

Industry Forum July Newsletter

For economic recovery, we now need unifying leadership and credible plans!

The UK faces big challenges in a world environment of high inflation, an energy crisis, supply chain disruption, and continuing Covid, in addition to our own home-grown industrial unrest and trade problems. Meanwhile, the government, the country and the business community are in limbo. We await a new Prime Minister chosen from two candidates with radically different economic plans who have revealed few details of their intentions on the big issues of climate change, trade, infrastructure investment, and supporting key industrial sectors.

It is unclear what continued austerity or general tax cuts would achieve in making the country more productive, more competitive, greener and less divided. Instead, we need actions to mitigate immediate, severe, economic hardship, while laying foundations for a real recovery. This requires a government with credible goals and substantive plans linked to real economic, social and environmental needs. Crucially, such an approach could generate the prosperity that is the key to solving many of our problems. From the new PM, therefore, we need honest, unifying leadership; 'winging it' has failed.

For the autumn, the Industry Forum is planning a full programme covering as many as possible of our current and emerging key issues. Most of these meetings will follow the party conferences by when the new political players will have emerged, and, hopefully, be prepared to talk about their policies and plans. Unless, of course, the new leader calls a general election.



Meetings currently in planning for the autumn, include:

- Reprioritising defence
- Does London have a dirty money problem?
- Financing economic recovery
- Achieving sustainability and resilience
- The exciting future of work
- Building a new, positive relationship with the EU
- Implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine for UK defence industries
- Issues and opportunities in the Asia/Pacific
- Building supply chain stability

These are all major topics which we hope to cover in some depth at physical meetings. We would also like to address some issues in greater depth, and are keen to talk to members interested working with us to produce research reports. Please let us know if you would like to sponsor or work with us on these or other topics.

In addition to members, we invite diplomats, academics, union representatives and business guests to participate in our meetings.

Our recent meetings have covered these topics: 'Valuing and sustaining the NHS', 'Prospects and pitfalls for green hydrogen' and 'Can physics supercharge the UK economy?'. As usual these are topical subjects and showcased Industry Forum members. Further details are listed below:

Can physics supercharge the UK economy?



30 June 2022

The answer to the question 'Can physics supercharge the UK economy?' discussed in June at an Industry Forum roundtable hosted by the Institute of Physics, was always a foregone conclusion. But physicists, also like to know how theory will be turned into practice. So the ideal person to lead the discussion was Chi Onwurah MP, Shadow Minister for Science, Research & Innovation, and a qualified engineer with extensive business and Westminster experience. She outlined the steps needed to tackle the daunting range of economic and environmental challenges facing the UK noting, in particular, the need to raise our R&D spend and to maximise diversity in the workforce and academia. Other speakers were Professor Martin Freer VP Science and Innovation at the IoP, Terry Pollard, COO of spinout company, Oxford Brain diagnostics, Dr Hira Virdee, Founder and CEO Lumi Space, and Elizabeth Chamberlain (standing in the picture), Head of Policy at the IoP, who outlined a proposed new R&D blueprint. Priorities identified included: Ensuring that everyone can follow a career in UK physics regardless of their background or gender; Ensuring that there is adequate funding for early-stage research; Providing the conditions needed to enable start-ups to scale up and grow their businesses within the UK; Encouraging the growth of a sophisticated community of investors in companies based on innovations in physics; Encouraging tech clusters around research universities and strengthening connections between academia and industry. All we need now, is to turn this plan into action!

Speakers:

Chi Onwurah MP, Shadow Minister Science, Research & Innovation
Professor Martin Freer, VP Science and Innovation, Institute of Physics
Terry Pollard, Chief Operating Officer, Oxford Brain Diagnostics
Dr Hira Virdee, Founder and CEO at Lumi Space

Prospects and pitfalls for green hydrogen



13 June 2022

Only one element has the potential to liberate the world from global warming and the grip of the petrostates – green hydrogen. To achieve this, however, big technical, policy and investment hurdles need to be overcome. So, in June, the Industry Forum launched the first of a series of meetings on this subject with an expert round table on 'The prospects and pitfalls for green hydrogen'. The meeting was hosted by BASF and led by renewable energy evangelist, Alan Whitehead MP, Shadow Minister for

Energy and the Green New Deal. The other speakers were Darren Budd, Commercial Director of the UK & Ireland Country Cluster, BASF; Diana Casey, Director, Energy and Climate Change, Mineral Products Association; Ian Constance, CEO, Advanced Propulsion Centre UK. Key issues which emerged in discussion of the UK situation were: concerns about the current availability of green hydrogen, doubts about the financial viability of using blue hydrogen plus carbon capture as a means of supplying green hydrogen, agreement that green hydrogen is better than batteries for heavy transport applications, anxiety about the front end investment needed to solve the considerable technical problems and build the large-scale production and distribution network required, unanimity on the need for an overall transition plan. Consumers alone are unlikely to fund a rapid transition, so finance ministers and central banks, world-wide, need to consider whether to provide investment finance for a transition to green hydrogen, or face rising bills from climate-change disasters.

Speakers:

Alan Whitehead MP, Shadow Minister for Energy and the Green New Deal

Darren Budd, Commercial Director UK / Ireland, BASF

Dr Diana Casey, Director, Energy and Climate Change, Mineral Products Association

Ian Constance, CEO, Advanced Propulsion Centre UK

Valuing and sustaining the NHS



8 June 2022

Leading from the front is what is needed in a pandemic, and this is the speciality of career A&E doctor and politician, Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP, Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health. In June, she led the first ever Industry Forum expert round table on the key issue of 'Valuing and sustaining the NHS', which was hosted in their London office by the Iraq Britain Business Council. She described graphically the trauma of working as a front-line doctor during the pandemic, and lessons that need to be learned. Professor Mohammed Al-Uzri, Consultant Psychiatrist and Associate Medical Director at the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and Alice Sorby, Director Employment Relations the Royal College of Midwives, responded and added their perspectives on mental health care and staff terms and conditions. The wide-ranging discussion that followed indicated that long term planning failures and piecemeal changes may have contributed to staffing and morale issues, as well as wasteful emergency spending on agency staff and procurement. So, in addition to some additional investment, the prescription for NHS recovery is clear goals and bold political leadership.

Speakers:

Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP, Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health

Professor Mohammed Al-Uzri, Health and Higher Education Advisor, Iraq Britain Business Council

Alice Sorby, Director, Employment Relations, The Royal College of Midwives

New members welcome

Now that we are meeting and networking again, we are keen to sign up new members to work with us and expand our meetings and research activities. If you're not already a member, and would like to help shape our agenda, host events, and receive invitations to all meetings, get in touch by email at info@industry-forum.org, or give us a call to find out more on 0207 434 0090.



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