

Minister for Women and Equalities Liz Truss speech at The House magazine's Women in Westminster: The 100 event

Thank you very much, it's fantastic to be here this afternoon with so many brilliant women, from politics, from the lobby, and from Whitehall, who we are celebrating today.

And congratulations to everybody who's made it onto the list, and I think there's loads of brilliant people who aren't on the list who ought to be as well. Not least our brilliant special advisers, working across the system.

Now I first got the urge for politics when I was quite young and my mother dragged me on a CND march, and we shouted about banning the bomb before I was quite old enough to understand what it meant.

And what it showed me, is that anybody, wherever you live, whoever you are, you can have an impact on the future of the world, and that was a really, really exciting idea. So although I moved to the right, politically, I've never lost that sense of activism and that sense of the ability to shape the future, which is what I think drives so many of us into politics.

Now the first female MP I ever met was Teresa Gorman, who you will recall was one of the Maastricht rebels, and she came to my university to do a seminar, and she started off the seminar by saying "politics is better than sex". And you can imagine all of the male tutors kind of crossing their legs and just looking completely horrified at this woman and her bold statement. And she proceeded to spend the next hour telling us about how dreadful the European Unions was, how great Hormone Replacement Therapy was, I see some friends of Teresa here today, and also the advantages of modern Tudor properties. But I've never forgotten that. And I think the women in politics that stick with me most are the people who were prepared to be different and say things that were different.

Whether that was Barbara Castle, a great Labour politician who fought against the status quo, or indeed Mrs Thatcher. And I do want to celebrate the difficult women, the battle axes and the rebels, that we have seen over the previous generation. But of course, when Teresa Gorman was in the House of Commons there were only 60 women MPs, and now there are 220, and it's been absolutely brilliant to have been joined by all these reinforcements, and it's no little thanks to people like Baroness Jenkin, who is a force of nature, and those women who were not prepared to stand for Parliament, she forced them to stand! It wasn't 'ask them to stand' it was 'tell them to stand'!

It's brilliant to be joined by all these reinforcements, and so many women of character, who I am sure we will remember in years to come, as making a massive impact on our politics.

There is of course one issue now in Westminster though, which is because all of these new female MPs, the facilities are now rather limited. Any parliamentarians will know you have to go searching around for a loo that isn't occupied, the female loos, so I think a key thing we have to do for Parliament is make sure the facilities for women actually match the number of women we now have in politics.

And it's not just about women on the front line, it's about women in the backroom. It's about making sure we've got more female special advisers, making sure we have more female journalists reporting on politics in the lobby, making sure we have more females in Whitehall as well. I'm very proud that at the Department for International Trade, that we have a female Permanent Secretary, and a female Secretary of State, and I'd like to see more departments like that in the future, setting an example but also unleashing all the talent, because what we know, is that when women aren't allowed to participate in society, when they're not able to put forward their ideas, when they're not able to make change, we're just missing out on an incredible amount of talent and opportunity. And I see talent and opportunity in this room.

I hope this award goes from strength to strength, it's fantastic to be here today, thank you to the House magazine for organising it, and maybe we should expand the number next year, so we can get even more brilliant women on the list. Thank you.

UK-US trade negotiations to start this month as Minister of State for Trade Policy visits US East coast

Minister of State for Trade Policy Greg Hands MP is in the United States this week (9-11 March), as the UK and US prepare to kick-start free trade agreement negotiations.

Minister Hands will meet business and industry leaders, as well as US government representatives in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington. His visit comes a week after the UK government published its negotiating objectives for a free trade agreement with the United States.

In New York, Minister Hands is attending a meeting with the Manhattan Institute, followed by a roundtable with BritishAmerican Business.

The Minister will then travel to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, where he will meet Pennsylvania's Secretary of Agriculture and the Chamber of Commerce. He will conclude the trip in Washington, where he will meet US representatives to discuss the opportunities around the upcoming trade negotiations.

Rt Hon Greg Hands, Minister of State for Trade Policy said:

From Harrisburg to Harrogate, this deal will benefit people on both sides of the Atlantic. It will scrap unnecessary red tape, bring more opportunities for businesses, lower prices and create better jobs in the UK and the US.

Securing free trade deals will be a key driver in levelling up the UK, and a trade deal with our largest single trading partner will benefit every UK region and nation. I am delighted to be on the East coast this week to discuss our objectives ahead of the negotiations.

Securing a trade agreement with the US is a priority for the UK government. The country is the UK's largest single trading partner, with total trade reaching £221 billion in 2019. Indeed, government analysis shows that the UK economy will benefit from a £3.4 billion boost, as the trade agreement will increase transatlantic trade flows by £15.3 billion.

Almost every industry – from agriculture to business services – will benefit, and the government is pushing for a dedicated SME chapter in an agreement to help the UK's 5.9 million small businesses.

Duncan Edwards, CEO BritishAmerican Business said:

BritishAmerican Business (BAB) is delighted to be hosting Minister Hands as part of his visit to New York City; we will be holding a round table discussion with business leaders before a broader reception to launch 'Growing US' our publication showcasing British investment success stories in America.

We will be working closely with Minister Hands and the whole Department for International Trade team as the UK-US negotiations begin later in March to ensure that any agreement fully incorporates the views of businesses large and small trading across the Atlantic.

[National Child Measurement Programme: school feedback letters](#)

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1. 10 March 2020

Added 2020 versions of National Child Measurement Programme school feedback letters.

2. 12 March 2019

Added 2019 versions of National Child Measurement Programme school feedback letters.

3. 24 May 2018

Updated with 2018 versions of all 3 templates.

4. 8 September 2017

Updated 2017 version of cover letter template and added example feedback letter and metadata.

5. 11 August 2015

First published.

[11-year ban for bankrupt who gifted £4 million of investments](#)

Neil Leslie Burns (57), from Windsor, Berkshire, did not attend the High Court in London on 10 February 2020, where Judge Burton handed him an 11-year directorship disqualification in his absence.

Effective from 3 March 2020, Neil Burns is banned from acting as a director or directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

The court heard that Neil Burns was a director of an investment company, B52 Investments Limited. Incorporated in November 2010, the company was charged with holding and managing investments into a separate company, Snoozebox Holdings Plc – a pop-up hotel company which used recycled shipping containers.

B52 Investments held 6.1 million shares in Snoozebox Holdings and received at least £3.3 million worth of loans and investments from investors, as well as £1.7 million worth of bank receipts into the company's accounts.

But the directors of B52 Investments abandoned the company after transferring all of B52 Investment's shares in Snoozebox Holdings to connected third parties, resulting in the company's liquidation.

B52 Investment's liquidation then brought the company to the attention of the Insolvency Service after the directors failed to co-operate with the liquidator or deliver up books and records.

During enquiries, B52 Investment's directors were unable to satisfactorily explain £3.9 million worth of transactions and the transfer of the 6.1 million shares the company held in Snoozebox Holdings.

Following further enquiries, investigators discovered that Neil Burns had been bankrupt three times, the latest coming in 2013 and had not been discharged from his restriction. As a bankrupt, Neil Burns was banned from managing companies but not only did he remain managing B52 Investments, he actively entered into agreements with investors while transferring their funds to connected third parties and family members.

Further misconduct caused by Neil Burns saw him transfer all the shares B52 Investments held in Snoozebox Holdings Plc to connected third parties. This was despite 1.4 million worth of shares already being used to secure investment of £373,000.

Neil Burns also agreed deals with third parties for investments earmarked to purchase vehicles for re-sale. The £253,000 worth of investments, however, was transferred to connected parties and family members but due to the lack of books and records, the directors could not explain why this happened.

The lack of books and records also meant that Neil Burns could not fully explain £5 million of receipts and what had happened to £3.9 million of payments.

Mark Bruce, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Throughout our enquiries Neil Burns obstructed our investigations to ensure we wouldn't be able to discover what he had done. Fortunately, our investigators were able to find evidence that showed not only was he an undischarged bankrupt but that Neil Burns had used investors' funds for his own personal benefit and those he was closely acquainted with.

An 11-year disqualification is a significant ban and should serve as a warning to other directors that failing to deliver up the company records will not stop the Insolvency Service carrying out a full and thorough investigation and discovering serious misconduct.

Neil Burns is from Windsor, Berkshire, and his date of birth is September 1963.

B52 INVESTMENTS LTD (Company number 07434900)

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Taskforce to bolster local response to coronavirus](#)

Local Government Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP has launched a new taskforce to strengthen local plans to help tackle the outbreak of coronavirus.

The taskforce will bring together senior experts from across key sectors – including resilience, local government, public health and adult social care fields – who will assess Local Resilience Forum (LRF) plans and provide support and advice to ensure they are robust.

It will be led by Andy Battle, the recently retired Assistant Chief Constable for West Yorkshire and the LRF chair for that region, and Dr Ruth Hussey CB OBE, the former Chief Medical Officer for Wales.

There are 38 LRFs in England which are made up of emergency services, a range of government agencies, health bodies and local authorities.

Local Government Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We all have a part to play in managing the spread of coronavirus and I am working to ensure local partners are fully equipped to play their part, too. Today I established a taskforce to support Local Resilience Forums, helping them fully prepare for a range of scenarios at a local level.

This includes ensuring that LRFs have robust plans in place for helping local people and dealing with pandemic flu of all types, including coronavirus.

With extensive experience, the new taskforce will provide LRFs with the capability and expertise to respond quickly and effectively.

As part of the review process the taskforce will:

- Analyse LRF local flu response plans;
- Discuss support with LRF chairs for vulnerable people, and how key services could be maintained;
- Commission a tabletop exercise in each LRF area; and
- Examine relationships between LRFs and Local Health Partnerships to ensure they can facilitate and support cross-LRF working

The taskforce will also strengthen LRF capability through inputting specialist advice from health, local government and resilience experts and ensuring that areas of good practice are actively shared.

The outcome of the review will be used to gauge the level of LRF preparedness for coronavirus, align and strengthen relationships between LRFs and health partners, and support LRFs to enhance their planning by identifying priorities and key risks in their current planning or capability.