

Polls suggest Liz Truss likely to replace Johnson as British Prime Minister



Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss, candidates for leader of the British Conservatives, at meeting with party members, Leeds, July 28.

On July 7, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced his resignation as leader of the Conservative Party. Under the party's rules, a new leader is elected in a postal vote of the party members for one of two candidates nominated by the party's MPs. On July 12, the party's 1922 Committee announced that eight MPs had been nominated by at least 20 MPs for the leadership and that the first round of voting by the party's MPs would take place the next day. After the first round, two of the eight were eliminated because they received fewer than 30 votes. After the second, third and fourth rounds, the lowest-placed candidate in each round was eliminated, leaving three candidates. On July 20, in the fifth and last round of voting, Rishi Sunak, the former chancellor of the exchequer, received 137 votes, Liz Truss, the foreign secretary, received 113 votes, and Penny Mordaunt, the trade minister, received 105 votes. Mordaunt was eliminated and Sunak and Truss became the nominees of the party's MPs.

The party then organized twelve meetings, called "hustings," between late July and late August at which members could hear, either in person or online, the two candidates discuss the issues and their positions and answer questions. Thus far, six of the twelve meetings have taken place. Tomorrow, Sunak and Truss will be in Perth and on Wednesday they'll be in Belfast. The last meeting will take place in London on August 31. The postal ballots are due by Sept. 2. On Sept. 5, the results of the postal vote will be announced. The next day Johnson will deliver his resignation as Prime Minister to the Queen, who will then appoint the new party leader to succeed him as Prime Minister.

According to a YouGov poll conducted on July 29-August 2 among 1043 Conservative party members, 60 percent said they support Truss, 26 percent said they support Sunak, and 13 percent said they didn't know who they'd vote for or wouldn't vote. Excluding the don't knows and won't votes, Truss led Sunak 69 percent to 31 percent, a 38-point margin. In an Opinion Research poll conducted on August 8-13 among 570 Conservative party members, 61 percent of

those who had already voted or said they would definitely vote for their preferred candidate supported Truss, compared to 39 percent who supported Sunak – a 22-point margin that, although considerably smaller than the 38-point margin in the YouGov poll, is still a commanding lead. In a techneUK poll conducted on August 12 among 272 party members, 60 percent said they supported Truss and 33 percent said they supported Sunak, with 7 percent saying they were undecided, giving her a 27-point margin over Sunak.

In the 2019 Conservative Party leadership contest in which Johnson defeated Jeremy Hunt and thereby became party leader and Prime Minister replacing Theresa May, 139,000 party members voted. There are currently estimated to be roughly 180,000 Conservative Party members. Most will vote and all the usual caveats about small n's apply to the polls mentioned above. Nevertheless, it appears quite likely that on Sept. 6 Liz Truss will become the next Prime Minister of the UK.

David R. Cameron
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