COVID VICTIM FAMILES DEMAND MONE IS KICKED OUT OF THE LORDS

Firm linked to Tory tycoon is ordered to repay £122m of taxpayers' cash after PPE scandal

OUT ON HER PEER

RAPPED Michelle Mone, right, and with billionaire husband Doug Barrowman, left

BY CHRIS McCALL

FURIOUS families of Covid victims have demanded that disgraced Michelle Mone is booted out of the House of Lords after a firm linked to her was ordered to pay back £122million for dodgy PPE.

PPE Medpro was ordered to repay the massive sum they received for supplying "faulty equipment" to the NHS during the pandemic.

The disgraced former Tory peer was at the centre of a deal to supply 25 million surgical gowns to the UK government during the pandemic.

A judge ruled yesterday that PPE Medpro – a consortium led by Mone's billionaire husband Doug Barrowman with his wife as a beneficiary – must repay the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) for breaching the contract. The judge ruled that the equipment supplied was not fit for use.

The firm – which was put into administration the day before the ruling – has just 14 days to cough up the cash.

After that, the company and its directors, including Mone and Barrowman, could be personally pursued for the money owed.

Calls were growing last night to kick Baroness Mone of Mayfair out of the House of Lords over the scandal.

Families bereaved in the pandemic welcomed the court ruling and called for Mone, 53, to be stripped of her peerage.

The Covid-19 Bereaved Families for Justice UK campaign group said: "Greed and corruption during the pandemic have cost lives, and everyone responsible must be held accountable."

They said the creation of a so-called VIP lane led to billions being spent on inadequate personal protective equipment (PPE), adding: "That failure cost lives.

"We want justice for those who died as a result.

"The UK Covid-19 Inquiry has so far concluded just one of its 10 modules. As it continues, the scale of the corruption, greed, misconduct and incompetence uncovered in its reports will shock the country. Nobody who had any part to play in the PPE scandal, which cost lives, should have any role in public life.

"Mone should have no role in making and passing the laws we all live under. Her title must be revoked immediately."

Veteran SNP MP Pete Wishart said: "We now have a ruling on the Michelle Mone PPE scandal and now is the time for the Labour Government to act – they must strip Mone of her peerage.

"The Lords is expensive enough – Michelle Mone cannot continue to have access to unfettered expenses at great cost to the public."

While a life peerage cannot be relinquished, Mone could choose to resign from being a member of the House of Lords. Peerages can only be removed by an act of Parliament.

Mone, who lost the Tory whip in 2022, is entitled to claim a range of expenses from the public purse.

PPE Medpro was awarded UK Government contracts in 2020 by the former Tory government to supply PPE after Mone recommended it to ministers.

Mone then acted as the firm's "big gun" in talks with officials to help get the contract over the line. The company agreed to the contract in the summer of 2020, but was sued by the DHSC in 2022 over claims that it breached the terms of the deal by providing "faulty" PPE.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) sued PPE Medpro at the High Court over allegations that it breached a deal for the 25million gowns because the items were "faulty" by not being sterile.

When PPE Medpro was being pursued over the faulty gowns, Mone claimed she had no link to the company.

She later admitted that she had lied when she repeatedly denied having been involved with the firm.

In her 87-page ruling, Mrs Justice Cockerill said that the gowns "were not, contractually speaking, sterile, or properly validated as being sterile" which meant they could not be used in the NHS.

She also concluded that Mone played a significant role in securing the contract for PPE Medpro as the Tory-run UK government scrambled to find supplies of protective equipment from around the world.

Justice Cockerill found PPE Medpro had breached the contract. She said the DHSC was entitled to the price of the gowns as damages but not the costs of storing the items. The judge said the money must be paid by 4pm on October 15.

Barristers for PPE Medpro told the trial it had been "singled out for unfair treatment" and accused the government of "buyer's remorse", claiming the gowns became defective because of the conditions in which they were kept, after being delivered to the DHSC.

Mone and her husband both reacted with fury to the court ruling. The bra tycoon said: "Today's judgment against PPE Medpro is shocking but all too predictable. It is nothing less than an establishment win for the Government in a case that was too big for them to lose."

Barrowman said: "Today, a travesty of justice took place following the judgment of Lady Justice Cockerill.

"She gave the DHSC an establishment win despite the mountain of evidence in court against such a judgment.

"Her judgment bears little resemblance to what actually took place during the month-long trial, where PPE Medpro convincingly demonstrated that its gowns were sterile. This judgment is a whitewash of the facts and shows that justice was being seen to be done, where the outcome was always certain for the DHSC and the Government."

> **Time for Labour Government to act and strip Michelle Mone of her peerage**
>
> PETE WISHART VETERAN MP FOR THE SNP

PPE MEDPRO

SLAMMED Mone being admitted to Lords in 2015, right, is facing calls to lose her title over PPE firm scandal

Fortune pocketed for faulty supplies

TIMELINE

APRIL 2020: As Covid deaths increase, the government sets up a "VIP lane" to certain firms to supply personal protective equipment to the NHS.

JUNE 2020: PPE Medpro, a consortium led by Mone's husband Doug Barrowman, is awarded two contracts by the Tory government – the first for £80.85million to supply 210 million face masks and a second for £122million to supply 25 million sterile surgical gowns.

DECEMBER 2020: Lawyers for Baroness Mone say she "had no role or function in PPE Medpro, nor in the process by which contracts were awarded to PPE Medpro". The same month, the Department of Health rejected the gowns.

NOVEMBER 2021: The Boris Johnson government releases files showing Mone was the "source of referral" for PPE Medpro. They show she contacted Cabinet Office minister Lord Agnew to refer the firm to the VIP lane.

DECEMBER 2022: The government sues PPE Medpro claiming the medical gowns supplied "did not comply with the specification in the contract".

DECEMBER 2023: Michelle Mone and Doug Barrowman acknowledge their role in helping PPE Medpro secure the contract, with Mone saying she could eventually benefit from the profit of about £60million.

OUTCRY Boris Johnson

REFERRAL Lord Agnew

BEGINNING Mone with models at Ultimo launch in 1999

Working class girl to undies millionare

OCT 8, 1971 - Michelle Mone is born in Glasgow's east end.

1986 - Leaves school with no qualifications to become a model.

1996 - Forms MJM International and bra firm Ultimo along with husband Michael Mone.

1999 - Launches Ultimo lingerie brand at Selfridges department store in London.

2010 - Joins the Conservative Party.

2011 - Divorces Michael and buys him out of the business.

2015 - Resigns directorships of MJM and Ultimo. Tory PM David Cameron announces Mone will become a baroness.

2016 - Reveals she is in relationship with billionaire Glasgow businessman Doug Barrowman.

JUNE 2020 - Barrowman's company PPE Medpro awarded £200million of contracts to provide PPE by UK government including face masks and surgical gowns.

DEC 2020 - Department of Health and Social Care rejects gowns as faulty and tells PPE Medpro to return the cash.

JAN 2022 - House of Lords Commissioner for Standards and National Crime Agency launch probe into Mone's links to PPE contracts.

DEC 2022 - Takes leave of absence from the House of Lords. UK government announces plans to sue PPE Medpro for £122million over the defective gowns.

DEC 2023 - Mone discloses she was involved with PPE Medpro despite previous denials.

SEPT 2025 - UK Government awarded £122million damages at High Court in London after judge rules that surgical gowns supplied by PPE Medpro were defective.

FLASHY Mone in Ultimo undies

Pair's own cash could be targeted

BY NORMAN SILVESTER

MICHELLE Mone could be personally liable for the £122million awarded to the UK Government and even made bankrupt, according to a leading insolvency expert.

The High Court yesterday ordered PPE Medpro, owned by Mone's husband Doug Barrowman, to pay back money they received for dodgy PPE equipment supplied during the Covid pandemic.

Mone herself had previously admitted she lied about her role in the company and would be a beneficiary of any profits.

With PPE Medpro filing for administration before yesterday's ruling, officers appointed by the court will now have the power to seize assets of people associated with the business – including Mone. Last night, the Government signalled it will attempt to recover the money owed.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting said: "The court ruling makes clear we won't stand for it and we're coming after every penny owed to our NHS. This Government will ruthlessly pursue any company which tried to exploit the pandemic for their own ends while our health service was fighting to save lives."

Chancellor Rachel Reeves, who has been leading work to claw back money lost during the pandemic, also welcomed the judgment.

She said: "We want our money back. We are getting our money back."

In December 2023, Mone admitted that she and her children could eventually benefit from the firm's profits of about £60million through a series of financial trusts where they money is held. Molly Monks of insolvency specialists Parker Walsh said: "This award makes the company's balance sheet insolvent as its assets are smaller than its liabilities.

"The administrator will look to sell any of the company's assets and distribute the monies equally to relevant creditors.

"They will also look at the conduct of the directors and shadow directors to see whether there has been any wrongdoing. If the directors have made a mistake, they could be personally liable for it.

"Beneficiaries are slightly different. It would depend on how she (Michelle Mone) received that money and whether she received it lawfully.

"If not, she might have to return it."

When asked if it would be difficult to recover money paid out to directors and others, Molly said: "Surprisingly not that difficult.

"It is a common misconception that a limited company gives you that protective bubble. It does as long as you have acted correctly as a director.

"The minute you don't act in the best interests of the creditors then you might face hefty claims against you."

Molly added: "If the administrator is pursuing an individual it would be up to the individual to pay or not pay.

"If they don't and the administrator has a valid claim against them, they can bankrupt."

QUEST Rachel Reeves