

National Executive Committee By-Elections 2026

Guidance for Candidates

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Introduction

Elections to the Co-operative Party National Executive Committee usually take place every three years. Members elected in by-elections in 2026 will serve until the next NEC is elected in 2027 and will then be eligible to seek re-election.

If you are considering seeking election to the NEC, please read these guidelines carefully, together with the NEC Handbook and Code of Conduct, to ensure that you meet the criteria and know what is expected of a member of the NEC. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Karen Wilkie, Board Secretary at board@party.coop.

See below for the full membership of the NEC.

Self-nominations for the vacancy for **LGBTQ+ Representative** will open on **Monday 16 February 2026**. The closing date is **12 noon on Friday 6 March 2026**. Nominations must be submitted via the form in the Party's website.

LQBTQ+ By-Election - Summary of Key Dates

6 June 2025	Deadline for candidates to have applied to join the Party
9 December 2025	Deadline for members to have applied to join the Party and participate in the ballot
16 February 2026	Self-nominations open
12 noon, 6 March 2026	Closing date for self-nominations
9 March 2026	Ballot opens
12 noon, 27 March 2026	Ballots close

Eligibility

All NEC candidates must:

- Have been a full member of the Co-operative Party for six months by 6 March 2026. This means have made a valid application to join by 6 June 2025, and not be in arrears.
- Meet the legal requirements for a Board member of a registered Society. For example, they must be over the age of 16.
- Complete the online nomination form and declaration

Additionally, no-one can be an NEC member who:

- is not a member of a local Party, which is itself a member of the Party
- refuses to sign a statement accepting the code of conduct for members of the National Executive Committee
- has been declared bankrupt or compounded with their creditors and not been discharged
- is subject to a disqualification order made under the Company Directors Disqualification Act
- has been convicted of an offence where the conviction is not treated as spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- fails to abide by any rules for the conduct of elections made by the National Executive Committee.

Other rules and guidance

Candidates may not seek election for more than one place.

A brief candidate statement (not exceeding 250 words) and photo, submitted with the on-line candidate application form will be circulated with the ballot papers.

The candidate information and statement provided with their on-line nomination, including a photo and short video, if submitted, will be available on the Party's website.

Candidates may include in the candidate statement links to social media pages and/or a personal website. Candidates may also use social media, but this must not be paid for (either by or on behalf of the candidate or in-kind).

No printed materials may be circulated other than the candidates' information and statement, which will be made available to branch officers and on-line to members.

Ballot

Links to vote will be emailed to members and the ballot will take place on line. Members who do not have an email address will receive instructions by post on how to vote.

To be eligible to vote, members must be current, not lapsed, and have applied to join the Party on or before **9 December 2025**. They must also be members of the LGBTQ Network.

The ballot will open **on 9 March and close at 12 noon on 27 March**.

For more information:

Contact Karen Wilkie, Board Secretary & Returning Officer, board@party.coop.

Membership of the NEC

Following the rule change agreed at the Society AGM in 2022, the NEC has 24 voting members. These are set out below:

Fifteen individual members:

One each from Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales

Elected by and from individual members by one member, one vote. Candidates must live in the nation for which they are seeking election.

Eight from England

Elected by and from individual members in four sections, two per section.

The sections are:

- England East and London: members in the East and London regions
- England Midlands: members in the East Midlands and West Midlands regions
- England North: members in the North East & Cumbria, North West and Yorkshire & Humber regions
- England South: members in the South East and South West regions.

Candidates must live in the section for which they are seeking election and a different region to any currently serving NEC member representing that section.

One member from each of the BAME, (dis)Ability and LGBTQ+ networks

These are elected by and from individual members of each network. Candidates must be a member of the relevant Co-operative Party network to seek election to these seats.

One youth representative

Elected by individual members aged 30 and under. Candidates must be under 27 at the date of nomination.

Two members appointed by the Co-operative Group

Two members elected by retail Societies other than the Co-operative Group

Each organisation may nominate one candidate. Candidates must be nominated by a retail Society that is a current member of the Co-operative Party.

One member elected by other non-retail Societies and affiliates.

Candidates must be nominated by a non-retail Society or other affiliate that is a current member of the Co-operative Party.

Two members of the Westminster Parliamentary Group

These are appointed by the Westminster Co-operative Parliamentary Group.

Two members elected by and from official Co-operative Party elected representatives other than the Westminster Parliamentary Group

This election is open to all current Labour and Co-operative Members of the Scottish Parliament, Senedd, London Assembly, Police & Crime Commissioners, Elected Mayors or Councillors who stood as 'Labour and Co-operative' at their most recent election or were endorsed by their local Co-operative Party as co-operative candidates.