

FROM THE COUNCIL TO THE COMMONS

Chamber^{UK}



SEPTEMBER 2026

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Kemi Badenoch

**"Only One Person Is
Turning Up for Work
Right Now. Me."**

**Healthcare Innovation:
Can Britain Implement
As Well As Invent?**

Parliamentary Pathfinder

NHS Innovation Adoption Awards 2026



with **Dr Penny Dash**,
Chair, NHS England

Join UK Healthcare and Life Sciences Innovation (UKHLSI) in Central London for the inaugural Parliamentary Pathfinder NHS Innovation Adoption Awards 2026 Ceremony and Reception.

The awards celebrate excellence in the adoption of scalable healthcare innovation across the NHS, recognising the people, teams and organisations turning proven ideas into real world impact for patients, staff, and the wider health system.

Organised by UKHLSI, in partnership with Curia's Health, Care and Life Sciences Research Group, and *Chamber UK*, and promoted by the NHS Innovation Service, the evening will bring together NHS leaders, parliamentarians, government decision makers, innovators, and policy stakeholders to recognise outstanding examples of innovation adoption in practice.

The awards will spotlight achievement across patient impact, prevention, and early intervention, workforce and system transformation, digital innovation, collaboration, adoption leadership, and scaling impact. A special Parliamentarian's Choice Award will also recognise an innovation with national significance, policy relevance or public benefit.

Monday, November 16
6 PM - 9 PM

Central London

6:00pm – 6:30pm:
Welcome drinks and networking

6:30pm – 7:45pm:
Awards ceremony

7:45pm – 9:00pm:
Celebration reception



Attendance is by invitation only and registration is required.

For questions about the awards, please contact **Joanne Bekis**, Chief Executive, UK Healthcare and Life Sciences Innovation (UKHLSI): Joanne.Bekis@ukhlsi.co.uk



Miles Bennington
Editor

Congratulations to previous Chamber UK contributor Andy Burnham on becoming Prime Minister since our last edition, and good luck to our current front cover feature on reaching Number 10. At this rate, everyone may get their turn!

On a more serious note, while Westminster moves quickly, the challenges facing the UK march on inexorably, less interested in twists and turns than in steadily undermining our politics. That's why, in this edition, we have focused on healthcare innovation and particularly the implementation of that innovation in our healthcare system. We have included articles from policy maker expert Paulette Hamilton MP, former nurse and current member of the Health and Social Care Committee; business leaders such as Arden Tomison, CEO of Thalamos – a software company that streamlines the mental health care pathway; Dave Thornton, President of Genomics, a company turning precision medicine into life-saving treatments; clinicians such as Ryan Kerstein, a surgeon and NHS innovation leader; and academics and researchers such as Pritesh Mistry of The King's Fund and Maria Higson of the Centre for Policy Studies.

Together, these tell the story of the UK's pioneering life sciences economy and its tragically slow adoption of new tools and treatments across the healthcare system to improve patient outcomes. If we can unlock this potential, there are huge benefits to reap from better healthcare to economic growth.

Away from health, we're tackling the lack of trust in UK politics with Vlad Vexler – noted YouTube creator and philosopher – and the stress our ageing population is putting on our social safety net with Ruth Curtice – Chief Executive of the Resolution Foundation.

While the personnel of British politics may be changing over, that is as nothing when looking at the upheaval facing democratic politics across the world. Discussing a new model for how democracy could work, we have Miriam Levin and Jess Sargeant of Demos, and explaining the potentially disastrous fallout from Donald Trump's threats to Greenland is Dr Peter Viggo Jakobsen of the Royal Danish Defence College.

But when Parliament returns, the political reality will change again. Burnham has spent much of his first weeks in office travelling the country, speaking directly to voters, and producing the kind of social media content that helped define his rise. Governing, however, is less forgiving. Beyond the early release crisis, he will soon face the daily grind of difficult spending choices, departmental failures, parliamentary scrutiny, hostile amendments, backbench pressure, and events that refuse to fit neatly into a political narrative. The real test will be how his own MPs respond when popularity collides with compromise: whether they give a new Prime Minister room to manoeuvre, or whether competing factions and constituency pressures begin to test his authority once Westminster is fully back in session.

In all, this quarter's journal makes for essential reading as Parliament and politics recover from an eventful summer and refocus on the long-term issues that the public expect them to solve. ☺



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OUT IN WESTMINSTER





Badenoch Targets Burnham and Farage as She Sets Out Tory Route Back to Power

Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch used a wide-ranging interview with Chamber UK's sister news platform, Politics UK, to argue that her Party is rebuilding after its 2024 defeat, while sharpening her attacks on Andy Burnham, Nigel Farage, and Reform UK. From defence and welfare to AI, housing, and immigration, Badenoch sought to present the Conservatives as a government-in-waiting with a clearer plan than its rivals.

Speaking to *Daily Mail* reporter Christian Calgie, for Politics UK, the Leader of the Opposition, Badenoch, said the mood inside the Conservative Party had improved despite national polls not yet moving decisively in its favour.

Pointing to the Party's Aberdeen South by-election victory, she said the result offered an indication of a changing political landscape and described the Conservatives as "more united than ever before".

She cautioned against reading too much into any one poll or election, arguing that multi-party politics requires a strategy for today rather than an attempt to recreate previous Conservative coalitions.

Taking Aim at Burnham

Badenoch reserved some of her strongest criticism for Burnham, arguing that he was inheriting "a big mess" and would face difficult choices on welfare, defence, and the public finances.

There's only one person who's actually turning up for work right now, and that's me.

She suggested he could either take difficult spending decisions or borrow more, warning the latter could provoke a market reaction. Badenoch also challenged him to fund the Government's defence investment plan at the forthcoming Budget, saying that failure to provide the necessary resources should raise the prospect of a general election.

While acknowledging that most new leaders receive a political honeymoon, she predicted the autumn would be considerably more difficult once Parliament returns and Burnham faces regular scrutiny.

Farage, Reform, and the Battle on the Right

The Conservative leader also turned her fire on Nigel Farage. Badenoch said she would be surprised if Farage's political career was over at the time of the interview, but claimed his recent difficulties offered a glimpse of the "chaos" a Farage government might produce.

She rejected suggestions of any formal arrangement with Rupert Lowe or Reform-aligned figures, while defending her willingness to work with politicians from other parties on a case-by-case basis.

AI, Housing, and Immigration

On policy, Badenoch presented lower energy costs, deregulation, tax reductions, welfare reform, and backing business as the foundations of her economic offer.

Asked about artificial intelligence (AI), she compared its development with the Internet in the 1990s. Britain, she argued, should create conditions that allow AI companies to remain and grow in the UK, including cheaper industrial energy and deeper capital markets.

She also called for the development of sovereign AI capability, warning against Britain becoming dependent on technology that another country could restrict or "switch off", and argued AI should be increasingly integrated into defence.

On housing, Badenoch acknowledged Conservative responsibility for resisting development in some areas and said increasing supply must be part of restoring home ownership for younger voters. She linked high prices to regulation, migration, and wider economic weakness, while defending the pension triple lock and arguing that stronger growth should come first.

On immigration, she conceded that "mistakes were made" under previous Conservative governments, but argued the Party now had a tougher approach.

Building Towards Government

Throughout the interview, Badenoch repeatedly returned to stability, preparation, and implementation. She contrasted her leadership with the turbulence affecting Labour and Reform, arguing that an effective team and detailed policy matter more than short-term headlines.

"Politics is a Contact Sport."

Asked whether she had doubts about her ability to become Prime Minister, Badenoch said she believed she would do "better than a good job", while insisting she was not complacent and highlighting her previous experience across government departments.

The main message Badenoch wanted to convey is that the Conservatives still have a long road back from their 2024 defeat, but that she wants voters to see a party moving from recovery towards readiness for government. 

Photo: Christine Quarmyne / CCHQ





Photo: Christine Quarmyne / CCHQ

Kemi Goodenough?

On July 6th, Kemi Badenoch joined a PoliticsUK In Conversation event, where she was grilled by Christian Calgie about her leadership of the Conservative Party and whether she has set them up for success since the General Election. Her answers show an improving but flawed candidate for Number 10.



Miles Bennington
Editor
Chamber UK

Christian Calgie wasted no time in asking the killer question when hosting Kemi Badenoch at a recent Politics UK In Conversation, “You and your team seem pretty chuffed at the moment. To put it bluntly, why?”

Exactly. The Tory Party has suffered its worst defeat since 1761, its MPs are defecting, and it has been polling below 20 per cent for a year. Worse, Reform UK have been ahead in the polls, threatening to usurp the traditional Conservative position as the default party for anti-Labour, low-tax, and right-wing voters and donors.

Yet, the Tories in Westminster are moving with an unmistakable smugness as their seemingly endless psychodrama seems to have migrated (sometimes literally) to Labour and Reform.

The Good News

As Kemi pointed out, however, there are real green shoots for the Conservatives. The by-election win in Aberdeen South represents a real, though very specific, win. Like Uxbridge, it is another by-election that shows that mobilising the anti-Net Zero vote can be a winning strategy, though not applicable everywhere, as the Arbroath and Broughty Ferry by-election the same day showed.

More applicable, however, is Kemi’s own performance. There is little doubt that she is getting better. Her PMQs performances are more assured and her TV appearances less awkward. This is important; Keir Starmer never really significantly improved his delivery, and if, as she claims, “this is not peak Kemi”, then she will become an even greater asset to her Party as she grows.

As leader of a Party that has been in Government for 14 years, her primary job is to regain the trust of the electorate. The tried-and-true method is to acknowledge and apologise for the reasons people voted you out, then promise they will not happen again. In this, Kemi seems to be trying. During the In Conversation, she pointed out the need for balanced books and taking tough choices, with reference to Liz Truss's brief tenure, and she even apologised for the "Boriswave" of immigration.

This shows that she is capable of deviating from the never-back-down style of right, and sounding more like a potential prime minister in waiting. That is a very good sign. If she wants to make the Conservatives more electable, however, she will need to tackle bigger problems such as "partygate", austerity, and maybe even Brexit. Nobody in the Conservative Party is seeking a return of Truss or increased immigration. Tackling the deeper problems is Kemi's tough choice.

Kembot

While her performance is improving, she is still miles away from a comfortable, approachable leadership style. She does have her own charisma, but it is the charisma of someone often agreed with. From the way she speaks, my impression is that she spends a lot of time in an online echo chamber.

Like Twitter, her rhetoric is at eleven all the time. Even before Calgie could question the wisdom of accusing Bridget Phillipson of acting like a Gestapo Officer for... introducing VAT on private school fees, she had already mentioned all the "rapists and paedos that Labour is letting loose". A dangerous attack, proven by Andy Burnham's exclusion of rapists and all those convicted of serious child sex offences from the early release scheme, but in words more familiar to the Twitter feed than Westminster interviews.

"Net Zero madness", "woke nonsense", "cancel culture". These are phrases she wields confidently and often, seemingly sure that those listening will understand.

These online phrases in excess bolster the *Spitting Image* "low energy weirdo" caricature. It's a mode of speaking that politicians should be very careful about (see Andy Burnham and whatever "neoliberalism" is). I'm also not sure that

comparing herself to 1990s Star Trek villains, The Borg, and saying that is a good thing... will make resistance to her charms any more futile.

Is Anybody Listening?

The Conservative Party is in a dangerous position. It is an old-fashioned big tent party, a loose collection of interests held together by the prospect of power. In the new multiparty, social media-driven politics, it is ripe for destruction. The purity of message that can be achieved by a one-man-band party like Reform or Restore just cannot be replicated by the Tories. No matter how many "wets" Kemi kicks out with purity tests, or how many refugees and children she threatens to throw out of social housing, she is a poor avatar for the angry, no limits, online right.

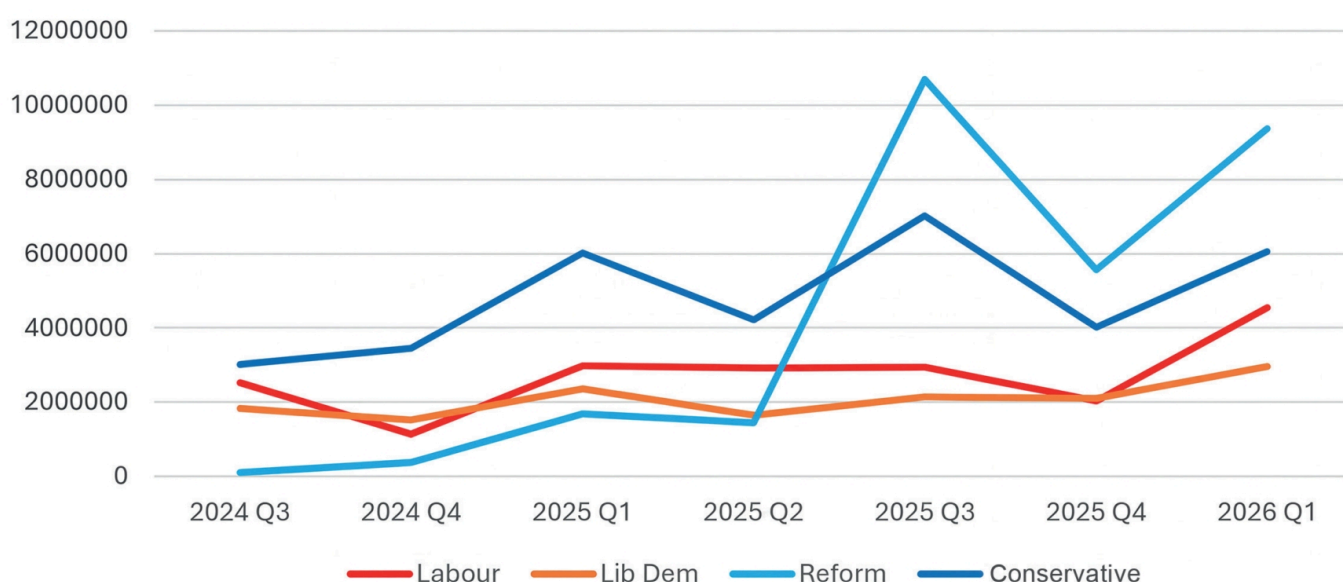
While exiting the centre of the British political storm may feel good to Conservatives, they're in danger of mistaking a lack of attention for a lack of scandal. Speaking to Westminster Tories now has eerie similarities to speaking with LibDems. Happy with their recent performance, they are smugly enjoying the spotlight focused on first Labour's and now Reform's problems.

That is a disaster. The Conservative Party is a vehicle for power, and it is never better than when it is ruthlessly competing for it. Coming third place in the next General Election will spell a permanent end for the Conservative Party. The donors will leave; indeed, Reform is already out-raising CCHQ. They will be quickly followed by the careerists, lobbyists, think tanks, and hangers-on that make up a significant part of the Tory power base.

Kemi should ignore the right-wing Internet and pay closer attention to Andy Burnham. He has neither swung left to meet the Greens, nor imposed purity tests on the Labour Party. He has installed an excellent comms operation that is well on the way to restoring Labour as the default option for left-wing voters.

That is the prize for the Conservatives at the next Election. Retain the mantle of default right-wing party. Only then will the survival of the most successful political party in history be assured. ☹

Party Political Donations since 2024 General Election



Source: Electoral Commission