

Resolve on Party Conference Season

2025

REPORT

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Understanding key insights on community safety and ASB from the party conference season

“This is a moment not just to celebrate progress, but to reflect on the evolving landscape of anti-social behaviour”

– Rebecca Bryant, CEO of Resolve

October 2025



Figure 1: Five Party Conferences, Five Leaders

Foreword

Every autumn, UK political parties hold annual conferences, aimed at rallying support. The party conference season has been in full swing. All major political parties have pulled out all the stops in order to outline their policy positions, satisfy their membership, and grab attention in the headlines. An opportunity to promote policies and set the agenda for both the party loyalists and the public. Of course, for the party in power, it is a different arena. Most of the focus is on the ruling party, and the strategy is noticeably different. Ministers tend to make announcements and hints on government policy, using the platform of the conference to gain attention to their particular policy area.

This conference season exists in a tenuous political time. Labour seeks to solidify their positions, counter the rise of Reform, and promote a national identity based on 'patriotic renewal', delivering on the plan for change. For the opposition, it marks an opportunity to counter Labour on both the left and the right, and to scrutinise some of Labour's headline policy provisions. For Reform, it has been an opportunity to show it is not a party of protest and opposition, but a genuine vehicle for power. For the Greens, it will be about countering Labour on its left, and for providing bold politics that inspire grass-roots politics. For the Conservatives, it will be a matter of preservation, solidifying the party's identity in a political moment where it has struggled to find its footing.

Indeed, for community safety it represents a significant step forward, we are at the precipice of some major policy developments, those of which have not been seen since New Labour's mandate of 'social exclusion' and the coalition government's Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. With the advent of the Crime and Policing Bill, Renters' Rights Bill, Victims' and Courts Bill and now, the Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, we have some major changes coming for the sector, and more importantly, our membership body. For our membership, we will use the following report to identify for you the key lessons we can take away from this party conference season, including any commitments, or new policy announcements.

Rebecca Bryant, CEO of Resolve, notes, "As Resolve marks 30 years of championing community safety, this is a moment not just to celebrate progress, but to reflect on the evolving landscape of anti-social behaviour. Staying attuned to the political temperature is essential as it's how we ensure our members remain informed, responsive and ready to influence the policies shaping our sector."

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Key Findings

- Labour has doubled down on its mission to tackle anti-social behaviour, with a renewed focus on community safety and a 'back to basics' approach to policing.
- The Conservatives have sought to position themselves as the party of law and order, with a focus on tougher sentencing and a review of the Human Rights Act.
- The Liberal Democrats have emphasised the importance of prevention and early intervention, with a focus on youth services and community cohesion.
- Reform UK have positioned themselves as the party of common sense, with a focus on zero-tolerance policing and a review of the ASB legislation.



Labour Party Conference

A comprehensive commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour through a 'back to basics' approach to neighbourhood policing and strengthened community safety partnerships.

Introduction

The Labour Party used its conference to reinforce the government's mission-led approach to crime and community safety. With a focus on delivering the manifesto commitments around anti-social behaviour, several key ministers outlined detailed plans for implementation.

Community Safety Implications

There was a repeated commitment to their policy developments, with particularly driving forward their 'mission-led' vision of government. There was a commitment to multi-agency working, neighbourhood policing, and a safer streets initiative.

Key Policy Announcements

- £50 million additional funding for hotspot policing initiatives
- 13,000 additional neighbourhood police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).
- A zero-tolerance stance on persistent anti-social behaviour.
- 'Winter of Action'
- Commitment to partnership working between agencies.

Looking Forward

The position of Labour is unenviable, with a country that so often feels at breaking point. The conference was therefore, an opportunity to highlight their particular vision for Britain, and how their policy drives that forward. It is likely the policy commitments we have already seen will continue to be pushed, particularly as they look to capitalise on their sizeable parliamentary majority from the last general election.

Mission-Led Government?

Home Secretary, Shahana Mahmood

Home Secretary Shahana Mahmood delivered her first major speech of the conference, outlining the government's approach to crime, antisocial behaviour (ASB), and community safety. The announcements represent an affirmation of various policy problems including those included in the Crime and Policies Bill and various initiatives. This includes measures towards visible enforcement, legislative reform, and community-led policing, with significant implications for local authorities, housing practices, and frontline services. The Home Secretary, previously Justice Secretary, has a fraught tenure with various difficulties impacting her premiership. In her keynote speech, Mahmood described the difficulties faced by the community. She stated, "In some areas, we are making real progress. The levels of violent crime in this country are a fraction of what they once were. But I know it does not feel like things are getting better in many communities across our country. Where crimes like shoplifting and anti social behaviour, which tear at the fabric of a local community, seem to be committed without consequence."

Focus on Neighbourhood Crime

The government is placing ASB and shoplifting at the heart of its crime strategy, recognising their disproportionate impact on local communities. These officers, often dismissed as "low-level," are now being treated as serious threats to community cohesion. This is welcome, as we are aware that ASB is never 'low level' and often culminates into corrective elements of the community.

- 3,000 new neighbourhood police officers are to be deployed by 2026.
- A new "Winter of Action" will target ASB and retail crime in partnership with local businesses, building on the recent "Summer of Action" which saw enforcement in 600 locations.
- The approach includes visible patrols, undercover operations, fines, and arrests, aiming to restore public confidence and reduce fear of crimes.



Figure 2: The new Home Secretary gives her first conference speech

Community Policing and Local Accountability

Mahmood reinforced Labour's Community Policing Guarantee, which centres on rebuilding public confidence through visible, accountable neighbourhood policing. Policing should focus on issues such as knife crime and violence against women and girls, Shabana Mahmood said. The new home secretary told the Labour conference that levels of violent crime are "a fraction what they once were", but recognised that "it doesn't feel like things are getting better", with offending such as shoplifting and anti-social behaviour. "It is right we focus on neighbourhood policing, with 3,000 more neighbourhood officers by 2026," she added.

Key commitments reinforced include:

- 13,000 additional neighbourhood police officers and Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to be recruited, reversing years of declining officer numbers
- Named officers assigned to every community to strengthen local accountability and continuity
- Guaranteed patrols in town centres and high streets to improve visibility and reassure residents
- A zero-tolerance stance on persistent antisocial behaviour, including street drinking, public drug use, and harassment

These measures are designed to restore a sense of security in public spaces and rebuild trust between communities and police forces. "You may not always like what I do... but I will fight for a vision of this country that is distinctly our own." — Shabana Mahmood, Home Secretary

Retail Crime and Protection for Shopworkers

Drawing on her family's experience running a corner shop in Birmingham, Mahmood outlined specific measures to combat retail crime and protect those working in the sector:

- Creation of a specific offence for assaulting retail workers, with tougher sentencing to reflect the seriousness of these attacks.
- Reversal of the £200 shoplifting threshold introduced by the previous government, which critics argued effectively decriminalised low-level theft
- Enhanced police powers to recover stolen goods, including the ability to enter premises without a warrant where GPS tracking evidence is available.

These measures form part of a wider "Winter of Action" on retail crime and antisocial behaviour, which will see intensified enforcement activity and partnership working with retailers

Policy Implications

Practitioners should anticipate greater reporting demands and oversight of partnership performance, alongside enhanced collaboration expectations between police and local authorities. These announcements signal a shift from broad strategy statements toward practical implementation. The emphasis on measurable delivery outcomes reflects a stronger central focus on accountability and enforcement consistency across local areas.



Conservative Party Conference

A focus on law and order with commitments to tougher sentencing, increased police powers, and a review of human rights legislation.

Introduction

The Conservative Party conference focused heavily on positioning the party as the natural party of law and order. With critiques of the government's approach as insufficiently robust, they outlined their alternative vision for community safety and criminal justice. 9

Community safety Implications

Even if the Conservatives do not become an electoral force by 2029, all policy commitments announced will contribute to the national conversation.

Key Policy Announcements

- Commitment to recruit 10,000 additional police officers
- Review of the Human Rights Act regarding its impact on policing
- Stronger sentencing for repeat offenders
- New powers for police to disperse groups causing ASB
- Increased use of electronic tagging for prolific offenders
- Stop and search commitment

Looking Forward

The conservatives have stood at important junctures in community safety history. Indeed, it was the Conservative government that was in power during the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Policing Act 2014. Since the general election they have wavered in support and look to position themselves firmly in opposition. This opposition, largely, looks to be a firmer approach to community safety; focusing on the initial eradication, rather than a long-term look at behaviour and cause.



Chris Philps, Shadow Home Secretary

Knife crime remained on top of the policy agenda for the Conservatives. Policy solutions remained similar to Labour, with a promise for bolstered police officers, and a tougher approach on street crime. Law and order was a key policy position for the Conservatives this conference, Philp set out plans to hire 10,000 extra police officers at a cost of £800m a year, which he said would be funded by some of the savings which was proposed by Shadow Chancellor, Sir Mel Stride in his conference speech. These savings would ultimately come from savings driven from cuts to welfare, the civil service, and foreign aid. Furthering this tough on crime approach, Chris Philps bolstered his approach to use certain measures that have proven controversial in the past. This includes policing stop and search if he becomes home secretary.

Further, he noted that "it's insane 'that the smell of cannabis alone, or somebody wearing a menacing mask alone, does not generally allow, legally, a stop and search". He reiterates that initial suspicion indicator should be enough, "Now in my view, a single suspicion indicator should be enough". Seeking to position themselves firmly on the tougher end of Labour's approach to community safety, "Lives will be save and knives will be taken off our streets. We have the courage to do that, Labour does not." This follows a previous history of a back and forth with stop and search, in 2014, then Home Secretary Theresa May had tightened the rules on stop and search, this was after an inquiry found 27% of police searches may have been illegal. This policy, however, was reversed in 2019 by her successor Sajid Javid, who made it easier to making it easier for officers to search people without reasonable suspicion in places where serious violence may occur.

Crack Down on Crime

Stop and search was one element of this 'crack down on crime' commitment, other elements include a commitment to hire 10,000 more police officers, reinforce a major police presence and live facial recognition in 2000 violent crime hotspots including scrapping non-crime hate incidents. This reinforces a commitment to be tough on crime, much like Labour are committing too, but positioning themselves firmly on the law and order side of this approach.

Abolishing the Sentencing Council

One of the more provocative headline policy announcements, the Conservatives have proposed abolishing the sentencing council. Before the conference, Robert Jenrick noted that the 'Sentencing Council is not fit for purpose'. Instead of the Sentencing Council, the Conservatives state that they will instead, hand sentencing responsibility to the lord chancellor. This comes after the Sentencing Council has been in the spotlight for a review of cases after taking into account race, sex and religion.



Green Party Conference

New kids on the block; the greens look to challenge Labour on their left, and promoting policies that seek to drive them into the national agenda. While not explicitly community safety focused, they had a significant focus on positive integration, national renewal and social inequality.

Introduction

The Green Party conference highlighted innovative approaches to government and policy focusing on migrant issues, the economy and workers rights. While not explicitly focused on Community Safety, the Green Party illustrated that for a more cohesive nation, wealth and therefore services, should be better distributed across society. Therefore, there are significant developments proposed, particularly for housing.

Community Safety Developments

While the Greens did not explicitly outline a community safety agenda, they positioned themselves as a true, unabashed left-wing op-

position to this government, they will likely focus on policies that ensure community cohesion and respect, while also undertaking significant housing reforms. It is likely they would boost social housing significantly, and implement rent controls..

Key Policy Announcements

- Introduction of rent controls.
- Ban on Buy to Let mortgages
- Councils given first refusal on property sales (particularly for properties failing insulation standards or vacant for over six months)
- Double taxation on empty properties
- Scrapping Right to Buy
- State-owned building company for council house construction

Looking Forward

The Greens have been an established force in British politics for decades, however it is only until now that they posed any sort of challenge to a current government. Focusing on economic justice, social inequality and the environment, they will likely carry a much bigger voice coming into the 2029 election.



Liberal Democrats Party Conference

Positioning themselves as the party of reserved reform, the Liberal Democrats has an emphasis on prevention, early intervention, and restorative approaches with increased funding for youth services and mental health support.

Introduction

The Liberal Democrats conference highlighted a different approach to community safety, focusing on the root causes of anti-social behaviour rather than purely enforcement-based solutions. The party emphasised evidence-based interventions and community-led solutions.

Community Safety Implications

The liberal democrats are not normally considered the party of law and order, and this rings true for their party conference. Their conference was largely shaped by discussion on how to raise that party's national profile, and how it can leverage its large parliamentary profile of 72 MPs to influence debate and policy. The issues in accessing justice was one component driven through at the conference,

with Liberal Democrat Shadow attorney general, Ben Maguire MP, speaking about how access to justice should be seen on the same level as other public services, including health-care. This included conversations around legal aid and the backlogs in the courts.

Key Policy Announcements

- £500 million fund for youth services nationwide
- Mental health support teams in every community
- Restorative justice programmes for low-level ASB
- Community-led safety initiatives with devolved funding
- Increased support for victims of ASB through third sector partnerships

Looking Forward

The Liberal Democrats will hope that their strategy can be repeated again, particularly as the next local elections are taking place in May 2026. With Labour's huge majority, it will be difficult for the party to drive real change, however recent developments, included reasoned proposed amendments to bills such as the Crime and Policing Bill, show a commitment to further their policy positions.



Reform Party Conference

Law and order, criminal justice and immigration are the three pillars behind the Reform policy agenda. This was still the case at their conference, which signalled a zero-tolerance, 'common-sense' approach to community safety, with a commitment to tougher sentencing and the expansion of stop-and-search powers.

Introduction

Reform UK used their conference to position itself as the party of common sense on crime and community safety. With strong critiques of existing approaches, they proposed significant changes to the legislative framework and operational practices.

Community Safety Implications

Announcing themselves as the new opposition to Labour, Reform focused on law and order, immigration and criminal justice reform. Reform expanded on the Conservatives policy commitments, going even further. Nigel Farage discussed fast-track justice for foreign offenders, expanding stop and search powers and proposing rapid construction of 'Nightin-

gale' prisons to address system failings in the criminal justice system. If Reform evolve into a real institutional policy force, we will likely see preventative community safety measures blocked, and stricter enforcement measures proposed in parliamentary bills.

Looking Forward

While the future is never certain, Reform is currently a favourite for an explosive and triumphant 2029 general election result. Currently a political force mostly in local government, once at the national level they will have more of a platform to forward their policy platform and prevent others. With a large parliamentary majority, we can expect a position to harder sentences for offenders, aversion to positive requirements, stop-and search expansion and an expansion in the prison capacity.

Key Policy Announcements

- Zero-tolerance policing model for ASB
- Simplified ASB legislation reducing bureaucracy
- Increased use of immediate sanctions and penalties
- Community trigger for immediate police response
- Reform of police accountability structures

Conclusion

The party conference season has revealed distinct approaches to community safety and anti-social behaviour across the political spectrum. While Labour has a keen focus on practical implementation and partnership working, the Conservatives emphasise traditional law and order approaches. The Liberal Democrats and Greens offer more preventive, community-based solutions, while Reform UK advocates for simplified, zero-tolerance measures.

It is clear the government wishes to commit to their mission-led focus, holding steadfast on various commitments, and attempting to conjure a nationalism of 'patriotic renewal', attempting to foster an image of

As these policy directions develop, community safety practitioners will need to navigate the changing landscape while maintaining focus on effective, evidence-based approaches that serve local communities.

There are key policy developments incoming for the sector, this includes the renters' rights bill, crime and policing bill and the victims and courts bill, to name but a few. The general election may seem far away, but 2029 will come quicker for us than we may initially think, and this party conference season may signal to use where ASB policy is destined to go.

We are working closely with government, and our membership, to influence a number of bills before parliament, this includes:

- Crime and Policing Bill will begin its second reading in the Lords on 16 October
- Victims and Courts Bill with a report stage that is yet to be announced
- Mental Health Bill will begin its report stage in the Commons on 14 October
- Renters' Rights Bill will begin a consideration of Commons amendments in the Lords on 14 October
- Sentencing Bill will begin its committee stage in the Commons on a date to be confirmed
- Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, which is current at the committee stage
- Bus Services Bill, which is currently in its final stages before Royal Assent.

To help influence our work, please see the contact information on the next page.

Contact Information

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