

SPECIAL BULLETIN

On this morning's Today programme, Christopher Montgomery from *A Better Choice* alleged that Francis Maude would "determine who amongst the mass membership actually gets a vote", that there were "moves afoot in Central Office to disenfranchise tens of thousands of Tory Party members" and that this was being done to favour a particular candidate.

There is no truth whatsoever in any of these allegations. The rules governing who is eligible to vote haven't been changed since shortly after the 2001 leadership election. The cases of people who do not initially receive a ballot paper and phone the ballot hotline will be investigated by a team of officials and all issues of principle will be referred to the Returning Officer Sir Michael Spicer. The Party has employed the services of Electoral Reform Services Limited, the highly respected independent electoral administrators, to ensure that we adopt the best electoral practices and that the ballot process is totally impartial and seen to be so.

Who qualifies for a ballot paper?

In England, Wales and Northern Ireland:

- foundation members (people who were members before 1998 and haven't lapsed since - other than those who lapsed in 1999 and rejoined at their original subscription before 31st March 2000 - whatever the size of the subscription they pay); and
- people who have paid a subscription of more than £15 (£3 if you are under 22) since 5th September 2004 and who haven't lapsed since, other than those who joined since 5th September 2005.

There is no special rule for married couples. Unless they are foundation members they would have to pay a joint subscription of £30 for both of them to get a ballot paper. If they pay a subscription of between £15 and £30 the first one entered on our database will get a ballot paper.

Anyone who has joined since 5th September 2005, anyone who has joined since 1998 and pays less than £15 (£3 if they are under 22) and anyone who was a member before 1998 but lapsed and has rejoined since and pays less than £15 (£3 if they are under 22) doesn't qualify for a ballot paper under the Party's rules.

In Scotland the minimum membership rule has never applied so anyone who has paid a subscription since 5th September 2004 and who hasn't lapsed since, other than those who joined since 5th September 2005, gets a ballot paper.

How many people will get a ballot paper?

We don't know the exact figure yet but it will be over a quarter of a million.