

## Industry Forum May Newsletter

### Winning against the odds

The Chancellor is warning of tough times ahead as inflation hits 9%. Key priorities will be to help those hardest hit, to build a recovery in real wages and growth, and to increase our efforts to tackle the potential catastrophe of climate change. The external environment is challenging and therefore, to prosper, the UK needs once again to win against the odds. The Industry Forum believes that this is achievable but is most likely to happen with planning, cooperation, and a clear focus on our goals. Our aim is to identify the key opportunities and impediments facing our economy, and bring together policy-makers, industry experts, and academics to discuss what should be done.

The Industry Forum has unparalleled experience of discussing business policy issues through 29 years and eight administrations, but the need for successful business and economic policies has never been greater than now. Our next three meetings will focus on: the vital contribution of our NHS which, because of its universal insurance funding is not always recognised as one of our most popular and successful industries, the opportunity to transform our energy ecosystem with a rapid pivot to green hydrogen, and the continuing contribution that physics can make to our economic recovery.

### *Valuing and sustaining the NHS*



*8 June 2022*

***Lead Speaker: Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP, Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health***

In the UK, universal availability of health care from the NHS has brought health security to millions without imposing high costs on individuals or businesses. Compared with most other advanced countries, the economic cost of the NHS is low. Nevertheless, the NHS has sometimes found it hard to keep up with all of these: the growth in demand for treatment; managing the interface with social care and mental health care; maintaining an adequate training pipeline for new staff; maintaining motivation and quality throughout its vast organisation. From a basis of frontline experience, this roundtable will look broadly at what needs to be done to tackle key issues, and discuss constructive policy ideas. It will be led by Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP, Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, and a practising doctor with experience of A&E during the pandemic. A small panel will respond followed by Q&A.

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

Other speakers to be confirmed

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***Prospects and pitfalls for green hydrogen***



***13 June 2022***

***Lead Speaker: Alan Whitehead MP, Shadow Minister for Energy and the Green New Deal***

To avoid a climate catastrophe, we need to totally stop net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050. The more uncomfortable truth is that the majority of these cuts must come in the next decade. One promising new fuel is green hydrogen which is capable of storing renewably produced energy. Green hydrogen is currently, however, only produced in small quantities, and the necessary research and investment required to scale up production is proceeding in a leisurely fashion. This roundtable, intended to be the first of a series on this topic, will discuss the prospects and pitfalls of the faster deployment of green hydrogen. The discussion will be led by Alan Whitehead MP, Shadow Minister for the Green New Deal and Energy. A small panel will respond followed by Q&A.

The speakers will be:

**Alan Whitehead MP**, Shadow Minister for Energy and the Green New Deal  
**Thomas Birk**, Vice President UK & Ireland/Managing Director, BASF  
**Diana Casey**, Director, Energy and Climate Change, Mineral Products Association

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## ***Can physics supercharge the UK economy?***



***27 June 2022***

***Lead Speaker: Chi Onwurah MP, Shadow Minister Science, Research & Innovation***

The modern world is built on the application of the great discoveries and innovations in Physics. Nevertheless, it is easy to assume that the torch of scientific progress has been passed to the life sciences, and engineers can be left to use the box of tools already produced by physicists. The aim of this roundtable is to explore the opposite view, that physics can still deliver answers to a vast range of mysteries and unlock a treasure trove of economic benefits. This expert roundtable will look broadly at some of the barriers to achieving this aim, and ideas on how they can be overcome. Key issues include: 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. This expert roundtable will be led by Chi Onwurah MP, Shadow Minister Science, Research & Innovation, who will make the opening remarks. A small panel will respond followed by Q&A.

Other meetings currently in planning for 2022, include:

- Does London have a dirty money problem?
- How should the government invest for growth?
- Helping SMEs drive the economic recovery
- Levelling up means building more high-quality homes
- Addressing the dementia pandemic
- Building a new positive relationship with Europe

These are all major topics which we hope to cover in some depth at physical meetings. We would also like to deal with 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 and 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: Helping UK Energy-Intensive Industries and Opportunities for International Trade in 2022. As usual these are topical subjects and showcased Industry Forum members. Our last two meetings are listed below:

### *Helping UK Energy-Intensive Industries*



*26 April 2022*

Vital UK Energy-Intensive industries such as steel, cement, and ceramics face multiple crises: The Ukraine/Russia war has caused a spike in fossil fuel prices that threatens their viability; the need to transition to carbon neutral energy requires large investments in research and transition, and, there is no overall plan to address these problems. The Industry Forum was therefore delighted that Bill Esterson MP, Shadow BEIS Minister, took time to lead a lunchtime roundtable on 'Helping Energy-Intensive Industries'. He shared ideas for reducing cost pressures and supporting research, and heard from the industry experts about the complex problems of keeping these essential industries competitive. The meeting was hosted by the Mineral Products Association and Dr Diana Casey, Director, Energy and Climate Change for the MPA, outlined the leading-edge research by MPA members into reducing the carbon emissions from cement production, and the difficulties involved in piloting new fuels such as hydrogen. Robert Ffello, the new CEO of the British Ceramics Association, echoed what Diana said. He highlighted the unique difficulties of the ceramics sector which has to use gas as a fuel, needs uninterrupted supply, has to adapt production to new fuels such as hydrogen, and also has many members outside of the areas in which hydrogen will be readily available. The Industry Forum is planning further research and events on this urgent subject.

Speakers:

**Bill Esterson MP**, Shadow Minister (Business and Industrial Strategy)  
**Dr Diana Casey**, Director, Energy and Climate Change, Mineral Products Association

## *Opportunities for international trade in 2022*



*31 March 2022*

Success in international trade will be the key factor in determining whether the UK economy adjusts successfully to operating outside of the EU and navigating the turbulence caused by the Covid pandemic, and the Ukraine/Russia war. So, we were delighted that Andrew Mitchell, Director General, Exports and Trade, at the Department for International Trade could lead an Industry Forum policy roundtable on, 'Opportunities for UK International Trade in 2022'. The hybrid meeting was hosted physically at the London offices of the Iraq Britain Business Council and the work of the IBBC was summarised by Charles Burbridge, Regional Managing Director of G4S Risk Management Group. Panelists, Geoff Mackey, Corporate Affairs and Sustainability Director, BASF, and John Taylor, Oil and Gas, Business Development Consultant with Hydro-C responded and suggested measures that could help British exporters. It was clear that enormous progress has been made in establishing a strong UK department for international trade and that independent operation will enable future trade deals to focus on the UK's particular strengths in tangible goods, and also take more account of our world-leading services sectors.

### Speakers:

**Andrew Mitchell**, Director General, Exports and UK Trade, Department for International Trade

**Geoff Mackey**, Corporate Affairs & Sustainability Director, BASF

**John Taylor**, Oil & Gas, Business Development Consultant, Hydro-C

## *New members welcome*

Now that we can finally meet and network 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](mailto:info@industry-forum.org), or give us a call to find out more on 0207 434 0090.



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