

## Badenoch is arrogantly contemptuous of almost all people...

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The words that Kemi Badenoch endorsed in the pamphlet published during the course of her Conservative Party leadership campaign that I referred to on this blog yesterday have haunted me since then because I have found many of them so troubling. None, however, appear to be more difficult than these:

### **The socialisation of mental health**

While people talking about mental health is a positive, the socialisation of mental health so everyone has to treat you differently has failed to improve people's mental health outcomes. As one academic put it, across the West, '**the meaning of 'safety underwent a process of 'concept creep' and expanded to included 'emotional safety'... The subjective experience of 'harm' became definitional in assessing trauma**'. Psychological and psychotherapy professions numbers went from 102,000 in 2002 to 223,700 in 2023. In 1999 the NHS spent £4 billion on mental health, which had risen to £16.8 billion by 2023/4.

This approach now offers economic advantages and protections. If you have a neurodiversity diagnosis (e.g. anxiety, autism), you are in a category similar to race or biological sex in terms of discrimination law and general attitudes. As a child, you may well get better treatment or equipment at school – even transport to and from home. If you are in the workforce, you are protected in employment terms from day 1, you can more easily claim for unfair dismissal, and can also require your employer makes 'reasonable adjustments' to your job (only revealed after you are employed). By 2024, mental health was the number 1 issue for new welfare claimants, with this as the primary claim for 41% of all new disability related benefit claims.

And then there were these words, as well:

*Being diagnosed as neuro-diverse was once seen as helpful as it meant you could understand your own brain, and so help you to deal with the world. It was an individual focused change. But now it also offers economic advantages and protections. If you have a neurodiversity diagnosis (e.g. anxiety, autism), then that is usually seen as a*

*disability, a category similar to race or biological sex in terms of discrimination law and general attitudes.*

*If you are a child, you may well get better treatment or equipment at school - even transport to and from home. If you are in the workforce, you are protected in employment terms from day 1, you can more easily claim for unfair dismissal, and under disability rules you can also require your employer makes 'reasonable adjustments' to your job (and you can reveal your disability once you have been employed rather than before).*

*In short, whereas once psychological and mental health was seen as something that people should work on themselves as individuals, mental health has become something that society, schools and employers have to adapt around.*

I cannot read these words and but think that Badenoch is implying that she wishes to deny the diversity of people living within our society.

I cannot help but think that she is also seeking to deny:

- \* Most mental healthcare
- \* The right to time off work for mental health conditions
- \* Support for children with mental health conditions in schools
- \* Special educational needs support for many children
- \* The right to support during education e.g. with the special needs some have for equipment, additional time, reading assistance and much else.

It would also seem that she wants to return to:

- \* A world of isolation and fear for those she deems to be 'not normal', who she makes clear should suffer in isolation and silence
- \* A past where bullying of those with mental ill health was the norm
- \* A place where those who were not typical were told to shut up and comply. The straitjacket had to fit everyone.
- \* A world of trauma for millions, in other words.

What is also apparent is that Badenoch wants to do this by:

- \* Stigmatisation
- \* Bullying
- \* Cutting of spending on mental health and related issues, especially in education

\* The removal of access for many to any chance of participating in society.

I was brought up in the world that Badenoch wants, and as a result, I saw and lived with the consequences. They were horrendous and long-lasting.

It would seem that Badenoch is in absolute denial of most modern understanding of both mental health and the neuro-divergence that is always inherent within societies. Some of the latter can give rise to mental health issues, but most are simply about the different understandings that people have as to how they can integrate within the society in which they live, which have to be respected. It is almost staggering that she picks up people with autism and anxiety for special attention when doing so, seemingly seeking to deny the consequences that these conditions can give rise to.

What I read from the whole of this document is that Badenoch is seeking to promote the idea that there is a single uniform standard of behaviour, philosophy, conduct and belief that is acceptable in her worldview and that those who transgress are of no concern to her.

We cannot, of course, know the precise number of those whose mental health conditions Badenoch is seeking to abuse, but many of us will suffer mental ill health during our lives or know those who have and do, and a substantial minority of people will be neuro-divergent. Many of these people will not fit into the supposedly standard education and employment systems that supposedly fit all and which Kemi Badenoch clearly thinks should prevail even though the inevitable consequence will be that the abilities of many people will be seriously underdeveloped at massive long-term cost to society at large.

What Badenoch ignores is that if neuro-divergence exists, it is precisely because of the advantages it brings to society. Otherwise we should have expected the evolutionary process to have eliminated it. Badenoch is seeking to deny that. She is claiming we should all be the same, when very obviously we are not.

I find it almost impossible to explain the revulsion that I feel at the words that Kemi Badenoch has chosen to endorse. They can only imply a belief on her part in her own superiority and a resulting belief that she has a right to impose her views upon everyone else, whether they are suited to them or not.

This is not just arrogant but goes far beyond that. It reveals an intellectual and moral bankruptcy so deeply embedded within her psyche that it suggests she has no understanding of the lives of most people and the options that they have or that the demands that she is making are repugnant to them. Her expectation that she can impose those demands is imperialist as a result, but it's also worse than that. The words she has endorsed imply that she is willing to deny the humanity of others.

That should make her wholly unfit for any public office, let alone to be Leader of the

Opposition in this country. There are, unfortunately, no grounds for thinking that her political demise will come as quickly as that of Liz Truss, but the sooner it happens the better the public life of this country will be.