# Labour under fire as Anonyvoter voting system sparks fresh allegations of bias and fraud



Concerns are surging within the Scottish Labour Party as the controversial Anonyvoter online voting system finds itself embroiled in a Metropolitan Police fraud investigation. Many party members fear this dubious software could be weaponised to undermine genuine left-wing candidates, furthering the interests of centrists in their candidate selections for the upcoming general election. Anonyvoter, alongside traditional methods like postal votes and in-person ballots, is currently employed across the party in this delicate process.

The system's credibility has come under fire, particularly after a glaring case involving left-wing MSP Mercedes Villalba, who lost her candidacy for Dundee West to centrist candidate Michael Marra despite having received more in-person votes. The subsequent online voting, however, showed an astonishing preference for Marra, with nearly three times the votes Villalba garnered—a clear indication of how the system potentially favours centrist candidates while sidelining those with bold, progressive viewpoints.

Discontent over Anonyvoter has been amplified by a series of spats concerning previous candidate selections where blatant manipulation was suggested. High-profile figures like former MPs Sam Tarry and Beth Winter have resorted to legal counsel to contest their deselections, claiming unfair bias against them despite strong grassroots support. Tarry didn’t hold back, dubbing the voting process as “rigged” and asserting that it unsurprisingly disadvantaged left-leaning candidates.

The integrity issues surrounding Anonyvoter are not confined to Scotland alone; a Labour branch in Croydon admitted to data manipulation linked to candidate selections, drawing unwelcome attention from police authorities. This incident has escalated calls for an independent inquiry into Anonyvoter’s role within the party, amid rising fears that its integrity is severely compromised. Critics argue that the lack of independent oversight eliminates essential checks, raising questions about transparency in electoral processes. Former Labour operatives have pointed out that traditional oversight measures, such as local officials supervising counts, are conspicuously absent from the Anonyvoter system.

Trade unions aligned with Labour have echoed these sentiments, pressing the party to discard Anonyvoter due to reliability concerns. Multiple Labour figures reportedly recognise the problems inherent in the system but have seen their worries dismissed by party leaders. One disgruntled member recounted their futile attempts to provoke a response from leadership after questioning the software’s efficacy, underscoring a growing distrust among the party’s grassroots constituents.

Scottish Labour representatives, including deputy leader Jackie Baillie, now face similar accusations to those levelled at their Westminster counterparts. Critics argue that the party leadership under Keir Starmer is relentlessly pursuing an agenda that sidelines the left wing, as evidenced by their commitment to a system marred by allegations of bias and ineffectiveness.

While the Labour Party remains resolute about Anonyvoter—insisting that candidate selections via the platform comply with established protocols—dissenting voices and scrutiny are rising. With members expressing escalating disquiet, the future of this contentious voting system hangs precariously in the balance. Calls for a thorough investigation loom large, with both internal and external stakeholders pondering the potential ramifications of continuing to rely on a platform many deem fundamentally flawed.

As these issues gain traction within the Scottish Labour context, crucial questions about the party's democratic principles and the integrity of its candidate selection mechanisms come to the forefront, particularly as it gears up for the next electoral cycle. The fallout from the Anonyvoter controversy promises to reverberate far beyond mere candidate selections, potentially reshaping the party’s ideological landscape and electoral fortunes in the months ahead.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/fears-over-scottish-labour-using-35282783> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.thecanary.co/uk/analysis/2024/09/02/jas-athwal/> - This article examines the controversy surrounding the Anonyvoter system used by the Labour Party for candidate selections. It highlights instances where candidates, such as Jas Athwal, secured a significant portion of in-person votes but were outpaced by online votes cast through Anonyvoter. The piece also discusses concerns about the lack of independent oversight in the online voting process and the potential for electoral fraud, citing specific cases where the system's integrity was questioned.
3. <https://jacobin.com/2024/04/starmer-labour-anonyvoter-scandal-democracy> - This analysis delves into the allegations that the Anonyvoter system was manipulated to favor candidates aligned with Keir Starmer's leadership within the Labour Party. It discusses the absence of independent oversight in the online voting process, the potential for vote tampering, and the broader implications for party democracy. The article also highlights calls for an independent investigation into the selection process and the suspension of Anonyvoter's use until the matter is resolved.
4. <https://nation.cymru/news/welsh-labour-mp-beth-winter-calls-for-inquiry-into-her-deselection-as-police-probe-voter-fraud/> - This report covers Welsh Labour MP Beth Winter's call for an independent inquiry into her deselection, following a police investigation into alleged voter fraud involving the Anonyvoter system. It details the circumstances of her selection contest, the involvement of the Metropolitan Police's cyber crime unit, and Winter's concerns about the integrity of the online voting process. The article also touches upon the broader implications of the controversy for the Labour Party's internal democracy.
5. <https://labourhub.org.uk/2024/03/29/labour-unions-pile-on-pressure-over-anonyvoter-scandal/> - This article discusses the growing pressure from four Labour-affiliated unions on the party's General Secretary, David Evans, to abandon the Anonyvoter system due to concerns over its integrity. It highlights the unions' demands for an independent inquiry into the system's use in candidate selections and internal elections. The piece also references specific instances where the Anonyvoter system was alleged to have been manipulated to favor certain candidates, raising questions about the transparency and fairness of the party's selection processes.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2024/03/22/labour-party-selection-sam-tarry-angela-rayner/> - This article reports on the legal action being considered by Sam Tarry, the MP for Ilford South, against the Labour Party over alleged 'voter fraud' involving the Anonyvoter system. It details Tarry's claims that the online voting system was used to disadvantage left-wing candidates during the selection process. The piece also discusses the broader controversy surrounding the Anonyvoter system and its impact on the party's internal democracy.
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-65436301.amp> - This BBC News report covers formal complaints made by two Labour constituency parties in Scotland regarding the selection process for key seats. The complaints highlight concerns about a 'lack of transparency' and the 'integrity' of the selections, with members expressing dissatisfaction over the process. The article provides insights into the internal challenges faced by the Scottish Labour Party and the steps being taken to address these issues.