

The Leo Panitch Leadership Programme

A central pillar of Momentum's new organisational strategy, [Socialist Organising in a New Era](#), is supporting our members to become movement leaders and organisers at every level. The Leo Panitch Leadership Programme is a key part of that.

Leo Panitch was one of the most incisive, creative, and committed socialist thinkers of his generation. He developed an extensive analysis of global capitalism and the challenges faced by socialists, particularly those in the Labour Party, arguing that any successful political strategy for the left needs to be rooted in attempts to develop the agency and capacities of working class people.

Leo was a warm and critical supporter of Momentum, embracing the dynamism of the movement in support of Jeremy Corbyn while arguing for a deeper strategic approach focused on organising on the ground and in the labour movement. Leo argued that Momentum “needs to be permanently engaged in teaching people how to be organisers and in developing its members’ own political education, so they can work at the base to engage in what needs to be seen as class re-formation today”.

Leo's emphasis on political education and developing the organising capacities of our movement lies at the heart of the Leo Panitch Leadership Programme, which will support Momentum members to develop their political education, strategic understanding and organisational skills. Here's what you'll learn over the course of the programme.

1. The Programme

Political: Over multiple sessions we'll develop participant understandings of core concepts central to socialist thinking, including class politics, imperialism and anti-racism. We'll cover issues such as:

- Unequal power relations in the economy
- The centrality of working class organisation as a driver of change

- The structural nature of modern racism and its relationship to imperialism

The aim of these sessions will be to strengthen participants' theoretical understandings and their ability to communicate socialist ideas, as well as providing a solid foundation for further political education.

Organising: these sessions will equip participants with a range of skills to level up their organising, by making it more effective and sustainable. Sessions will focus on:

- How to pick winnable campaigns and develop tactics
- How to build effective teams
- How to embed collective care at the heart of your organising
- How to identify and support organic leaders
- How to persuade and speak with confidence

The aim of these sessions is to help participants develop as organisers so they can go back to their communities and help build working-class power, organise winning campaigns and help grow Momentum locally.

Strategic: effective socialist organisers need to think strategically as well as possess the skills and confidence to achieve change. These sessions will enable participants to draw on their own experiences and understanding to think through key strategic dilemmas. We'll focus on:

- Power mapping the Labour Party and labour movement, to identify points of leverage and influence
- Analysing Momentum's new strategy and the role of local groups and organisers in delivering it
- Developing an understanding of socialist strategy more broadly, and the relationship between the Party, labour movement and state

The aim of these sessions is to develop the strategic capacity of participants, allowing them to better identify past failures and plan for future victories, thinking through where power lies, how we build alliances and how we win.

Learning by doing: develop your own political project

The Leo Panitch Leadership Programme will be an interactive programme, in which participants collectively and individually 'learn by doing'. A key part of this is that we ask

participants to propose their own local political projects when they apply to be on the Programme, and participants will develop these projects over the course of the Programme, using what they have learnt to inform their actions, and reporting back the challenges they face to the rest of the cohort.

There isn't a set list of recommended political projects, but it could include running a local political education event or campaign, increasing socialist influence in a CLP, or increasing the number of active Momentum members in your local Group.

Programme structure

The programme will begin in August and take place over a period of four months. It will consist of:

- One in-person weekend (two days: 10am-6pm) either on August 7th-8th or August 21st-22nd, taking place in London and Leeds.
- A minimum of 4 online sessions between August and November (dates TBC), with additional sessions as the programme develops.
- One online day-long closing session on Saturday November 20th. All applicants need to make sure they are available on this date.

In total there are 19 sessions planned (ten on the first weekend; four online sessions; and five on the final day). Some of the online sessions will include 'free sessions' that we will use for sessions requested or offered by participants after the first weekend, and we will also use sessions to allow participants to report back on their projects and seek advice and support from their peers.

We will front-load aspects of the programme that we feel are essential to support participants in the development of their projects (political and skills-based), and leave other aspects for later on in the programme.

Cohorts

We will run the Programme in two cohorts of 20, broadly organised geographically. This will create more manageable groups for better dynamics and assist in developing relationships over closer geographical regions.

2. FAQ

Why is Momentum running the Leo Panitch Leadership Programme?

Organisers are the lifeblood of any socialist organisation, and Momentum's future success depends on members getting active in their communities, workplaces and in the Labour Party, politically educating, running campaigns and building power.

The Leo Panitch Leadership Programme is designed to help Momentum members become organisers, by helping members develop the confidence, skills and relationships they need to take their organising to the next level.

The Programme sounds great but I'm not sure if it's for me

This Programme is for you if you're a committed Momentum member and want to step up and take on more responsibility in the movement - whether in your local Momentum Group, CLP, Eviction Resistance action group, or in your workplace or your community.

Alternatively, if you have been doing great work and share Momentum's politics but haven't been heavily involved in the organisation so far, we'd still like to hear from you about what you'd like to achieve with us.

A key part of what Momentum does is to organise to increase the number of socialists holding elected office, and we welcome people with an interest in standing for election, but the Leo Panitch Leadership Programme is not focused on candidate development.

If you have any questions then please get in touch with Rachel at rachel.godfreywood@peoplesmomentum.com or attend our drop in session at 6pm on Wednesday 28th April.

How much activist experience is necessary to apply?

The Programme is primarily for people who have already made some contribution to the movement, but want to take it to the next level.

Those contributions could come in different forms, ranging from organising with local Momentum Groups or in CLPs, with trade or tenants' unions or other types of organising and activism, such as environmental activism or thorough anti-racist groups.

What are the time requirements for the Programme and when would I need to be available?

The Programme will begin with one in-person weekend in August, which will be held either on 7th-8th August or on 21st-22nd August, so all applicants need to be available on at least one of these weekends, and ideally both for the sake of flexibility.

There will also be one closing day held online on Saturday November 20th that applicants must be available for.

There will also be a minimum of four 2 hour-long online sessions between August and November (dates unconfirmed).

In total there are 19 sessions planned (ten on the first weekend; four online sessions (2-3 hours); and five on the final day). Some of the online sessions will include 'free sessions' that we leave free and use for sessions requested or offered by participants after the first weekend, and we will also use the sessions to allow participants to report back on their projects and seek advice and support from their peers.

We'll also be asking participants to deliver local political projects as part of the programme. We will let successful participants know the dates and times as soon as they are accepted onto the Programme.

If I apply, when will I find out if I have been successful?

We will let all applicants know if they have been successful by June 2nd.

What do I need to take part?

As some of the programme will be online you will need internet and a laptop/tablet or phone to connect to Zoom.

What is the cost of taking part?

The cost is free but participants are required to be Momentum members.

What costs can Momentum cover?

Momentum will be able to cover travel costs for those who need it. Where participants need to travel further than 2.5 hours in order to arrive at the in-person event, Momentum can cover the costs of accommodation if no other accommodation is available.

What happens after the Programme is completed?

After the Programme all participants will be supported to use what they have learnt to build power and drive forward change locally with other Momentum activists. You will also have a cohort of other activists who you have been on the Programme with to share your experiences with.

Why does the form ask participants to put down ‘Political Referees’?

It is important that applicants fully share Momentum’s ideals and goals, so we are asking applicants to identify two people who can speak to their commitment to socialist ideas and organising. These should ideally be people who are involved in Momentum, for example leaders of a local Momentum Group, or are involved in the Labour Party or in key allied organisations such as an affiliated trade union or another organisation which is politically close to the organisation.

This is a selective programme. Why are the rest of Momentum’s members unable to participate in it?

We aim to run this Programme each year, which means that over time more and more activists will be able to participate. Additionally, we expect that every participant will share the skills and experiences that they learn through the Programme with as many Momentum members as possible, to achieve Momentum’s strategic goals and organisational priorities. We’ll also look to make available the content used in the Programme to all Momentum members, so local Momentum Groups and members can run their own scaled-down versions of the Programme.

As part of our new strategy for movement building we are committed to delivering a mix of political education and membership development activities, through programmes such as this, as well as events and campaigns. Our approach will combine a mix of open access activity in which all Momentum members can participate, whatever their starting point, as well as more selective programmes that give activists the time to reflect and develop in a supportive environment, with added care and attention. We believe that for our organisation to succeed we need to do both.

We’ll also be supporting our local Groups and members to deliver projects and campaigns of their own, through which Momentum members everywhere can contribute, develop and win together.