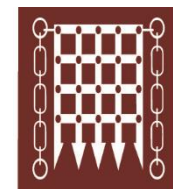


## Westminster Business Forum policy conference:

### Next steps for UK start-ups policy

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> September 2025

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



WESTMINSTER  
BUSINESS  
FORUM

*Draft agenda subject to change*

- 8.30 Registration
- 9.00 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentary
- 9.05 **Priorities for UK start-up policy - driving growth, competition, and enabling innovation**  
**Carolyn Dawson**, Chief Executive, Founders Forum Group  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.30 **Assessing and implementing the UK's Small Business Strategy**  
*aligning start-up support with local and national growth priorities / how the Industrial Strategy might benefit SMEs / streamlining the support network through the Business Growth Service / strategic coordination across government departments, mayoral authorities, and local authorities / building connections with overseas investors and export markets / integrating local growth hubs and university-led ecosystems / policy levers for improving access to finance / next steps for promoting entrepreneurship*  
**Councillor Nazia Rehman**, Portfolio Holder, Finance, Resources and Transformation, Wigan Council  
**Charlotte Keenan**, Head, Corporate Engagement International, Goldman Sachs  
Senior representative, start-up  
Senior representative, investment  
Senior commentator  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.30 **Opportunities for innovation and technology in unlocking start-up growth**  
**Madush Gupta**, Chair, Centre for Finance, Innovation and Technology  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.55 **Chair's closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentary
- 11.00 Break
- 11.10 **Chair's opening remarks**  
Senior Parliamentary
- 11.15 **The role of regulation in supporting start-ups and promoting competition**  
**Jessica Lennard**, Chief Strategy and External Affairs Officer, Competition and Markets Authority  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.40 **Early indications from the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 for start-ups - reducing barriers to entry, faster payments, and access to public sector contracts**  
Senior representative, procurement
- 11.50 **Tackling barriers to growth - supporting the business journey from start-up to scale-up**  
*addressing regional funding imbalances / tackling underrepresentation in founder communities / leveraging the British Business Bank and National Wealth Fund / rollout of AI and digital tools in supporting SME productivity / early indications from the Business Growth Service / unlocking business skills / role of PISCES in supporting business growth*  
**Ian Merricks**, Proposition Lead, VenturePath  
Senior representative, devolved nation  
Senior representative, innovation  
Senior representative, skills
- 12.10 Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.30 **'Policy priorities for making life easier for start-ups and small firms to access contracts, money, and support'**  
**Emma Jones**, Small Business Commissioner  
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 **Chair's and Westminster Business Forum closing remarks**  
Senior Parliamentary  
**Thomas Howard**, Westminster Business Forum