



More in
Common

Future of the Conservative Party

Polling data from 7 - 10 February 2025
N = 2,005

Toplines

After over 100 days as Leader of the Opposition, More in Common finds that Kemi Badenoch's approval rating sits at -19, some 22 points above Keir Starmer, but below Nigel Farage. Public perceptions of the Conservative Party remain negative, with many Britons believing the party has not yet demonstrated it has changed since the General Election, and few Britons saying it's clear what the new leader stands for.

Asked to describe the Tory leader in a single word, the nation's favourite adjective is "unknown", followed by "useless" - although "strong" and "leader" are also high on the list.

So far Badenoch has struggled both to impress those who remained loyal to the Party in the last election, and to rebuild trust among former Conservative voters who defected. In both groups people believe Nigel Farage offers a clearer vision for the country.

However, More in Commons polling also highlights a range of strengths that the Conservatives can build on. There is space for Badenoch to position herself between Labour and Reform: a more credible, economically competent and experienced alternative to Farage, but more patriotic and straight-talking than Starmer.

Toplines

Only 4 in 10 Britons say it's clear what Kemi Badenoch stands for. In contrast, two thirds (66 percent) say it's clear what Nigel Farage stands for. Even 2024 Conservative voters are more clear about what Farage, rather than Badenoch, stands for. Only two thirds (66 percent) of Britons know that she's leader of the Conservative.

The top words used to describe Badenoch are "Unknown" "Useless" and "Strong", these match closely with how voter describe the Conservative Party as "Useless" "lost" and

Britons narrowly think that Kemi Badenoch is doing a worse job as leader than Boris Johnson or Rishi Sunak. Meanwhile, nearly half (47 percent) of Britons think the party has not changed since the election, though a third of Conservative voters think it has changed for the better

71 per cent of voters would like Kemi Badenoch to apologise for the last Conservative Government they would also like to see her be more critical of Starmer and Farage. A majority of voters would like Badenoch to expel Truss and Braverman, but Conservative voters tend to disagree

Conservative 2024 voters tend to oppose the idea of a merger with Reform UK (67 per cent to 33 per cent), however they are more split on whether the two parties should form a pact not to run against one another (53 per cent - 47 per cent). Likely Reform voters are more keen on a merger and a pact than Conservative voters.

Those who switched to Reform in 2024 are least likely to return to the Conservatives: 79 percent say they are unlikely to vote Tory at the next election, including 38 percent who rule it out altogether. Only 1 in 5 Conservative-Reform switchers say they are likely to vote Tory at the next election.

Kemi Badenoch is right to focus on trust before policies: 7 in 10 think that restoring trust in the Conservative Party is more important than policy. This rises to 8 in 10 (79 percent) among those who defected from the Conservative Party in 2024.

However, Kemi Badenoch and her party have key strengths compared to their opponents: Britons view the Tories as more experienced and less extreme than Reform UK. Tory voters also believe the key advantage the Tories have over Reform is on economic competence. Badenoch also holds a strong lead over Labour on immigration and representing Britain abroad, leads both Labour and Reform on the economy.

Badenoch's approval hits an all-time-low

More in Common's weekly polling has shown an unprecedented drop in the Labour Party's approval and vote share. Keir Starmer's approval has in recent weeks sunk lower than that of Rishi Sunak at the height of the D-Day Debate.

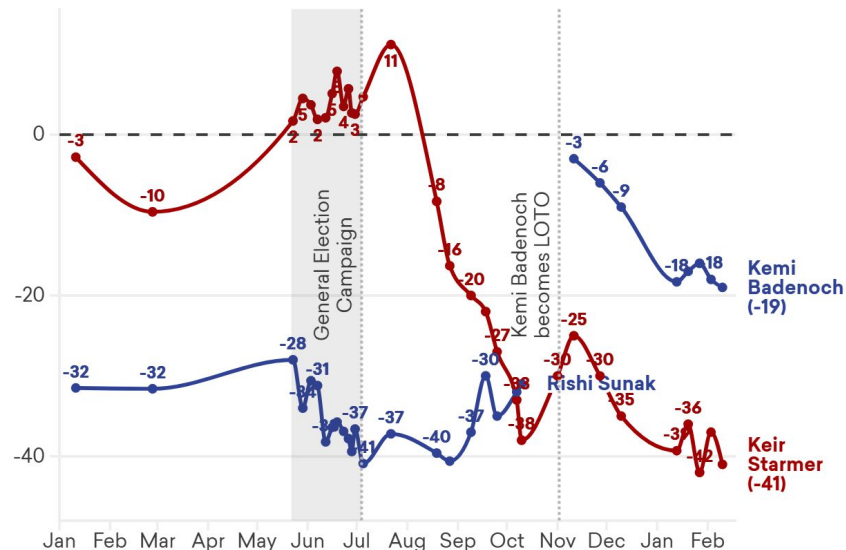
However, Kemi Badenoch's Conservative Party has so far been unable to capitalise on this dissatisfaction and is stuck in a three-way deadlock with Labour and Reform, with the parties each earning a quarter of the country's support.

Meanwhile, Badenoch's personal approval rating has reached the lowest point since her election as party leader. Since her election as leader, her personal net approval has fallen from -3 to -19. While this is still significantly higher than Keir Starmer's approval, it is lower than Nigel Farage or Ed Davey.

Asked to choose their preferred Prime Minister between Badenoch, Starmer and Farage, only 13 percent select the Tory Leader, compared who selected Farage (24%) and Starmer (22%). 4 in 10 select "none of them".

Party Leader approval tracker

Net approval rating



Source: More in Common • Proportion who think each leader is doing a "somewhat good" or "very good" job, minus those who think they are doing a "somewhat bad" or "very bad" job
Last fieldwork: 7 - 10 February 2025

Few Britons know who Kemi Badenoch is...

100 days into her leadership, only 66 per cent of Britons know who Kemi Badenoch is. This is only 10 points above Ed Davey - only 56 per cent know who he is.

From focus group questions, it is clear that Badenoch's biggest challenge does not relate to the substance of her actions, but to the extent to which she is able to cut through and make an impression with the public.

Some former Tory voters believe that Kemi Badenoch is a 'slow burn' who still has an opportunity to cut through, but others question why they are not hearing more from her.

"Maybe she's a slow burner (...) I've seen her around, but I could not put a name to that face at all. And I think that speaks reams."

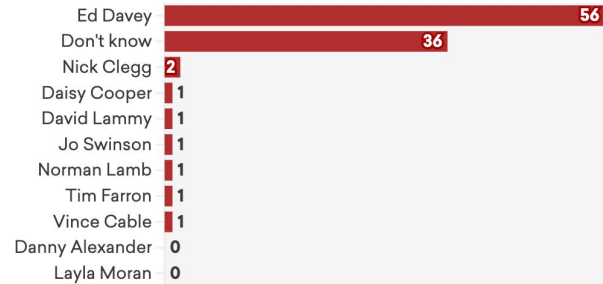
Amanda, Conservative-Reform switcher, Chipping Barnet

I think she's got a plan and just because you don't shout about doesn't mean you're not going to be good, but what you, let's wait and see."

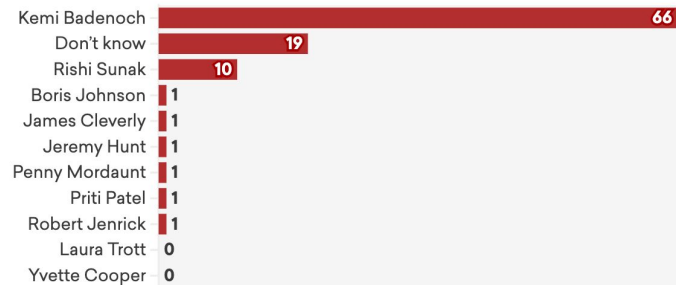
Kelly, Conservative-Labour switcher, Plymouth

Two thirds of people know who Kemi Badenoch is

According to the best of your knowledge, who is currently leader of the Liberal Democrats?



According to the best of your knowledge, who is currently leader of the Conservative Party?



... or what she stands for

Unsurprisingly given the low levels of awareness of Kemi Badenoch her vision for the country also hasn't cut through: only 40 percent of Britons say they're clear about what she stands for.

By comparison, half of Britons (49 percent) say they're clear about what Keir Starmer stands for, and two thirds (66 percent) say they're clear about what Nigel Farage stands for.

While 2024 Tory voters are more likely to say it's clear what the leader stands for (58 percent), 42 percent believe it is unclear. By comparison, 70 percent of 2024 Tory voters say they're clear about what Farage stands for.

"She's been quite quiet in my opinion. There's not been much press about her, whether that's good or bad. I don't know."

Dawn, Conservative-Reform switcher, Plymouth

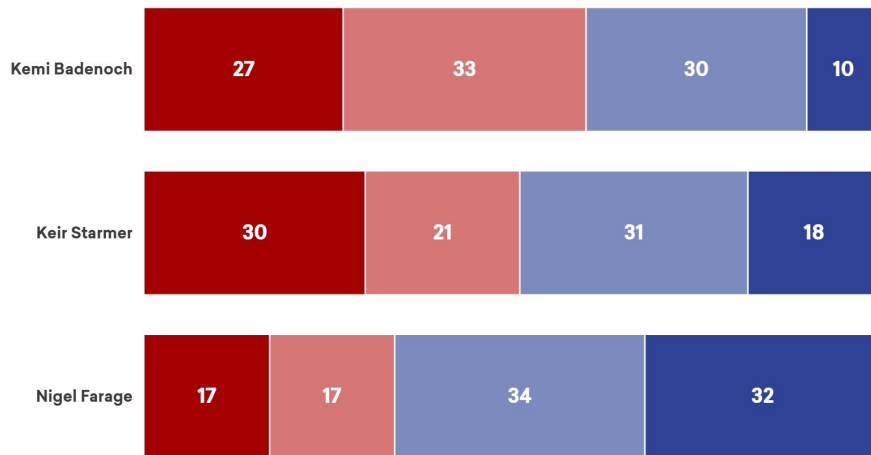
"A party leader should be well known to be out there and with strong views and I think it says quite a bit that she's quite hidden."

Viraj, Conservative-Labour switcher, Chipping Barnet

Only 4 in 10 Britons are clear on what Badenoch stands for

How clear are you about what the following politicians stand for?

● Very unclear ● Somewhat unclear ● Somewhat clear ● Very clear



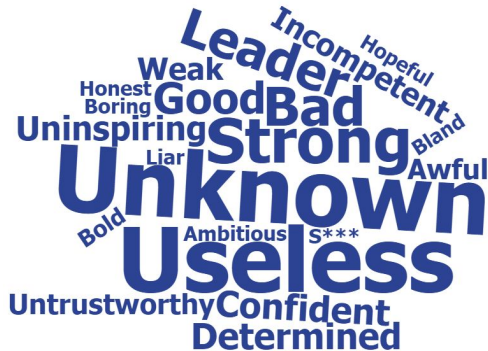
“Unknown” and “useless”: voters’ verdict on Badenoch

Asked to describe Badenoch in a single word, the most common answer was “unknown”, followed by “useless”. Also high on the list were “bad”, “uninspiring” and “untrustworthy”. However, supporters described her as “strong”, “determined” and a “leader”.

Asked to describe the Conservative Party, the most common responses were “useless”, “corrupt” and “lost”.

Despite the preponderance of negative descriptions of Badenoch she does however attract more positive descriptions than Keir Starmer, who is most often described as “useless”, “bad” or a “liar”.

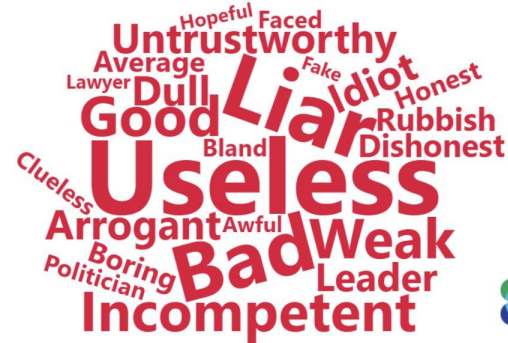
How would you describe Kemi Badenoch, leader of the Conservative Party, in a word?



How would you describe the Conservative Party in one word?



How would you describe Keir Starmer in one word?



Only 14 percent of Britons think the Tory Party has improved since the election

Asked how the Tory party has changed since the 2024 General Election, almost half of the public (47 percent) say it has stayed the same, while one in four (24 percent) say it worsened. Only 14 percent say that the party has improved.

There are some differences in perceptions of how the Conservative Party has changed between different voter groups.

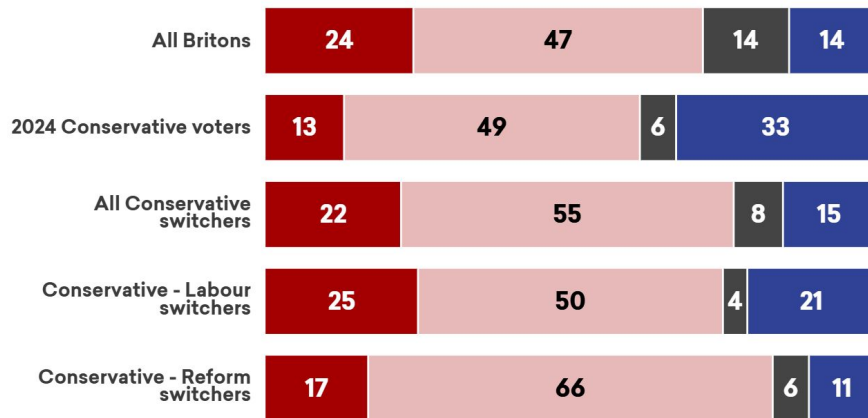
- Tory 2024 are the most likely to believe that a party has improved, with a third believing that Badenoch has changed the Party for the better and 49 per cent saying the party has stayed the same.
- However those that previously voted for the Conservative Party are still to be convinced, just 15 per cent of those who abandoned the Tories in 2024 think the party has changed for the party.
- Of this group, those who left the party for Reform are least likely to say that the Party has improved and 17 percent say it has worsened.

Overall, this data shows Badenoch's work to detoxify the Conservative Brand has a long way to go

Only 14 percent of Britons say that the Conservative Party has improved

Since the General Election last year, would you say that the Conservative Party has...

- Changed for the worse
- Not changed for the better or worse
- Don't know
- Changed for the better



Britons think Badenoch is doing a worse job than Sunak or Johnson

Asked to compare Badenoch's performance with past Tory leaders, Britons are split. By 32 to 28 percent, Britons narrowly prefer Johnson over Badenoch, however 40 per cent don't know; by a narrower 30 to 27 percent, Britons prefer Sunak over Badenoch, while 42 per cent don't know

This gap is wider among Conservative supporters:

- Almost half (47 percent) of those who voted Tory in 2024 say that Boris Badenoch is doing a worse job than Boris Johnson, compared to just over a quarter (26 percent) who say Badenoch is doing a better job.
- Similarly, those who voted Tory in 2019 but switched at the last election are far more likely than average to prefer Boris Johnson over Badenoch (43 percent).

Strikingly, those who abandoned the Party between 2019 and 2024 believe Sunak did a better job than the new leader. While it is hard to directly compare Prime Ministers with Leaders of the Opposition, this is evidence that Badenoch has so far failed to distinguish herself positively from her more long lasting predecessors.

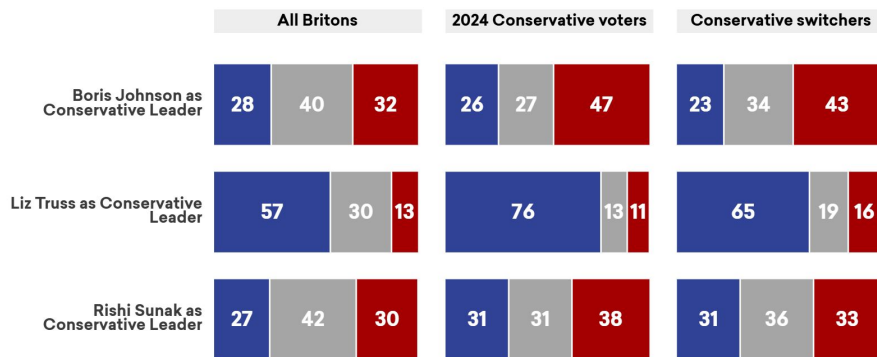
Badenoch does however perform better than Liz Truss. 57 per cent of voters think that Kemi Badenoch is doing a better job than Liz Truss, just 13 per cent think she is doing worse.

"I wouldn't mind (Boris) coming back (...) I think he did a pretty good job and he was that patriotic person. I felt like he was a very likeable character."
Amanda, Conservative-Reform switcher, Chipping Barnet

Britons think that Kemi Badenoch is doing a worse job than Johnson or Sunak

Think about Kemi Badenoch the Conservative Leader, do you think that she is doing a better, worse, or about the same job as...

- Kemi Badenoch is doing a better job
- Don't know
- Kemi Badenoch is doing a worse job



Conservative-Reform switchers most likely to rule out voting Tory at the next election

Half of those who switched their vote from the Conservatives in 2024 (51 percent) say they are unlikely to or won't vote for the party at the next election, including 3 in 10 (29 percent) who would "almost certainly" not. In contrast, only 30 percent say they are likely to vote Tory at the next election.

Those who switched to Reform UK are least likely to return to the fold: 79 percent say they are unlikely to vote Tory at the next election, including 38 percent who rule it out. Only 1 in 5 Conservative-Reform switchers say they are likely to vote Tory at the next election. In general Reform are maintaining a much higher share of their 2024 vote than other parties.

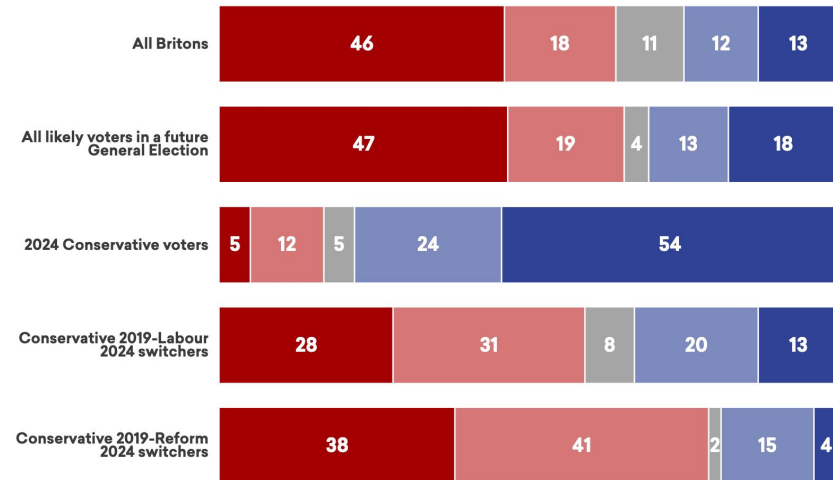
Kemi Badenoch may have a better chance of winning back voters lost to Labour: a third of this group say that they would consider voting Tory at the election.

Badenoch currently appears unlikely to be able to break out of the 25 per cent ceiling on the Conservative Party's support they achieved at the last election.

Most Conservative switchers say they will probably not vote Tory in the next election

How likely do you think you are to vote for the Conservative Party at the next General Election?

- I will almost certainly NOT vote for the Conservative Party
- I am likely to NOT vote for the Conservative Party, but am open to the idea of doing so
- Don't know
- I am likely to vote for the Conservative Party, but will consider other options
- I will almost certainly vote for the Conservative Party



Only a third of 2024 Tory voters think Badenoch is the best option for PM

One more concerning indicator for Kemi Badenoch's prospects of becoming PM is her performance in a three-way head-to-head between the main party leaders. Few Britons - even among the Tories 2024 voters pick the leader of the opposition as their preferred PM.

Only 13 percent of Britons - and 14 percent of Conservative switchers - pick Badenoch as the best option for Prime Minister. "None of them" leads among the general public, followed by Nigel Farage. Among Tory switchers, Farage leads with a strong 44 percent.

Among those who remained loyal to the Tory in 2024, just over a third (36 percent) choose Badenoch as the best option. 28 percent think Farage would be a better option, and 31 percent say "none of them".

The high proportion of those who choose "none of them" speaks to the context of deep political disillusionment in which Badenoch is attempting to establish herself. Rather than simply profiting from dissatisfaction with the Labour Government, the Conservatives will need to illustrate how their approach is different.

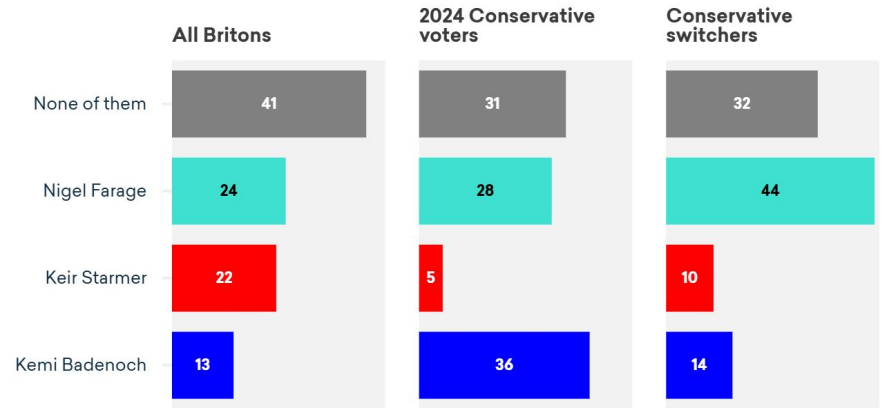
"I've got to say that every government I've ever known has made promises when they're trying to get into power and reneged on a lot of those promises. So this is nothing new. Also, whatever government is in always blames the previous government for any problems.

Amanda, Conservative-Reform switcher, Chipping Barnet

"I don't think she'll be around by the end of the year."
Ian, Conservative-Reform switcher, Chipping Barnet

In a head-to-head between the main party leaders, Badenoch is in last place

Who do you think would make a better Prime Minister?



Kemi Badenoch is right to focus on trust before policy

Despite the headwinds faced by Kemi Badenoch her focus on rebuilding trust before engaging in policy development is backed by the public: 7 in 10 Britons (71 percent) think that restoring trust in the Conservative Party is more important than setting out new policies.

Among those who defected from the Tory party, this rises to 8 in 10 (79 percent).

This is significant because, when Tory switchers are asked why they defected from the Conservative Party, the top reason is that they had lost trust in the party. In focus groups, asked to discuss the current Conservative Party, participants invariably refer to the legacy of the last government.

In this context, Badenoch appears to be doing the right thing by focusing on reconnecting with the public to restore trust before setting out a policy agenda.

"I sort of got to the end of the road with the conservatives, with the state of our public services really. And it didn't matter whether you were talking about the roads, passports, the NHS, it seemed to be anything you could think of which used to work no longer works. And that was it for me."

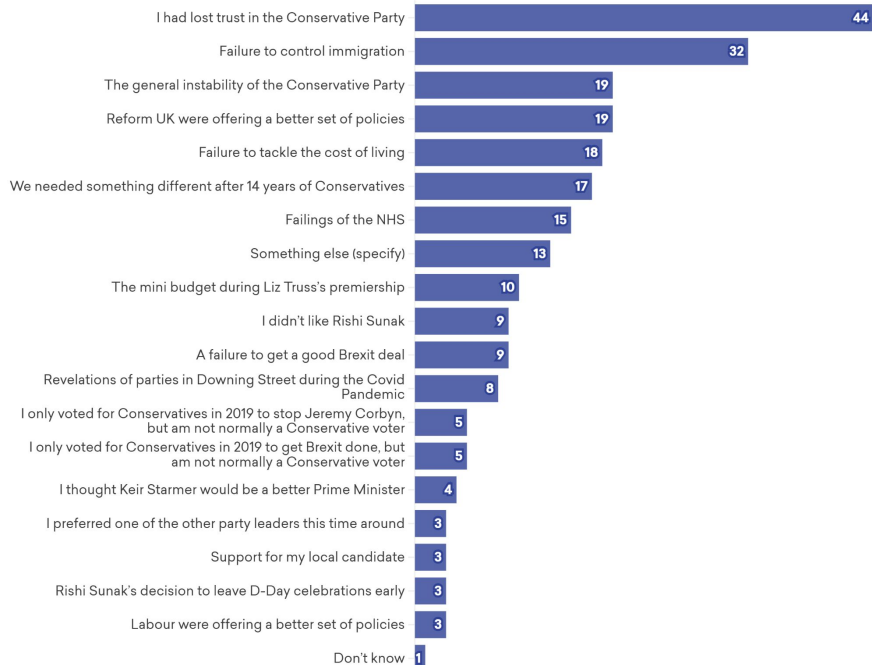
Dave, Conservative-Labour switcher, Plymouth

"I want to be able to trust that they really understand the issues and they really care and I really want to fix it. And someone who takes ownership for past mistakes, full ownership."

Viraj, Conservative-Labour switcher, Chipping Barnet

Top reasons why 2019 Conservative voters switched in 2024

You said you voted Conservative under Boris Johnson in 2019, but did not vote for the Conservatives in 2024, why was that?



What should Kemi do?

Despite critical reports that Kemi Badenoch told Conservative Party Staffers they needed to work harder, 84 percent of the public believe it is something that Kemi Badenoch should do. **71 percent would also like to see Badenoch apologise for the actions of the last Conservative Government.**

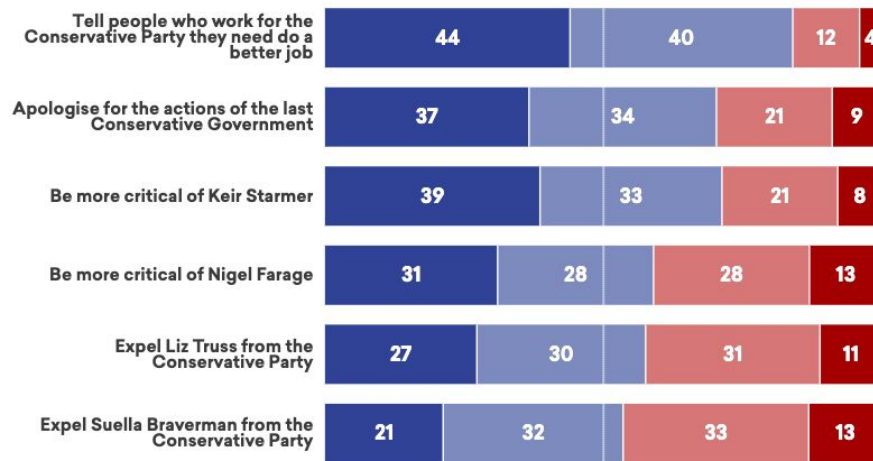
There also appears to be more of an appetite for the Conservative leader to be more forthright in her criticism of both Keir Starmer (72 per cent) and Nigel Farage (59 per cent)

Majorities of the public would also support Kemi Badenoch expelling Liz Truss (57 per cent) and Suella Braverman (54 per cent) from the Conservative Party. However Conservative 2024 voters are more likely to oppose expelling Truss (42-58 per cent) and Braverman (39-61 per cent).

What should Kemi do?

For each of the following please state whether you think Kemi Badenoch should or should not do it:

- Should definitely do it
- Probably should do it
- Probably should not do it
- Definitely should not do it



How should the Conservatives take on Reform?

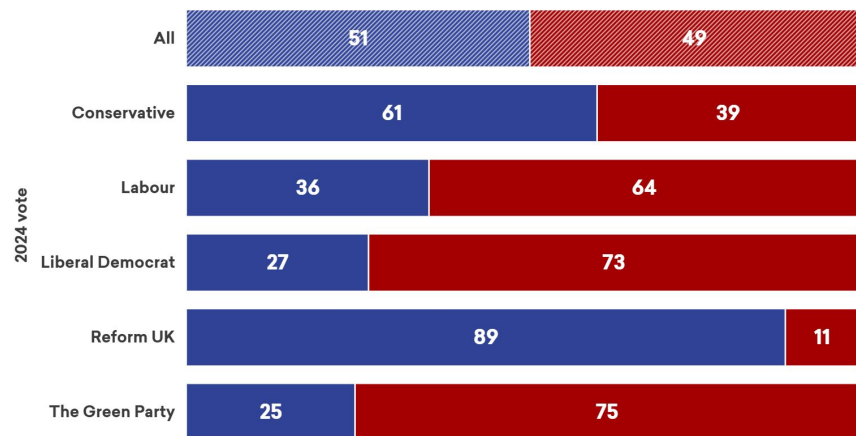
Britons are split on how the Conservative Party should tackle Reform. 51 percent say the Tories should prioritise working constructively with the party, whereas 49 percent say they should focus on challenging them.

There is a significant left-right split here: Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green voters largely think that the Tories should challenge Reform, whereas 6 in 10 Conservative voters think they should work constructively with them.

Britons are split on how the Conservatives should handle Reform

Please indicate which you think should be a bigger priority for the Conservatives at the moment:

● Working constructively with Reform UK ● Challenging Reform UK



Few want to see a merger or deal between the two parties

Despite a plurality wanting the Conservatives to work constructively with Reform, very few Britons want to see any official deal between the two.

Few want to see a Reform-Conservative deal or merger: More than half of the public (55 percent) say that Kemi Badenoch should not do a tactical deal with Reform, including 28 percent who say she should “definitely” not do it; Britons are even stronger in their opposition to a merger: 67 percent say Badenoch should not propose a merger between the two parties, including 39 percent who say that she should “definitely” not.

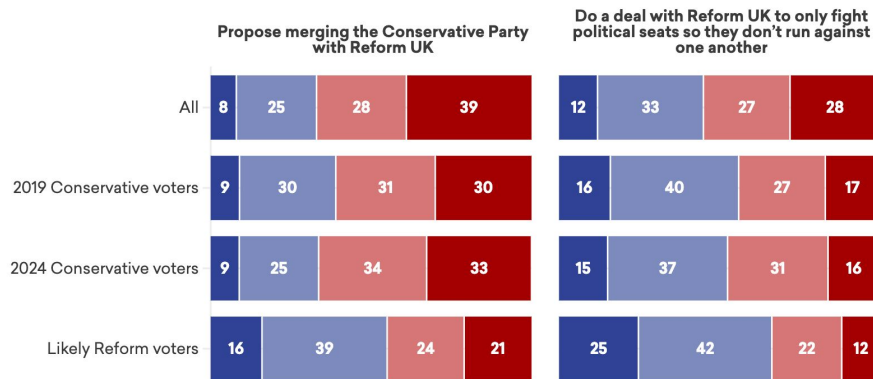
Opposition to a merger is strong among former and current Tory supporters: 2024 Conservative voters are just as likely as the wider public (67 percent) to oppose a merger between the two parties. However they are split on a pact (53 per cent - 47 per cent). Either way any suggestion of closer working with Reform risks alienating a significant chunk of the party’s remaining party’s base

Likely Reform voters are more positive about the idea of a merger with 55 per cent supporting the idea, and 67 per cent of likely Reform voters think there should be a pact between the two parties.

Few want the Conservatives to merge with Reform

For each of the following please state whether you think Kemi Badenoch should or should not do it:

- Should definitely do it
- Probably should do it
- Probably should not do it
- Definitely should not do it



How do the Conservatives compare to Reform?

What makes the Conservatives better than Reform? One in three voters (35 percent) say nothing. Though only 14 per cent of 2024 Conservative voters believe that.

However, there are key strengths that people identify when comparing the two parties. Britons tend to see the Conservatives as more serious and less extreme in comparison to Reform.

Labour voters are most likely to cite the fact that Reform are too extreme, and racism in Reform's ranks. Meanwhile, 55 percent of Conservative voters (and 22 percent of Reform voters) point to the fact that the Tories have more experience in government. 44 per cent of Conservative voters also believe Reform have better policies on the environment.

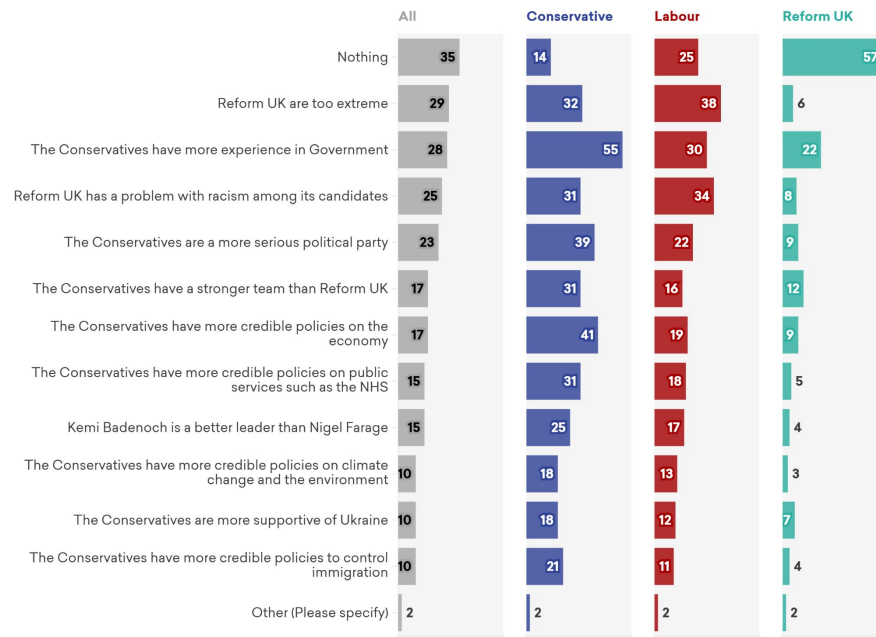
Kemi Badenoch has an opportunity to build on the Conservatives' perception as a more moderate, economically sound and credible alternative to Reform.

"(I want) a credible person to take charge. That's the main thing. As I said earlier, most politicians make promises, so we've heard it all before, so we need something a bit more tangible."

Kelly, Conservative-Labour switcher, Plymouth

What, if anything, makes the Conservative Party better than Reform UK?

(By 2024 vote)



Opportunities for Kemi Badenoch

Badenoch's strongest performance against the other party leaders is on the economy

Compared to both Farage and Starmer, Badenoch is better trusted to handle the economy, and marginally more trusted to tell the truth.

Badenoch also has an edge over Starmer on immigration, and standing up for British interests abroad - although on both measures, Farage scores higher than Badenoch.

Britons also trust Badenoch more than Farage when it comes to handling the NHS and caring about the environment.

This implies that there is space for Badenoch to position herself between Labour and Reform: a more credible, experienced alternative to Farage, but more patriotic and straight-talking than Starmer.

"I saw (PMQs) briefly and it looked like she was able to hold up her own."
Victor, Conservative-Labour switcher, Chipping Barnet

"Whoever was to lead the Tory party probably needs to say something along the lines of, 'we'll put Britain first Before everything else'. Essentially what Donald Trump is doing - maybe to a lesser extent, he is a bit mad if we are honest"
Ian, Conservative-Reform switcher, Chipping Barnet

Where does Kemi Badenoch lead over Starmer and Farage?

For each of the following statements, would you say they apply more to Kemi Badenoch or Nigel Farage/Keir Starmer?

% who think that the statement applies more to Kemi Badenoch, minus % who believe it applies more to the other leader

