

Contains some
major problems –
must read before
Birmingham

CONFIDENTIAL



Shadow Cabinet Vetting

CCHQ Vetting Team

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Not to be shown to the electorate

October 2026



Monday 5th October 2026

Dear Kemi,

As the Vetting Team in CCHQ we have been working hard to implement your new selection criteria for those seeking to be Conservative election candidates.

The tests we have applied are based on your recent public statements about the qualities needed to be a Tory MP. As Leader you have reiterated the importance of having stringent rules in place which prevent those who “do not have the judgement” from becoming candidates. You have emphasised that while “competence may seem like a boring quality... it matters” and you have promised that under your leadership the Conservatives are committed to “recruiting serious people”. Moreover, as part of your plan to drag the party closer to Reform UK you have stipulated that candidates can’t be in favour of Net Zero targets and they have to support the UK’s withdrawal from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).

However, we have run into a bit of a problem.

You have said that “everyone has had the same, rigorous tests applied to them”, so the CCHQ Vetting team has been looking at our Shadow Cabinet.

Unfortunately, based on the criteria above **our top team, yourself included**, don’t pass vetting.

We’re sorry to have to say that, based on your rules, they are not up to the job of being Conservative Members of Parliament. Some of them may not be up to the job of going out in public at all.

- Our new Shadow Chancellor praised Liz Truss’s mini-Budget for having “lots of good things” in it – and I’m afraid we found a lot of other Liz Truss supporters too.
- Our new Shadow Foreign Secretary just said “no” when he was asked about leaving the ECHR, and says he’s committed to Net Zero targets – and he’s not the only one.
- Our new Shadow Business Secretary appears to have memory-holed her previous job as Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero – there’s a clue in the job title about what that job involved.
- Our Shadow Defence Secretary was a Defence minister in a government that delivered just two out of 49 major defence projects on time.
- Our Shadow Justice Secretary ran our 2017 election campaign.
- Our Shadow Secretary of State for the Home Department is Chris Philp. It’s honestly a bit embarrassing.

We also need to address your own poor judgement – saying that the public might not always want a free-at-the-point-of-use NHS, that maternity pay is “excessive”, and that up to 10% of civil servants should be in prison; your incompetence in proposing a tax-free shopping policy you used to call a “costly gimmick” and your own record on warning against leaving the ECHR and defending Net Zero targets. Taken together, it makes your claim that “I never have gaffes” look... well, just not very serious.

Yours sincerely,

CCHQ VETTING TEAM

NAME: Kemi Badenoch
JOB TITLE: Leader of the Conservative Party



Judgement: *Poor*

Badenoch suggests Britons may change mind on free access to healthcare

The former minister is vying for the Conservative Party leadership

Notes: *I think hoping no one noticed is the best we can do here.*

Judgement: *Disgraceful.*

Kemi Badenoch accused of insulting armed forces for saying RAF 'hanging around' in the Middle East

Notes: *Indefensible this one, quite honestly.*

Judgement: *Stupefying*

Maternity pay is 'excessive', says Tory leadership hopeful Kemi Badenoch

Notes: *Zingers like this won her the leadership.*



Competence: *Questionable.*

Tories pledge to reverse decision to scrap tax-free shopping for tourists

Notes: *I'm old enough to remember when we scrapped tax-free shopping for non-EU tourists and Kemi said it was a "costly gimmick". But now she wants to bring it back?*

Competence: *Lacking.*

Tories will consider means testing pension triple-lock, Badenoch says

Notes: *Kemi was saying a lot of things when she first got in.*

Competence: *Shocking.*



Notes: *Don't know where the Leader "checked" but Northern Ireland did not in fact vote to leave at all.*

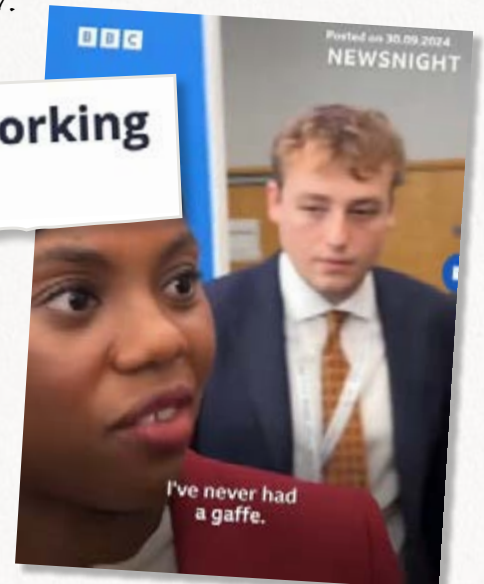


Seriousness: *Deeply unserious.*

Kemi Badenoch Says 1 In 10 Civil Servants Are So 'Bad' They 'Should Be In Prison'

Notes: *Some of the audience laughed. They're not laughing now.*

Kemi Badenoch claims she 'became working class' after working in McDonald's



Notes: *You can say you don't have gaffes. You can say working in McDonald's turned you working class. You can't say both of those things.*

Support for pulling out of the ECHR: *Depends.*

Kemi Badenoch Says She Would Take Britain Out Of The ECHR. But She Used To Say It Was A Bad Idea

What could possibly have happened to change her mind?

By Kevin Schofield

04/10/2025 06:49am BST

Notes: *We might need to address that Kemi kept saying leaving the ECHR was "not a silver bullet".*



Support for net zero targets: *Depends.*

Kemi Badenoch, the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, said:

“We are determined to achieve a cleaner, green future, and cutting our emissions to net zero by 2050 is crucial to this.

Notes: *File this one under 'screeching U-turn'.*

NAME:

Alex Burghart

JOB TITLE:

Deputy Leader of the Conservative Party,
Shadow Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and
Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland



Competence: *Far from it.*

EXCLUSIVE: Kemi Badenoch's 'Tory aristocracy' team: Full list of partners, relatives and 'pedigree parents'

Notes: *Alex had a right go at Labour's "new aristocracy" and nepo-babies. This went really well until someone remembered his father-in-law was one of our ministers. Must remember to speak to CRD about that one.*

Support for Net Zero targets: *Was all for it.*

Our New Plan to Deliver Net Zero

Notes: *The Deputy Leader used to say "the cost of inaction is too high" on Net Zero. Could we say that was a typo?*

NAME: Andrew Griffith
JOB TITLE: Shadow Chancellor
of the Exchequer



Judgement: *Spectacularly bad.*

Badenoch appoints architect of Truss's mini-Budget to replace Mel Stride as shadow chancellor

Andrew Griffith, who was a senior Treasury minister who worked on the disastrous mini-Budget, is promoted from shadow business secretary to shadow chancellor

Notes: *SOMEONE TELL HIM TO STOP TALKING ABOUT HOW GREAT THE MINI BUDGET WAS. (I know we love it but most normal people really don't. And sorry for shouting)*

Judgement: *Bad. Again.*

UK Treasury minister Andrew Griffith defends mini-budget plans as pound faces turmoil - video

Notes: *There's really rather a lot of this stuff, I'm afraid. Think I preferred Mel.*

Judgement: *He got this one right.*

Kemi Badenoch Humiliated As Shadow Minister Breaks Ranks To Praise UK-US Trade Deal

Notes: *Kemi said Labour's trade deal with the US "shafted" us. Andrew had a slightly different take.*



Judgement: *Consistently terrible.*

EXCLUSIVE: Tory tipped as Kemi Badenoch's Shadow Chancellor said minimum wage is a 'burden'

New Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch is widely expected to choose Shadow

Notes: *At least when he's talking about the mini-budget he's not talking about the minimum wage.*

Support for Net Zero targets: *He championed them.*

UK appoints champion to spur business on to net zero emissions

The Prime Minister has appointed Andrew Griffith MP as the UK's Net Zero Business Champion to support the country's business community to make credible plans to net zero by 2050 or earlier.

Notes: *If we're really scrapping Net Zero targets the UK's 'Net Zero Business Champion' might not be the best person to front it up.*



NAME: Claire Coutinho

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State
for Business, Innovation,
Science and Trade

Competence: *Questionable.*



Ed Miliband Mocks Tory Frontbencher In Brutal Commons Takedown

"The job of opposition is to oppose government, not oppose yourself," he told Claire Coutinho.

Notes: *Could we just make sure the next time Claire attacks Labour on carbon emissions it's not actually one of our own policies? I'd like that. Or when she says they're putting a "new tax on boiler companies" - also us.*

Support for Net Zero targets:

This was her job in the last government. Seriously.





Our ambitions on net zero are undiminished. we continue to have world leading targets and we will meet them with the help of the talent, expertise and innovation in this room.

I am determined that this historic transition.

To a net zero economy. to an energy secure nation.

Is not only one that we can deliver.

It's also one that we will deliver together.

Notes: *These days her ambitions on net zero are a bit more diminished, as is her determination to deliver it.*



NAME: Richard Fuller
JOB TITLE: Shadow Chief Secretary
to the Treasury



Judgement: *Missing.*

**NE Bedfordshire MP faces
backlash following 'plodder'
comments in radio interview**

Notes: *We've got another mini budget lover here. If he still thinks the mini budget would give young people the "motivation" to stop "plodding along" then I suggest we proof his conference speech very closely.*

Seriousness: *Hard to say.*

**Who is Richard Fuller, the
unknown Tory chairman?**

Notes: *The answer to the question in this headline is "Yes, that's right".*

NAME: Tom Tugendhat

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs



Competence: *Dubious*

Conservatives should stop defending triple lock 'Ponzi system', says senior Tory

Badenoch: Triple lock is 'current' Tory policy and in 'draft manifesto'

Notes: *I don't think this is the line. I think this is the opposite of the line, Tom.*

Support for pulling out of the ECHR: *"He's woolly"*

EXCLUSIVE 'It's a ploy!' Tom Tugendhat blasted by Tories as ECHR U-turn exposed by GB News - 'He's always been woolly on this!'

Notes: *Tom just says 'no' about leaving the ECHR. If it was admirable honesty we were after, this would be great.*



Support for Net Zero targets: *Committed.*



Notes: *Tom is committed to Net Zero. If it was admirable honesty we were after, this would be great.*



NAME: Chris Philp
JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State
for the Home Department

Judgement: *Disastrous.*

**Treasury minister claims mini-Budget has
boosted pound – as it hits 37-year low**

Chris Philp red-faced after saying 'Great to see sterling strengthening on the back of the new UK Growth Plan'

Notes: *Truss fan klaxon! Honestly are this lot really the best we've got? If you tweet that the pound is strengthening, then it actually crashes to a 37-year low, the best thing you can do is delete that tweet. And probably retire. And emigrate.*

Competence: *About as good as his geography.*

**Policing Minister Chris Philp faces backlash
for asking if Congo is different country to
Rwanda**

**Chris Philp's history of gaffes as Tory MP
appointed shadow home secretary**

Notes: *Plenty to pick from but this is definitely one of Philp's greatest hits.*



NAME: James Cartlidge
JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State for Defence



Competence: *"Well short of where we need to be."*

James Cartlidge >

As of 13 November, some 84% of rooms met the standard. That means that 13,347 did not, which falls well short of where we need to be. However, the intent is that, by April 2024, a further 30% of those will be upgraded. In the longer term, the Department will invest around £5.3 billion in SLA over the next 10 years to get homes up to standard. That will see us deliver approximately 40,000 new or refurbished bed spaces.

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James Cartlidge >

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Notes: *James admitted that when we were in government, we were "well short of where we need to be" on housing for our service personnel.*

Competence: *Afraid not.*

The Labour government has criticised the Conservatives' record on defence procurement, accusing the former administration of leaving major defence projects in disarray.

A newly published Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) report revealed that during the Conservatives' final year in office, only two out of 49 major defence projects – just **4%** – were delivered on time and within budget. The report also highlighted a significant increase in the number of red-rated projects, rising from five to eight, a **60% increase**.

Notes: *Kemi promoted him?! The phrase 'reward for failure' is ringing round my head.*



Competence: *Not totally across the detail*

**PMQs descends into CHAOS as
Tory loses count of how many
questions he's asked**

Notes: *Is it too much to ask that our shadow ministers can count to six?*

NAME: Kevin Hollinrake
JOB TITLE: Chairman of the
Conservative Party



Judgement: *Bad.*

Tories under fire over U-turn on pledge to protect renters from no- fault evictions

The Tories promised to scrap no-fault evictions almost six years ago but more than 100 MPs voted against Labour's Renters' Rights Bill and shadow housing secretary Kevin Hollinrake refused to say he supported the incoming ban

Notes: *Before we let him oppose no-fault evictions can we check how many properties Kevin is currently renting out?*

Support for Net Zero targets: *It was part of his vision.*

Setting out my vision for creating local green jobs

Notes: *It might not be very environmentally friendly but could we just burn all the net zero essays Kevin used to write for the Conservative Environment Network?*



NAME: Helen Whately
JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State
for Work and Pensions

Competence: *"I don't know"*



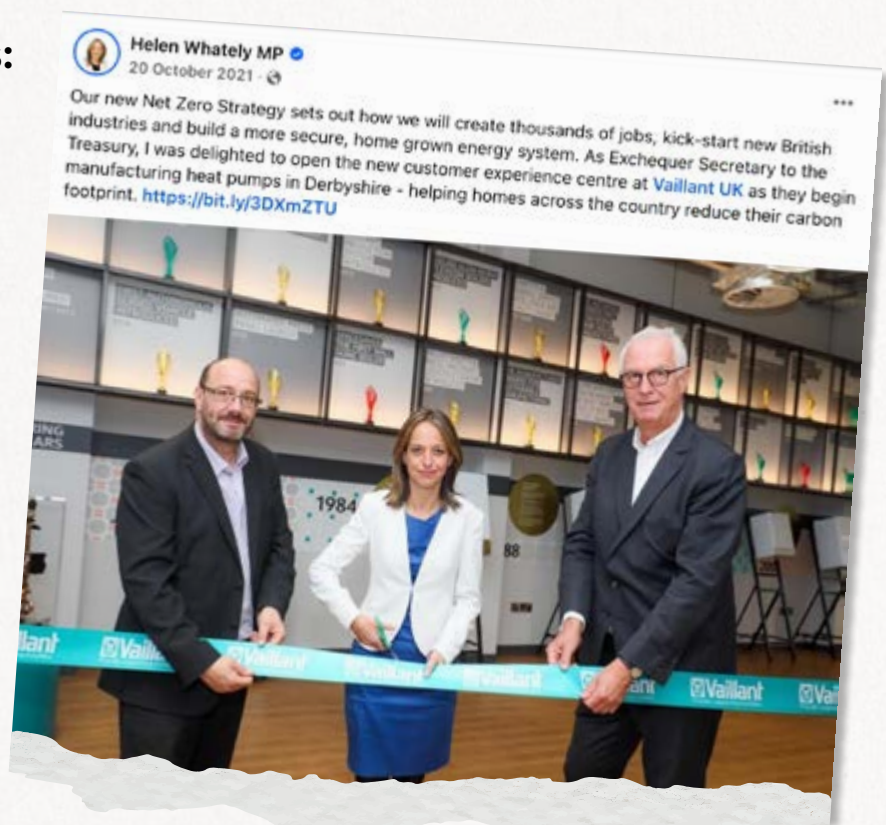
Gavin Williamson incompetent? I
don't know says minister amid
Marcus Rashford racism row

Notes: *We try not to say "I don't know" when asked if our ministers are incompetent.
Although sometimes it's the best we can manage*

Support for Net Zero targets:

Loves them

Notes: *Heat pumps and carbon
footprint in this one. Not
very on-message is it?*



NAME: Andrew Bowie

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of
State for Energy Security



Judgement: *Dubious.*

**Kemi Badenoch is not a 'loose cannon', says
Conservative MP supporter**

Notes: *When Kemi was saying maternity pay was "excessive" and trying to put civil servants in prison, Bowie insisted she was not a "loose cannon". He should've said she doesn't make gaffes.*



NAME: Laura Trott

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State for Education

Competence: *Significant room for improvement*



Laura Trott accused of not knowing 'basic facts of her job' after questions over debt

A Treasury minister has been criticised for claiming debt as a percentage of GDP is falling - something that contradicts official forecasts.

Notes: *Laura was accused of failing to understand the basics of her job before, yet she wants to be in charge of children's education. It's a hard square to circle.*

Support for Net Zero targets: *Enthusiast.*

Laura Trott MP asks COP President question on interim Net Zero targets

As attention nationally turns to the start of the UN COP26 conference in Glasgow, I am incredibly excited to this week (5th November) be hosting our first Sevenoaks and Swanley Virtual Climate Change Conference. Climate change is a serious threat to the future of our planet; in 2019, the UK adopted a world-leading net zero emissions target, aiming to end our contribution to climate change altogether by 2050. This will mean changing the way we heat our homes, get to work, grow our food, and much more. The Sevenoaks and Swanley Virtual Climate Conference will see experts from around the country, as well local councillors and groups, discuss what changes we need from businesses and consumers. Following the event, I will be writing to the COP26 President, Alok Sharma MP, to summarise the conversations we've had and give him an overview of our local priorities. I do hope as many of you as possible will be able to join and I have provided the registration details below if you are yet to sign up.

Notes: *Laura went above and beyond on Net Zero. Questions in the Commons, summits in her constituency. She really committed to the bit. Which could be an issue now, you know.*

NAME: Nick Timothy
JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of
State for Justice

Judgement: *See 2017.*



Architect of Theresa May's 2017 election disaster to fight Matt Hancock's old seat

Notes: *It's a real asset for us to have people on board who know what it's like running an election. Don't think 2017 would've been my first choice but that's above my pay grade.*

Judgement: *Lacking.*

James Cleverly says he disagrees with Nick Timothy about Islamic public prayer

Notes: *Might want to get Nick in a room with James — you know, the guy who wants to be Mayor of London — before he starts ranting again about an “act of domination”.*



NAME: Damian Hinds

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of
State for Health and
Social Care

Support for Net Zero targets:

Backed them for years.

In its 2019 report, the CCC described Net Zero in 2050 as "the latest date for the UK credibly to maintain its status as a climate leader and the earliest to be credibly deliverable alongside other government objectives." The Conservative manifesto, on which I as a Conservative candidate stand, is just out, and reconfirms our commitment to 2050. A candidate's Election Address is our own personal statement; as I say in mine, "Climate change remains the great challenge of our age".

Notes: *Damian's still in the Conservative Environment Network and he loved the net zero stuff in the last manifesto, but other than that I'm sure he'll be fine with junking his long-held principles.*



NAME: Victoria Atkins

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Competence: *Textbook lack of.*

NOT MUCH COP Home Office minister admits she doesn't know how many police officers there are in the service – as she gave an interview about police numbers

Notes: *It was only an interview about policing numbers. Why should the policing minister be expected to know how many police there are?*

Support for pulling out of the ECHR: *Not. A. Fan. At. All.*

Victoria Atkins also spoke about her "sadness" at the Tories' plan to leave the EHCR but said it was the right thing to "deal with the politics of today".

Notes: *When we're doing the ECHR stuff let's try and remember it makes Victoria sad.*



NAME: Richard Holden
JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of
State for Transport

Competence: *Coward.*



Tory MP Has A Rather Telling Response To Jibe About Richard Holden's 'Chicken Run'

The former Conservative

Notes: *Ric was running things round here the last time. Didn't actually see much of him though, what with the whole chicken run thing.*

Competence: *Laughable.*

Tory chairman's leaflets sent to wrong constituency

Notes: *This is an easy mistake to make when you haven't decided where you're chicken running to.*

Competence: *Doing Labour's job for them.*

Top Tory accidentally exposes party's shocking record on prison spaces

Notes: *It's like when you see a clown stand on a big comedy rake.*

NAME: Katie Lam

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary
of State for Housing,
Communities and
Local Government



Judgement: *Poor.*

Tory MP sparks backlash after calling for legal migrants to 'go home' to make Britain 'culturally coherent'

Katie Lam said many migrants who came to Britain legally will 'need to go home'

Deporting legally settled people is 'broadly in line' with Tory policy, says Badenoch's office

Notes: *When Katie said she wanted migrants living legally in the UK to "go home" you gave her a big old endorsement so there isn't much for me to say here.*

Competence: *Problematic.*

Senior Tory privately urged 'radical' shake-up of triple lock

In a leaked recording in June, Katie Lam appears to break from Kemi Badenoch's position, saying an 'entirely new pension system' may be needed

Notes: *Katie going further than the line. AGAIN.*



NAME: Rebecca Paul

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of
State for Digital, Culture,
Media and Sport

Notes: *A thorough vetting process has failed to identify who this person is.*

NAME: Harriet Cross

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland



Support for Net Zero targets: *Big fan.*



Notes: When "transitioning to net zero" was our thing Harriet loved it.



NAME: Mims Davies

JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary of State for Wales

Judgement: *Truss fan.*

**I'M BACKING
LIZ TRUSS
FOR LEADER**

**LIZ FOR
LEADER** | **READY TO
LEAD**
LIZFORLEADER.CO.UK



Notes: *We could probably just ask Mims to delete her support for Liz Truss. Or at least start with the bits in big capital letters.*

Competence: *Not really.*

**DWP minister appears to admit
PIP crackdown and reforms is
'dangerous'**

Ms Davies "appears to have breached the long-standing convention of ministerial "collective responsibility"

Notes: *Last time Mims was in government she said her own department was "dangerous". She won't be doing that again!*



NAME: Joy Morrissey
JOB TITLE: Shadow Secretary
of State for Women
and Equalities



Support for Net Zero targets:

Big Believer.

Let me be clear, the Conservatives want a net-zero future for our country. After all, we oversaw the fastest decarbonisation of any G20 nation. It is instinctively Conservative to want to do all we can to protect our planet. But how we get there matters.

Notes: *A bit of gentle re-education for Joy is needed here.*



NAME: Rebecca Harris
JOB TITLE: Opposition Chief Whip



Judgement: *Terrible.*

Liz Truss backed as next Tory leader by 11 government whips in latest blow for rival Rishi Sunak

Chief Whip Chris Heaton-Harris is yet to announce who he is backing - while Truss supporter Therese Coffey revealed the move in a graphic posted on social media on Tuesday morning.

Notes: *Rebecca backed Liz Truss. Now we let her tell all the other MPs what to do. I can see an issue here.*



Shadow Cabinet Vetting

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