

# **Weekly Political Update**

**14<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

## Employment

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><b>Oral question on the proposed Work and Health Programme</b></a></p>	<p>Kate Hollern MP (Lab, Blackburn) tabled an oral question asking whether the Government plans for benefit sanctions to be applicable to people referred to the proposed work and health programme.</p> <p>In response the Employment Minister, Priti Patel MP (Con, Witham) said that the DWP is:</p> <p><i>“Developing new provision to support people with health conditions and disabilities and those who are very long-term unemployed. We are currently developing the design of the programme, including the conditionality that will be a feature of it.”</i></p> <p>During the supplementary questions Stephen Timms MP (Labour, East Ham) said that under the Work Programme, extra help has been given to jobseekers who have been out of work for 12 months, but under the new programme it will not be until two years have passed. He therefore asked if the Jobcentre will get extra resources to deal with people out of work for between one and two years.</p> <p>Priti Patel responded by saying that the new programme will be accompanied by a structural reform that will better target support for those individuals who are furthest away from the labour market. She added that the new Work and Health programme will integrate services, particularly for those with mental health conditions or health barriers, to help them get closer to the labour market and back into work.</p>
<p><a href="#"><b>Oral question on increasing the number of disabled people in work</b></a></p>	<p>William Wragg MP (Con, Hazel Grove) tabled an oral question asking what progress has been made on increasing the number of disabled people in work.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North) said that In the last two years the number of disabled people in work has increased by 339,000. He added that the Government recognise that the gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people remains too large, which is why they are committed to halve it.</p>

	<p>In his supplementary question William Wragg highlighted an upcoming Disability Confident event in his constituency and praised the work of local charities ARC and Independent Options for their contributions to the event.</p>
<a href="#"><u>Oral question on Access to Work</u></a>	<p>During an oral question on low pay and training Neil Coyle MP (Lab, Bermondsey and Old Southwark) noted that these are issues which affect many disabled people. He then added:</p> <p><i>"two years ago, almost to the day, the Department announced the extension of the Access to Work programme to disabled people seeking training, internships and apprenticeships. How many people have benefited from that scheme and when will we hear about its progress?"</i></p> <p>In response the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Work and Pensions, Shailesh Vara MP (Con, West Cambridgeshire) said that 'We are very close to record levels as far as that initiative is concerned'.</p> <p>At the end of Work and Pensions questions Neil Coyle raised a Point or Order calling for the Shailesh Vara to clarify the statistics he used for his answer, saying that the Minister '<i>stated that Access to Work use was at record levels. According to DWP figures published in October, in 2014-15 there were 36,760 users, but in 2009-10 there were 37,270.</i>' No substantive response was given.</p>

## Charities

*Click on link for source*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<a href="#"><u>Written question on Government support for charities</u></a>	<p>Bob Blackman (Con, Harrow East) has asked what plans the Government has to support charities during this Parliament.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Civil Society said that in the last five years the number of registered charities has increased by over 2,000, and the sector's annual income has grown by over £10bn.</p> <p>He added:</p> <p><i>"Looking ahead, the Government's priority is supporting a strong, independent, transparent and accountable voluntary sector. Plans will include a focus on outcomes based commissioning, restoring public trust in fundraising and</i></p>

	<i>strengthening the Charity Commission to protect charities from abuse through the Charities Bill.”</i>
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## Transport

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Item	Summary
<a href="#"><b>Written question on the transport Accessibility Action Plan</b></a>	<p>Shadow Transport Minister, Daniel Zeichner MP (Lab, Cambridge) asked the Department of Transport what recent monitoring it has undertaken of the Accessibility Action Plan; and if there will be annual updates on such monitoring.</p> <p>In response Transport Minister Andrew Jones MP, (Con, Harrogate) said:</p> <p><i>“This Government is committed to continuing improving disabled people’s access to public transport services. We are working with the Disabled People’s Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) to revamp next year the Department for Transport’s first-ever Accessibility Action Plan, which was initiated under the Coalition government, including consideration about how we monitor progress against it.”</i></p>

## Health Social Care

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Item	Summary
<a href="#"><b>Written question on social services finances</b></a>	<p>Shadow Treasury Minister Rebecca Bailey-Long MP (Lab, Salford and Eccles) has tabled a written question to the Department for Communities and Local Government asking what assessment has been made of the amount that the two per cent precept for adult social care would raise for each local authority if used fully. She has also asked whether the Government carried out an equality impact assessment on the policy to allow local authorities to raise council tax by two per cent to fund adult social care.</p> <p>In response the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, Marcus Jones MP (Con, Nuneaton) the two per cent levy could raise £2bn a year by 2019-20. He added that the Government will set out further details alongside the provisional local government finance settlement later this month, including an equality impact assessment in the New Year.</p>

<p><b><u>Written statement on charges for overseas visitors and migrants who use the NHS</u></b></p>	<p>The Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt MP (Con, South West Surrey) has laid a written statement announcing a new consultation on charges for overseas visitors and migrants who use the NHS.</p> <p>The visitor and migrant National Health Service cost recovery programme was established in July 2014 to design and implement improvements in the systems for charging patients who are not resident of the United Kingdom. The programme has focused so far on improving identification and cost recovery from chargeable patients in hospitals. The consultation seeks views on extending the charges to NHS services delivered outside of hospitals.</p> <p>The proposal included in the <a href="#">full consultation document</a> includes provisions to extend the charging regime to NHS services delivered by non NHS providers in the voluntary sector.</p>
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## Consultations

**Title:** Impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on health and social care

**Source:** House of Commons Health Select Committee

**Deadline for written evidence:** 22 January 2016

The House of Commons Health Select Committee has launched an inquiry into the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on health and social care.

In particular, the Committee will look at:

- The distribution of funding for health and social care across the spending review period;
- Achieving efficiency savings: their source, scale and impact;
- Achieving service transformation set out in the Five Year Forward View at scale and pace through transformation funds;
- The impact and management of deficits in the NHS and social care;
- The effect of cuts to non-NHS England health budgets e.g. public health, health education and Department of Health, and their impact on the Five Year Forward View;
- Social care funding, including implications for quality and access to services, provider exit, funding mechanisms, increasing costs and the Care Act provisions;
- Impact of the spending review on the integration of health and social care;
- Quality and access in health and social care including the cost and implications of new policy objectives such as 7 day services;
- Progress on achieving parity of esteem through funding for mental health services.

Full details can be found [here](#)

## 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