

October ThinkTank survey: The party conferences


UK opinion formers believe the Labour Party conference was the most successful of the three main parties, and this is confirmed in Ed Miliband's approval rating bouncing to its highest level ever. Labour MPs are also more positive about their own conference than Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs are about theirs. Meanwhile, the opinion formers' approval of David Cameron decreases.

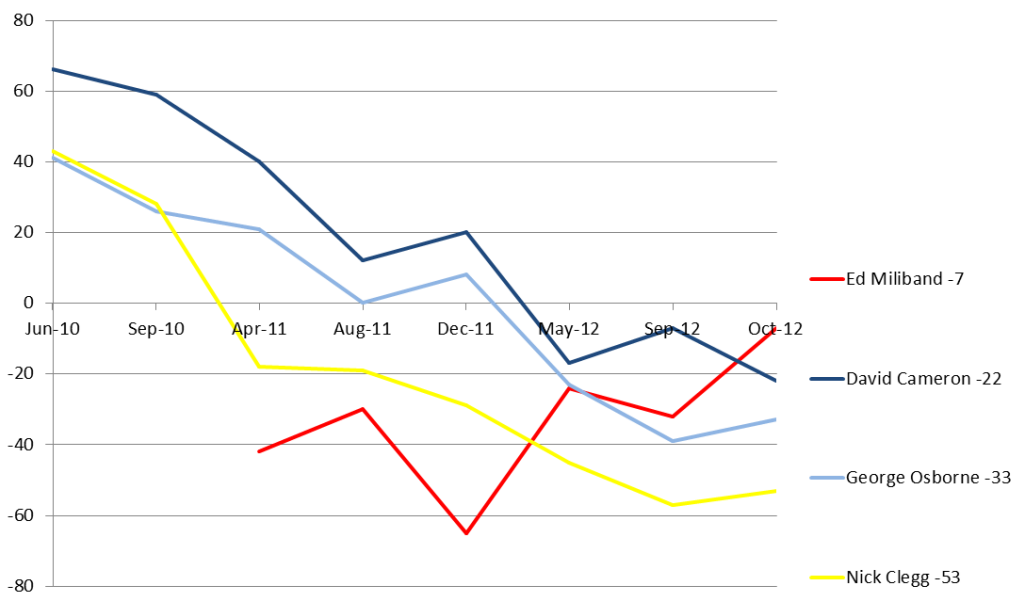
Respondents support introduction of the English Baccalaureat but are against UK military intervention in Syria.

YouGov interviewed 734 members of its ThinkTank of 4000+ influential Britons between 17/10/2012 and 25/10/2012, with panellists amongst others drawn from politics, business, media, academia, NGOs, and the public sector.

In a separate survey, YouGov interviewed 100 Members of Parliament, between 17/10/12 and 02/11/12. The sample was weighted and is representative of the House of Commons.

The Party Conferences

 **How well do you believe each of the following are doing in their current roles? Net score (% positive - % negative)**



Base: Jun-10, 877; Sep-10, 697; Apr-11, 904; Aug-11, 938; Dec 11, 803; May 12, 835; Sep-12 936, Oct 12-734 UK 'influentials'.

YouGov

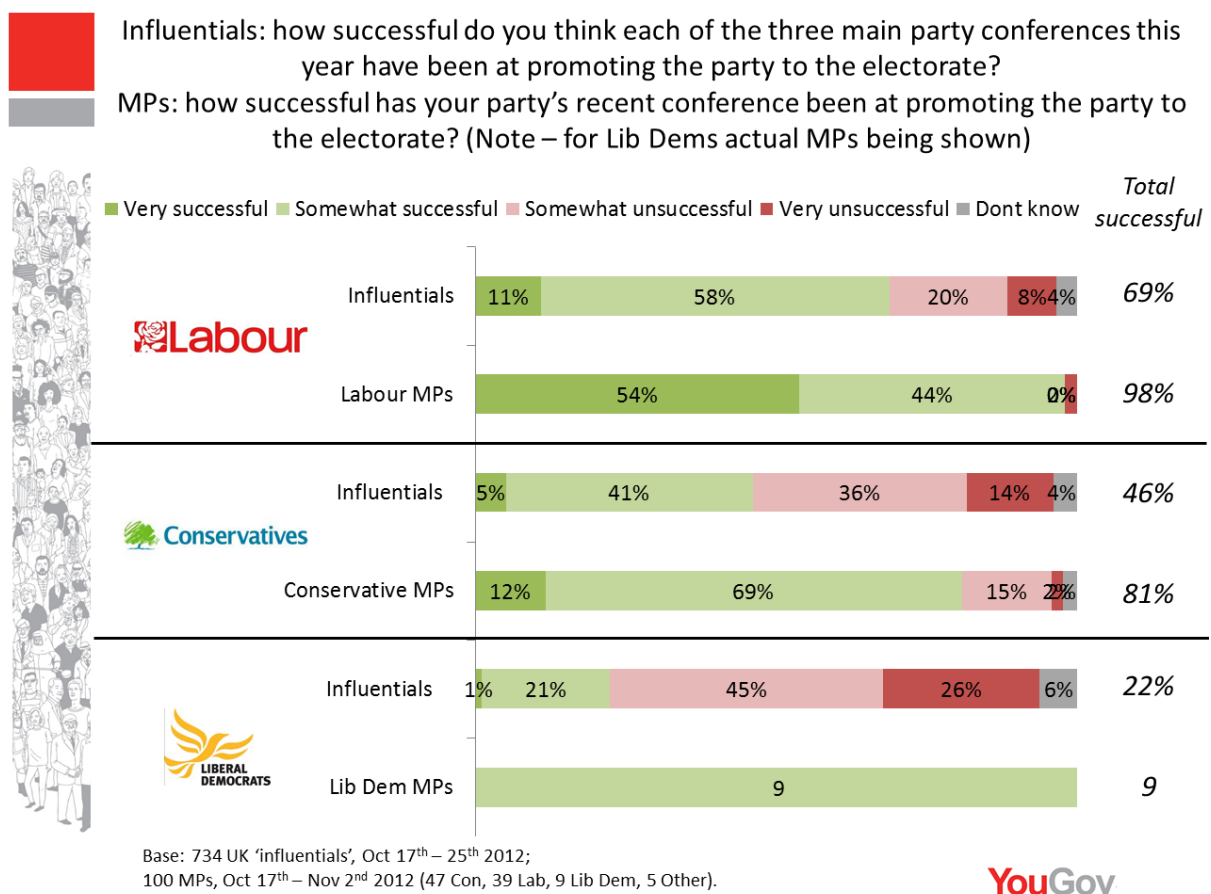
Following the party conference season, respondents rated how well four key political figures are currently doing in their roles. Of these, only David Cameron did not experience a lift in approval ratings since September. His net approval (the percentage of those who think he is doing a good job minus those who think he is doing a poor job) has dropped from -7 in

September to -22 in October, suggesting that Cameron was unsuccessful at making use of the conference platform to improve his standing. Respondents from the public sector are particularly likely to be critical of Cameron’s work, at a net score of -47.

At the same time there has been a small lift for the figure for George Osborne, rising to -33, from -39 in September. Nick Clegg’s score has improved slightly as well but still remains at -53, indicating that the panel continues to be highly critical of his work.

Only Ed Miliband has seen a real boost in his ratings, bouncing up from -32 in September to -7, his highest score yet. Most likely this boost has come off the back of his well-received ‘One Nation’ speech at the Labour conference. Nevertheless the negative score still reflects the fact that more respondents think he is doing a poor job than a good job.

This trend is mirrored when looking at respondents’ evaluation of how successfully the Labour Party conference has been at promoting the party to the electorate. A majority, 69% believe the Labour conference was ‘very’ or ‘somewhat’ successful in this respect. This is a relatively high score compared to the other two main parties’ conferences, which are not judged to have been as successful by the influentials.



Although 46% believe the Conservative party conference was successful in promoting the party to the electorate, 50% disagree. And figures are even worse for the Liberal Democrat conference: less than a quarter believe it was successful, and a vast majority (71%) does not.

In a separate survey, a similar question was asked to MPs about their own party's conferences. Unsurprisingly almost all believed their conferences to have been successful. However, Labour MPs were far more positive about their own conference than their counterparts in the other two parties. Over half of Labour MPs surveyed thought their conference was 'very successful', and all but one of the others thought it 'somewhat successful'.

This contrasts to the Conservative MPs questioned. Only one in ten thought their party conference to have been 'very successful'; two thirds believed it to be only 'somewhat successful'. And one in six even rated their own party conference as having been unsuccessful at promoting the party to the electorate. The Liberal Democrat MPs surveyed unanimously declared their conference to have been 'somewhat successful'.

Policy issues: English Baccalaureat, health reform and Syria

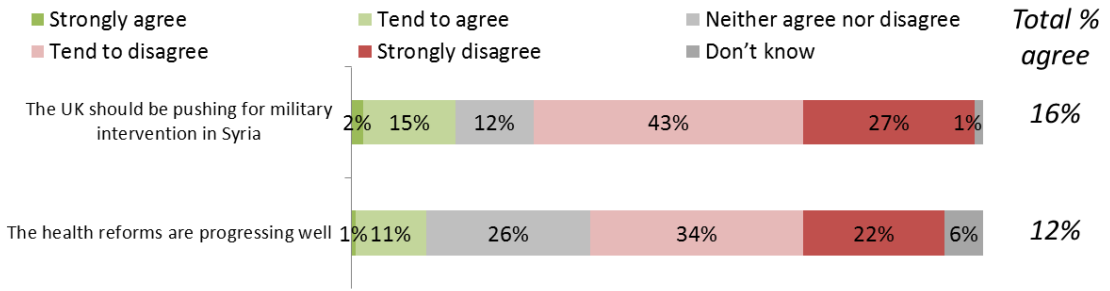
Respondents were also asked about particular policy issues. A majority of respondents (58%) state that they support Michael Gove's plans to replace GCSE's with an English Baccalaureat qualification. However, those working in education are less likely to support this measure (53%), as are those in culture and leisure (50%) and those in the public sector (49%).

Reform to the healthcare system on the other hand is not judged as positively by respondents. Only 12% believe the reforms are progressing well; 56% disagree, rising to 62% for those working in Health. 65% of female respondents are critical about how the health reforms are progressing, compared to 50% of men.

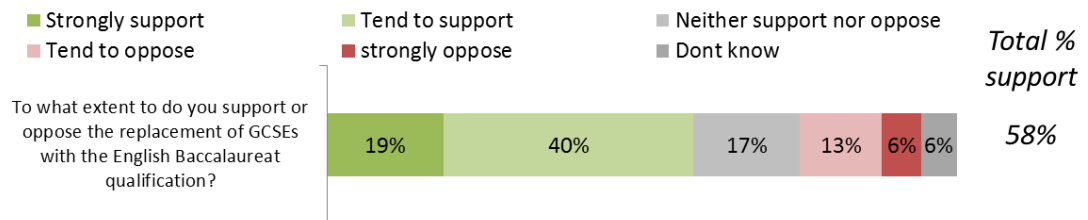
Although the civil war in Syria continues, respondents do not believe the UK should be undertaking a military intervention. 70% are opposed to such an idea, with only 16% in favour.



How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



To what extent do you support or oppose the replacement of GCSEs with the English Baccalaureat qualification?



Base: 735UK 'influentials', Oct 17th – 25th 2012.



[Link to Opinion formers results tables](#)

[Link to MPs results tables](#)