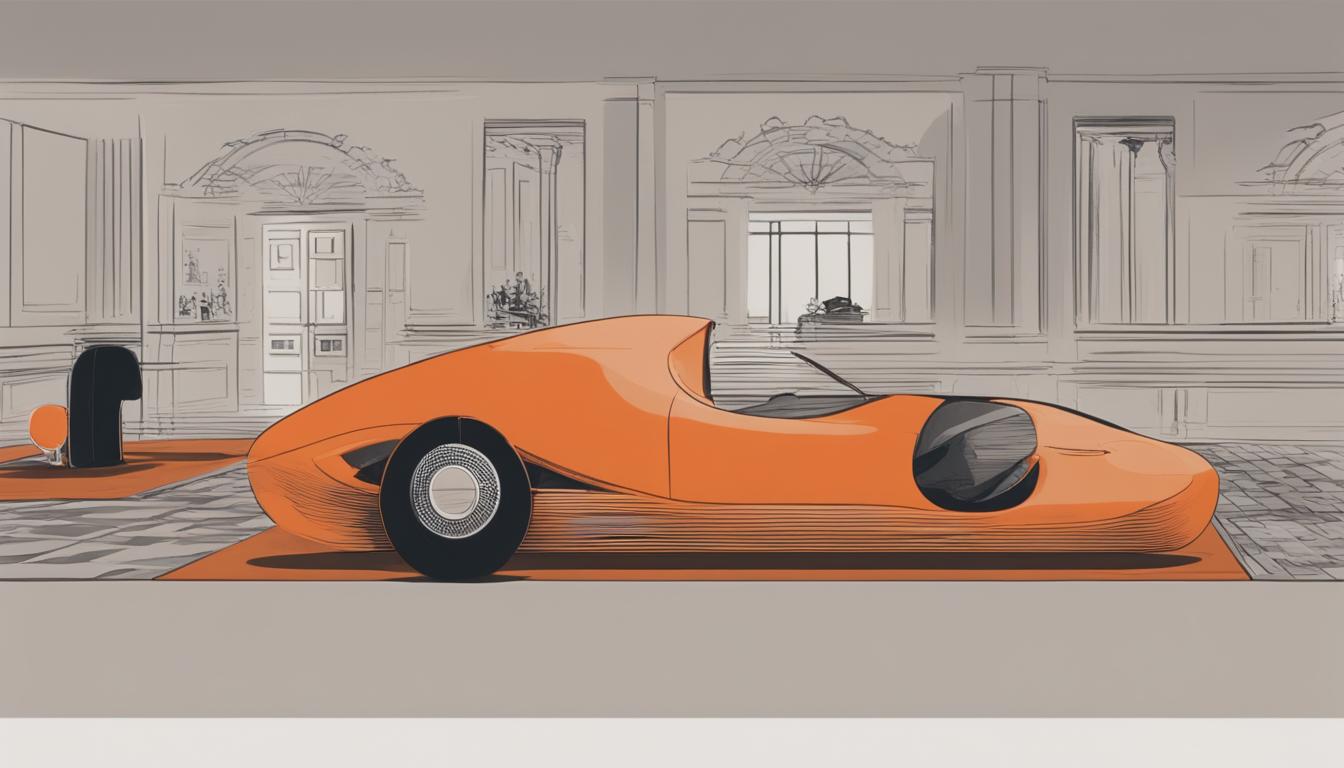
# Labour Leader Sir Keir Starmer Clarifies Diane Abbott's Candidacy for General Election Amid Controversy



Labour Leader Sir Keir Starmer addressed the ongoing controversy surrounding veteran MP Diane Abbott's candidacy for the July 4 general election. Responding to reports, Sir Keir clarified on May 29, 2024, in Worcester that no decision had been made to bar Ms. Abbott from standing as a Labour candidate. This follows a period of confusion where Ms. Abbott, while having recently had the Labour whip restored, believed she had been barred from running, railing via social media about the situation.

Ms. Abbott, MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington since 1987 and the UK's first black female MP, was suspended in April 2023 following controversial comments about Jewish, Irish, and Traveller communities. She had apologized for her remarks, and an investigation concluded in December 2023 with a formal warning and an antisemitism awareness course completed by February 2024.

The final decision on her candidacy will rest with Labour's National Executive Committee (NEC). The issue has caused a backlash within Labour, with significant criticism from figures like former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn and various trade unions who publicly supported Ms. Abbott's right to stand for election.

Additionally, MP Lloyd Russell-Moyle announced his suspension from the party over past alleged misconduct, complicating Labour's election strategy. This incident coincides with Labour’s broader campaign focus on NHS waiting list reductions, which has also been overshadowed by a five-day junior doctors' strike and other policy discussions.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and other political leaders have called for transparency over Labour's processes regarding these disciplinary cases, intensifying the scrutiny on Sir Keir's leadership decisions during the election campaign.