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Guide to Labour Party Conference



Sunday 27th September – Wednesday 30th September
Liverpool

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Labour Conference – under new leadership with a new PM

Labour Party Conference 2026 is set to be one of the most significant political events since Labour came into power in 2024. With a new leader and Prime Minister in Andy Burnham, the Labour Party faithful will arrive in Liverpool this September at the beginning of a new political chapter.

While Labour's substantial parliamentary majority remains intact, the change at the top represents more than a simple change in personnel; it raises important questions about the future direction of the Government, its policy priorities, and how it intends to reconnect with voters ahead of the next general election.

The leadership change follows a particularly challenging period for Labour. Disappointing performances in local and devolved elections, declining public confidence in the Government's ability to deliver change, and growing pressure from political opponents on both sides of the political spectrum have all prompted a period of reflection within the Parliamentary Labour Party. Burnham's election presents an opportunity to reset the Government's approach, sharpen its focus on delivery, and rebuild momentum for the second half of the parliamentary term.

This year's Conference will be watched closely for early signals about the new Prime Minister's priorities. Party members, journalists and businesses alike will be looking for indications of how Burnham intends to approach key issues across a range of policy areas, including economic growth, public service reform, housing, devolution, energy and skills.

While the main conference stage will give the new leadership an opportunity to set out its vision, some of the most revealing conversations are likely to take place throughout the secure zone and at the many fringe events happening throughout the week.



Beyond the speeches and fringe discussions, Labour Party Conference also retains an important formal role in shaping party policy. Throughout the year, party members submit ideas to the National Policy Forum (NPF), which develops proposals for consideration at Conference and helps determine the issues debated and voted on by delegates. Delegates from trade unions, affiliated groups and constituency parties are nominated to represent the breadth of the party and ensure that views from across its membership are heard. Although these formal proceedings are often overlooked by those outside the party, they can provide valuable insight into Labour's political direction and the strength of feeling around particular issues.

For businesses, charities and membership organisations, Conference offers a range of valuable engagement opportunities. Burnham and his team will be eager to demonstrate that they can deliver on Labour's promise to improve living standards and ease cost-of-living pressures, while also presenting the Government as pro-business, fiscally responsible and a safe pair of hands for the economy.

It will also provide an important opportunity to meet, engage with and hear directly from regional political leaders, whose influence is set to grow as the Prime Minister places greater emphasis on devolving power across the country and 'rewiring' the state. Building relationships early with these figures, as well as the teams and advisers around them, will be increasingly important for organisations seeking to understand and influence policy.

Conference is all about making connections. The extensive programme of fringe events, receptions and one-to-one meetings, as well as the relationships built over the course of the week, can support wider public affairs objectives. Activity at party conference should therefore not be treated as a one-off moment, but as a key part of your organisation's ongoing strategic engagement.

In a year defined by political change, understanding the priorities of the new administration will be essential. Organisations that engage early, build relationships and demonstrate how they can contribute to the Government's refreshed objectives will be best placed to influence policy and seize the opportunities that emerge from Labour's next chapter.



What's on?

Labour Party Conference includes set-piece speeches from the Prime Minister and his top team, key votes in the main hall, and an exhibition hall of stands filled by campaign groups, businesses and coalitions.

But much of the real actions happens on the fringe.

Fringe events

Fringe events are panel discussions, receptions, workshops, and roundtables that take place alongside the main Conference. They are run by charities, think tanks, campaign groups, media outlets, businesses and more. Fringe venues host high-profile sessions often attended by ministers, backbench MPs, councillors, activists and sector experts. They take place both inside and outside the secure zone.

You will need a conference pass to attend any events within the secure zone.

Fringe events are one of the best opportunities to engage with the people shaping Labour policy. They offer the chance to hear directly from ministers and MPs, and give opportunities to raise questions, make your voice heard, and get noticed.

PLMR's Policy Hub is a fringe venue within the secure zone, hosting a jam-packed schedule of high-level events throughout Conference.

FULL LINE-UP

PLMR is also on hand to support with:

- Identifying the most relevant fringe events for your priorities
- Securing relevant panel and speaker opportunities where appropriate
- Arranging coffees and meetings with stakeholders

The full schedule of events across the Conference is set to be published in early September.



Making the most of Conference



DO plan ahead

Decide your key messages early and build a clear engagement strategy. Ask:

- What is your campaign or policy ask?
- Why now?
- Who needs to hear this, and why should they care?
- What does success look like?



DO be ready to seize spontaneous moments

MPs, ministers, advisers, and influencers will be at receptions, panel events, hotel lobbies, and coffee shops. A short conversation in an informal setting can be just as valuable as a pre-booked meeting.



DO take care of yourself

Conference is an exhausting few days of early starts and late nights. Bring comfortable shoes, a refillable water bottle, snacks, and leave time for breaks – it's a marathon, not a sprint.



DO use your time wisely

Aside from the debates in the main hall, mid-morning and mid-afternoon usually present opportunities to meander through the exhibition hall and explore the range of other organisations in attendance.



DO ask questions at fringe events

This helps raise your organisation's profile and may lead to follow-up conversations.



DO use Conference to build your network

Arrange coffees before you go and be prepared to make time for spontaneous ones too.



DON'T focus exclusively on the frontbench

Senior ministers will be in high demand. Target MPs on key select committees, special advisers, councillors, mayors, and rising stars – many of whom may be more accessible and influential in your area of interest.

What to bring to Conference



Your pass – required for access to secure areas and most events.



The printed guide – details the full agenda and key venues.



The official app – allows you to create a personalised schedule and receive real-time updates.



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