# Badenoch's populist stamp duty abolition signals Tory turn towards austerity and division



At the 2025 Conservative Party Conference, party leader Kemi Badenoch unveiled a populist policy aimed at abolishing stamp duty on primary residences in England and Northern Ireland, a move ostensibly designed to alleviate the tax burden on homebuyers and stimulate the housing market. This announcement conveniently aligns with her broader agenda of pursuing a rightward shift in policy, influenced by figures like Nigel Farage and Donald Trump, with promises of dismantling environmental commitments and leaving European human rights frameworks—positions that echo the increasing desperation of a party trying to paper over its failures. Badenoch claims that this reform can be achieved without breaking her so-called "golden rule" of fiscal responsibility, pledging that at least half of her £47 billion in proposed spending cuts would go towards reducing the national deficit—though critics doubt the sustainability and fairness of such austerity.

Such rhetoric harks back to the long-standing Conservative bias against progressive taxation, with abolishing stamp duty presented as a “common-sense” measure to benefit wealthier property owners—especially in London and the South East—without regard for how it may widen regional inequalities or price out lower-income families. Think tanks such as the Social Market Foundation have pointed out that this policy essentially rewards the already affluent, while offering little to those struggling with housing affordability. The plan to fund the £9 billion annual cost through sweeping cuts—targeting welfare, foreign aid, and public sector pay—raises serious questions about whether the Tories are genuine about tackling Britain’s social crises or simply pursuing an ideological austerity agenda disguised as economic reform.

Opposition voices are quick to condemn this gambit, with Labour and trade unions dismissing such policies as outdated and out of touch. They argue that the government’s focus remains on austerity, offering nothing meaningful for working-class families or those relying on public services. Instead of addressing the root causes of the housing shortage—such as supply constraints—this proposal merely masks a failure to craft sustainable, equitable reforms. Meanwhile, Badenoch’s broader right-wing agenda, which includes scrapping the Climate Change Act, leaving the European Convention on Human Rights, and curtailing university places, signals a reckless abandonment of long-standing commitments to social progress and international cooperation.

This move towards a more hardline stance, championed by Badenoch and her allies, reflects a broader strategy to evoke a sense of raw economic nationalism—taking cues from Nigel Farage’s populist playbook—while retreating from the party’s traditional commitments to responsible governance. Such policies threaten to alienate moderates and traditional Conservatives alike, risking further division within the party and weakening its credibility. The narrative pushed by Badenoch portrays a government intent on delivering quick fixes rooted in deregulation and austerity, but in reality, these measures threaten to deepen inequality and undermine social cohesion at a time when the country desperately needs a balanced and compassionate approach.

As the Conservative leadership doubles down on these hardline policies, the opposition is seizing the opportunity to highlight the failure of previous austerity-driven governments to deliver for everyday families. While Badenoch’s rhetoric promises a reset towards market-driven reforms and minimal state intervention, the reality remains that Britain’s social fabric is fraying—exacerbated by the very policies she champions. With the specter of a far-right drift looming over governance, and Labour’s attacks on Tory failures mounting, the party’s attempts to rebrand through culture war rhetoric and populist policies appear increasingly disconnected from the pressing needs of the nation. The question remains—can a government chasing populist votes and short-term gains truly lead Britain into a prosperous future, or will its reckless policies leave the country more divided and impoverished?

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/live/2025/oct/08/conservative-tory-conference-kemi-badenoch-labour-keir-starmer-india-uk-politics-live-news-updates?page=with:block-68e6449e8f08759dd527907f> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-opposition-conservative-leader-makes-surprise-pledge-cut-property-tax-2025-10-08/> - At the 2025 Conservative Party conference, UK opposition leader Kemi Badenoch announced a plan to abolish stamp duty on property purchases over £125,000 in England and Northern Ireland. This tax is often criticised for hindering housing transactions and economic mobility. Badenoch also introduced a fiscal 'golden rule' aiming to reduce government borrowing by implementing £47 billion in annual spending cuts, focusing on welfare, foreign aid, and the government workforce. Half of the savings would be used to reduce Britain's national debt, now approaching 100% of GDP, with the remainder supporting tax cuts or public spending. Additionally, she pledged to eliminate net zero environmental targets. These comprehensive proposals aim to revitalise the Conservative Party's image, which has been weakened by post-Brexit turmoil and internal divisions. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-opposition-conservative-leader-makes-surprise-pledge-cut-property-tax-2025-10-08/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.apnews.com/article/c96381f22b6f41e90ef5109d6c28d1b7> - The once-dominant Conservative Party in the UK is facing existential challenges following its historic defeat in the 2024 general election. Now led by Kemi Badenoch, the party is shifting to the right, adopting policies inspired by Donald Trump, such as mass deportations, slashing government budgets, and exiting the European Convention on Human Rights. This move aims to regain support amid competition from both the ruling Labour Party and the surging hard-right Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage. Despite the party’s attempts to modernise and energise its base, public support remains weak, and Badenoch’s leadership is under scrutiny. Critics, including some party members, argue the sharp rightward turn alienates traditional Conservatives and narrows the party’s appeal. Notable figures like Robert Jenrick are gaining prominence, fuelling leadership speculation. Amid this turmoil, many Conservatives look back nostalgically to the era of Margaret Thatcher, hoping a similarly bold leadership style could spark revival. However, internal divisions and declining public faith in the party's competence add to the uncertainty surrounding the Conservatives’ future. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/c96381f22b6f41e90ef5109d6c28d1b7?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.conservatives.com/news/kemi-badenoch-closes-conference> - Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, closed the 2025 Conservative Party Conference with a speech emphasising the importance of a strong economy. She announced that the next Conservative government would abolish stamp duty entirely on primary residences, aiming to make home ownership more accessible. Badenoch highlighted the need for a government that takes less of the public's money and doesn't interfere in their lives, where the state does less but does it better. She also stressed the importance of rewarding effort, supporting enterprise, and ensuring that actions have consequences. The speech concluded with a call for a country where everyone can achieve their dreams, including owning a home, running a business, and raising a family. ([conservatives.com](https://www.conservatives.com/news/kemi-badenoch-closes-conference?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/politics/kemi-badenoch-immigration-tory-conference-speech-b2839686.html> - In her speech at the Conservative Party Conference, Kemi Badenoch announced plans for the UK to leave the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) if she is elected. She argued that treaties like the ECHR, drafted with good intentions, are now being used in ways never intended by their original authors. Badenoch stated that Britain needs deep change and that leaving the ECHR is necessary to prevent the country from being divided. She emphasised the importance of combining secure borders with a shared culture and strong values to bring the country back together. ([the-independent.com](https://www.the-independent.com/news/uk/politics/kemi-badenoch-immigration-tory-conference-speech-b2839686.html?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/badenochs-number-caps-plan-would-cut-100000-university-places> - Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, announced plans to cut the number of UK university places by about 100,000 annually by reintroducing student number controls. She described the current higher education system as a 'rigged system propping up low-quality courses' and pledged to abolish the status quo. Badenoch proposed doubling funding for apprenticeships using public money redirected from what she termed 'debt trap degrees'. This initiative aims to address concerns about the quality and value of higher education and to promote alternative pathways to employment. ([timeshighereducation.com](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/badenochs-number-caps-plan-would-cut-100000-university-places?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/kemi-badenoch-rachel-reeves-stamp-duty-keir-starmer-harry-taylor-b1251872.html> - Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, vowed to abolish stamp duty for home buyers during her keynote speech at the Conservative Party Conference. She stated that the next Conservative government would abolish stamp duty entirely on primary residences, aiming to make it easier for millions to realise the dream of home ownership. Badenoch also addressed other policy areas, including immigration and tax, and thanked party members for their support amid challenging poll ratings. ([standard.co.uk](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/kemi-badenoch-rachel-reeves-stamp-duty-keir-starmer-harry-taylor-b1251872.html?utm_source=openai))