

Backbench Business Committee

Representations: Backbench Debates

Tuesday 1 July 2025

Ordered by the House of Commons to be published on 1 July 2025.

[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Bob Blackman (Chair); Jonathan Davies; Mary Glendon; Martin Vickers; Chris Vince.

Questions 1-16

Witnesses

[I](#): Tonia Antoniazzi.

[II](#): Manuela Perteghella.

[III](#): Mark Garnier and Sir Julian Lewis.

[IV](#): Dr Simon Opher.

[V](#): James Naish.

Written evidence from witnesses:

– [Add names of witnesses and hyperlink to submissions]

Tonia Antoniazzi made representations.

Q1 Chair: Welcome to this meeting of the Backbench Business Committee, where we will be considering applications from colleagues for debates in both the Chamber and Westminster Hall. The first application is from Tonia Antoniazzi, for a debate on the impact of extended producer responsibility for packaging. The request is for a 90-minute debate in Westminster Hall on either a Tuesday or a Thursday. Tonia, please present your application.

Tonia Antoniazzi: Thank you, Chair. I would like to have the opportunity to lead a debate on the impact of extended producer responsibility for packaging. I am the chair of the all-party parliamentary group on beer, and the sector is working incredibly hard to move towards more sustainable packaging and recycling solutions. EPR can enable sustainable means to collect and recycle packaging materials. However, the current proposals are going to add hundreds of millions of pounds to business costs, with hospitality businesses effectively paying twice for recycling, without having a material impact on the intended outcomes.

Not only are the estimated fees eye-watering, particularly for glass, but hospitality suppliers still lack the clarity and certainty needed for conversations with their customers and for planning, at a time when the sector will have to implement a deposit return scheme and navigate packaging waste recycling. I am seeing this at first hand as a Member of Parliament for a Welsh constituency, where we have to consider the impact of other recycling schemes in Wales, such as the deposit return scheme. That will also have an impact in other devolved places.

The hospitality sector supports the Government's ambition to increase the recycling of packaging, but we have to consider the impact. The beer and brewing industry and hospitality industry are also facing the cumulative effects of other Government decisions, and they feel like they have been hit particularly hard, when they are potential growth areas that should have a little bit more consideration.

I would like to lead the debate, and a number of other Members support my application on a cross-party basis, including Ruth Cadbury, Greg Smith, Alec Shelbrooke, Leigh Ingham, Richard Holden, Andrew Snowden, Toby Perkins, Sarah Champion, Noah Law, Jacob Collier and Edward Morello. They are colleagues who also see the impacts in their constituencies. I give you that information for your consideration, Chair.

Q2 Chair: Thank you. As you have requested a debate on a Tuesday, can I clarify which Department would be answering? We have to allocate it on a day when the relevant Department is answering.

Tonia Antoniazzi: When they are answering?

Chair: Yes. They answer every two weeks, so we need to know which Department you expect to be answering.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tonia Antoniazzi: DEFRA.

Chair: I also declare an interest as a member of the all-party group on beer.

Q3 **Chris Vince:** I declare an interest as someone who has a glass manufacturer in my constituency, and this issue has been mentioned to me. I know you said DEFRA, but would it not be the Treasury because it is to do with money?

Tonia Antoniazzi: I do not mind. I just think this regulation—

Chair: We need to be clear, because we have to allocate it on the right day.

Tonia Antoniazzi: Yes, it is DEFRA that we want.

Chris Vince: It's only that when I have spoken to DEFRA, they have referred me to the Treasury. That is all I am suggesting, but if you want to go with DEFRA—

Tonia Antoniazzi: The policy lies with DEFRA, and I want to go after the policy and its wording.

Chair: Are there any other questions?

Mary Glendon: I am also a member of the APPG.

Q4 **Chair:** We all have a love of beer. Are there any time limitations on this?

Tonia Antoniazzi: I would not like to delay it too much longer, but obviously there has been a delay in me being able to come in front of the Committee, so I will accept any date, or as soon as is practicably possible.

Chair: There is a queue.

Tonia Antoniazzi: I will go into the queue, as requested.

Q5 **Jonathan Davies:** If the regulation goes ahead, will it kick in with the Finance Bill in the autumn? Is that the moment when it begins to apply?

Tonia Antoniazzi: No. It will apply from next year, I believe. There has been a three-month delay to producers becoming liable for EPR fees. The final fees are being published at the end of June. They may or may not have been published—I am not aware of that—so it will be a timely debate in the autumn.

Chair: Fine. We will do our best to get you a debate then. If there are no other questions, the Clerks will be in touch with you in due course about a potential date.

Tonia Antoniazzi: Thank you very much, Chair.

Manuela Perteghella made representations.

Q6 Chair: Next up is Manuela Perteghella, whose request is for a debate on financial support for small businesses and individuals during the covid-19 pandemic. This application is for either a debate in the Chamber or a 90-minute debate in Westminster Hall on a Tuesday. Please present your request.

Manuela Perteghella: Thank you, Chair and Committee. This debate will give the House a chance to reflect on the economic support, or lack of it, during covid-19. We had the first report back from the covid-19 inquiry, one of whose recommendations was obviously to learn lessons to ensure that what happened does not happen again and that the Government are prepared.

We all know that during the covid-19 pandemic the Treasury rightly set up lots of grants and funds to help companies, organisations, employees and employers. One of the most famous was the furlough system. However, 3.8 million—nearly 4 million—businesses and individuals were not eligible for that system during the pandemic. They included sole traders, self-employed people, people who were very unluckily changing jobs when the pandemic happened, and those on maternity leave.

A raft of workers and businesses could not get access to any form of funding during the pandemic. Most MPs have constituents like that. I represent Stratford-on-Avon, where the majority of the people affected were from the creative and arts sector. When the theatres went black, lots of self-employed people, from lighting technicians to stage managers, were not allowed to apply for furlough or any other of the various covid-19 grants.

We have not really had a chance to understand why that was done and to listen to the impact of it on those individuals and families. We know that there have been some suicides linked to this issue. Some people recovered—at a certain point the Government offered bounce back loans, although they were very difficult to repay—but some did not recover at all, so some businesses completely closed down. Obviously, in the long term, that affects our communities and our local economy. Small businesses—the entrepreneurial spirit—are the engine of the local economy. I have constituents who lost everything. They could not pay their mortgage, they had huge issues, and they got depressed, so there are lots of mental health issues.

As you can see from the application, the debate has support from across the House. We have all the main parties, including independents. We have all had constituents come to tell us how hard it was not to be able to access any financial support during and after the covid-19 pandemic. I would like the House to have the chance to debate this issue and tell the stories of their constituents, so that when—not if—we have the next pandemic, we have learned from the scandal that has happened to those referred to as “the excluded”. I hope the Committee can grant a debate either in the Chamber or in Westminster Hall.

Q7 Chair: Thank you. If the debate is held on a Tuesday, we have to allocate



HOUSE OF COMMONS

it when the relevant answering Department is available. Which answering Department would you expect?

Manuela Perteghella: It would be the Treasury.

Mary Glendon: Thank you for putting in for this debate, because I think all of us who were MPs during covid and after have been, at some point, approached by one of the forgotten 3 million, whose campaign has been sustained and still crops up. Each of us will probably get contacted about it if the campaign is granted.

Chair: If there are no other questions, the Clerks will be in touch with you in due course, when we have a slot.

Mark Garnier and **Sir Julian Lewis** made representations.

Q8 **Chair:** The next application is from Mark Garnier on protecting consumers from rogue builders. It is a request for a 90-minute debate in Westminster Hall on a Tuesday or a Thursday.

Mark Garnier: Thank you very much, Mr Blackman. It is a great pleasure to be here for, I think, the first time in 15 years. The proposal of the debate is to explore the scourge of rogue builders that is blighting many people's lives. I have been working on it for a number of years, since I was a victim of a rogue builder myself.

When you become a victim, you discover just how unbelievably difficult it can be for those who are caught by this. The problem is that you find yourself without any proper help. There is no type of licensing regime. There is nothing that they can lose, so if you do find yourself having to confront somebody who has harmed your household and not provided work up to standard, you ultimately have to go to court. If you go to court and win, and you win damages, the rogue builder can then go bust on you, so you end up out of pocket.

When I first started campaigning on the issue, I started off with a private Member's Bill a number of years ago. I have another private Member's Bill, which is about to be timed out because of the assisted dying Bill taking a lot of time. When I started raising the issue, I was inundated with contact from many other Members' constituents, who were delighted to see that there was a possibility of the issue being resolved.

Ultimately, a solution would be to engage a licensing regime, which would then be able to create something that the rogue builder would lose, and they would therefore not be able to operate. It is worth bearing in mind that it is not just our constituents as homeowners suffering from this, but also subcontractors and traders selling bricks and all that kind of stuff. There is a huge problem out there, and right now, ultimately, there is no sanction against these builders, even if you win a court case.

I have been working very closely with the Federation of Master Builders, but I have also had a lot of communications with TrustMark and trading

standards, all of which agree that we have a problem. A 90-minute debate would give an opportunity to air the problem properly and get the Minister to come and have a proper listen to what is going on. I do not believe we have had a debate on it, certainly since I have been campaigning on it for the last four or five years.

Sir Julian Lewis: I thoroughly support the case Mark is making. I raised the matter in the House when my late father was scammed by a rogue builder. We went all the way to court and, in the end, after huge effort, we were able to prevail. It is not the sort of thing that most people can be expected to do, and if that particular rogue builder had had the foresight to set up a limited company, I probably would not have been able to prevail against him.

We are coming with a potential solution, which is that the Federation of Master Builders believes in a licensing regime for builders. Builders can come in, wreck your home and do all sorts of things to the boilers, as happened to a constituent of mine who is facing an overall bill of over £40,000 to repair the damage done by a rogue builder who was in a trading standards-approved free publication. If you complain, you get about £1,000 compensation for a misdescription. He paid £23,000 up front and then had to spend over £40,000 putting the damage right. Yet when one tries to involve the police, they say things like, "Even though this person has a pattern of activity and other people have complained about them, it is an argument about the standard of workmanship rather than calculated fraud." Now that there is a Government that might be perhaps more favourable, shall we say, to bringing in a scheme of regulation than a previous Government, it seems a good time to have the debate.

Q9 **Chair:** I assume that MHCLG will answer.

Mark Garnier: Yes. I think Matthew Pennycook is the Minister responsible.

Chair: If there are no other questions, the Clerks will be in touch with you in due course.

Dr Simon Opher made representations.

Q10 **Chair:** Next up is Dr Simon Opher for a debate on how the NHS can prevent domestic homicides and domestic abuse-related deaths. This is an application for a 90-minute debate in Westminster Hall on a Tuesday morning.

Dr Opher: Thank you, Chair. Domestic abuse is a public health emergency, and it is a priority of this Government to halve violence against women and girls. We are in a crisis: it has increased by 37% in the last five years.

Usually, domestic violence first presents to a healthcare professional—that might be a GP, a social worker or someone in A&E. It is quite clear from



HOUSE OF COMMONS

some of the evidence in the Casey report and in homicide reports that we are not doing well enough. In about 90% of domestic abuse-related deaths reviewed last year, there was advice for health services about what they could do differently to save lives. There is clearly a problem there.

The Public Accounts Committee reported in 2025 that under previous iterations of the strategy for reducing violence against women and girls, the Home Office had failed to secure full support from other Government Departments. It is really important with domestic violence to understand that it is not just a health problem, but it is not just a Home Office problem either.

I am particularly interested in improving the first interaction that a woman, usually, has with the health services, so that we identify it really early on before more damage takes place. This debate is critically important. I also want us to try to train up our NHS frontline staff so that we can reach the target of halving violence against women and girls in this Parliament.

Q11 **Chair:** I assume that DHSC would be the answering Department.

Dr Opher: Yes.

Q12 **Martin Vickers:** We need an even split between Government and Opposition Members, so you could do with another couple of signatures from the Opposition.

Dr Opher: Yes, we noted that. I will go away and try to secure a couple of others from the Conservative party. We have some other parties involved, just not the Conservative party at the moment.

Chris Vince: It is only Westminster Hall, so he only needs four.

Chair: Four is enough.

Dr Opher: I will try to add those names, Mr Vickers.

Martin Vickers: They do not have to be Conservative; it just says "non-Government parties". You just need two more from the Opposition side of the House.

Dr Opher: We have some Liberal Democrats and some from Plaid Cymru. We are working on a couple of Conservative MPs. I think this is a cross-party issue and I am sure that we can find them.

Q13 **Chair:** Thank you for your presentation. The Clerks will be in touch with you in due course.

James Naish made representations.

Q14 **Chair:** Our final application is from James Naish, for a debate on the potential impacts of immigration reforms on humanitarian visa routes. I believe your request is for a 90-minute debate on a Thursday in

Westminster Hall.

James Naish: A Thursday or a Tuesday—whichever is earliest.

Chair: You have only ticked Thursday on the application that I have in front of me.

James Naish: I guess that is because we are assuming Thursday will be earlier.

Chair: Over to you.

James Naish: Thank you, Chair and Committee members, for hearing my application. I am here to request time for a debate on the potential impacts of the Government's proposed immigration reforms on humanitarian visa routes and, from my perspective, specifically on British national overseas visa holders from Hong Kong, who have made the UK their home in the light of the repression that Hong Kong continues to experience. I was at a protest today related to the embassy.

Since the publication on 12 May of the immigration White Paper, which proposes extending the settlement period from five to 10 years, there has been no decision yet on whether the change will apply to humanitarian visa holders. These routes were created not for economic migration but in response to war, repression and moral obligation, so a debate is required about how the Government treat these routes. There is a risk that we undermine our commitments to international law, including those stemming from the Sino-British declaration, and our credibility as a country that defends human rights.

The BNO visa scheme stems from our historic responsibilities under the joint declaration. Visa holders would be affected in ways that others are not, with their children not being able to go to university until the age of 27 and pensioners being left for a decade without pension payments. We need to discuss those things as a House, especially given the previous Government's support for Hongkongers. There is a remarkable number of Hongkongers in the UK, and I am keen that we have a discussion. That said, there are also worrying implications for our other humanitarian visa routes, so my debate would be broader than just Hongkongers and would allow for discussion of the potential impact on others.

My request has the support of 27 Members from across the House—Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Green—and would provide a vital opportunity for MPs to raise the concerns of our constituents and to ensure that reforms to immigration policy do not come at the expense of the people the schemes were designed to protect. I therefore hope the Committee will grant time for the debate.

Q15 Chair: It seems to be a very heavily subscribed debate. I hope you have explained to your supporters that they will get about two minutes each in a 90-minute debate.



HOUSE OF COMMONS

James Naish: Yes, and I am sure that many more will want to join, because the Hongkonger community is dispersed across the country. There was a very good response to my application and it will be a very timely debate, given the ongoing discussions around the immigration White Paper. But yes, we would make sure that contributions are short.

Q16 **Chair:** Is there any particular time sensitivity?

James Naish: My personal view is that it would need to come pretty quickly after the summer recess, to perhaps have a significant influence on decision making, so I ask the Committee to consider that.

Chair: If there are no other questions, the Clerks will be in touch with you in due course. Thank you very much for your presentation. That concludes our public business. The Committee will now retire and consider the applications in private.