

The Leo Panitch Leadership Programme

Momentum's yearly Leo Panitch Leadership Programme aims to create a new generation of socialist leaders and organisers, and support them to take on impactful work within the movement.

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.

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 movement to identify points of leverage and influence
- 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: hand on experience delivering exciting programmes of work

The Leo Panitch Leadership Programme will be an interactive programme, in which participants collectively and individually 'learn by doing'. A key part of this will be ensuring that after the Programme participants are given opportunities to play leading roles in big political projects, including national campaigns and growing Momentum's local group structure. Expert organisers will continue to work with participants after the Programme ends to support them in their development.

Programme structure

The programme will begin in August or September and take place over a period of two months.

It will consist of:

- One in-person weekend (two days: 10am-6pm) either on August 13th-14th in London or on September 3rd-4th in Leeds
- No more than 2 online sessions after the in person weekend (dates TBC)
- One in-person day of activity at The World Transformed Festival (TWT) in Liverpool on Saturday 24th September.

All participants of the programme need to be free for one in-person weekend and the day of activity at TWT so when you apply please preemptively book all of these times in your calendar.

Cohorts

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

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 creating leaders capable of organising in their communities, workplaces and in the Labour Party, politically educating, running campaigns and building power.

The Leo Panitch Leadership Programme is designed to skill up a new layer of leaders by helping participants develop the confidence, skills and relationships they need to organise effectively and create change.

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

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

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're interested in becoming a candidate for local elections then check out our Future Councillors Programme [here](#).

If you have any questions then please get in touch with Fergal at fergal.odwyer@peoplesmomentum.com or attend our drop in session at 6pm on Wednesday 25th May.

Do I have to be a Momentum member to attend?

You do not need to be a member of Momentum or the Labour Party to attend the programme. Whilst we welcome activists with a background of organising within the Labour Party or labour movement, we also welcome applicants who come from different parts of the left.

We do ask that participants sign up to become a Momentum Movement Builder to participate in the Programme. This is to ensure that participants remain invested in the organisation beyond the Programme, and committed to using the skills, knowledge and networks built to further Momentum's strategic aims. It only costs £3 a month and you can do this when you apply for the Programme or after your application has been accepted. If you are unable to afford £3 a month then please get in touch and we can ensure you are still able to participate.

How much activist experience is necessary to apply?

You don't have to be a highly experienced activist to apply. In fact, we welcome applications from less experienced activists with the right attitude and a commitment to socialist organising.

In your application we'd be interested to hear about any past organising experience, paid or unpaid, which could include working in your local Momentum group or CLP, with trade or tenants' unions or other types of organising and activism, such as environmental activism or through 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, which will be held on 13th-14th August in London and on 3rd-4th September in Leeds, so all applicants need to be available to attend the weekend that suits them most.

There will also be one in person day of activity at The World Transformed (TWT) festival in Liverpool on Saturday 24th September which all participants are expected to attend.

There will also be a maximum of two online sessions between the in-person weekend and TWT (dates unconfirmed). 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 9th.

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. If you don't have access to these then let us know in the section of the form which asks about accessibility and we will do our best to accommodate you.

What age do I have to be?

Unfortunately we cannot accept applicants under the age of 18 for the programme.

What is the cost of taking part?

The Programme doesn't require a fee, but participants are required to become Momentum Movement Builders to attend.

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 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 don't we run the Programme with all of our members?

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.

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.