

Conservative Party Conference

10 things we learnt

- 1** The Conservative Party conference was a subdued affair – while many of the fringe events were packed, the conference hall was often half empty, and the majority of MPs stayed away
- 2** Theresa May used her conference speech to announce an extra £2bn for to build council houses, as well as draft legislation for her energy bill cap – though her speech was overshadowed by a protester handing her a P45 form, a recurring cough and the backdrop falling apart behind her
- 3** Labour is increasingly setting the agenda – Chancellor Philip Hammond devoted his speech to warning of the dangers of a Corbyn government, while Justice Minister Dominic Raab thanked delegates at a fringe event for coming to the “Labour Party conference”
- 4** The DUP were out in force at the party conference, with Arlene Foster and Nigel Dodds seen networking with delegates in the Midland Hotel in the evenings
- 5** Ministers are being asked to be ‘around’ for upcoming votes in Parliament – a Home Office Minister was heard complaining that they had only two days to visit India rather than the normal five
- 6** It will be a busy October for the Treasury Select Committee – first up is the Chancellor on 11 October, followed by the Bank of England on 17 October, and then the FCA on 31 October
- 7** Policy Forum Chair George Freeman admitted he had been unaware of what was in the 2017 manifesto, as this week he launches an initiative to create “young champions” for policy areas
- 8** Despite Theresa May’s insistence that she can lead the party into the next general election and beyond, the battle to replace her is on – Jacob Rees-Mogg and Ruth Davidson were particularly well-received at the conference; Boris Johnson, Priti Patel and Andrea Leadsom were the talk of the evenings; and Grant Shapps and Ed Vaizey have been plotting in recent days
- 9** Meanwhile, Work and Pensions Secretary David Gauke hinted at his ambitions to be Chancellor, as he defied opposition to press ahead with the roll out of Universal Credit
- 10** Brexit Secretary David Davis announced that he is preparing to quit the Government as soon as the UK has left the EU

