



BRIEFING

2022 Conservative Party Leadership Contenders

07th July 2022 [2nd edition]

Two days after the Chancellor and the Health Secretary abruptly resigned, citing concerns about the Prime Minister's competence and ability to serve the country with integrity, Boris Johnson has now announced his own resignation. In this briefing, FTI Consulting takes a look at the runners and riders positioning to succeed Johnson as Prime Minister.



In 2019, Boris Johnson defeated Jeremy Hunt by 66% to 33% of the Party Membership



180,000+

Conservative Party Members

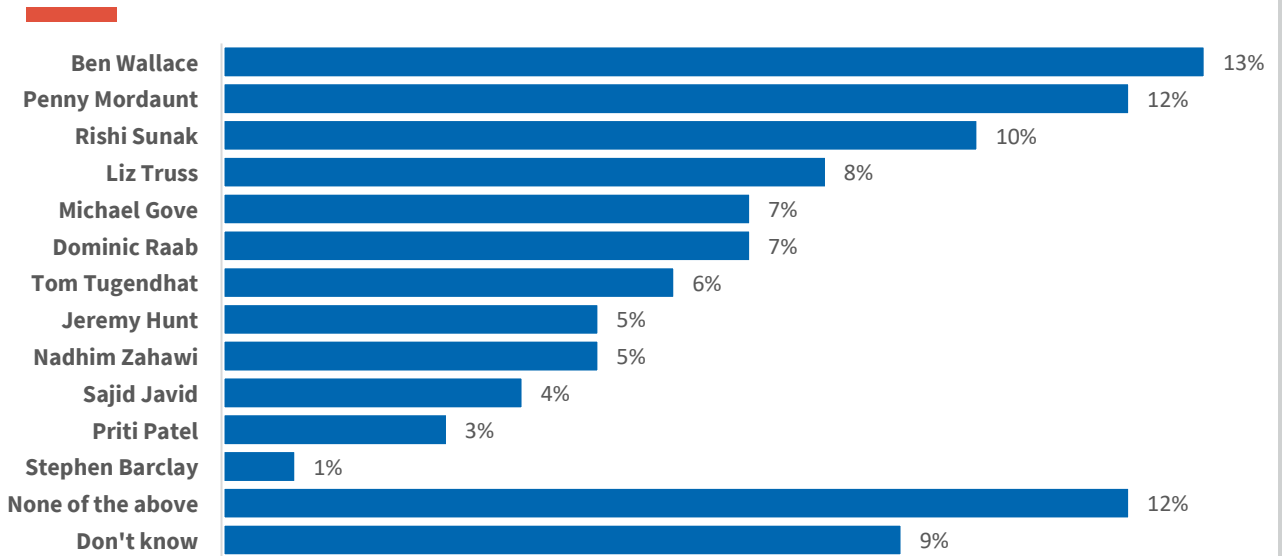
Purpose of this Briefing

This briefing provides a detailed profile of the senior Conservative MPs who are expected to run for the Conservative Party leadership, and FTI Consulting's take on their leadership chances.

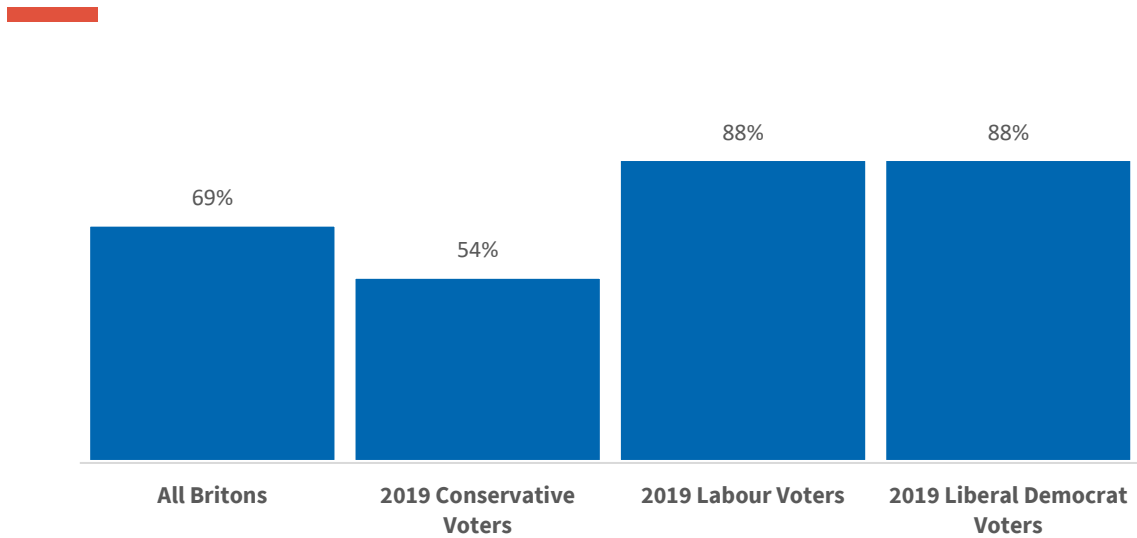
Situation

Amid growing concerns about Boris Johnson's leadership since the start of the so-called Partygate scandal, the Prime Minister has suffered a tidal wave of ministerial exits from the Government this week, with close to 60 MPs on the 'payroll' tendering their resignations. The Prime Minister has now offered his own resignation, and in so doing so has triggered the beginning of a new Conservative Party leadership election. This will take place in two stages. The first stage is a process of shortlisting, where candidates put themselves forward with the support of other Conservative MPs. These are then whittled down to a final two through a series of ballots of MPs, in which they must receive a certain proportion of votes, or not come last, to proceed in the contest. The 1922 Committee sets the rules, thresholds, and timetable for this stage, which will be announced in due course. Ballots are then issued to all Conservative Party members who may then cast their vote for either of the two final candidates in a straight contest. This afternoon, senior Conservative MPs with leadership ambitions are working at pace to garner support among MPs, ahead of what is highly likely to be an extremely crowded field. So far, the Attorney General Suella Braverman and Steve Baker have been the only two Conservative MPs to announce their intention to run for the leadership.

While the race to be the next Conservative party leader appears to be a crowded field, head to head match-ups tell a different story ([YouGov 7th July 2022](#))



Snap poll: most Conservative voters now want Boris Johnson to resign ([YouGov 5th July 2022](#))



Results available [here](#).



The Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP

*Minister of State for Trade Policy, Department for International Trade
(September 2021 – Present)*

Constituency: Portsmouth North (Majority: 15,780)

Previous Positions

Paymaster General,
Cabinet Office (February
2020 – September 2021)

**Secretary of State for
Defence, Ministry of
Defence** (May 2019 – July
2019)

**Minister for Women and
Equalities, Cabinet Office**
(April 2018 – July 2019)

**Secretary of State for
International
Development, Department
for International
Development** (November
2017 – April 2018)

Minister of State,
Department for Work and
Pensions (July 2016 –
November 2017)

**Minister of State for the
Armed Forces, Ministry of
Defence** (May 2015 – July
2016)

**Parliamentary Under-
Secretary of State for
Communities and Local
Government, Department
for Communities and Local
Government** (July 2014 –
May 2015)

Elected to the House of Commons

2010

Analysis: Mordaunt is seen by some in Westminster as a potential 'last man standing' in a leadership election, owing to her moderate views, previous experience in Cabinet, and position on the centre-right of the Parliamentary party. However, her ambiguous ideological position is viewed by others with distrust. This perceived insincerity could prevent her from garnering enough support in an increasingly polarised group of MPs, as some yearn for a return to the type of Conservatism promoted by David Cameron, whilst others believe the only way to retain support in the so-called 'Red Wall' - and the only way to remain in Government - is to retain the current Johnsonian course.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Penny Mordaunt was elected as Member of Parliament for Portsmouth North at the second attempt in 2010, taking the seat from Labour with a majority of 7,289. Upon entering Parliament, she served on the House of Commons Defence Committee and Committees on Arms Export Controls and European Scrutiny Committee. She was first appointed to Government as a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, as part of David Cameron's July 2014 reshuffle.

After the 2015 General Election, Mordaunt was promoted to Minister of State for the Armed Forces, before being moved to the role of Minister of State for Disabled People in July 2016. She was then promoted to the Cabinet in November 2017, replacing Priti Patel as Secretary of State for International Development. Mordant was made Minister for Women and Equalities following Amber Rudd's resignation in April 2018. In May 2019, Mordaunt was appointed Secretary of State for Defence and continued to serve as Minister for Women and Equalities concurrently. She served in both roles until July 2019, when Theresa May resigned as Prime Minister.

Following the 2019 General Election, Prime Minister Boris Johnson re-appointed Mordaunt to the Government, this time as Paymaster General in the Cabinet Office, a role she held from February 2020 until September 2021, where she led work on overhauling how the UK prepares and responds to threats and has bolstered the UK's defensive cyber security. After this, Mordaunt was appointed to her current role at the Department for International Trade where she primarily oversees the UK's trade remedies, trade disputes and engagement with the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

Prior to her election, Mordaunt had a varied career including a period working in hospitals and orphanages in post-revolutionary Romania, an experience to which she attributed her interest in politics. After graduating, she held a variety of political and public relations roles, including Head of Youth for the Conservative Party under John Major and Head of Broadcasting under William Hague. She also briefly worked as Head of Foreign Press for the

2000 George W Bush presidential campaign, going on to repeat her involvement in 2004. Mordaunt is a Royal Naval Reservist, serving as an acting sub-lieutenant at HMS King Alfred on Whale Island.

Political views and position within the Party

Mordaunt has expressed strong pro-Brexit views and was a prominent figure within the 2016 Leave campaign. During her time in Cabinet and prior to the UK's official departure from the EU, Mordaunt belonged to a grouping which advocated a "managed no-deal" exit.

Mordaunt has, for some time, been viewed as a possible leadership contender, and in recent months as a potential "dark horse candidate". In the summer of 2016, she organised a party for MPs that was viewed by several attendees as an attempt to establish support for a future leadership bid. During the premiership of Theresa May, Mordaunt sought to retain her Brexiteer credentials to ensure that she would receive support from the Party membership and was able to maintain some distance from the then Government's approach to Brexit.

Since then, Mordaunt's views on Brexit have positioned her favourably during Boris Johnson's tenure, despite her support of Jeremy Hunt in the 2019 Conservative leadership election. It has been argued that she represents a 'fresh choice' that could prove more popular than other potential candidates such as Liz Truss and Ben Wallace, who both backed a Remain vote in 2016. Mordaunt has at times been critical of government policy and it has been reported that supporters of other candidates may draw attention to these occasions. On 28th May, after the publication of the full Sue Gray report, Mordaunt told the BBC that she was "angry" at those in Downing Street who ignored Covid rules while blocking "reasonable requests to relax restrictions".

However, it has been suggested that, beyond Brexit, it is hard to establish exactly where Mordaunt sits ideologically. On constitutional issues she has demonstrated traditionalist views, such as her opposition to the Lords Reform Bill on which she opposed the Coalition Government. She has also demonstrated liberal credentials on social issues, for instance through her strong support of equal marriage and trans rights. Her time as Minister for Trade Policy has also revealed her

strong beliefs in free markets, free trade and economic liberalisation, but she has often caveated this belief with a desire to see further cooperation among like-minded states as opposed to an outright laissez-faire approach across the globe. This is particularly true in the context of UK and allied security.

Minister of State for Trade Policy

Since taking up her role as Minister for Trade Policy in September 2021, Mordaunt has promoted open and free trade policies, viewing trade liberalisation as a "powerful force for good." However, Mordaunt has noted that more must be done to tackle "non-tariff barriers" and market distortions which block progress.

In a speech delivered at the Chatham House Global Trade Conference in November 2021, Mordaunt said that the Government's trade policy would feed into wider interests including defence, intelligence and national security. Mordaunt made clear that the Department for International Trade would "play a central role" in achieving the objectives of the Integrated Review through global trade reform and a balancing of the UK's security and prosperity objectives.

Acknowledging the trade, security and intelligence challenges from China and Russia, Mordaunt has argued for a coherent government policy that addressed these issues as a whole and noted that the AUKUS defence agreement would be an important opportunity to do this. Whilst supportive of multilateralism, Mordaunt claimed that "we are living in a world where CPTPP initiatives are a floor, AUKUS is the ceiling and the WTO is the foundation." As a result, she said that multilateralism must be complemented by working with like-minded partners "to set the direction of travel for trade policy with a sense of urgency."

In December 2021, Mordaunt delivered another speech detailing her approach to trade policy at the Carter Center in the US. Reiterating many of the points made in her November speech at Chatham House, Mordaunt also called for an "invigorated shared vision for trade" which builds upon the Atlantic Charter, maximises AUKUS, and promotes shared ideals for the Indo-Pacific. Mordaunt showed a particular desire to have this vision developed by 2023, when Japan will occupy the presidency of the G7, India the G20 and Australia the Secretary-General position of the OECD.



The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP

Secretary of State for Defence, Ministry of Defence (July 2019 – present)

Constituency: Wyre and Preston North (Majority: 16,781)

Previous Positions

Minister of State for Security and Economic Crime, Home Office (July 2016 – July 2019)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Northern Ireland Office (May 2015 – July 2016)

Assistant Whip, HM Treasury (July 2014 – May 2015)

Shadow Minister for Scotland (July 2007 – May 2010)

Member, House of Commons Administration Committee (December 2014 – March 2015)

Member, House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee (July 2005 – May 2010)

Elected to the House of Commons
2005

Analysis: Wallace had a relatively low-profile reputation within the Conservative Party prior to the evacuation from Afghanistan and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Since both situations have unfolded, and in the context of the wider ‘Partygate’ scandal, Wallace’s reputation has been bolstered across the political spectrum and in the media. Indeed, several outlets have considered Wallace a potential ‘dark horse’ candidate in a future leadership election, and he has recently topped ConservativeHome’s poll of party members’ approval of the Cabinet, coming ahead of Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss, who have long been spoken of in Westminster as frontrunners. Whilst it is not yet clear whether Wallace would have sufficient support in the Parliamentary party should he choose to run, he is certainly well liked among the grassroots who could view him as a safe pair of hands.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Ben Wallace was elected to Parliament in 2005 for the constituency of Lancaster and Wyre, now Wyre and Preston North, defeating the Labour Party incumbent with a majority of 4,171. With the boundary changes of 2010, his seat became considerably safer, and he now has a majority of 16,781. Wallace has a background in Scottish politics, having served as a Member of the Scottish Parliament between 1999 and 2003. Whilst in the UK Parliament, Wallace has served in a number of roles including Minister of State for Security and Economic Crime, Shadow Minister for Scotland, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Northern Ireland Office.

Before entering politics, Wallace had a military career, attending Sandhurst aged 19 and serving in the Scots Guards, rising to the rank of Captain. During his time in the military, he was posted in Germany, Cyprus, Central America, and Northern Ireland.

Political views and position within the Party

Wallace had been viewed as close to Boris Johnson after managing his short-lived 2016 leadership campaign, and his political proximity to him has been considered curious given the two men were firmly on opposite sides of the Brexit debate.

Wallace has not shied away from criticising colleagues within the Party in the past, particularly when there are matters of personal loyalty or leadership considerations at stake. Previously, he sought to differentiate himself from the former Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson. This may be in part because he was seen by some as a more suitable successor to Michael Fallon when the latter was forced to resign. This animosity is thought to have contributed to Wallace’s more low-profile position in Johnson’s 2019 leadership campaign.

In response to the resignations of Rishi Sunak and Sajid Javid on 05 July, Wallace confirmed he would not be resigning, adding he would not be “indulging in political parlour games”.

Secretary of State for Defence

Wallace was appointed as Secretary of State for Defence following Boris Johnson’s ascension to the premiership in July 2019. His appointment is understood to have been unpopular with many close to Johnson, with the Prime Minister allegedly only appointing him reluctantly. In August 2019, Wallace was overheard - and filmed - having a private conversation with French Defence Minister Florence Parly about Johnson’s decision to prorogue Parliament. In their exchange, he appeared to admit that the decision had been made with a view to limiting time for Parliament to block the Government’s Brexit policy which contradicted the official No.10 line that the decision was made in order to bring forward a new legislative agenda.

In early 2020, following the Conservative Party’s decisive election victory, Wallace managed to retain his position despite it being anticipated that he would be replaced in the Prime Minister’s cabinet reshuffle. This is thought to be due, in part, to Wallace’s embrace of Dominic Cummings’s technology-focused agenda and the fact that he toed the party line on the integrated review and avoided conflict with the Treasury.

Wallace’s tenure as Defence Secretary has been marked by a focus on leading international efforts to try and introduce rules governing conduct in space. He has also driven discussions on ways to strengthen defence relations with Saudi Arabia, particularly military exports.

In 2021, the Ministry of Defence outlined its plans to reduce the size of the regular Army, lowering the target size from 82,000 personnel to 72,500 by 2025. Wallace told the Commons at the time that the Army’s “increased deploy-ability and technological advantage will mean that greater effect can be delivered by fewer people”.

Following the publication of the Defence and Security Industrial Strategy in March 2021, Wallace emphasised that it was time for UK defence suppliers to think more about the social value of their work, though wider benefits such as skills creation and supply chain resilience which can enhance local economies. Significantly, under Wallace, social value has become a key element of the MOD’s tender evaluations. According to Wallace, the DSIS further sets the foundations to reverse the long-term decline of Defence R&D investment.

Throughout his time as Defence Secretary, Wallace has been a strong proponent of working collaboratively with allies both in terms of economies of scales and interoperability. According to Wallace, “we know too that often, ground-breaking transformational capabilities only come through international collaboration.”

Under Wallace, the UK has also been at the forefront of international efforts to support the Ukrainian government and armed forces as they defend themselves from Russian attacks. It is understood that he has been a key figure in pushing the Government towards a position of robust support for Ukraine. Wallace has backed an extra £1.3 billion in extra funding for military operations and aid to Ukraine, on top of the existing £1.5 billion of UK support. During the May 2022 US-UK Ukraine Aid discussions, Wallace – in what can be interpreted as a criticism of Macron’s assertion that NATO was “braindead” – said that many have criticized NATO in the past but that “the response to the Russian invasion has shown that actually NATO is far from moribund.”

More recently, Wallace has publicly called for higher defence spending by the middle of the decade, in a move which put him at odds with the former Chancellor, Rishi Sunak. He said that billions more would be needed to meet Britain’s defence needs, but denied that he was ordered by Downing Street to rewrite a keynote speech to remove a call for a higher military spending target.



The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP

*Chair, House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee
(January 2020 – Present)*

Constituency: South-West Surrey (Majority: 8,817)

Previous Positions

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Foreign & Commonwealth Office (July 2018 – July 2019)

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Department of Health and Social Care (September 2012 – July 2018)

Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media and Sport, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (May 2010 – September 2012)

Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Shadow Deputy Prime Minister (July 2007 – May 2010)

Shadow Minister for Work and Pensions (May 2005 – July 2007)

Member, House of Commons International Development Committee (July 2005 – July 2006)

Elected to the House of Commons

2005

Analysis: Many in Westminster certainly expect Hunt to stand in any forthcoming leadership election. Viewed as a return to Cameroonian competence by some, and as “Theresa May in trousers” by critics, however Hunt’s window of opportunity for the top job may well have passed. Yet, if he can demonstrate decent support among MPs, he may earn himself the offer of a return ticket to Cabinet.

Background and Parliamentary Career

First elected to the safe Conservative seat of South-West Surrey in 2005, Hunt has spent much of his time in Parliament on the Conservative frontbenches, most notably serving as Health Secretary and Foreign Secretary. His vast Parliamentary experience prompted him to take part in the 2019 Conservative Party leadership election where he ultimately lost to Boris Johnson.

Before entering politics, Hunt worked as a management consultant at OC&C Strategy, before moving to Japan to become an English language teacher. After returning to the UK, he had a number of business ventures, including founding PR agency Profile PR in 1991, specialising in IT. He then founded a company known as Hotcourses with the aim of helping people who want to study rather than just travel abroad'. Hunt stood down as director of the company in 2009, but he retained 48% of the shares, which gained him over £14 million when the company was sold in 2017. With this, he became the richest Cabinet member.

As the longest running Health Secretary in British political history, Hunt worked to embed the major structural reforms passed under the Health and Social Care Act, led efforts moving towards a “seven-day NHS” and oversaw the implementation of the Five Year Forward View led by Sir Simon Stevens. Dealing with some upheaval during his tenure, Hunt worked to position himself as a champion for patient safety, community and social care, and mental health reform. Hunt is also credited with arguing successfully for health and social care to be put on equal footing in terms of government priority, and for securing a cash injection for the NHS of £20 billion by 2020.

Political views and position within the Party

After initially campaigning to remain during the EU referendum, Hunt rebranded himself as a “born again Brexiteer” but campaigned against a no-deal departure. A self-described “One-Nation Tory”, Hunt generally positions himself on the liberal wing of the Conservative party, associating himself with socially and economically liberal policies. However, despite saying he would not seek to change the law if he became Prime Minister, Hunt raised eyebrows in 2019 when he said he supported halving the legal time limit for abortions from 24 to 12 weeks.

In response to the announcement that Boris Johnson would face a confidence vote on 6th June, Hunt tweeted that Conservative MPs “know in our hearts we are not giving the British people the leadership they deserve”, adding “we are not offering the integrity, competence

and vision necessary to unleash the enormous potential of our country". He concluded by saying the party was on course to lose the next general election, declaring that the vote was a decision between changing or losing. Allies of the Prime Minister responded by dismissing Hunt as "Theresa May in trousers".

Chair, House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee

In 2020, Hunt was elected as the new chair of the Health and Social Care Committee. During his tenure, the committee has launched numerous inquiries, from the safety of maternity services in England, to children and young people's mental health, to digital transformation in the NHS. Its latest inquiry continues a common theme from Hunt's time as Secretary of State – integrated care systems and how to deliver better local care for patients.

Hunt supported the principle of lockdowns during COVID-19 and, as the UK transitioned to a new normal post-COVID, his focus turned to the growing backlog of patients waiting for care. His committee warned that over five million people were waiting for NHS treatment. Whilst he

expressed concerns around how the money would be spent, Hunt also said the Government should be given credit for paying the "political price" of raising taxes – in this instance, national insurance – to help find the money to tackle the backlog.

In 2021, Hunt admitted that he was part of the "groupthink" that focused too much on flu and failed to adequately plan for a pandemic. He also stated that the UK should have gone into lockdown faster than it did, adding that "the Prime Minister is of course ultimately responsible, but some of the advice that he got was also wrong".

After his statement following the announcement about a confidence vote in Boris Johnson, Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries launched a series of criticisms against Hunt. She stated that when she was Health Minister, Hunt told her the Government should follow the pandemic response of China, with mandatory two-week stays in quarantine hotels for infected people, adding "your pandemic preparation during six years as health secretary was found wanting and inadequate".



The Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (September 2021 – present); Minister for Women and Equalities, Government Equalities Office (September 2019 – Present)

Constituency: South-West Norfolk (Majority: 26,195)

Previous Positions

Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade, Department for International Trade (July 2019 – September 2021)

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, HM Treasury (June 2017 – July 2019)

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Ministry of Justice (July 2016 – June 2017)

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (July 2014 – July 2016)

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education and Childcare, Department for Education (September 2012 – July 2014)

Member, House of Commons Justice Committee (September 2012 – July 2015)

Elected to the House of Commons
2010

Analysis: Since her appointment as International Trade Secretary, it has been suggested that Truss could run as a candidate of the free-market right in a future leadership election. Her beliefs on taxation, the size of the state, and personal freedom will likely appeal to a significant number of party members who feel that the party has moved away from its core principles. Consistently in the top three for who party members want to succeed Boris Johnson, Truss is viewed as being in a strong position if she makes it to the party members' ballot. The perceived damage to the former Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, has also served to boost Truss' chances, as well as her loyalty in public to the Prime Minister. However, a concerted effort will likely take place by a significant section of the party to prevent her from getting on to the members' ballot, with rivals highly likely to coalesce around an 'anti-Truss' candidate should that become necessary.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Following losses in Hemsworth (2001) and Calder Valley (2005), Truss was elected as Member of Parliament for South-West Norfolk in May 2010 with a majority of 13,140. Prior to standing for election, Truss was chairman of the Lewisham Deptford Conservative Association from 1998 to 2000 and served as a Local Councillor in Greenwich from 2006 to 2010.

After campaigning for a greater priority to be placed on more rigorous school subjects, Truss was appointed as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department of Education in September 2012. She was then promoted to the Cabinet in David Cameron's 2014 reshuffle, taking up the role of Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

After Theresa May's appointment as Prime Minister in July 2016, Truss was promoted to Secretary of State for Justice and Lord Chancellor, the first woman to hold the role, before being demoted to Chief Secretary to the Treasury after the 2017 general election. Upon Boris Johnson's appointment as Prime Minister, Truss was appointed to the role of Secretary of State for International Trade, until September 2021 when she became Foreign Secretary.

Before her election to Parliament, Truss had a career in management accounting, working for Shell as a commercial manager and Cable and Wireless as economics director. She became full-time director of the think tank Reform in January 2008, where she focused on education policy, crime, and the UK's overall competitiveness.

Political views and position within the Party

Although she supported Remain in the 2016 Referendum, Truss subsequently favoured a harder form of Brexit than many other remain-voting members of the Cabinet. Her approach was based on a belief that a cleaner break from the EU would allow more scope to realise the benefits of Brexit, in particular de-regulation of the economy and liberalisation of trade

Truss sits firmly on the economically liberal right of the Conservative Party. Alongside fellow MPs Kwasi Kwarteng, Dominic Raab, Priti Patel and Chris Skidmore, she contributed to the 2012 book '*Britannia Unchained*,' which advocated widespread de-regulation and a commitment to free markets. Truss is known to be a moderniser who embraces the disruptive impact of globalisation, champions the gig economy, and has argued that the Conservative Party needs to be seen to like the modern country Britain has become. In this sense she differs from many of her Conservative colleagues who are more traditional and cautious in outlook. However, her recent stance on social issues such as trans rights and conversion therapy has shown that she is not ideologically dogmatic and has won her supporters on the more socially conservative wing of the party who view her as 'anti-woke'.

Instinctively, Truss has been one of the most fiscally conservative members of the current Cabinet, gaining a

reputation whilst serving as Chief Secretary to the Treasury of always saying no to spending requests. She has openly argued for the size of the state to be cut so that the Government can focus on doing less, better. She brands this 'popular free-market conservatism'.

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs

Truss was appointed as Foreign Secretary in September 2021, becoming only the second woman to hold the position and the first Conservative woman to do so.

After the resignation of Lord Frost, formerly the Government's chief negotiator with the EU, Truss was given the brief of solving the dispute on the Northern Ireland Protocol. At first, the EU responded positively to Truss' outreach, but to date no joint solution has been agreed. More recently, the Government has introduced the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill, which Truss argued would fix the unnecessary barriers to trade that had been erected. In response, the Irish Foreign Affairs Minister said the protocol was "no fix" and would only damage the Good Friday peace deal rather than protect it.

During the war in Ukraine, Truss has been hawkish in her positions on Russia, arguing that only total defeat would send the necessary message to Vladimir Putin that such conduct will not be tolerated by the West. This has pitted her against other European leaders such as Emmanuel Macron, President of France.



The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP

Backbencher (July 2022 – present)

Constituency: Richmond (Yorks) (Majority: 27,210)

Previous Positions

Chancellor of the Exchequer, HM Treasury
(February 2020 – July 2022)

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, HM Treasury
(July 2019 – February 2020)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government (January 2018 – July 2019)

Member, House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee (July 2015 – May 2017)

Elected to the House of Commons

2015

Analysis: Historically the unrivalled favourite, Sunak's chances have suffered in recent months due to a number of scandals, including receiving a police fine for breaching COVID-19 lockdown conditions in 10 Downing Street and the handling of his wife's non-dom tax status. His recent increase in the National Insurance levy also resulted in significant criticism from the right of the Conservative Party, as well as his rejection of calls to immediately cut taxes across the board. Sunak now sits third-to-last in party members' net satisfaction ratings for Cabinet Ministers and has a negative rating with the public at large. That said, despite a range of hurdles in his path, Sunak is undoubtedly still a heavyweight among the prospective contenders. He remains viewed as a figure of competence, responsibility and seriousness, and for many in the Parliamentary party his style sits in stark contrast to the Prime Minister's character. Whilst some suspect he may walk away before a contest occurs, this is not a widely held view and it would be a mistake to write Sunak off, especially given his formidable - albeit former - ratings with the public. If he can shake off recent troubles and restore his image, perhaps made somewhat easier following his dramatic resignation as Chancellor, Sunak could regain his place at the top and be viewed as an asset to his party once more.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Rishi Sunak was elected as the Member of Parliament for the North Yorkshire seat of Richmond in 2015, succeeding the former Foreign Secretary and Conservative leader William Hague with a majority of 19,550. He joined the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee upon entering Parliament, serving until the 2017 General Election. He was appointed as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Ministerial Team at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in June 2017. In January 2018, he joined the Government as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Local Government. From July 2019 to February 2020 Sunak served as Chief Secretary to the Treasury, before succeeding Sajid Javid as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in what was seen as a major promotion for the then relatively in-experienced junior minister.

Before his election to Parliament, Sunak worked in investment, starting as an analyst for Goldman Sachs. He also worked at The Children's Investment Fund, a hedge-fund manager, and Thélème Partners, a private investment firm. He then co-founded a firm that worked with companies in Silicon Valley and Bangalore, amongst other locations.

Political views and position within the Party

Sunak voted to leave the European Union. He described the decision as the “toughest” of his career due to his having to go against his predecessor William Hague. He cited his experience of working in various countries around the world and the wide range of opportunities on offer as a prime reason for voting to leave. He also cited excessive regulation emanating from an EU level and the need for the UK to control its own borders. As a member of the Government, Sunak supported the Withdrawal Agreement at every time of asking. During the ‘indicative votes’ process in March 2019, Sunak voted in favour of leaving the EU without a deal and seeking ‘preferential trade arrangements’ whilst voting against all the options for a softer Brexit.

Sunak is seen as a moderniser within the party. He leans towards the free market wing of the party on economic issues and has historically favoured tight control of public spending. Sunak favours a competitive tax regime, particularly for employee taxation. He has been a staunch supporter of free ports and co-authored a report on the topic with the Centre for Policy Studies.

Sunak has also emphasised the importance of SMEs in driving economic growth. He has committed to Northern Powerhouse Rail (HS3) and for improved transport and digital infrastructure in the north to boost economic productivity. In a speech in 2017, Sunak outlined the three things he regards as integral to ensuring the UK remains globally competitive, citing: Increasing investment on research and development; improving infrastructure; and technical education.

Chancellor of the Exchequer

Sunak was appointed Chancellor during Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s February 2020 reshuffle. Sunak had been expected to remain as Chief Secretary to the Treasury, but was promoted following Sajid Javid’s resignation. At 39 he became the second-youngest Chancellor of the past century behind George Osborne.

Sunak was regarded as a competent choice for the role but someone over whom the Prime Minister will be able to exert greater policy control than with his predecessor.

This was reinforced by the announcement that Sunak would share a team of special advisers with No 10.

As a result of his work during the pandemic, which included the issuing of over £400 billion of support for the UK economy, such a notion was quickly swept away. Sunak’s personal ratings dramatically increased, which led to a greater sense of autonomy from No.10 as well as a greater reliance placed on Sunak’s communication skills on behalf of the Government as a whole.

In July 2022, Sunak abruptly resigned as Chancellor amid a controversy surrounding allegations against Chris Pincher MP of sexual harassment. In his resignation letter Sunak said, “the public rightly expect government to be conducted properly, competently and seriously. I recognise this may be my last ministerial job, but I believe these standards are worth fighting for and that is why I am resigning ... In preparation for our proposed joint speech on the economy next week, it has become clear to me that our approaches are fundamentally too different.”

Sunak gave his spring statement on 23rd March 2022. He cut fuel duty, removed VAT on energy saving equipment and reduced national insurance payments for small businesses and, while continuing with a planned national insurance rise in April, he promised to align the primary threshold with the basic personal income allowance as of July. He also pledged a reduction in income tax in 2024. This was followed by an additional cost-of-living package announced on 26 May, worth £37 billion when all taken together, in which he also introduced a controversial windfall tax, something the Labour Party claimed victory over.

The non-domiciled status of Sunak’s wife, Akshata Murty, caused controversy when the story broke in April 2022. Following media controversy, Murty announced on 8th April that she would pay UK taxes on her global income, adding in a statement that she didn’t want the issue “to be a distraction for my husband”. On 10th April it was announced that a Whitehall inquiry was launched into who had leaked the details of her tax status, and on 27th April the then-Chancellor was cleared of breaching the ministerial code over his wife’s tax affairs.



Tom Tugendhat MP

Chair, House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (July 2017 – November 2019; January 2020 – present); Member, House of Commons Committees on Arms Export Controls (July 2020 – present); Member, Joint National Security Strategy Committee (May 2020 – present)

Constituency: Tonbridge and Malling (Majority: 26,941)

Previous Positions

Backbencher

Elected to the House of Commons

2015

Analysis: A Liberal Conservative, Tugendhat has long been touted in Westminster circles as someone who holds high ambitions for the leadership. However, his low profile with the public and lack of ministerial experience will likely prove difficult to overcome, especially when facing numerous candidates who are much more established with the public. Tugendhat is known for his hawkish views on foreign policy, particularly with regards to Russia, China and Iran. However, during what the Government itself acknowledges is a cost-of-living crisis, a Conservative leadership bid based on foreign policy credentials may see Tugendhat effectively drowned out in what will be a crowded field. However, it should be noted that as a result of the war in Ukraine, foreign policy priorities have climbed the political agenda of late and calls for higher defence spending would be very popular amongst the Conservative membership.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Tom Tugendhat is the Conservative MP for Tonbridge and Malling and was first elected to Parliament during the 2015 General Election, following a career in the military. In the 2019 General Election, Tugendhat continued his hold on the seat, claiming a significant 62.8% of the vote.

Upon entering Parliament, Tugendhat's maiden speech highlighted the need to support victims of dementia and the Armed Forces. In addition to his role as Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Tugendhat sits on the National Security Committee, the Committee on Arms Export Controls and the Liaison Committee. Tugendhat is also the Vice Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fair Business Banking.

Prior to his time as an MP, Tugendhat had a military background. He has worked as a journalist in Beirut, writing about the conflicts, politics and economics of the area, while establishing one of the first public relations companies in the city. Upon returning to the UK, he worked as a management consultant and later joined the Territorial Army, serving both in Iraq and Afghanistan, before becoming the military assistant to the Chief of the Defence Staff. In January 2010, Tugendhat was awarded an MBE for operations in Afghanistan. Before entering politics, Tugendhat wrote a report for Policy Exchange in 2013 entitled 'The Fog of Law,' which argued that the Armed Forces were under threat from the legal application of civilian norms to military conduct.

Tugendhat holds a BA in Theology from the University of Bristol and following this he attained a Masters in Islamic Studies from Gonville and Caius College, at Cambridge University. Whilst studying for his Masters, Tugendhat acquired valuable Arabic language skills that he used during his time abroad.

Political views and position within the Party

Tugendhat was quickly billed as a rising star in the party and his selection to contest the safe Conservative seat of Tonbridge and Malling added to the trend from the party of encouraging former Army officers into professional politics.

Tugendhat voted to remain in the European Union in the 2016 Brexit referendum. He stated this decision was “not out of any love of the EU, but from a cold, hard look at what I think is in the best interest of the British people” and expressed concern about the potential effect that a diminished European Union would have on countries in the former Eastern bloc from a security perspective. Writing on his website, he said: “our security is more than just the size of our military or the stability of our economy; it is the prosperity of our allies and the confidence of our friends. No matter how emotionally appealing it would be to leave, I have a duty to think hard what would be best for Britain and best for our community.”

However, following the result of the referendum, Tugendhat became a reluctant Brexit supporter. He has been particularly vocal about the role of foreign policy in post-Brexit Britain, emphasising the role of the nation state, the rule of law and the coordination of strategy which he said are “all essential to shaping our future”.

Chair, House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee

Tugendhat was elected as the youngest-ever Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee by a landslide vote in July 2017. In January 2020, he was reappointed to the position, with the chief responsibility to scrutinise the expenditure, administration and policy of the Foreign Office and other associated bodies, including the British Council.

As Chair, Tugendhat wrote a piece for *PoliticsHome* commenting on the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, International Development and Foreign Policy in March 2020, stating that it must be “about much more than defence”. In acknowledging the lasting impact of the coronavirus pandemic, he said that a foreign policy review has never been more timely, and announced an inquiry

into the Review with the Committee. As part of this, he called for the Review to recognise Britain’s place in the world, the importance of the UK’s industrial base, and to understand how the public health crisis is impacting the move away from globalisation. Additionally, Tugendhat mentioned the need to monitor the emergence of 5G, the EU’s delay to coordinating a response to the economic shock, and criticised China as hiding the emergence of COVID-19 and accused it of “arresting those who spoke out.”

This led to further criticism from Tugendhat of the Chinese Communist Party’s handling of the COVID-19 crisis, stating that “scientists calling out the accurate figures are silenced” in the country. This built on former comments about Chinese relations that Tugendhat made when he argued that the UK should give Hong Kong citizens full UK nationality as a means of reassurance amid a standoff with Beijing. In doing so, he said, the move would reassure Hong Kong’s people rather than face down to Chinese threats. Similarly, in regard to a debate about the banning of TikTok in the UK amid concerns of political and data privacy issues, Tugendhat warned that relationships with foreign companies should be carefully considered, stating that “democratic nations need to be more aware of the partners they’re working with and the reputations they have in their own countries.”

In July 2020, Tugendhat labelled the Chinese Ambassador to the UK, Liu Xiaoming a “bully”, after the Beijing official accused Britain of cooking up “lies and slander” about the country and of getting too involved in its internal affairs. He stated that the UK considers evidence of China’s human rights abuses against Uighur Muslims “a matter for the whole world” to take a stand on.

In the same month, Tugendhat openly criticised the Russian state, which he said has been “taken hostage by a mafia gang.” Following the release of a report revealing that Moscow’s attempts to influence British politics had become the “new normal” – which Tugendhat commented did not come as a surprise – he said that Russia had become a “shell of its former self.”



The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

Backbencher (July 2022 – present)

Constituency: Bromsgrove (Majority: 23,106)

Previous Positions

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Department of Health and Social Care (June 2021 – July 2022)

Chancellor of the Exchequer, HM Treasury (July 2019 – February 2020)

Home Secretary, Home Office (April 2018 – July 2019)

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Department for Communities and Local Government (July 2016 – April 2018)

Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (May 2015 – July 2016)

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (April 2014 – May 2015)

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, HM Treasury (October 2013 – April 2014)

Economic Secretary to the Treasury, HM Treasury (September 2012 – October 2013)

Elected to the House of Commons

2010

Analysis: Javid is already seen as the man who fired the starting pistol on the current leadership race. Having served in various Cabinet positions under three different Prime Ministers, he can boast a range of different experiences. It is likely that his deeply personal letter of resignation, which took direct aim at the Prime Minister's character, may harm his standing with Conservative Party members, who may not be satisfied with Boris Johnson's conduct, but who also disapprove of public displays of disloyalty. As is the case with Jeremy Hunt, an energetic campaign, a positive showing among MPs and a demonstration of fresh ideas for Government could earn him a job offer in a future Cabinet.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Javid was elected as Member of Parliament for the seat of Bromsgrove in Worcestershire at the 2010 General Election with a majority of 11,308. His early parliamentary career was marked by a swift rise up the ministerial ladder. He served briefly on the House of Commons Work and Pensions Committee from July 2010 to November 2010, before being appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education. In October 2011, he was promoted to Parliamentary Private Secretary to then-Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, where he remained until his promotion to Economic Secretary to the Treasury in September 2012. He was later promoted to Financial Secretary to the Treasury in October 2013, holding the position until April 2014.

Javid became the first member of the 2010 intake to be appointed to the Cabinet in April 2014, replacing Maria Miller as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and Minister for Equalities. Following the surprise Conservative majority at the 2015 General Election, Javid was appointed Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BEIS). After Theresa May's appointment as Prime Minister in July 2016, Javid became Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Javid was promoted to the role of Home Secretary following Amber Rudd's resignation in the wake of the Windrush Scandal. He immediately sought to tackle the issues that led to his predecessor's resignation, launching a consultation on compensation for those affected. In July 2019, Javid was then appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer by the then incoming Prime Minister, Boris Johnson. He had previously run unsuccessfully for the Conservative leadership, finishing fourth behind Johnson, Michael Gove and Jeremy Hunt. After being knocked out of the race he publicly backed Johnson for the premiership. Growing tensions between Javid's Treasury and Johnson's No10 operations led to Javid's resignation in February 2020.

Prior to his election to Parliament, Javid had a successful career as an investment banker. He joined Chase Manhattan Bank in New York after graduation, becoming vice president at the age of 25. He joined Deutsche Bank as a director in 2000, becoming a managing director

in 2004, and global head of Emerging Markets Structuring in 2005. He left Deutsche Bank in 2009 to pursue his political career. Growing up, Javid lived near Stapleton Road, a relatively deprived area of Bristol and attended Downend School, a state comprehensive, and Filton Technical College.

Political views and position within the Party

Javid's ideological position is not clear-cut. He is perceived to sit on the liberal wing of the party, following in the footsteps of David Cameron and George Osborne's brand of Conservatism. However, he has also spoken of his more Thatcherite instincts and, although he retains a relatively free-market outlook, insiders believe that his views have evolved somewhat since his early political career and that he now has more of an interest in cultural and social capital. Nevertheless, he remains on the economically and socially liberal wing of the party in principle, even if his pragmatism often triumphs in practice.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

Javid replaced Matt Hancock as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care in June 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite COVID cases remaining in the community, Javid confirmed that he would push for an

end to public health restrictions, saying: "We are going to have to learn to accept the existence of COVID and find ways to cope with it – just as we already do with flu", a strategy supported by other Conservative MPs but prompting criticism from some public health experts.

Javid was then criticised for insensitivity by several opposition MPs and the pressure group COVID-19 Bereaved Families for Justice for tweeting: "If you haven't yet – get your jab, as we learn to live with, rather than cower from, this virus". Javid later deleted the tweet and apologised for the "cower from" remark.

On 5 July 2022, Javid resigned as Health Secretary in the fallout from the controversy around Chris Pincher MP's sexual assault allegations. In his resignation letter to the Prime Minister, Javid wrote: "The tone you set as a leader, and the values you represent, reflect on your colleagues, your party and ultimately the country. Conservatives at their best are seen as hard-headed decision-makers, guided by strong values. We may not have always been popular, but we have been competent in acting in the national interest. Sadly, in the current circumstances, the public are concluding that we are now neither". This was widely seen as firing the starting pistol on the current Conservative leadership contest.



The Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP

Chancellor of the Exchequer, HM Treasury (July 2022 – Present)

Constituency: Stratford-upon-Avon (Majority: 19,972)

Previous Positions

Secretary of State for Education, Department for Education (September 2021 – July 2022)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Health and Social Care (November 2020 – September 2021)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (July 2019 – September 2021)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Education (January 2018 – July 2019)

Member, House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (September 2017 – February 2018; July 2015 – May 2017; June 2014 – March 2015)

Member, House of Commons Committees on Arms Export Controls (July 2010 – March 2015)

Elected to the House of Commons

2010

Analysis: As a former refugee from Iraq who came to Britain as a child with no spoken English, Zahawi has a compelling story to tell. Whether it's the success story of the COVID-19 vaccine rollout or the perceived competency shown as Education Secretary – Zahawi has a solid track record of success and achievement in Government. However, there are also red flags that a Zahawi candidacy would have to navigate during a leadership contest including criticism around his expenses, to former business dealings in oil and gas. His recent appointment as Chancellor presents him with an opportunity to appeal to Conservative MPs and members and may help him become the unifying candidate. However, the context in which he finds himself is hardly appealing. Whilst his display of loyalty to the Prime Minister will be admirable to some, to others it will be a display of personal opportunism. Yet, as happened with David Cameron, Zahawi could well emerge as the right man at the right time. His chances of making the final two are favourable, but it will not come without a fight given the crowded pack of potential candidates.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Nadhim Zahawi was elected as Member of Parliament for the safe seat of Stratford-on-Avon at the 2010 General Election with a majority of 11,346. Previously, Zahawi had unsuccessfully contested the seat of Erith and Thamesmead at the 1997 General Election.

As of the 2017 General Election his majority was 20,958. Zahawi was appointed to his first Ministerial role, Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Children and Families, following Theresa May's first cabinet reshuffle in January 2018. Prior to this, Zahawi served as a member of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee (2014-2018) as well as the Business, Innovation and Skills Committee (2010-2015) and was appointed to the Number 10 Policy Unit under David Cameron in 2013.

Following Boris Johnson's appointment as Prime Minister, he was appointed Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business and Industry, and in 2020 he was given additional responsibility for the COVID-19 vaccination programme as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for COVID-19 Vaccine Deployment. In the 2021 cabinet reshuffle he was promoted to Johnson's cabinet as Secretary of State for Education.

Born in Iraq to Kurdish parents, Zahawi fled with his family at the age of nine to the United Kingdom during Saddam Hussein's first years in power, an experience which he cites as having shaped his conservatism. Throughout the 1990s, he served as a political aide to former Member of Parliament Jeffrey Archer, during which time he assisted Archer in his controversial 'Simple Truth' campaign which called for HM Government to assist Kurdish

victims of the First Gulf War. Before his election to Parliament, Zahawi had a career in local government, standing successfully in 1994 as a Conservative Councillor for Putney in the London Borough of Wandsworth. Zahawi co-founded the market research and data analytics firm YouGov in 2000, serving as the organisation's CEO from 2005-2010.

Zahawi has attracted attention within the Conservative parliamentary party as a consequence of his additional role as the Chief Strategy Officer of Gulf Keystone Petroleum which he left in December 2017. He received remuneration in excess of £20,000 per month from the role, making him the second-highest earning MP per annum. Zahawi faced further criticism when it was revealed he had claimed in excess of £170,000 in parliamentary expenses in 2012/13 and was forced to "apologise unreservedly" when the Sunday Mirror reported in November 2013 that this had mistakenly included more than £5,000 for electricity to power his riding school business.

Political views and position within the Party

Zahawi sits comfortably on the Eurosceptic Thatcherite wing of the Conservative Party and declared his support for Britain's withdrawal from the European Union owing to his belief that "a Greater Britain, where people have

greater hope, greater chances and greater security" was best achieved outside of the European Union. Zahawi remains optimistic that "Brexit means trusting our democracy and trusting ourselves to find the right path to the future." In the recent Conservative leadership election, Zahawi initially backed Dominic Raab, before switching his support to the eventual victor Boris Johnson following Raab's elimination from the contest.

Due to his position on the government payroll, Zahawi supported former Prime Minister Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement, voting for it on the three occasions it was brought before the House of Commons. In the indicative votes process, Zahawi voted against a Customs Union, Labour's Brexit plan, a second referendum, and revocation to avoid no deal, and abstained on the other proposals.

Chancellor of the Exchequer

Zahawi was promoted to Chancellor of the Exchequer on 5 July following the resignation of Rishi Sunak. In his first move as Chancellor, Zahawi has called for a review of the UK's corporate tax policy and current planned increases for corporation tax. He told media outlets on 06 July that "I will look at everything. There's nothing off the table. I want to be one of the most competitive countries in the world for investment."



The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP

Secretary of State for the Home Office (July 2019 – Present)

Constituency: Witham (Majority: 24,082)

Previous Positions

Secretary of State for International Development, Department for International Development (July 2016 – November 2017)

Minister of State, Department for Work and Pensions (Cabinet) (July 2019 – September 2021)

Exchequer Secretary, HM Treasury (July 2014 – May 2015)

Elected to the House of Commons

2010

Analysis: Patel's chances of winning a leadership election are low. From her Department's poor handling of passport applications to complications surrounding her Rwanda relocation plan, to a failure to stop disruptive protests – her time at the Home Office has been dominated by perceived incompetence and will likely end her campaign before it properly begins. As with other candidates, she may decide that running for the leadership is the best chance she has to remain within Cabinet and also an opportunity to recover some of the narrative around her current post.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Priti Patel was first elected as the Conservative MP for Witham in 2010, and has served both as Home Secretary since 2019 and prior to that as Secretary of State for International Development between 2016 and 2017.

Prior to winning her seat of Witham in 2010, she was a public affairs director for Weber Shandwick. She has also served in Conservative Central Office and as a Deputy Press Secretary to William Hague.

Political views and position within the Party

One of the leading voices in the Vote Leave campaign in the run up to the 2016 referendum, Patel is considered firmly on the right of the Conservative party and member of the European Research Group. She is a hard Brexiteer, a social conservative and likely to favour a light-touch regulation for business.

A self-described Thatcherite, Patel has taken right-wing stances on crime, attracting media attention when she argued for restoration of capital punishment on the BBC's Question Time in September 2011. Patel also voted against the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Bill in 2013. In October 2010, she voted for the smoking ban to be overturned and led the Conservative campaign against plain tobacco packaging.

Secretary of State for the Home Office

Patel was appointed Home Secretary by Boris Johnson in July 2019. In February 2020, Patel launched a points-based immigration system, which aims to reduce the number of immigrants to the UK by requiring visa applicants to meet a set of criteria, such as a salary threshold, ability to speak English, academic qualifications and working in an understaffed industry. In April 2022, Patel visited the Rwandan capital of Kigali and signed the Rwanda asylum plan, which was designed to deter illegal immigration by flying thousands of migrants who cross the English Channel in lorries or on boats to the African country.

In February 2020, Patel came under scrutiny for allegations of trying to "force out" Sir Philip Rutnam, the most senior civil servant in her department. Rutnam resigned on 29th February, saying he would sue the government for constructive dismissal and that he did not believe Patel's assertion that she had been uninvolved in an alleged campaign briefing against him. In November 2020, a Cabinet Office inquiry found evidence that Patel

had breached the ministerial code following allegations of bullying in the three government departments in which she had served. On 20th November 2020, Alex Allan announced that he had resigned as the Prime Minister's chief advisor on the ministerial code after Johnson rejected the findings of the inquiry and stated that he had "full confidence" in Patel.



The Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP

*Attorney General for England and Wales, Advocate General for Northern Ireland
(February 2020 – present)*

Constituency: Fareham (Majority: 26,086)

Previous Positions

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, Department for Exiting the European Union (January 2018 – November 2018)

Chair, European Research Group (June 2017 – January 2018)

Parliamentary Private Secretary (PPS) to the HM Treasury Ministerial Team, HM Treasury (June 2017 – January 2018)

Member, House of Commons Education Committee (July 2015 – May 2017)

Elected to the House of Commons

2015

Analysis: Braverman turned convention on its head on the evening of 6th July by announcing her plans to stand for the leadership of the Conservative Party, despite pledging to continue serving as Attorney General in Boris Johnson's cabinet. Her chances of making it past the first round of the MPs' ballot appear low, owing to her low profile in what is already an extremely crowded field. It is likely Braverman will use this opportunity to raise her profile, pitch for a promotion in a future Cabinet, and talk about her small-c conservative views which will likely chime with members of the Conservative Party's grassroots.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Braverman was elected as the Conservative Member of Parliament for the safe, Hampshire, seat of Fareham in 2015, with a majority of 22,262. In January 2018, she joined the Government frontbench for the first time as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Leaving the European Union. Braverman resigned from the position the same day as her portfolio boss, Dominic Raab on 15th November 2018 in protest at Theresa May's draft deal for the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement.

In the February 2020 reshuffle, Braverman was appointed by Boris Johnson as the first Conservative female Attorney General for England and Wales and Advocate General for Northern Ireland. Braverman replaced Geoffrey Cox QC, who had originally been appointed in July 2018 under Theresa May. Braverman's appointment by Johnson was divisive. Largely, this was due to concerns about her being able to fill the shoes of her predecessor who was considered to have had significantly more legal experience.

Braverman is a member of Middle Temple, where she won an Astbury Scholarship in 2005. She completed her pupillage at 2–3 Gray's Inn Square (now Cornerstone Barristers). From 2008 onwards, she was based at No.5 Chambers in London practicing in planning, judicial review and immigration law. She was appointed to the Attorney General's C Panel of Counsel in 2010.

Political views and position within the Party

A staunch Eurosceptic, Braverman campaigned and voted to leave the European Union and between 2017 and 2018 was Chair of the influential European Research Group of Eurosceptic Conservative MPs. She has previously described Brexit as a 'golden opportunity'. She cited the provisions for a 'Northern Ireland backstop' as the principal reason for her resignation from DeExEU and to vote against Theresa May's deal. Braverman stated that she "voted for

Brexit in the acceptance that it would be a very complex and difficult process for our country. That was outweighed by my innate belief in the capacity of our institutions and nation to ultimately deliver democracy.”

Braverman is seen as a socially and economically conservative figure within the party, leaning towards the free market wing of the party on economic issues. In 2016, Braverman supported Michael Gove’s candidacy to become Conservative leader after David Cameron announced his resignation in the wake of the EU

referendum. During the subsequent 2019 Conservative Party leadership contest, she supported Boris Johnson. Braverman is also a keen advocate of free schools which are modelled on charter schools. She was Chairman of Governors at Michaela Community School in London, a leading free school that now achieves some of the best results in the country. She believes that the overall project of free schools has lost momentum and authored a report for the Centre for Policy Studies in August 2019 calling on the Government to “turbocharge its commitment to free schools”.



Steve Baker MP

Deputy Chair, COVID Recovery Group (November 2020 – present)

Constituency: Wycombe (Majority: 4,214)

Previous Positions

Chair, European Research Group (September 2019 – February 2020)

Deputy Chair, European Research Group (July 2018 – September 2019)

Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Exiting the European Union (June 2017 – July 2018)

Member, House of Commons Treasury Committee (2014 – 2017; 2018 – 2021)

Elected to the House of Commons

2010

Analysis: Baker has long been rumoured to have ambitions to lead the Conservative Party, and he has now confirmed he will indeed launch a bid for the top job. Firmly on the right wing of the party and a member of the socially conservative Cornerstone Group, Baker is known for his libertarian views on the economy and the ideal size of the state. A committed Brexiteer in tune with the party's base, he could certainly perform well with Conservative Party members. Whether or not Conservative MPs would ever let him get that far is an entirely separate matter. It is quite possible Baker will use this as a springboard for a ministerial post, but his chance of victory among his fellow MPs is slim.

Background and Parliamentary Career

Baker is the MP for Wycombe, having represented the seat since 2010. Born in 1971, Baker served in the Royal Air Force as an engineer. After reading Aerospace Systems Engineering at Southampton University, he served three tours of duty, working with Tornado and Jaguar fast jets. He later undertook an MSc in computer engineering at Oxford and later joined a software firm.

He also worked as Chief Architect of the global financing and asset service platforms at Lehman Brothers from 2006 to 2008. This has informed his longstanding interest in the role of government in financial services. He has recently called for the Prime Minister to resign over breaches of covid regulations.

In May 2014, Baker was elected to the Treasury Committee following Andrea Leadsom's promotion to the Treasury. He kept his position until his appointment as Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department for Exiting the European Union. He was seen by many as a hardline Brexiteer, and resigned from the post in July 2018, in protest over the Government's Brexit policy under Theresa May.

Political views and position within the Party

A follower of the Austrian School of Economics, Baker is regarded as being on the right of the Conservative Party, known for his staunch libertarian views on issues from the economy to society to environmental issues.

He campaigned for Brexit long before, and during, the 2016 referendum. Indeed, he previously stated that the reason he joined the Conservative Party was to campaign for the UK to leave the EU. He also chaired 'Conservatives for Britain', a predecessor group to the official Vote Leave campaign. In 2010, he stated at a meeting of the Libertarian Alliance he thought 'the European Union needs to be wholly torn down', considering it 'an obstacle to ... free trade and peace among all the nations of Europe as well as the world'.

Baker is currently working on the relaunch of the pressure group, 'Conservative Way Forward', founded by Thatcher and known for its economically liberal outlook. It is expected

the group will argue for Conservative solutions for the challenges of the day from climate change to issues of equality. It will also inevitably focus on reducing the size of the state, making the case for free-markets, free trade, and more autonomy for communities.


George Waring

Senior Consultant, Public Affairs
+44 (0)7977 016808 M
george.waring@fticonsulting.com


Jack Powell

Consultant, Public Affairs
+44 (0)7855 980 919 M
Jack.Powell@fticonsulting.com