

Weekly Political Update

13 February 2018

For further information on any of the parliamentary terms used in this document, please click [here](#).

Assistive Technology

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| <p><u>Oral evidence – Inquiry on Assistive Technology</u></p> | <p>The Work and Pensions Select Committee heard oral evidence from Accessibility UK, Microsoft, and AbilityNet, as part of its Assistive Technology Inquiry.</p> <p>To read in full, please click on the link on the left.</p> |
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Social Care

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| <p><u>Written Statement on adult social care funding</u></p> | <p>Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Sajid Javid MP (Conservatives, Bromsgrove) has made the following Statement:</p> <p><i>“I am today announcing a further £150 million in 2018-19 for an Adult Social Care Support Grant. This will be taken from anticipated underspend in existing departmental budgets, and will not affect existing revenue commitments made to local government. This will be allocated according to relative needs and we will expect to see councils use it to build on their progress so far in supporting sustainable local care markets.”</i></p> <p>To read the Statement in full, please click on the link on the left.</p> |
| <p><u>Written question on whether the upcoming consultation on adult social care will include consideration of unfair care home contracts</u></p> | <p>Luke Pollard MP (Labour, Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department’s planned consultation on adult social care will include consideration of unfair care home contracts.”</i></p> <p>Newly appointed Minister of State for Health and Social Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“Any instance of unfair and harmful terms and conditions in care home contracts are unacceptable. The issue was highlighted by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in the final report of their care home market study published on 30 November 2017.</i></p> <p><i>It is right that the CMA is taking enforcement action where appropriate and we welcome that the CMA will provide guidance on consumer law for the adult social care sector. The CMA report set out important recommendations about what can be done to better protect care home residents from unfair practices. The Government will set out its response to the CMA’s recommendations on this issue.”</i></p> |

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| <p><u>Written question on what steps the Government has taken to improve the monitoring of the adequacy of care provided in care homes</u></p> | <p>Shadow DUP Health Spokesperson, Jim Shannon MP (DUP, Strangford) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent steps the Government has taken to improve the monitoring of the adequacy of care provided in care homes.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Health and Social Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“As at February 2018, 81% of social care organisations are rated by the Care Quality Commission as Good/Outstanding. However, it is completely unacceptable that standards in some settings fall below those rightly expected by care users and their families.</i></p> <p><i>The Government introduced tougher inspections of care services and councils have been given access in total to £9.4 billion more dedicated funding for social care between 2017/18 and 2019/20.</i></p> <p><i>This summer we will publish plans to reform our social care system to make it sustainable for the future. The consultation will set out options to put the social care system on a more secure footing and address issues to improve the quality of care and reduce variation in practice.</i></p> <p><i>The Department is also working with the adult social care sector to implement Quality Matters – a shared commitment to take action to achieve high quality adult social care through six actions.”</i></p> |
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Healthcare

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| <p><u>Oral parliamentary health questions – on the integration of health and social care; NHS funding; Accountable Care Organisations (ACOs) and clinical commissioning decisions</u></p> | <p>Luke Hall MP (Conservatives, Thornbury and Yate) has asked the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care:</p> <p><i>“What steps he is taking to integrate local health and social care services.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Health and Social Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“The fact that the Department has been renamed the Department of Health and Social Care reflects both their interdependence and our commitment to achieve co-ordinated care tailored to individual needs. The better care fund is a national integration programme that helps the NHS and local government to deliver better, more joined-up services.”</i></p> <p>Shadow Secretary of State for Health, Jonathan Ashworth MP (Labour, Leicester South) asked the following question:</p> <p><i>“One model of integration that has aroused considerable concern is the so-called accountable care organisation model. Many are concerned that that means greater private sector involvement... Can the Minister rule out any private sector involvement in ACOs? Will she also delay laying the relevant regulations to establish an ACO until after the two judicial reviews and the NHS England consultation?”</i></p> |
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Minister of State for Health and Social Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:

"The hon. Gentleman is right to raise this. NHS England is consulting on that at the moment, and I can confirm that no regulations will be laid until that consultation has been completed."

Shadow Secretary of State for Health, Jonathan Ashworth MP (Labour, Leicester South) then asked:

"I am extremely grateful to the Minister for offering us that clarification. May I therefore ask her about funding? The integration of health and social care needs more funding, yet the NHS is going through the biggest financial squeeze in its history and social care has been cut by billions since 2010. A few moments ago the Minister said that the funding is adequate, but if the funding is adequate across health and social care, why are delayed discharges of care up 50%, and why did NHS England say on Friday that for the rest of this year the A&E target has in effect been abandoned?"

Minister of State for Health and Social Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) replied:

"We recognise that there are pressures on our social care as the population ages. In the short term, we have of course made the extra £2 billion of funding available to local authorities; in the medium term, we need to make sure that best practice is observed across all local authorities and NHS trusts; and in the long term, we will be coming forward with a Green Paper on social care later this year."

Emma Hardy MP (Labour, Kingston Upon Hull and Hessle) asked a question about commissioning decisions within her constituency:

"The Minister will be aware of the situation surrounding pain infusion treatment for patients in Hull and East Riding. Many of the 86 patients who lose that treatment will require increasing levels of social care. Consultants have even written letters to the CCG to say that if that treatment is removed, there is an increased risk of mortality for those patients. Will the Minister meet me urgently to discuss that and write to the CCG to ask it to urgently review its decision in the light of the evidence from consultants?"

The Minister, Caroline Dinenage replied:

"Of course blanket bans on treatments are unacceptable, and decisions on treatments should always be made locally by doctors, based on clinical assessment. I understand that those patients will be offered an alternative, more rounded service and that the CCGs have arranged for each patient to meet their consultant to discuss their treatment. Where there is evidence of rationing, we expect NHS England to ensure that CCGs are not breaching their duties."

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| <p><u>Announcement on Accountable Care Organisation contracts consultation – NHS England</u></p> | <p>NHS England have announced that they will launch a consultation on Accountable Care Organisations (ACO) contracts.</p> <p>For more information, please click on the link on the left.</p> |
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Disability benefits

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| <p><u>Written question on what estimate the Government has made of the cost to the public purse of the review of all PIP payments</u></p> | <p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the cost to the public purse of the review of all personal independence payment claims.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by myself, Official Report, 30 January 2018, Column 703.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question on whether the Government will publish an updated equality assessment</u></p> | <p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the increase in the estimated number of people eligible for higher personal independence payment support from 164,000 to 220,000, if her Department will publish an updated equality assessment.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by myself, Official Report, 30 January 2018, Column 708.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question on whether there will be an appeals process for PIP claimants who believe they are entitled to back payments but are not contacted by the Department for Work and Pensions</u></p> | <p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether there be an appeal process for personal independence payment claimants who believe they are entitled to back payments but are not contacted by her Department in the course of its review of all personal independence payment claims.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by myself, Official Report, 30 January 2018, Column 704.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question on whether the Government’s</u></p> | <p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether her Department’s review of 1.6 million personal independence payment claims includes those claims which</i></p> |

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| <p><u>review of 1.6 million PIP claims includes claims which scored 0 and were not awarded PIP</u></p> | <p><i>(a) scored 0 points and (b) were not awarded personal independence payment.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by myself, Official Report, 30 January 2018, Columns 704-705.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question on what criteria the Government is using to prioritise the PIP claims it is reviewing</u></p> | <p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what criteria her Department is using to prioritise the personal independence payment claims it is reviewing.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by myself, Official Report, 30 January 2018, Column 704.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question what the timetable is for the Government to update the PIP assessment guide following the RF v Secretary of State for Work and Pensions [2017] judgement</u></p> | <p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova (Labour, Battersea) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the timetable is for her Department to update the personal independence payment assessment guide following the judgment of RF v Secretary of State for Work And Pensions [2017] EWHC 3375 (Admin) (21 December 2017).”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by my Rt. Hon Friend, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Official Report, 23 January 2018, Column 139.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question on when the Government plans to include provision to consider mental health issues on the PIP assessment form</u></p> | <p>Henry Smith MP (Conservatives, Crawley) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when her Department plans to include provision to consider mental health issues on the personal independence payments assessment form; and if he will make a statement.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“The assessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) looks at an individual’s ability to carry out a series of everyday activities. The assessment considers the overall impact of a claimant’s health condition or impairment on their functional ability, rather than focusing on a particular diagnosis. Therefore the PIP assessment forms that underpin the assessment include provision to consider mental health issues as well as physical issues.</i></p> <p><i>66% of PIP recipients with mental health conditions get the enhanced rate daily living component, compared with 22% who received the highest DLA care component. And 31% of PIP recipients with mental health conditions get the enhanced rate mobility rate, compared with just 10% of DLA recipients.”</i></p> |

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| <p><u>Written question on what steps the Government is taking to issue backdated payments as a result of the High Court judgement – Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) (Amendment) Regulations 2017</u></p> | <p>Christine Jardin MP (Liberal Democrats, Edinburgh West) has asked “<i>the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to issue backdated payments as a result of the High Court judgement on the Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.</i>”</p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth):</p> <p><i>“I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by myself, Official Report, 30 January 2018, Column 703.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question on the timetable for the upcoming review of Personal Independence Payments (PIP)</u></p> | <p>Anna McMorrin MP (Labour, Cardiff North) has asked “<i>the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the timetable is for the upcoming review of all personal independence payment claims.</i>”</p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“I refer the Hon. Member to the statement made by myself, Official Report, 30 January 2018, Column 703.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question on what steps are being taken by the Government to ensure that PIP assessments are undertaken fairly and efficiently</u></p> | <p>Rosie Duffield MP (Labour, Canterbury) “<i>What steps her Department is taking to ensure that personal independence payment assessments are undertaken fairly and efficiently.</i>”</p> <p>Responding, Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) said:</p> <p><i>“We are committed to ensuring claimants receive high quality, objective assessments. The Department holds regular performance meetings with Assessment Providers at local and senior levels. Assessments are independently audited and Departmental clinicians periodically observe assessments. Both providers have increased personalised clinical support to all Health Professionals. PIP Assessment Providers cost less than 4% of the total annual benefit spend on PIP.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Written question on what plans the Government have to provide PIP claimants with an accompanying list of functional descriptors used to assess PIP claims</u></p> | <p>Former Shadow Disabilities Minister, Marie Rimmer MP (Labour, St Helens South and Whiston) has asked “<i>the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to provide personal independence payments (PIP) claimants with an accompanying list of functional descriptors used to assess PIP claims and the points each descriptor carries.</i>”</p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) replied:</p> <p><i>“I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to her previous Question UIN 123022.”</i></p> |

Written question
– with reference
to the Minister’s
comments on
PIP back
payments -
whether there
will be a new
form setting out
descriptors

Jess Phillips MP (Labour, Birmingham Yardley) has asked *“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the oral contribution of the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, of 30 January 2018, Official Report, column 703 on PIP back payments, whether there will be a new form setting out descriptors.”*

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:

“We will undertake all the necessary steps to implement the Upper Tribunal judgment in MH in full.”

Parliamentary terms

Early Day Motion (EDM)

Early Day Motions are formal motions for debate submitted by MPs in the House of Commons. There is usually no time available to actually debate an EDM, but they are useful for drawing attention to specific events or campaigns and demonstrating the extent of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view. MPs register their support by signing individual motions.

Oral Parliamentary Question (OPQ) and Written Parliamentary Question (WPQ)

Parliamentary Questions are used by both MPs and Peers to question Ministers in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. They are used to seek information, and Ministers are obliged to explain and defend the work, policy, decisions and actions of their departments, oral questions can also be used to make political points. Parliamentary questions are a vital tool in holding the Government to account. The Prime Minister answers oral questions from the House of Commons every Wednesday at midday.

Debates

Both the House of Commons and the House of Lords hold debates in which Members discuss government policy, proposed new laws and current issues. All debates are recorded in a publication called 'Hansard' which is available online or in print.

All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)

All-Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) are informal groups composed of politicians from all political parties. They provide an opportunity for cross-party discussion and co-operation on particular issues. All-party groups sometimes act as useful pressure groups for specific causes helping to keep the Government, the opposition and MPs informed of parliamentary and outside opinion.

Select Committees

House of Commons Select Committees exist to scrutinise the work of government departments. Most committees have about 11 members and reflect the relative size of each party in the Commons. They conduct enquiries on a specific issue, and gather evidence from expert witnesses. Findings are reported to the Commons, printed, and published on the Parliament website. The Government then usually has 60 days to reply to the committee's recommendations.

Written ministerial statements

Government ministers can make written statements to announce:

- The publication of reports by government agencies
- Findings of reviews and inquiries and the government's response
- Financial and statistical information
- Procedure and policy initiatives of government departments

Private Members' Bills

Private Members' Bills allow backbench MPs or Peers to introduce their own legislation. There are three types of Private Members' Bills introduced into the House of Commons:

- **Ballot Bills:** A ballot is held at the beginning of each parliamentary year the 20 MPs whose names come out top are allowed to introduce legislation on a subject of their choice.
- **Ten Minute Rule Bills:** The sponsoring MP is given a slot in which they may make a speech lasting up to 10 minutes in support of his or her bill
- **Presentation Bill:** a Member is not able to speak in support of it and it stands almost no chance of becoming law