**Labour Party Conference 2023: round-up**

Overview

Having become leader of the Labour Party in a time of complete disarray marked by a devastating general election defeat, internal party divisions, poor polling and suffering the consequences of Corbynism, Keir Starmer was determined to showcase a party poised for government.

Despite being showered in glitter by a protester in his keynote address, Starmer remained unfazed and delivered a speech light on policy, but focused on pushing the narrative that Labour is ready to assume leadership, glitter and all. Notably, this conference achieved record-breaking attendance figures, making it the best-attended Labour conference to date. With ongoing growth in Westminster polling, Starmer could be on the path to a potential Labour victory.

Key figures

* Sir Keir Starmer MP (Holborn and St Pancras): Party Leader
* Jonathan Reynolds MP (Stalybridge and Hyde): Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Trade
* Wes Streeting MP (Ilford North): Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care
* Steve Reed MP (Croydon North): Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
* Ed Miliband MP (Doncaster North): Shadow Secretary for Energy Security and Net Zero

Policy announcements

As we approach the next general election, Labour is solidifying its policy agenda. Conference saw the launch of a number of policies that will be featured in the Labour Party’s manifesto.

**Business and Trade**

* Ban zero-hour contracts and fire and rehire.
* Secure British automotive manufacturing with sector deal for the automotive industry, building two million electric vehicles and creating 80,000 high skilled jobs. Labour’s auto strategy will deliver:
  + New battery factories with priority planning permission to get spades in the ground.
  + Support colleges to specialise in technical skills needed to build electric vehicles.
  + Provide ten-year funding cycles for automotive R&D, to match that given to aerospace.
  + Set binding targets and redirect funding to ensure reliable charging coverage in every part of the UK.
  + Introduce clear battery stickers on new electric vehicles giving customers real life range times.
  + Standardised battery health tests so customers can buy second hand electric vehicles with confidence.
  + Quality standards on data on charging apps to bring all the information needed together in one place.
  + Push government to work with European partners secure a delay on the Rules of Origin requirements.
  + Secure critical mineral partnerships with ally countries.
  + Tackle uncompetitive energy prices through our mission to make the UK a clean energy superpower delivering a cheaper, zero-carbon electricity system by 2030.
* Negotiate a Sanitary-Phytosanitary agreement with the EU, to ease the flow of trade from Britain to the EU’s Single Market

Most relevant to Trading Standards:

With developments in automotive manufacturing, Trading Standards would be key to ensuring product safety, particularly concerning batteries.

**Energy and net zero**

* Establish GB Energy, a state-owned energy firm to:
  + invest in offshore wind like other state-owned energy companies do in the UK.
  + invest £1 billion a year in developing local renewable power.
* Use GB Energy to bring the Transmission Operators (TOs) together in a consortium to standardise parts and procure the grid supply chain the country needs together in a super-tender.
* Having stabilised the supply chain, work with manufacturers to expand their capacity in Britain to help make sure that those orders are delivered using new, British factories where possible.
* Open up new grid construction to competitive tendering, with GB Energy looking to bid into that competition to build or co-build that new grid where necessary.
* Ensure that the UK has the critical grid supply chain needed for Labour's plans for clean power by 2030 and beyond.
* Plan to cut bills by £93 billion by 2030, lowering the price through bulk purchasing and standardisation, and creating significant export opportunities for Britain.
* Double onshore wind, treble solar and quadruple offshore wind.
* Create a warm homes plan with the aim of insulating 19 million homes.
* Establish a National Wealth Fund to invest, alongside the private sector, in UK ports, hydrogen and steel industry.
* Create the British Jobs Bonus, where £2.5 billion of public money will be used to direct private investment in areas essential to a clean energy future and ensure a just and worker led transition from fossil fuels.
* Legislate for an Energy Independence Act for Britain to reduce energy dependence on potentially hostile states.

Most relevant to Trading Standards:

In the context of net zero initiatives, Trading Standards will play a central role in safeguarding consumer safety during the transition, particularly with new products being regulated. CTSI will be approaching politicians to ensure Trading Standards role is not forgotten in any net zero work.

**Environment, food and rural affairs**

* Make a veterinary agreement with the EU.
* Force water companies to monitor every single water outlet.
* Expand the regulatory powers of Ofwat so that water bosses who fail to meet high environmental standards on sewage pollution will be met with significant sanctions to ensure they cannot profit from breaking the law.
* Ensure that water bosses will face personal criminal liability for extreme and persistent lawbreaking.
* Bring in severe and instant fines for illegal sewage dumps, using the money to pay for an enforcement regime.

**Housing and planning**

* First dibs for first time buyers with a government-backed mortgage guarantee scheme.
* Upskill local authorities on Section 106 negotiations through an expert Take Back Control Unit.
* Increase flexibility in the Affordable Homes Programme so Homes England can support build out of ‘stalled' sites with planning permission with more social and affordable housing, and reforms to the Section 106 agreements.
* Devolution package for Mayors and stronger powers over planning.
* Increasing planning capacity by ensuring every local authority has at least one full time, experienced planning officer, funded by increasing stamp duty on overseas buyers.
* Increase transparency, monitoring and enforcement of requirements to maintain up to date local plans with fixed timelines for renewing local plan.