# David Cameron criticised over peerage for Michelle Mone amid PPE contract investigation



David Cameron's decision to elevate Michelle Mone, a prominent business figure embroiled in controversy over PPE contracts during the COVID-19 pandemic, to the House of Lords has drawn considerable scrutiny. Critics, including former associates, argue that this move reflects poorly on Cameron's judgement, with one stating the former Prime Minister had “lost the plot.” Mone was appointed as a Tory peer in 2015, despite her company, MJM International, facing significant financial difficulties prior to this promotion, having reported losses of approximately £500,000 by 2012.

The aftermath of her appointment has been overshadowed by allegations involving £203 million worth of contracts awarded to her husband's company, PPE Medpro, for supplying medical equipment to the NHS during the pandemic. Mone initially denied any connection to PPE Medpro, but her admission in 2023 that she had misrepresented her involvement has intensified scrutiny surrounding her conduct and the circumstances of her elevation to peerage. Jack Irvine, her former PR consultant, recalled his disbelief upon hearing of her appointment, highlighting a shared concern among many regarding the influence of political connections in the awarding of government contracts.

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has launched an investigation into Mone and her husband, Doug Barrowman, amidst allegations of fraud and bribery related to the procurement of PPE under the so-called "VIP lane" established during the health crisis. This lane provided preferential access to firms that had political endorsements, a practice that has garnered widespread criticism within both political and public spheres. Critics of the system argue that such measures undermine the integrity of government procurement processes, particularly when combined with personal connections that may improperly influence decision-making.

Cameron's decision to appoint Mone has also been called into question by Conservative MPs, including David Mundell, who stated that the appointment breached standard protocol, as the Scotland Office was not consulted. This lack of consultation reflects deeper issues regarding governance and accountability within political appointments, particularly in the context of Scottish affairs. Mone’s previous financial struggles and her controversial rise through political endorsement have led to accusations that her peerage was more about publicity than merit.

In light of these developments, the unfolding drama has raised ethical concerns about the role of wealth and influence in British politics. Mone's financial gains from the PPE contracts are documented, with profits reportedly amounting to £60 million. She has insisted that her involvement was not deceptive but aimed to protect her family. However, the ongoing investigations and resulting legal actions, including a £122 million lawsuit filed by the government for breach of contract, have placed her and Barrowman under considerable pressure.

As the scrutiny continues, Mone described her disappointment in a recent statement, asserting that the upcoming documentary about her life will rely on “misleading and one-sided accounts.” Her claims of innocence, accompanied by a general denial of wrongdoing from both her and Barrowman, have yet to restore public confidence in either her legacy or the process that led to her seat in the House of Lords.

Overall, the saga surrounding Michelle Mone serves as a stark reminder of the complexities within the relationship between business, politics, and public trust, particularly during a time of national crisis. Moving forward, the implications of this case may prompt a reevaluation of how political connections influence the awarding of government contracts, as well as the broader ethics of peerage appointments in the United Kingdom.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/david-cameron-michelle-mone-ppe-35282453), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/jan/25/david-cameron-broke-convention-when-he-made-michelle-mone-a-peer-says-tory-mp)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/david-cameron-michelle-mone-ppe-35282453), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/98d3cdf0-f2bc-4038-9d6e-1e2b5c75f38a), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/17/how-the-michelle-mone-scandal-unfolded-200m-of-ppe-contracts-denials-and-a-government-lawsuit)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/9261f4a40b80fd986f6d0135c412367b), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/17/michelle-mone-admits-she-stands-to-benefit-from-60m-pounds-ppe-profit)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/david-cameron-michelle-mone-ppe-35282453), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/jan/25/david-cameron-broke-convention-when-he-made-michelle-mone-a-peer-says-tory-mp)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/98d3cdf0-f2bc-4038-9d6e-1e2b5c75f38a), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/17/michelle-mone-admits-she-stands-to-benefit-from-60m-pounds-ppe-profit)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/david-cameron-michelle-mone-ppe-35282453), [[3]](https://apnews.com/article/9261f4a40b80fd986f6d0135c412367b), [[5]](https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/17/how-the-michelle-mone-scandal-unfolded-200m-of-ppe-contracts-denials-and-a-government-lawsuit)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/david-cameron-michelle-mone-ppe-35282453> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/98d3cdf0-f2bc-4038-9d6e-1e2b5c75f38a> - A 46-year-old man was arrested in Barnet, north London, in connection with £200 million worth of UK government contracts awarded to PPE Medpro during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Crime Agency detained the individual on suspicion of conspiracy to commit fraud and attempting to pervert the course of justice. PPE Medpro, owned by a consortium led by Doug Barrowman, husband of Conservative peer Baroness Michelle Mone, faced controversy over the suitability of the equipment supplied. Mone admitted to benefiting financially from the contracts and using her influence to secure them. The Department of Health sued PPE Medpro in 2022 for breach of contract, alleging that £122 million worth of medical gowns were inadequately packaged. Both Mone and Barrowman have assets worth £75 million frozen, including properties in Glasgow, and they deny any wrongdoing.
3. <https://apnews.com/article/9261f4a40b80fd986f6d0135c412367b> - Michelle Mone, a member of Britain's House of Lords, acknowledged lying about her connections to PPE Medpro, a company awarded significant government contracts for COVID-19 protective equipment. She regretted her denials and threats to journalists regarding her involvement. Her husband, Doug Barrowman, led the consortium that owns the company, and Mone benefited financially from the contracts. Despite acknowledging her error, Mone claims she and her husband are scapegoats in a larger scandal involving government spending during the pandemic. PPE Medpro received over £200 million in contracts, but millions of supplied surgical gowns were deemed unusable, leading to government breach of contract actions and a National Crime Agency investigation. The U.K. government's VIP lanes for contracts, giving preferential treatment to recommendations from politicians, have been heavily criticized. Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden defended these lanes, stating that any fraud would be pursued through civil and criminal investigations.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/17/michelle-mone-admits-she-stands-to-benefit-from-60m-pounds-ppe-profit> - Former Conservative peer Michelle Mone admitted to lying about her involvement with PPE Medpro, a company that secured over £200 million in government contracts to supply personal protective equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mone stated she wasn't trying to deceive anyone and had lied to protect her family from media attention. She acknowledged benefiting from profits of about £60 million from the contracts. Mone and her husband, Doug Barrowman, have been under investigation by the National Crime Agency for alleged fraud and bribery, which they deny. The U.K. government's VIP lanes, which fast-tracked contracts for companies with political connections, have faced heavy criticism. Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden defended these lanes, stating that any fraud would be pursued through civil and criminal investigations.
5. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/dec/17/how-the-michelle-mone-scandal-unfolded-200m-of-ppe-contracts-denials-and-a-government-lawsuit> - Michelle Mone and her husband, Doug Barrowman, initially denied any involvement with PPE Medpro, a company that secured over £200 million in government contracts to supply personal protective equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic. They later admitted to introducing the company to government ministers and benefiting financially from the contracts. The National Crime Agency is investigating them for alleged fraud and bribery, which they deny. The U.K. government's VIP lanes, which fast-tracked contracts for companies with political connections, have faced heavy criticism. Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden defended these lanes, stating that any fraud would be pursued through civil and criminal investigations.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2024/jan/25/david-cameron-broke-convention-when-he-made-michelle-mone-a-peer-says-tory-mp> - David Mundell, the Conservative MP for Dumfriesshire, Clydesdale and Tweeddale, stated that David Cameron breached 'proper process' when appointing Michelle Mone to the House of Lords in 2015. Mundell, who was the Secretary of State for Scotland at the time, said the Scotland Office was not consulted about Mone's appointment, which is standard practice for Scottish peerages. Cameron and other Westminster Tories were impressed by Mone when she backed the union in the Scottish independence referendum. Mone was already well known in Scotland through her lingerie business, Ultimo. Some Scottish businesspeople were unhappy with Mone's peerage, questioning her qualifications and the process of her appointment.