

Kemi Badenoch named new children's minister ^[1]

Kemi Badenoch has been appointed the new children and families minister in Boris Johnson's first cabinet.

Author: Gaunt, Catherine

Source: Nursery World

Format: Article

Publication Date: 28 Jul 2019

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The MP for Saffron Walden, who was elected in 2017, replaces Nadhim Zahawi, who has been moved to the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Ms Badenoch takes on responsibility for the inspection and regulation of early years and childcare policy and the delivery of 30-hour childcare, as well as the pupil premium, special educational needs and children's social care.

The appointment was announced on Saturday evening. On twitter the new minister said:

I'm humbled to have been appointed a junior minister at the DfE. A huge privilege to be able to serve and make a positive difference on a number of issues close to my heart. I look forward to working with the ministerial team and everyone at @educationgovuk...(1/3)

She added, 'Thank you for all good wishes and kind messages of support received. I also look forward to working not just with @Conservatives colleagues but cross-party and grateful for the warm welcome from @TracyBrabin and @SteveReedMP who no doubt will be keeping me on my toes!'

Considered a rising star in the Conservative Party, she was vice-chair of the Conservatives from January 2018 until June this year and previously sat on the Justice Select Committee from September 2017 until this month.

The 39-year-old MP was born in London but grew up in Nigeria, before returning to England at 16 to study at an FE college, where she worked part-time at McDonald's.

In an interview with The Independent in 2017 she said of her time at college, 'Most of the students were from ethnic minorities and the expectations for us were low. The poverty of low expectations must change. Schools and teachers matter.' In the same interview, she spoke of her support for Brexit.

She became an apprentice engineer and studied engineering at Sussex University.

This was followed by a part-time law degree at Birkbeck College, and a job at Coutts bank as a systems analyst for nine years. She was digital director at the Spectator before joining the London Assembly as the Conservative's economic and policing spokesman.

Ms Badenoch's personal website lists her areas of interest as engineering and technology, social mobility and integration, and says that she provides regular mentoring to women who wish to pursue careers in technology.

In April, she spoke during a debate on school funding in the House of Commons, saying, 'Schools are performing so much better than before, but I must recognise concerns raised by my local headteachers and parents about available funding, as schools are having to meet costs that they never did before...We are asking schools to do much more than they ever have, and it is only right that we give them much more money to do so.'

Sector comments

Neil Leitch, chief executive of the Early Years Alliance, said, 'It's hugely disappointing to have lost the fifth minister for childcare in almost as many years.

'Kemi Badenoch inherits a brief overseeing a sector in crisis: there is now a £662m funding shortfall and thousands of providers have closed with many more continuing to struggle on. The challenges facing the sector are significant but are not insurmountable and they require urgent action.

'Families value the high quality, dedicated workforce and we look forward to working with the new minister to ensure children across the country have the best start in life.'

Purnima Tanuku, chief executive of the National Day Nurseries Association (NDNA) said, 'We would like to welcome the new minister with responsibility for early years, Kemi Badenoch, and look forward to working with her.

'We know that she has raised the issue of school funding in Parliament, so we now hope she will urgently look at early years funding for private, voluntary and independent (PVI) nursery providers who deliver the majority of funded childcare hours in England.

'Many nurseries are struggling to offer funded childcare particularly in deprived areas. This could reduce the availability of places and damage efforts to drive up quality.

'We will urge the new minister to look at solutions which include meaningful investment in funded childcare, calling the hours "funded" rather than "free", which raises unrealistic expectations, and giving nurseries in England 100 per cent relief from unfair Business Rates. We hope that Mrs Badenoch will support the PVI sector to thrive so it can deliver the Government's ambitious childcare promise.'

Susanna Kalitowski, policy manager at the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years (PACEY), said she hoped that the new minister would 'be able to stay in post long enough to build trust with the childcare and early years sector and bring about positive change.

'This can't come soon enough, as her appointment comes at significant moment. Whilst more providers are "good" or "outstanding" than ever before, more and more are also struggling to stay afloat. We have lost over a third of registered childminders in England since 2012, and staff turnover is increasing in nurseries.

'Urgent action is needed from Government to ensure that dedicated and talented practitioners continue to join and remain in the sector in the future, and that providers can balance their books. Without this, parents will no longer have access to a wide range of affordable, high quality provision in the future.'

On Twitter, June O' Sullivan, the chief executive of London Early Years Foundation, said, 'Congratulations @KemiBadenoch to one of the most important and often misunderstood role in Gov. Let us get you up to speed with its complexities.'

Kemi Badenoch's brief in full

- children's social care including child protection, children in care, adoption, care leavers, social work, local authority performance and family law
- special educational needs including high needs funding
- education policy in response to the race disparity audit
- safeguarding in schools
- disadvantaged pupils – including pupil premium and pupil premium plus
- school sport, healthy pupils and school food, including free school meals
- early years policy including inspection, regulation and literacy and numeracy
- childcare policy, inspection and regulation
- delivery of 30 hours free childcare offer
- social mobility including opportunity areas
- DfE contribution to cross-government work to tackle rough sleeping

Region: Europe ^[3]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/07/kemi-badenoch-named-new-childrens-minister>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/19/07/kemi-badenoch-named-new-childrens-minister> [2]

<https://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/news/article/kemi-badenoch-named-new-children-s-minister> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/region/europe>