



Seema Malhotra MP

Working hard for Feltham and Heston

Shadow Business and Consumers Minister



@SeemamalhotraMP

@SeemaMalhotraMP

@SeemaMalhotra1

LABOUR 2021 CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER AND REFLECTIONS

The 2021 Labour Party Conference was our opportunity to set out Labour's vision for the future of the UK. For the first time in two years, it was fantastic to have members, trade union leaders, businesses, and our excellent Feltham and Heston delegates all in one place. It was an honour to be in the conference hall to listen to countless passionate delegates tell their stories and to make the case for a Labour government. I also had the privilege of speaking at over 15 fringe events and our Business Forum, where I discussed a range of topics, including Labour's plan for a green economy, the support business needs, and how we can improve diversity in business.

REFLECTIONS

It was an incredible few days at the 2021 Labour Party Conference and I was very proud to hear Keir Starmer's first Leader's speech in front of thousands of people. Keir passionately and powerfully laid out a different vision for Britain. There was incredible energy over the week and there is no mistaking the sense of clarity and the sense of purpose of what a Labour Government stands for. We want to see a fair society, one with a strong economy, one that is focused on the future and allows for opportunities for all. Labour wants a country where everyone contributes to our national success, and where that contribution is recognised. We want to see a country that is based on the important values of care, dignity, respect and security. It is striking that a Sky poll this week, voters thought that Keir Starmer came across as more competent, in touch and agreeable in his conference speech than Boris Johnson did in his conference speech.

SUNDAY

Labour Friend of Bangladesh & SME4Labour: Britain's Takeaways after COVID, protecting the backbone of the High Street

Takeaways often stayed open during the first lockdown, providing food, drink, and a welcome sense of normality for millions of people. But through recovery, many issues remain. I joined a panel to debate what more can be done, and shared Labour's calls for support directed at the hospitality sector and our high streets, such as providing assistance with mounting rent debt, a review of business rates, and an increase in start-up funding to help the sector boom

Community trade union: Just Transition: A Steelworkers Union Answer to Climate Change

It was great to join speakers and Community union and speak on the day Labour pledged an unprecedented 10-year commitment for the steel industry to go green, investing up to £3 billion, in collaboration with business, over the coming decade. Part of our Green New Deal, it shows our ambition to make the steel industry an industry for future leaving no worker behind.

We must deliver climate justice and economic justice together and protect industries vital to the strength of our economy. I also backed Community's campaign for an end to fire and rehire.



BULO Campaign

I was proud to join and support the Labour Business campaign to have Business Liaison Officers (BuLO) in CLPs across the country, connecting with local community businesses and being a strong voice for local business in our Party. We are one of the first CLPs to have a BuLO. Find out more at <https://labourbusiness.org/bulo/>

MONDAY

Labour Business Forum

Up bright and early on Monday morning, I had the privilege of kicking off Labour's Business Forum 'in conversation' with Mike Cherry from the FSB. We covered a broad range of topics, including discussing the impact of Covid on business, the economic challenges we face, why we need a focus on the growing costs of doing business today, and a proper plan for an equal recovery. I then hosted several round tables, hearing from business leaders about how government and business can work together to tackle the productivity puzzle and how we can create the conditions for start-ups, scale ups and entrepreneurs to thrive.

Social Market Foundation: Better business: How Labour can encourage companies to do more for people and the planet

Sharing a panel with Catherine Howarth, Chief Executive of ShareAction, and Paul Lindley, founder of Ella's Kitchen, my next event focused on how businesses can work more sustainably. It was fantastic speaking alongside Catherine and Paul, two experts focused on responsible business.

We discussed how the economy is intertwined with and influences broader society, how businesses have a crucial role in creating positive change, and how consumers are influencing business behaviour for the better.



MONDAY (2)

Fabians: Business & Sustainability: can UK PLC rise to the challenge?

Green, sustainable, and responsible business was very much the theme of the day. On the same day that our Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced that Labour would commit £28bn into the green transition for each year of this decade, I spoke on this panel about PLCs and sustainability. Business and the green agenda must go hand-in-hand if we're to fix the climate problem. Labour's plans for targeted support to industries like steel, and regional industrial strategies, are key steps to ensuring we achieve climate justice, economic justice, and social justice. It was fantastic to hear so many businesses leaders speak passionately about sustainable business and how it's becoming one of their priorities. It's vital for big businesses and small to start to step up and lead the charge.

New Statesman Event in association with EY: Build Back Greener: How can business and policymakers make the green industrial revolution work best for Britain.

The New Statesman-EY roundtable at which I spoke with Lord Karan Bilimoria, President of the CBI, focused on the role that businesses and policymakers will play in the upcoming green revolution. The core topics that I addressed in my contribution were the challenges and opportunities that were facing UK businesses as they begin their pursuit of net-zero emissions along with the necessity for Government to provide effective support and guidance to help all businesses, particularly SMEs, with this transition. The next 10 years will be critical in meeting our climate goals, but the Government has been slow in providing businesses detailed information on how to begin to reduce their CO2 emissions. It cannot be an issue for businesses to tackle on their own. Labour is committed to leading the charge for a green, fair and sustainable economy.



TUESDAY

Fabians: Bouncing Back: how small business can thrive after the pandemic

During the week that furlough ended, a discussion on how businesses can thrive after the pandemic was timely. Small businesses are vital to our economy, accounting for three fifths of employment in the private sector. They are the backbone of our economy and must be at the heart of our recovery. Talking to small business leaders about what they need to bounce back from the pandemic was welcome and informative. Access to skills, workers and capital, and a government that understands the challenges business is facing, were some of the key concerns. I am continuing conversations with businesses to ensure that Labour gets to the heart of what small businesses need.



British Future: Race equality and business: How to turn aspiration into action?

I was humbled to join this important debate discussing race equality and business. I underlined Labour's commitment to a new Race Equality Act to address the structural inequalities that were laid bare in this country by the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on minority ethnic groups. Businesses need to look at their own inequalities, in their hiring practices, their representation at board level, and their ethnic pay gap.

Labour will continue to ensure that there is an equal and fair recovery from the pandemic by pushing the Government to publish data on the number of jobs created by Kickstart, Restart, and JETs by ethnicity, as well as by sex and disability.



Labour Business: Digital & Financial Inclusion

A theme time and again throughout the pandemic has been the challenge many families and young people have faced with digital connectivity. In an ever-connected world, where it is taken for granted that everyone has access to the internet, the need for equal access to the digital revolution is incredibly important. It is vital that businesses and communities work together towards better digital and financial inclusion. A fair and equal recovery for everyone is only possible if the government supports businesses in taking advantage of the digital opportunities available.

Now that I am back in Parliament, I look forward to making sure that YOUR concerns are heard. We must urgently end fire and rehire practices, campaign against the cut to the £20 Universal Credit uplift and make sure all leaseholders get a fair deal in the building safety bill.

EXHIBITIONS

I spent time visiting the different exhibitions and hearing about the excellent work being done by countless charities and unions. It was great to see some new faces and old friends who are all doing fantastic work up and down the country for our communities when I toured the stalls meeting those charities, businesses, media outlets, trade unions, and affiliated Labour organisations. It was very timely to meet a representative from Cancer Research UK, a charity I regularly support, to discuss what needs to be done for cancer patients all around the country. I also met with WWF to discuss climate change and the environment. The nature and climate crises are two sides of the same coin and both must be tackled now. We must put nature at the heart of our response to climate change. The Labour Conference was a great way to gauge what various organisations within and outside of the Labour movement are doing in their communities and what contribution they can make to our area too. I even got to see an electric postal van! A big thank you to everyone who took the time to meet me and tell me about their work.



FELTHAM AND HESTON DELEGATES

Attending the conference, each delegate had the opportunity to hear the policy direction in important areas such as the environment, health, education and justice. They heard speeches from Keir Starmer MP, Leader of the Labour Party and the shadow cabinet, including Angela Rayner MP, Ed Miliband MP, David Lammy MP, Jonathan Ashworth MP and Kate Green MP and voted in the ballots on the debates. Our Feltham and Heston delegates also attended fringes and training sessions, and sat in sessions with Labour Metro Mayors who gave an insight in how they have made a hugely positive impact in their areas and to show what we can achieve for our communities by winning elections at a local level. There were also local members who also visited the conference and took part in a number of events and visited the different exhibitions. A big thank you to our members including Naeem Ulfat, Uday Nagaraju, Sri Lal Dias, Shakil Malik, Cllr Hina Mir, Cllr Javed Akhonzada, Venugopal Gampa and Sudhakar Goud who joined for parts of the conference. It was also great to meet our Brentford and Isleworth delegates and members.

Riaz Gull from Gull Law Chambers in Hounslow also gave a powerful speech on immigration. Overall, it was a very positive mood and a serious conference with Labour starting to set out its plans for Government. I want to dedicate a massive thank you to all our Feltham and Heston delegates for attending the Labour Conference and for their fantastic contributions.

Cllr Samia Chaudhry
Roseann Connolly
Riaz Gull
James Rose
Amy Croft
MacKenzie Ingram

