

**Westminster Higher Education Forum policy conference:  
Financial sustainability and long-term funding of UK higher education**

*Timing: Morning, Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2025*

**\*\*\*Taking Place Online\*\*\***

*Draft agenda subject to change*



- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Higher education funding and priorities for the sector**  
**Sarah Bevan**, Head, Funding Policy, Universities UK  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Immediate priorities for sector financial sustainability and stability**  
*assessing long-term funding frameworks / tuition fee and maintenance loan reform / options for indexation, targeted grants, and other adjustments / supporting access, participation, and progression / addressing disparities across disciplines and regions / managing rising staffing, infrastructure, and technology costs / income volatility from student recruitment and research funding / structural risks from demographic shifts / managing financial stress and insolvency risk highlighted by the Office for Students / supporting high-cost and strategically important provision / future strategy for international student income / compliance with immigration rules and diversification of income / brand positioning and global competitiveness*  
Senior representative, university  
Senior representative, student union  
Senior representative, consultancy  
Senior commentator  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.15 **Assessing current income streams and student recruitment priorities for universities moving forward**  
**Professor Christopher Millward**, Practice in Education Policy, University of Birmingham  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.35 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.40 Break
- 10.50 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.55 **Alternative funding models and longer-term approaches to financial sustainability**  
*options for new funding settlements / impact of research and development commitments from the 2025 Spending Review / aligning funding approaches with Industrial Strategy priorities / balancing public and private contributions / sustaining strategically important teaching and research / securing provision in vulnerable subjects*  
**Baz Ramaiah**, Head, Policy and Research, Million Plus  
**Joanna Burton**, Head, Higher Education Policy, Russell Group
- 11.15 **Strategies for income diversification and strengthening sector resilience**  
*enabling growth of commercial and international income streams / scaling-up spinouts, short courses, and transnational delivery / research commercialisation and international ventures / strengthening industry and business partnerships / addressing barriers and enablers to commercialisation / governance and investment priorities for sustainable diversification / strategic partnerships and lessons from other jurisdictions / aligning diversification with institutional resilience goals*  
Senior representative, university  
Senior representative, consultancy  
Senior representative, spin-out  
Senior representative, industry
- 11.35 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.00 **Exploring international priorities for university financial sustainability**  
Senior representative, international university
- 12.10 **Financial regulation, governance, and long-term sustainability of UK higher education**  
*scope and coordination of financial regulation / intervention triggers and provider expectations / coordination between regulators and adequacy of current frameworks for systemic risk / balancing autonomy, sustainability, and accountability / sustaining long-term global positioning of UK universities / maintaining competitiveness internationally / adapting to priorities in the Immigration White Paper / reducing reliance on international students while sustaining attractiveness / cost-efficiency in estates and technology investment for net zero / assessing the future of tuition fees in the long-term*  
**Johnny Rich**, Chief Executive, Push; and, Chief Executive, Engineering Professors' Council  
Senior representative, university  
Senior representative, student recruitment  
Senior representative, students' union
- 12.30 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Higher Education Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian  
**Sean Cudmore**, Westminster Higher Education Forum