



Industry Forum July Newsletter

A new world of business opportunity

Labour's landslide victory in the general election has transformed opportunities for UK business. The new government will have some five years before it needs to seek re-election. Barring disasters, this should bring the consistent policy and regulatory environment for which the business community has been appealing.

The King's speech is packed with proposals, many of which will stimulate economic activity. For business, one of the most welcome changes, was set out at the Blenheim Palace European Political Community Summit. It was the proposal from Prime Minister Starmer to reset our relationship with Europe, a move which could help restore lost trade and goodwill with the EU. Despite hitting the ground running, the government's more detailed proposals concerning rebuilding the economy, and improving government dialogue with business and civil society will be work in progress over years. The government has clear policy goals but these, necessarily, need fleshing out in detailed and affordable plans. We therefore expect it to behave much like the New Labour administration in the 1990s in being prepared for discussion and partnership on how goals could be achieved.

This means a welcome change of gear for the Industry Forum. Our previously planned programme is now on hold as we gather feedback from members on their new priority topics and identify the best speakers to invite. One issue which appears urgent, and which several members have flagged, is a likely skills crisis as the economy pivots to building more infrastructure and transitioning to green energy - we hope to feature this in October. Please could members look through the Labour manifesto and the King's speech and let us know as soon as possible which other topics are important to you and who you would like us to invite to speak. There are no guarantees that busy ministers will make time to speak to us but there is also a rich choice of new, well qualified select committee chairs potentially available.

Our research programme on big issues, under the WhatIF banner, is now under way. The choice of one of the topics, 'Combatting the threat of the lone terrorist,' seems prescient after the attack on Donald Trump at the US Republican National Convention.

Our next scheduled events are our House of Commons Business Reception on 11 September and fringe meetings at the Labour Conference in Liverpool. The fringe meetings will be in the secure zone and will be open to all comers. We hope to see many members and friends of the Industry Forum at these two events. We won't be attending other party conferences this year.

Industry Forum Business Reception



11 September 2024

Host: Darren Jones MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury

UK prosperity and our standing in the world depend heavily on economic success which, in turn, depends a lot on our success in harnessing digital technology. We are therefore delighted that our House of Commons Business Reception this year will be sponsored by two leading international digital sector companies Workday and Vodafone. Speakers will be announced in August

The reality of AI in business



24 September 2024

Labour conference fringe meeting

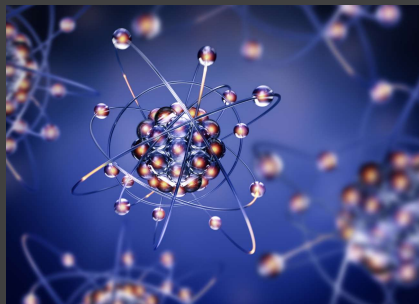
Panel:

Dr Chris Francis, Government Affairs Director for UK & Ireland, SAP
Rod Dowler, Executive Chair, Industry Forum

***James Johns, Head of Corporate Affairs, Workday
plus other speakers to be confirmed***

This year, the topic of artificial intelligence has seized the imagination of the media and stock markets. The transformative potential of the group of hardware and software technologies that are bringing AI services to market is clearly enormous. This fringe meeting is hosted by leading enterprise software company SAP. It will have a panel of industry specialists who can put these developments into the perspective of the use of AI in the existing software and services and give their views on the future use of AI in business. We will also invite a minister with digital responsibilities from the new administration to comment on policy implications and priorities for AI.

Supercharging physics R&D for UK prosperity



24 September 2024

Labour conference fringe meeting

Panel:

Speakers to be confirmed

Since World War II, physics-based innovation has driven major economic developments and increased world prosperity. Sectors such as semiconductors and telecommunications have become major industries in their own right, and have also facilitated dramatic growth in, for example, software, digital services and marketing. A key ingredient in this process has been government funded investment in physics research and development in leading universities and technology-based companies. The last Labour government fully recognised the potential benefits of physics R&D and raised the overall level of science R&D investment as well as introducing R&D tax credits to encourage the industrial development of scientific research. This fringe meeting will explore the continuing economic benefits of investment in physics R&D.

Our meeting plans, currently under review include:

- Avoiding a skills crisis
- Strengthening the SME sector
- Policy priorities for building safely

- Future UK environment and climate policy, and business engagement
- Delivering real benefits from science, innovation and technology
- Improving our digital infrastructure would be a win/win for businesses and the economy
- Reforming UK corporate governance is key to invigorating the UK economy
- Funding radical change
- Building a new positive relationship with Europe

These are all major topics which we hope to cover in some depth at meetings and policy workshops.

In addition, in the coming year, we are planning to host House of Commons dinners to discuss key sectoral issues with policymakers, as well as a, Christmas, House of Commons Reception for members and guests.

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



Big Change Research Programme

To celebrate the change in political climate we have started a research programme to look at some of the macro issues that affect our lives, but which often seem too big to contemplate. To kickstart this process of getting the little grey cells working constructively, we have four short research projects for the summer vacation period.

These are on the following topics:

Why we need a more united Europe

How do we get UK climate plans back on track?

The reality of what AI means

Combatting the growing threat of the lone terrorist

In the Autumn we will be publishing short 'think pieces' arising from this research and will organise events to discuss these along with our normal programme of roundtables.

If you are interested to participate in these projects, in any way, please contact jwyer@industry-forum.org

Our most recent Industry Forum meetings have focused on immigration issues and managing parliamentary business.

Tackling our immigration issues

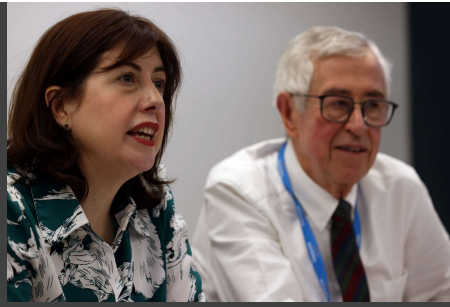


20 May 2024

Speaker: Stephen Kinnock MP, Shadow Minister for Immigration

'Tackling our immigration issues' was the topic of a recent Industry Forum expert roundtable led by Stephen Kinnock MP, Shadow Minister for Immigration. The meeting was sponsored by Lowick a leading reputation management and public affairs consultancy closely aligned with Labour. Kevin McKeever the founder and managing director of Lowick welcomed guests to their new offices close to Tate Modern. Stephen Kinnock identified the need for an immigration system that delivers for the economy and builds social cohesion. The approach of a Labour government would focus equally on compassion and control. The discussion, with people from business and academia, ranged across current bureaucratic failings in providing statistics and processing asylum seekers, the serious skills shortages arising from the end of free movement after Brexit, and the desirability to take the heat out of the current debate. It is clearly necessary to concentrate on improving home office efficiency and unifying border control resources to combat people smuggling. Reducing the backlog of asylum seekers and the cost of housing them would have the major benefit of restoring much of the foreign aid budget to help with reducing some of the problems that lead to asylum applications. In summary, systematically addressing the root problems looks like the most promising way to tackle UK immigration issues. It would be welcomed by UK business and academia.

Managing the business of the House of Commons



16 April 2024

Speaker: Lucy Powell MP, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons

The critical importance of managing the business of the House of Commons is not widely understood. Should Labour win the coming general election, this vital role would likely fall to the current Shadow Leader of the House, Lucy Powell. Clearly relishing the prospect, Lucy Powell led a wide-ranging Industry Forum roundtable on how she would approach this challenge. An incoming reformist government would clearly have a lot of work to do in rapidly turning policies into draft bills and then legislation. In addition, there are major challenges for big cross-departmental projects or missions which are currently not well managed by the Cabinet Office. It is important to restore standards in public life and restore controls on the executive exercised by, for example, the select committees. Large issues such as House of Lords reform will also need to be considered. Bearing in mind the current poor fiscal situation all changes will need to be accomplished without the luxury of generous budgets. The business audience at the roundtable could fully appreciate these constraints; the potential bonus for Lucy Powell and Labour is that they also indicated that clear and consistent plans and policies would be valuable to business and could be the key to unlocking private investment in the UK. This meeting was hosted by Workday, a leading provider of cloud based financial and personnel management services.

New members welcome

The Industry Forum was established in 1993, and has held over 500 meetings with top policy-makers since then. It is one of the most experienced, and well-networked, business policy think-tanks in the UK. 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.



Copyright © 2024 Industry Forum, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

