# Former Conservative MP Aaron Bell Withdraws from General Election Citing Personal Reasons



Former Conservative MP Aaron Bell has announced he will not be standing in the upcoming general election due to "personal and family reasons." Bell, who has represented Newcastle-under-Lyme since December 2019, made this announcement despite participating actively in the campaign trail alongside Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in Stoke earlier this week. Bell's departure contributes to a record high of 79 Conservative MPs stepping down before the election.

In another development, Julian Knight, former Conservative MP for Solihull, has decided to contest the election as an independent candidate. Knight, who was stripped of the party whip in December 2022 following serious sexual assault allegations which he denies, had initially stated he would not seek re-election.

These events unfold as the Conservative Party trails 25 points behind Labour in recent polls. This adds pressure on Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as he navigates challenges within the party amidst the general election campaign.