# Kemi Badenoch opens up on personal loss, social media concerns and Tory leadership challenges



In a recent interview with the Daily Mail, Conservative Leader Kemi Badenoch addressed a variety of personal and political issues, revealing insights into her leadership, family experiences, and policy priorities as she prepares for the upcoming local elections.

Badenoch, 45, who has led the Tory party for five months amid challenging polls, was initially spotlighted after a BBC Breakfast interview in which she declined to watch the Netflix drama Adolescence. The show, which depicts a fatal stabbing involving a schoolboy and addresses themes such as toxic masculinity and online incel culture, prompted interviewers Charlie Stayt and Naga Munchetty to express surprise at her unfamiliarity with it. Badenoch responded firmly, stating, “In the same way I don't need to watch Casualty to know what's going on in the NHS, I don't need to watch a Netflix drama to understand what's going on. It's a fictional series.”

Beyond media and culture, Badenoch shared a deeply personal story regarding the dangers of excessive internet use. She revealed that a cousin in his twenties, living alone in Canada, tragically took his own life in 2022 after descending into philosophical beliefs such as pro-mortalism and anti-natalism, ideologies she had not previously encountered. She described the experience as "heartbreaking" and an influence on her cautious stance toward social media’s addictive qualities. “My views about the dangers of social media are not just about children. I know even as adults we can get dangerously addicted,” she said. This personal loss informs her consideration of policies similar to Australia’s approach, including banning social media usage for under-16s.

Politically, Badenoch’s leadership faces scrutiny. Recent YouGov polling places the Conservatives at 21 per cent, trailing behind Labour at 24 per cent and Nigel Farage’s Reform party at 23 per cent. Rumours of a leadership challenge loom as the May local elections approach, and although Badenoch dismisses collaborations with Reform, she acknowledges the party’s rise. “Yes, I will ‘reform’ the Civil Service – but I'm not worrying about other people at this stage,” she quipped.

On the topic of immigration and integration, Badenoch is pursuing a policy commission to address perceived failures by past governments in assimilating migrants. She highlighted concerns over significant government expenditures on translation services within the NHS and education, advocating encouragement for migrants to learn English. Citing the Southport killer Axel Rudakubana, whose parents were Rwandan asylum seekers, she underscored the importance of embracing British values. “People who come here have to assimilate our values and not try to change them,” she stated. The commission is expected to include a diverse group of experts, with sources suggesting some appointments might surprise Conservative observers.

Badenoch also commented on social and cultural dynamics, expressing criticism of what she perceives as an overextension of ‘anti-racist’ rhetoric. She referenced the Wildlife and Countryside Link’s claim that the British countryside is a “racist and colonial white space” as “unbelievable,” warning such views have sparked backlash and deepened divisions. “Everything is ‘racist’ now. The countryside is racist. All white people are racist,” she remarked, promising that addressing this trend will require “moral courage.”

The interview further explored Badenoch’s personal background. Born Olukemi Olufunto Adegoke in Wimbledon in 1980 to Nigerian parents, she experienced a culturally rich but economically challenging childhood after her family faced hardship following Nigeria’s 1985 military coup. She recounted doing homework by candlelight and fetching water from a borehole, experiences that inform her current political positions. Educated at Sussex University in Computer Engineering, she described both her appreciation for Brighton and her frustration with what she calls the university’s left-wing atmosphere.

On the domestic front, Badenoch spoke of her family life with husband Hamish, whom she met at a Conservative Party event in 2009. He left his role at Deutsche Bank to support her political career and handles the majority of their household duties, including cooking. The couple has three children, aged five, eight, and eleven, whose names she prefers to keep private.

Regarding her public persona, Badenoch acknowledged criticism of her style and performance, saying, “I started with analysis and data and no one knew what I was talking about... I now realise it’s a show, it’s panto.” She admitted to learning how to balance substance with presentation in the political arena.

Looking ahead, Badenoch recognises the challenges facing the Conservative Party, including recovering from a series of leadership changes since 2019. She conveyed a desire to return to “authentic Conservative principles” to stem voter disillusionment and stabilise her leadership. “We are in the last-chance saloon,” she declared.

Despite the difficulties, Badenoch expressed optimism, drawing a parallel to Margaret Thatcher, whom she described as her inspiration. “After six months, people thought Thatcher was doomed to failure,” she noted. “But look what happened next.”

The Daily Mail’s exclusive interview offers an in-depth portrait of a Conservative leader navigating personal tragedy, party politics, and social issues as she prepares for a critical electoral test.

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

## References

* <https://www.tiktok.com/@dailymailuk/video/7483120223302814998> - This TikTok video link supports Kemi Badenoch's stance on political issues, such as achieving net zero by 2050, which reflects her leadership style and priorities.
* <https://www.instagram.com/dailymail/p/DDzBFXMOmk4/kemi-badenoch-met-with-jeremy-clarkson-at-his-oxfordshire-pub-yesterday-as-the-p/> - This Instagram link shows Kemi Badenoch interacting with Jeremy Clarkson, highlighting her engagements with influential figures and political discussions.
* <https://www.tiktok.com/@dailymailuk/video/7447515240029244704> - This TikTok video showcases Kemi Badenoch's personal views on subjects like sandwiches, illustrating her candid and unconventional approach to interviews.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This source provides the original article about Kemi Badenoch's interview, detailing her personal and political insights ahead of the local elections.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news> - BBC News can provide background information on Kemi Badenoch's media appearances, such as the BBC Breakfast interview mentioned in the article.