

UK Conservative MP Natalie Elphicke defects to Starmer's right-wing Labour Party

Robert Stevens
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Sir Keir Starmer's onward lurch to the right was given a seal of approval this week by the defection of Conservative Party MP Natalie Elphicke to the Labour Party.

She is the second Tory defection to Labour in as many weeks, following on the heels of Dan Poulter, and the third since Christian Wakeford in 2022. Elphicke is on the extreme right-wing of the Tories and made her name as an anti-immigration agitator. Crossing the floor of Parliament Wednesday, she cited "the safety and security of our borders" as a crucial factor in her decision.

Welcoming Elphicke were Starmer and Labour chair Anneliese Dodds, who described her as a "good, natural fit" for the party. Questioned on Elphicke's anti-immigration agenda, Dodds commented, "People can change their minds."

Except she hasn't changed her mind. Elphicke is seeking to salvage her political career by jumping ship to a Labour Party expected to easily win a general election later this year, and she can do so by joining a party whose programme is identical to that of the Tories.

Labour has already chosen its candidate for Elphicke's Dover and Deal constituency, on England's south coast, so Elphicke will not stand in the upcoming general election and will instead take an unpaid role as an adviser to the leadership on housing. But she can be certain to be given a safe seat at some stage going forward.

A former finance lawyer, she became an MP in 2019, succeeding her now ex-husband Charlie after he was charged and found guilty of sexual assault. Elphicke infamously said of her former husband at the time of his unsuccessful appeal against his conviction in September 2020 that he was "an easy target for dirty

politics and false allegations" because he was "attractive, and attracted to, women."

From her constituency, where most of the small boats of desperate asylum seekers crossing the Channel from France end up, she has relentlessly whipped up anti-migrant sentiment, including denouncing Labour's policy as being too soft.

It was in the filthy anti-migrant atmosphere whipped up by the Tories and Labour alike that in October 2022 a fascist attacked the Western Jet Foil migrant processing centre in Dover. Before killing himself, the man threw three firebombs at the facility. Writing in the *Mail on Sunday* before the attack, Elphicke had declared the migrant situation "intolerable" and called for "constant vigilance", denouncing "the handwringing rights industry."

Within hours of the attack, she declared, "Every single attempt to get on top of this is delayed or thwarted by a rag bag of people who seem to want open borders and don't seem to want us to get a grip on this particular situation."

Writing a year ago in the *Daily Express* under the headline, "Don't trust Labour on immigration they really want open borders...", Elphicke insisted, "The only sensible policy, as set out in the [Tories' anti-immigrant Rwanda] Bill, is to simply remove everyone who arrives here illegally—whatever their circumstances, whatever their reasons for coming to the UK, whether they are an economic migrant or worse."

The piece concluded, "Will Keir Starmer be prepared to get tough or will Sir Softie strike again?"

The following day, Elphicke posted an image of Starmer holding Britain's door open with a "welcome" sign as asylum seekers landed at Dover.

Elphicke now declares that Labour puts forward an anti-immigration agenda that will appeal to her

constituents and the wider Tory heartlands in the south of England.

A photo-op was held in Starmer's Parliament office, which he made the subject of a social media post with a picture of the Labour leader beneath a Union Jack and Elphicke with a Union Jack-design scarf around her neck.

None of this is slightly controversial anymore. Labour launched a new membership card last October with the Union Jack on one side and "Putting the country first" on the other, earning the praise of the fascist leader of Britain First.

On Friday, Starmer appeared with Elphicke in Dover to announce a raft of new anti-immigration policies. With a backdrop also emblazoned with the Union Jack, and speaking from a rostrum with the same and displaying the word "Border Security", Elphicke complained that the government "are failing to keep our borders safe and secure" with "small boat arrivals once again at record levels this year." Labour had an "approach that puts at its heart a commitment to border security that tackles the criminal gangs behind the small boats crises and saves lives."

Starmer committed to scrapping the Rwanda policy, complaining that it will "see just a few hundred people a year removed to Rwanda, less than 1 percent of the people who cross the sea in small boats every year... for £600 million." The "rest of our border system... honestly, it's like a sieve."

Labour "will end this farce. We will restore serious government to our borders," meaning "a new Command with new powers, new resources, and a new way of doing things—Border Security Command."

The full weight of the state would be brought down to stop the arrival of asylum seekers via the Channel, "based on a counter-terrorism approach which we know works" and "An end to the fragmentation between policing, the border force and our intelligence agencies... so that border protection becomes an elite force... an essential frontline defence that communities like this can depend upon."

The "specialist investigators" being enlisted for this were "the National Crime Agency, the Border Force, Immigration Enforcement, the Crown Prosecution Service [which Starmer headed for five years from 2008] and yes—MI5, all working to a single mission."

The Home Office will "hire hundreds of new

caseworkers" and a "new fast-track returns and enforcement unit" will be set-up "to clear the backlog".

Starmer made sure to denounce anyone who, "based on their principles," believed "that people should be able to move across the globe, wherever, whenever, and however they want." This "would lead to a chaos," he said.

Within the Labour Party, Elphicke's arrival met with only muted protest. What constitutes the Labour "left" complained, usually anonymously, that Elphicke was let in while their main representatives, Jeremy Corbyn and Diane Abbott, are still expelled from the Parliamentary party. Corbyn's former shadow chancellor John McDonnell said he was "a great believer in the powers of conversion but this one would strain the generosity of spirit of John the Baptist."

Starmer has no reason to care what McDonnell and company may think because they will do nothing about it. He will continue to recruit leading Tories with his stated aim to win as many Tory voters to Labour as possible. Moreover, as the *Daily Mirror* editorialised, "When the likes of Ms Elphicke decide Britain will be better served with Mr Starmer in No10, it shows how much Labour has changed."

Shadow Health Secretary Wes Streeting said he had spoken to more Conservative MPs who were considering crossing the floor.

It should be noted that Elphicke, while claiming to oppose the mass sacking of 800 P&O ferry workers in her constituency in March 2022, refused to vote against the fire-and-rehire laws which made this possible. When attending a demonstration against the job losses in Dover, she was denounced by workers, who she later attacked in Parliament as "odious hard-left militants."

This is who the Labour "left" are prepared to stand alongside and the type of right-wing government of austerity and war they back as they campaign for a Labour victory.



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