

Iceland boss and ex-Tory donor switches support to Labour

Iceland supermarket boss Richard Walker has switched his support from the Conservatives to Labour, saying Sir Keir Starmer's party is "the right choice" for his customers.

Mr Walker, a former Tory donor and the executive chairman of Iceland, said under Sir Keir's leadership [Labour](#) had "progressively moved towards the ground on which I have always stood", while the [Conservatives](#) "have moved away from it".

He accused the Tories of abandoning "basic Conservatives principles" and this had "not only fuelled my personal disenchantment, it is also reflected in the total collapse of public confidence we can see in every opinion poll".

Mr Walker's endorsement of Labour comes after he quit the Conservative Party last year and he failed to be selected as one of its parliamentary candidates for the election.

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At the time he told the Politics Hub with Sophy Ridge the Tories "didn't want" him, he was never given a reason why he wasn't selected, and the party "doesn't want people with genuine views, experience, or opinions of their own".

Mr Walker said while he would be supporting Labour at the next general election, he would not become a party member.

Writing in the Guardian, Mr Walker said: "Labour is the right choice for the communities across the country where Iceland operates – and the right choice for everyone in business who wants to see this country grow and prosper."

“Having met the man, I am sure that [Starmer](#) has exactly what it takes to be a great leader.

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“Indeed, he has already demonstrated this in the way in which he has transformed his own party by ruthlessly excising the Corbynite extremism that made Labour unelectable in 2019.”

Mr Walker went on to say Sir Keir “demonstrates a compassion and concern for the less fortunate that contrasts very favourably with the attitude of most of his opponents”.

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He added: “He absolutely gets it when I talk to him about the way that the [cost of living](#) crisis has put unbearable strain on the finances of so many of my customers and their families, and the urgent need for a government that does everything in its power to ease their burden.”

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Sir Keir said he was “delighted that Richard Walker has backed Labour”.

“The work that he and his colleagues at Iceland have done to help customers through the cost of living crisis has been commendable,” he said.

“With Labour, shoppers and shop workers will get a fair deal. We’ll tackle the cost of living crisis, get Britain’s economy growing again and get our country’s future back.”