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Kemi Badenoch Criticises Labour's Equality Reform as "Ineffective Bureaucracy"

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Former Equalities Minister Kemi Badenoch has delivered a sharp critique of the Labour government's decision to activate the long-dormant "socio-economic duty" within the Equality Act 2010. Describing the move as "a bureaucratic nightmare dressed up as progress," Badenoch warned that the policy will burden public services with excessive red tape while delivering little measurable impact.

The clause requires public bodies to consider the effects of their decisions on socio-economic inequality. While Labour frames it as a step toward fairness, Badenoch argues it will divert resources away from frontline services. "This means councils spending time and

money on lengthy impact assessments while roads deteriorate and schools struggle to afford basic supplies," she said.

Pointing to its implementation in Scotland and Wales, Badenoch cited findings from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which were unable to identify clear benefits from the duty's application. She argued that the policy has created layers of bureaucracy without improving outcomes for disadvantaged communities.

Reflecting on her time as Equalities Minister, Badenoch described repeated instances where straightforward policy initiatives such as ensuring female-only spaces were delayed or obstructed by overcautious internal reviews. "Common-sense proposals were too often derailed by a fixation on avoiding perceived offence rather than solving practical problems," she noted.

Badenoch also expressed concern about the growing influence of consultants and HR-led initiatives focused on "class-equity strategy" and "lived experience" reporting. She warned that such roles consume public funds while offering little support to overextended schools, hospitals, or law enforcement agencies.

In closing, Badenoch framed the socio-economic duty as part of a broader ideological trend within the Labour government. "Britain needs policies that deliver results, not paperwork," she said. "Our public services require focus, efficiency, and accountability not symbolic gestures that distract from their core missions."