# Kemi Badenoch faces crucial local elections amid predicted Conservative losses



Kemi Badenoch, the Leader of the Opposition and Conservative MP, is currently facing a significant electoral challenge as local elections unfold today, encompassing 1,641 contested seats across 23 authorities in England. Additionally, voters are set to elect four regional mayors and two local mayors, alongside a by-election for the constituency of Runcorn & Helsby following the resignation of former Labour MP Mike Amesbury.

Experts have expressed concerns that Badenoch, 45, may experience substantial losses for her party. Predictions suggest that the Conservatives could lose hundreds of councillors to rivals such as the Reform Party and the Liberal Democrats. Speaking to The Mirror, Professor Sir John Curtice indicated that the Reform Party's appeal might inadvertently aid the Liberal Democrats, particularly in areas like Oxfordshire. He stated, "In taking votes from the Conservatives, Reform could simply help the Liberal Democrats... Despite the party's current unpopularity, even Labour might pick up some Tory seats too, with Nottinghamshire a key target."

Kemi Badenoch, who ascended to her leadership position in November 2024, holds the distinction of being the first black leader of a major UK political party and the fourth woman to lead the Conservative Party. Reflecting on the momentous occasion, she commented, "It will be the first time since the general election, the greatest defeat in all parties' history, that we fight these seats."

Born Olukemi Olufunto Adegoke in Wimbledon, South West London, Badenoch’s early life took her back to Nigeria with her family, where her father, Femi, worked as a GP and her mother, Feyi, was a university academic. At the age of 16, she returned to the UK to stay with a family friend, Dr Abiola Tilley Gyado, to pursue her education. Confronted with challenges, she arrived with just £100, which her father had provided after spending his savings on her plane ticket. Badenoch later recounted this experience in a 2017 interview with the Daily Mail, illustrating the initial struggles she faced upon her return to the UK.

During her time at school, Badenoch claimed she faced discrimination, stating that she was discouraged from applying to study medicine at prestigious universities like Oxford, with careers advisors suggesting nursing instead. She pursued a degree in Computer Systems Engineering at Sussex University and graduated with a Master of Engineering in 2003. Entering the workforce in banking, she became involved in the Conservative Party the same year, citing her disillusionment with the attitudes of left-wing students towards Africa during her university years as a catalyst for her political engagement.

Badenoch’s entry into politics was marked by her candidacy against Labour's Tessa Jowell in the 2010 general election, where she met her husband, Hamish Badenoch, a fellow Conservative activist. The couple married in 2012 and now have three children.

Before her election as MP for Saffron Walden in 2017, Badenoch garnered attention for an incident in which she hacked into the website of Labour MP Harriet Harman about ten years prior. She later described it as a “harmless prank” and apologised for the breach, stating, “It was a summary offence at the time… Now that I'm an MP, it's a lot less amusing.”

Badenoch’s political career has included several prominent roles, such as serving as vice-chair of the Conservative Party and holding positions within government departments including children and families, international trade, and equalities. Under both Prime Ministers Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak, she continued to rise within the party, playing a significant role in triggering the fall of Boris Johnson’s government in 2022.

Most recently, Badenoch has been involved in a series of controversies, including sacking Post Office chairman Henry Staunton during her tenure as cabinet minister. She has engaged in public disputes over trans issues and responded dynamically to critiques from notable figures such as actor David Tennant, to whom she retorted that he was "a rich, lefty, white male celebrity… blinded by ideology."

As the local elections unfold, Kemi Badenoch's leadership is at a pivotal point, with potential ramifications not only for her party but for her political trajectory as well.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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