# Michelle Mone and Doug Barrowman’s £122 million PPE scandal exposes endemic cronyism and ongoing asset concealment



Michelle Mone, the controversial peer embroiled in scandal, and her billionaire husband Doug Barrowman face mounting scrutiny following a High Court ruling demanding PPE Medpro, a consortium led by Barrowman, repay £122 million to the UK government. The judgement exposes a sordid tale of greed, with the court finding that the couple profited heavily from a shady Covid-19 contract awarded through a politically manipulated “VIP fast lane,” a scheme championed by Mone herself and emblematic of the cronyism that has plagued our public procurement processes. The deal involved the supply of 25 million surgical gowns—manufactured in China—that were later rejected outright by the NHS for failing sterilisation standards, rendering them useless at a time of national crisis.

The couple’s financial dealings, including illicit profits estimated at £65 million from the contract, highlight how privileged insiders exploited taxpayer funds for personal gain. Despite denials and attempts at public distancing, Michelle Mone eventually admitted to misleading the public about her involvement, raising serious questions about transparency and integrity. Court documents reveal that large sums from these illicit profits were funneled into trusts linked to Mone and her children—funds that have fueled a luxury spending spree, including multiple high-value properties across Glasgow, as well as a yacht and prime London real estate. Many of these assets are now under threat of repossession, yet estimates suggest ongoing rental income still cashes in on these ill-gotten gains, further exposing the extent of the scandal.

The revelations have sparked widespread outrage, with calls from senior Scottish politicians and taxpayers’ advocates demanding a comprehensive freeze on all assets linked to the pair. The Scottish public’s trust in political and judicial accountability is further eroded by the fact that Mone continues to sit in the House of Lords, shielded by privilege despite the scandal’s gravity. The notion that political elitism allows such individuals to dodge consequences feeds into public disillusionment, and highlights the urgent need for reforms to prevent future abuses of power.

Adding to the chaos, PPE Medpro recently filed for administration amid revelations that its UK accounts show net assets of less than £700,000—paltry compared to the sums owed and the profits made. Tax and legal experts suggest offshore entities in the Isle of Man may hold the key to recovering some funds, yet the full scope of the real financial trail remains elusive. Meanwhile, the National Crime Agency’s ongoing investigation into potential criminal conduct continues, following raids and a £75 million asset freeze ordered by authorities, which the couple has not contested. Such measures, while significant, are unlikely to fully recover taxpayers’ money given the offshoring of assets and the political privilege that still shields Mone.

Throughout this saga, Michelle Mone dismisses allegations as “scapegoating,” insisting she is the victim of political persecution designed to divert attention from government failures during the pandemic. Her outspoken criticism of Labour Chancellor Rachel Reeves and threats received on social media demonstrate how the scandal has become a battleground in the broader effort to hold the political establishment to account. Yet, she remains a peer in the House of Lords, enjoying privileges that critics say represent a double standard for those who have exploited their position for personal enrichment.

As this high-profile scandal unfolds, one thing is clear: the government’s ability—or lack thereof—to recover stolen taxpayers’ money will be a litmus test for public trust and integrity in future government contracts. The oversight of public procurement, once riddled with cronyism and corruption, must be overhauled to prevent such abuse from recurring. As the political landscape shifts, citizens must question whether our elites remain above the law, or whether steps will finally be taken to ensure accountability for those who have profited from the pandemic crisis through deceit and deceitful connections.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/politics/total-freeze-urged-michelle-mone-36014880> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.apnews.com/article/b7d784339dbfe5e3540887e47c471864> - A British High Court has ordered PPE Medpro, a company linked to Michelle Mone's husband Doug Barrowman, to repay £121 million ($163 million) for breaching a government contract to supply 25 million surgical gowns during the COVID-19 pandemic. The gowns, manufactured in China, failed to meet sterility standards and were never used by the UK's National Health Service. The ruling found that PPE Medpro breached the contract, although the government cannot recoup storage costs. PPE Medpro obtained the contract through political connections, recommended by Mone, a Conservative peer who later admitted to misleading the public about her involvement. Both Mone and Barrowman deny wrongdoing and criticized the ruling. This case is part of a broader effort by the newly elected Labour government to recover funds lost to PPE procurement failures. Treasury chief Rachel Reeves confirmed the recovered money would support public services. However, PPE Medpro has filed for administration, complicating repayment. Campaigners demand Mone be stripped of her title due to her role in the PPE scandal.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/uk-wins-lawsuit-against-firm-over-gowns-contract-covid-pandemic-2025-10-01/> - The UK government has won a lawsuit against PPE Medpro, a firm involved in a controversial deal during the COVID-19 pandemic. The High Court in London awarded the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) £122 million ($164.3 million) in damages after ruling that PPE Medpro breached a 2020 contract to supply 25 million sterile surgical gowns. The court found the gowns were not properly validated as sterile and could not be used in healthcare settings, thus justifying the department's rejection of the goods and demand for compensation. However, the judge dismissed an additional claim for £8.6 million in storage costs. PPE Medpro, linked to former Conservative lawmaker Michelle Mone, had argued that the government simply regretted the purchase. Mone criticized the court's decision, maintaining that she and her husband, described as the company’s "principal backer," were being scapegoated. Despite the judgment, recovering the awarded damages remains uncertain, as PPE Medpro’s latest financial records show net assets of under £700,000. The company has also filed a notice of intent to appoint an administrator. The case is emblematic of wider criticism over the UK government’s handling of procurement during the pandemic, especially contracts awarded via a "VIP lane."
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jun/11/dhsc-122m-claim-michelle-mone-linked-company-high-court> - In November of the following year, the couple acknowledged for the first time that they were involved in PPE Medpro. A month later Mone admitted in an interview with the BBC’s Laura Kuenssberg that she had lied to the media. Barrowman said he had made more than £60m in profits from the PPE contracts, and transferred money to the trust, adding that the beneficiaries included his children too. PPE Medpro had said in a statement in December 2020 that it was “proud” that the gowns and face masks it provided had “undoubtedly helped keep our NHS workers safe”. In fact, while the face masks were accepted, the gowns had been rejected by the DHSC and were never used in the NHS. In December 2022 the government sued the company after questions were asked in parliament following the Guardian’s reporting. In the same month Mone took a leave of absence from the House of Lords. In its legal claim the DHSC alleges that it rejected the gowns because they were not sterile and could have compromised patient safety, their technical labelling was “invalid” and “improper”, and they “cannot be used within the NHS for any purpose”. The court action is for payment of the full £122m the DHSC paid to the company, plus £11m for storage and disposal costs, and interest. PPE Medpro has insisted throughout that the gowns were manufactured in China to the correct specification and sterility, and said from the start that it would defend the legal action. This week as the case is to open, the company maintained that position. In a statement, a spokesperson said: “PPE Medpro categorically denies breaching its obligations to DHSC in the supply of sterile surgical gowns during the Covid pandemic and it will robustly defend these claims in court.” The DHSC has said it does not comment on active legal proceedings. The high court action is separate to the long-running investigation by the National Crime Agency into whether Mone and Barrowman committed any criminal offences during the process of procuring the contracts. The NCA executed search warrants on the couple’s homes and other properties in April 2022, and in January 2024 the Crown Prosecution Service obtained a court order freezing £75m of their assets. Mone and Barrowman did not contest that application, and have denied any criminal wrongdoing.
5. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/michelle-mone-assets-frozen-nca-inquiry-medpro-b2485520.html> - Assets linked to Michelle Mone and her husband Doug Barrowman have been frozen as part of a National Crime Agency (NCA) investigation into PPE firm Medpro. In May 2021 the NCA launched an inquiry into “suspected criminal offences” committed in the procurement of PPE contracts by PPE Medpro, which is owned by a consortium led by Mr Barrowman. Baroness Mone has since said she is being “treated like Pablo Escobar” after having her bank accounts frozen. According to the Financial Times, around £75m of assets, including a townhouse in Belgravia and an estate on the Isle of Man, have either been frozen or restrained following an application by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Some 15 bank accounts at Coutts, C Hoare & Co and Goldman Sachs International are also said to have been affected by the move. Back in 2022, the UK government sued PPE Medpro for breach of contract, claiming that £122m worth of protective gowns the company had supplied were of insufficient quality. PPE Medpro has denied that the goods were faulty and is contesting the lawsuit. A spokesperson for the couple said the assets freeze “comes as a result of a consensual process during which negotiations took place with the CPS”, adding that it “allows the wider businesses and assets of the Barrowman family to operate normally and free from any restrictions or uncertainties”. The spokesperson added: “Doug and Michelle did not contest the application and were happy to offer up these assets, which means they can begin the task of proving their innocence more quickly. “Mr Barrowman finds it deplorable that private matters such as this are being conducted in the public realm via leaks from government departments and the CPS.”
6. <https://www.itv.com/news/2025-10-01/firm-linked-to-tory-peer-michelle-mone-must-pay-back-122-million-for-faulty-ppe> - A High Court judge has ordered the company linked to Tory peer Michelle Mone, must repay the government almost £122 million for breaching a contract to supply 25 million surgical gowns during the coronavirus pandemic. The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) sued PPE Medpro, saying the company had provided 25 million “faulty” gowns that were not sterile and therefore could not be used. The company, a consortium led by Lady Mone’s husband, businessman Doug Barrowman, was awarded Government contracts by the former Conservative administration to supply PPE during the pandemic, after she recommended it to ministers. Both denied wrongdoing and neither gave evidence at the trial in June, while lawyers for the DHSC said they were “not concerned with any profits made by anybody” and that the case was “simply about compliance.” The Government wants to recover the costs of the £121 million contract, as well as the costs of transporting and storing the items, which amounts to over £8,500. Mrs Justice Cockerill gave her ruling on Wednesday, with a further hearing to take place dealing with consequential matters. Ahead of the ruling, PPE Medpro filed a “notice of appointment to appoint an administrator” on Tuesday. Baroness Mone also accused the government of “scapegoating” her and Mr Barrowman in a post on X, in which she claimed that the company had offered to settle the case. She said: “Doug and I have been deliberately scapegoated and vilified in an orchestrated campaign designed to distract from catastrophic mismanagement of PPE procurement. “The government decided to make us the poster couple for the PPE scandal, a convenient distraction to take the blame off them.” She continued that instead of settling the case, the DHSC “chose to spend a staggering £5 million of taxpayers’ money pursuing litigation against a company they knew had no funds.” 103 out of 140 of the gowns PPE Medpro provided were found to not be sterile. Credit: iStock