



OPINIUM-OBSERVER POLLING SERIES

2026 party conference season:

THE TRADITIONAL PARTY LEADERS FIGHT BACK

07

Op
Opinium

Insights
with impact

OCTOBER 2026

At a glance



01

LABOUR AND THE
TORIES GAIN GROUND

Both parties record polling gains and positive post-conference verdicts, while Reform receives the most negative rating.



02

LESS ATTENTION, BUT
POSITIVE REVIEWS

Conference visibility falls from 2025, although key leaders' speeches tested receive positive net ratings.



03

LEADER STRENGTHS,
PARTY WEAKNESSES

Burnham leads on likeability and competence, Badenoch on leadership.

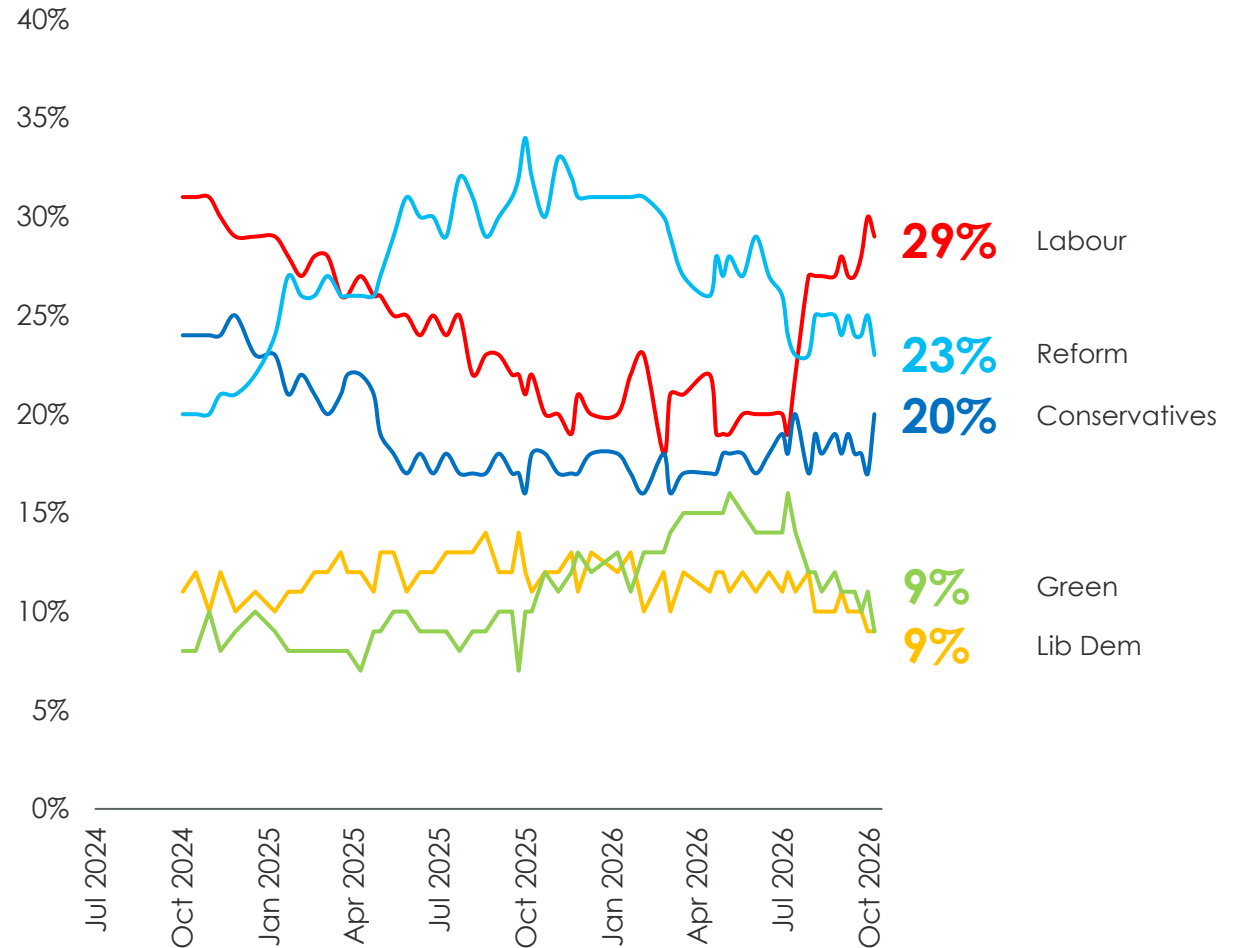
Labour and the Conservatives gain ground over conference season

Labour rose two points after its conference to reach 30%, before easing slightly to 29% in our latest poll. It now leads Reform by six points, the widest gap since December 2024.

The Conservatives also finished the period stronger, rising from 17% to 20% after their conference.

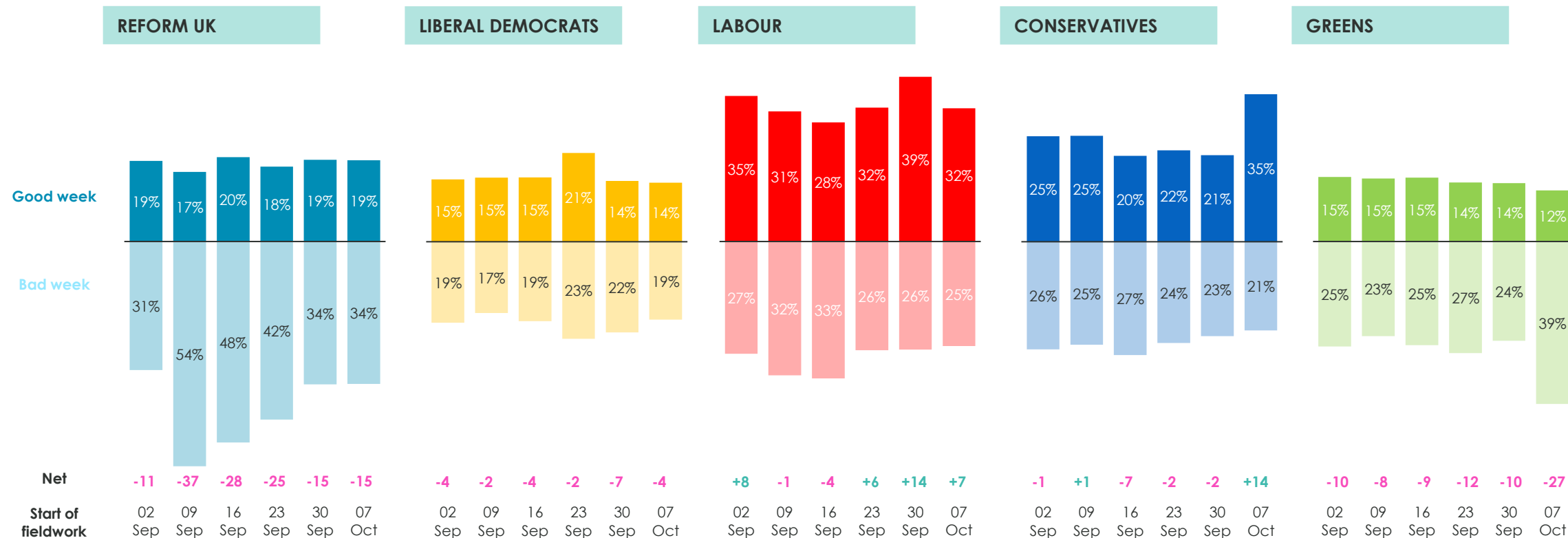
With Reform on 23%, its lead over the Conservatives has narrowed to three points, matching its smallest since January 2025.

HEADLINE VOTING INTENTION



Labour and the Conservatives finish strongly; Reform's conference week draws the most negative verdict

Labour and the Conservatives each recorded a net “good week” score of +14 immediately after their conferences. Labour’s net ratings were also positive across the final three weeks. Reform received conference season’s most negative verdict, scoring –37 after its conference before recovering to a still-negative –15. The Greens also finished poorly, with a post-conference score of –27.



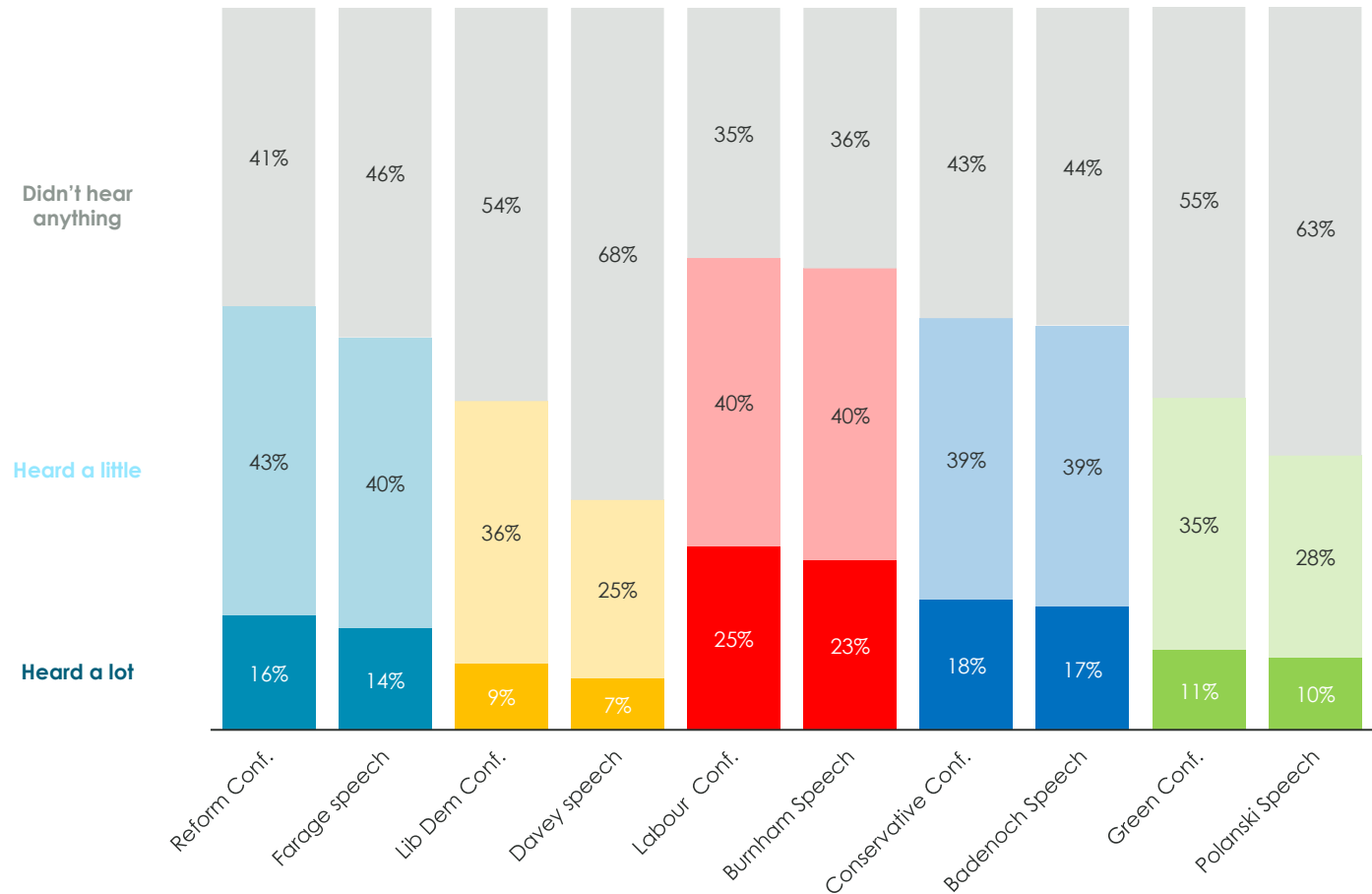
In general, do you think each of these parties have had a good or bad week?
Base: 2,050 UK adults. Latest fieldwork: 7th-9th October 2026
Don't know responses not shown. Parties shown roughly in conference order. Net scores subject to rounding.

HOW MUCH HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT...

Labour's conference attracts the most attention, but visibility is no guarantee of success

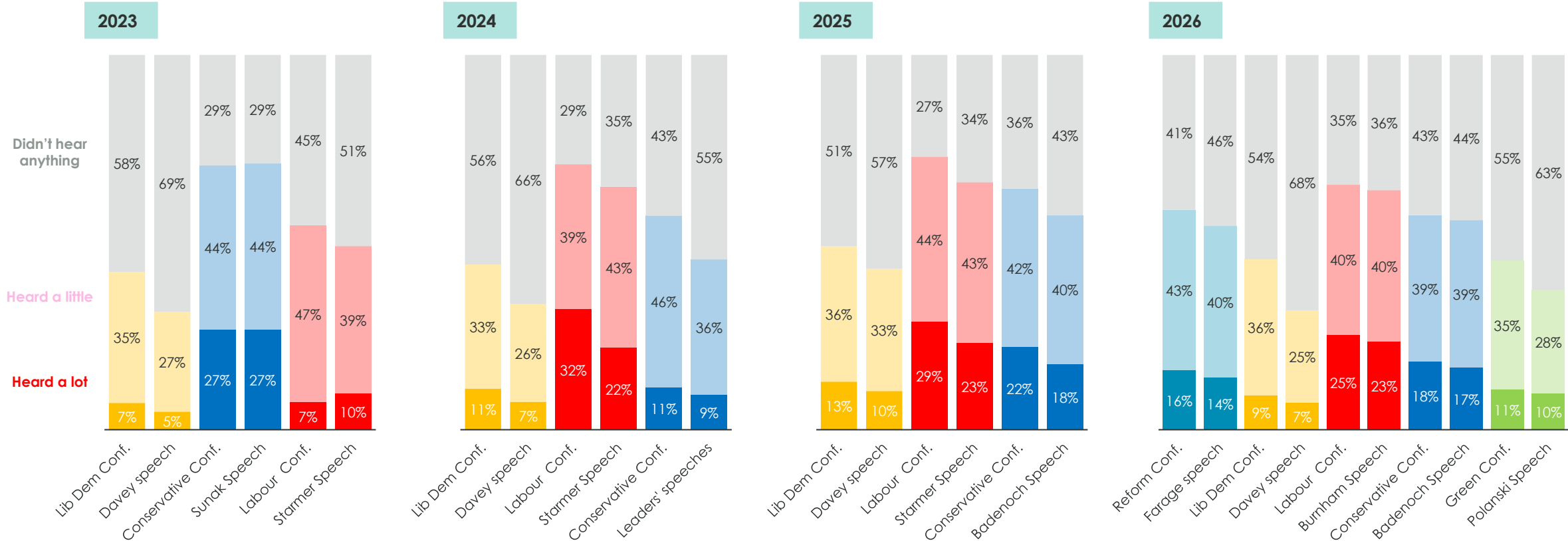
Labour's conference drew the most attention: 25% heard a lot, followed by the Conservatives (18%) and Reform (16%). The Greens (11%) and Lib Dems (9%) trailed.

Despite similar visibility, Reform's conference week received a much worse verdict than the Conservatives', showing attention did not guarantee a positive impression.



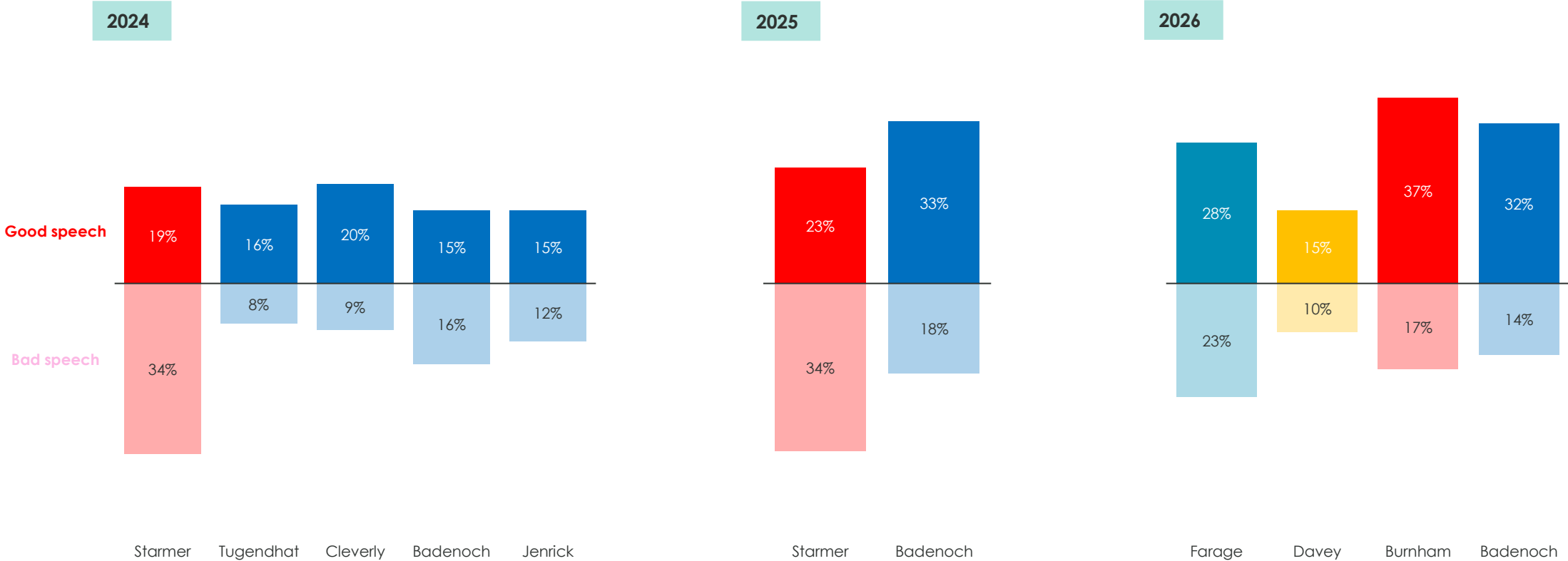
The main parties' conferences attracted less attention than in 2025

The proportion hearing a lot about each conference fell four points from 2025: Labour to 25%, the Conservatives to 18% and the Liberal Democrats to 9%. Labour's conference also attracted less attention than 2024, while the Conservatives exceeded 2024 but fell short of 2025.



A strong year for the main party leaders' conference speeches

Burnham's speech scored +20, reversing Starmer's negative verdicts in 2024 (-15) and 2025 (-11). Badenoch improved from +15 to +18. All four speeches tested received positive net ratings, though Farage's speech divided opinion more and Davey's attracted less attention.



Labour and the Conservatives finish conference season with the most attention and positive reviews

	LABOUR	REFORM	CONSERVATIVES	LIB DEMS	GREENS
Latest voting intention	29%	23%	20%	9%	9%
Net “good week” after conference	+14	-37	+14	-2	-27
Heard a lot about conference	25%	16%	18%	9%	11%
Leader’s speech: net good	+20 Burnham	+5 Farage	+18 Badenoch	+5 Davey	Not tested
Overall takeaway	A polling bounce and the most consistently positive weeks over conference season.	Attention came with the worst conference week verdict of any party.	A strong closing week and a polling bounce.	Little cut-through and little change in public perceptions.	Low visibility and a public verdict that remained negative after their conference.

Burnham's strengths centre on likeability and competence, while Badenoch's relies on decisiveness and leadership

Burnham scores positively on likeability and competence, but less well on sharing voters' views. Badenoch's strengths are decisiveness, strong leadership and being principled; her weaknesses concern connection with the public.

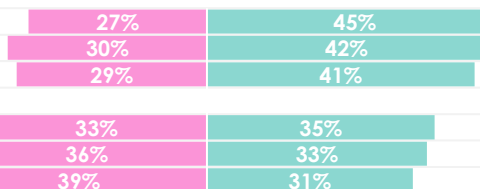
Farage and Polanski score negatively across all the attributes tested, with trust a particular weakness for Farage.

To what extent do you agree or disagree that [leader]...
Base: 2,000 GB adults. Fieldwork dates: Burnham (30 Sep – 2 Oct), Badenoch (7 – 9 Oct), Davey (16 – 18 Sep), Farage (2 – 4 Sep), Polanski (30 Sep – 2 Oct).
Nets subject to rounding.

ANDY BURNHAM

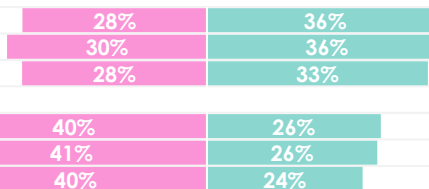
Likeable	+18
Nation's best interests at heart	+12
Competent	+12
Trusted to take big decisions	+1
Represents what most think	-3
Similar views to my own	-8

Disagree Agree



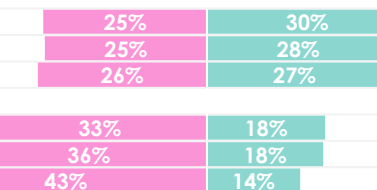
KEMI BADENOCH

Decisive	+8
Strong leader	+6
Sticks to her principles	+5
Similar views to my own	-14
In touch with ordinary people	-15
Represents what most think	-16



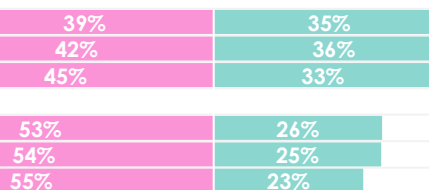
ED DAVEY

Likeable	+6
Nation's best interests at heart	+3
Competent	+1
Represents what most think	-15
Similar views to my own	-18
PM in waiting	-29



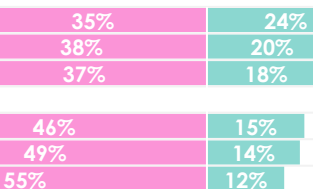
NIGEL FARAGE

Decisive	-4
Sticks to his principles	-5
Strong leader	-12
Trusted to take big decisions	-27
PM in waiting	-29
Trustworthy	-33



ZACK POLANSKI

Sticks to his principles	-11
Brave	-18
Decisive	-19
Stand up for Britain abroad	-32
Represents what most think	-35
PM in waiting	-43



Conservatives have a slightly clearer identity, but both traditional main parties struggle to connect with voters

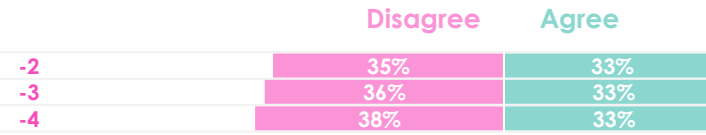
The Conservatives score better than Labour on knowing what they stand for (+4 vs -3), but Labour fares slightly better on their shared weakness on representing what most people think (-15 vs -20).

Neither party has a convincing strength in connecting with the public.

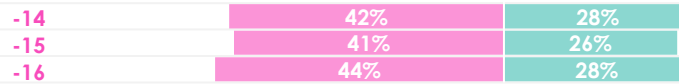
To what extent do you agree or disagree that [party]...
Base: 2,000 GB adults. Fieldwork dates: Labour (30 Sep – 2 Oct), Conservative (7 – 9 Oct), Lib Dem (16 – 18 Sep), Reform (2 – 4 Sep), Green (30 Sep – 2 Oct).
Nets subject to rounding.

LABOUR

Tolerant
Knows what it stands for
Nation's best interests at heart

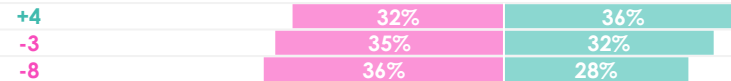


Trusted to take big decisions
Represents what most think
Similar views to my own

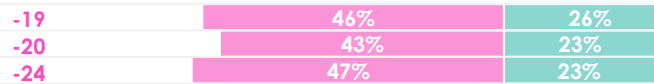


CONSERVATIVES

Knows what it stands for
Clear sense of purpose
United

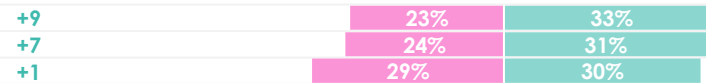


Similar views to my own
Represents what people think
In touch with ordinary people

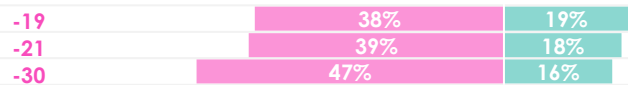


LIB DEM

Tolerant
United
Knows what it stands for

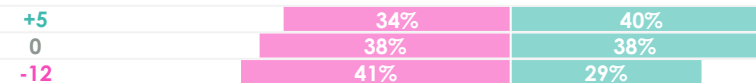


Trusted to take big decisions
Represents what most think
Ready for government

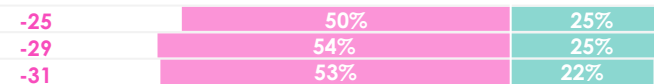


REFORM UK

Knows what it stands for
Clear sense of purpose
United

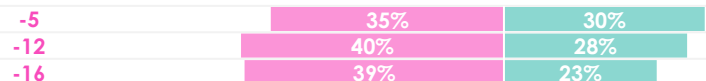


Trusted to take big decisions
Ready for government
Tolerant

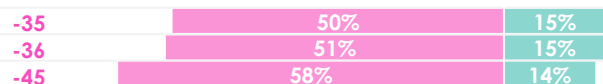


GREENS

Knows what it stands for
Clear sense of purpose
United



Trusted to take big decisions
Represents what most think
Ready for government



Where next with Opinium?

Test reactions to key policies and announcements

Use our political omnibus or bespoke polling to assess public support, test messages and provide timely evidence for policy and media engagement.

Understand the audiences that matter to you

Explore what drives opinion through focus groups, voter segmentation and research with specialist or often overlooked audiences.

Take your evidence into constituencies

Use MRP modelling and research with local communities to understand geographic differences and strengthen conversations with MPs and local stakeholders.

Build an evidence base people return to

Develop a tracker, index or flagship research programme that informs your strategy and builds your authority on key policy areas over time.

Turn findings into engagement

Bring your evidence to life through reports, briefings, interactive maps and expert presentations for policymakers, media and stakeholders.

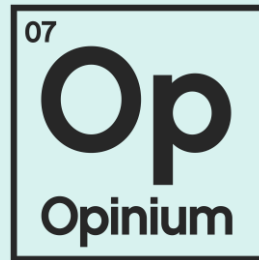
Talk to our Political and Social team about your next research question.

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Opinium at the 2026 party conferences



THANK **YOU!**



Insights with impact

POLITICAL & SOCIAL TEAM
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