

## Westminster Business Forum policy conference:

### Next steps for UK start-ups and scale-ups

Timing: Morning, Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> September 2026

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



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Draft agenda subject to change

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 9.05 **Key priorities for improving the UK environment for start-ups and scale-ups**  
Senior commentator  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Next steps for financing growth - scaling investment, improving access to capital, and strengthening investor confidence**  
*priorities for the British Business Bank and Innovate UK | increasing institutional and pension fund investment | addressing barriers to scale-up finance and late-stage capital gaps | implications of capital markets reform and UK listings competitiveness | investor confidence, valuation challenges, and international competition | access to finance for under-represented founders and regional firms | balancing support for priority sectors with wider innovation objectives | improving navigation and co-ordination across support schemes | private markets and implementation priorities for PISCES | implications of the Autumn Budget and the Government's Backing Your Business growth strategy*  
Senior representative, investment  
Senior representative, business  
Senior representative, advisory  
Senior representative, founder  
Senior representative, private market  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.20 **Supporting innovation and commercialisation - investor-university links, proof of concept funding, and progression from research and spin-outs to scale-ups**  
**Scott O'Brien**, Chief Investment Officer, Innovate UK  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.45 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 10.50 Break
- 11.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian
- 11.05 **Next steps for the Small Business Protections Bill - tackling late payments, improving cash flow, and supporting SME growth**  
**Emma Jones**, Small Business Commissioner  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.30 **Priorities for business growth enablers - regulation, procurement, and routes to market**  
Senior speaker confirmed from the **Confederation of British Industry**
- 11.40 **Strengthening business support - innovation, regional coordination, and access for under-represented founders**  
*co-ordination across national and regional growth initiatives | local innovation partnerships and cluster-based approaches | addressing fragmentation and complexity in business support | improving awareness and accessibility of support schemes | attracting and retaining talent | AI adoption and digital capability | support for under-represented founders, including measures for improving inclusive access to growth opportunities | reducing regulatory complexity for growing business | IP protection, barriers to entry, and competition issues in specific markets | priorities for implementation and measuring impact of business support*  
**Fiona Bennington**, Director, Entrepreneurship, Catalyst  
Senior representative, business support  
Senior representative, technology  
Senior representative, SME  
Senior representative, talent
- 12.05 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **Next steps for delivering a competitive environment for UK start-ups and scale-ups**  
Senior representative, policy  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Business Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentarian  
**Thomas Howard**, Westminster Business Forum