

10 Key Takeaways From Labour Party Conference



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Sir Keir Starmer has worked hard to improve his party's relationship with business. Having previously promised a productive relationship between the state and the private sector, businesses welcomed Labour's change in attitude and supported their desire for honest dialogue, including CBI Director General Tony Danker.

02

Labour leadership candidates spent the early days of conference vying for pole position, with Angela Rayner being particularly active and briefing against Wes Streeting who was heckled as "scum" at an IPPR reception. Andy Burnham was also a ubiquitous presence throughout conference, laying out his own, membership appealing, policy platform.

03

The Metro Mayors proved crowd pleasers with Andy Burnham in particular a focus of media attention and interest with Sadiq Khan, Steve Rotheram and Dan Norris active participants in the afterhours seafront networking. They also touted a significant 'levelling up' proposal to be announced next week to time with the arrival of Conservative Party Conference in Manchester.

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Keir Starmer's speech has received mixed reviews due to its length but impressed with his ability to tackle hecklers and presentation of a significantly more centrist policy platform to the country.

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Whilst Andy McDonald's resignation points to divisions with the party's left, those more in tune with the leadership's world view are relatively content. Conversations with Labour activists such as the Fabian Society felt that the leadership of Starmer had provided a more positive atmosphere to the Conference, contrasting the toxic nature of recent years

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The speech of Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves, surpassed expectations – impressing both businesses present at the conference and the membership. The announcements on removal of business rates and £28bn per annum for green transition had both groups onside.

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Rule changes pushed through this week mean that Labour is no longer a member-led party, with power in the hands of unions and MPs. However, this also means there is incentive for potential leadership candidates to stake their claim before Labour wins any more MPs at the next election.

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Conference hall voting was swayed by the old power brokers in the party, the unions, as they swung behind the leadership on core issues. A breakdown of their votes alongside those of Constituency Labour Parties (i.e Labour members) show that members were broadly opposed to the leadership's vision for the party.

09

The topic of the environment and achieving Net Zero dominated the conference and there was a consensus amongst business that there was a need for a greater long term plan and investment from the government.

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Notable inclusions and exclusion from the main stage, always something to watch at conference, were fewer and far between here. However the absence of Emily Thornberry, Shadow Secretary of State for International Trade at the podium could reflect Labour's priorities in the coming months.