

# **Weekly Political Report**

**16<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

The consultations section is at the end of this document.

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

## **Employment**

*Click on link for source*

Item	Summary
<u><a href="#">Secretary of State for Work and Pensions gives oral evidence to Commons Select Committee</a></u>	<p>The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Stephen Crabb MP (Con, Preseli Pembrokeshire) has announced that the Government will be issuing a Green Paper on Work and Health later this year and not – as previously announced – a White Paper. A White Paper is a document setting out Government policy, whilst a Green Paper is usually an options paper in which the Government sets out an issue and seeks views on public policy responses.</p> <p>Stephen Crabb MP made the announcement whilst giving oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee. This was a one-off evidence session on the work of the Department for Work and Pensions – allowing the Committee to ask questions across the Department's remit.</p> <p>During the evidence session Stephen Crabb, who was only appointed as Secretary of State in March, was asked about the timing of the upcoming White Paper on Work and Health, to which he replied:</p> <p><i>“For me, coming in fresh to this Department, rather than rushing towards a White Paper, I think there is a need to take a step back and I think that’s consistent with what I told the House on that first Monday after I was appointed, about wanting to restart the conversation with disability organisations and disabled people themselves about how best we—as a Government—can work with them to close the disability employment gap, and support people who have sicknesses and other conditions into employment. So I won’t be rushing towards a White Paper with firm legislative proposals; I want to take a step back and have a much more discursive Green Paper that starts to reframe the issue and points the way towards more meaningful, long-term reform.”</i></p> <p>He also implied that the implications of such a Green Paper would be long-term. Responding to a question on welfare reform and the best means to meet the Government's commitment to</p>

	<p>reduce spending on benefits by £12bn the Secretary of State said:</p> <p><i>"I want to produce a Green Paper later this year to start to reframe discussion around this set of issues and point towards some short-term, medium-term and longer-term questions that I think we as the present Government, and whoever forms the Government after 2020, need to be taking on board if we are going to have a serious, meaningful welfare reform agenda that makes inroads into the challenge that I have been describing. There are millions of people parked on benefits, out of meaningful reach of health interventions and of our work coaches; they have just been parked."</i></p>
<p><b><u>Written question on tendering for the Work and Health Programme</u></b></p>	<p>Labour Equality Spokeswomen, Cat Smith MP (Lab, Lancaster and Fleetwood) has asked when the tender document for the Work and Health Programme to provide specialist support for long-term unemployed and claimants with health conditions and disabilities will be published; and when that programme will be operational.</p> <p>The Minister of State for Employment, Priti Patel MP (Con, Witham) responded:</p> <p><i>"The 2015 Spending Review confirmed that the Department will launch the Work and Health Programme, restructuring our current provision to focus on providing the best possible support for claimants with health conditions or disabilities, as well as those who are long-term unemployed. The programme will launch in 2017.</i></p> <p><i>"The Department have commenced the commercial process for the programme by issuing a Prior Information Notice which was published on 28 April 2016."</i></p> <p>The Prior Information Notice referred to in the answer can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

## Health and Social Care

*Click on Link for Source*

Item	Summary
<u><a href="#">Secretary of State for Health gives oral evidence on the impact of the spending review on health and social care</a></u>	<p>The Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt MP (Con, South West Surrey), has given oral evidence to the Commons Health Select Committee on the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on health and social care. He was joined by Simon Stevens, the Chief Executive of NHS England, David Williams, Director General of Finance, Department of Health and Bob Alexander, Executive Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive, NHS Improvement.</p> <p>The session focused on whether the funding settlement announced at the November 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review will allow the Government to meet the aims set out in NHS England's Five Year Forward View in October 2014.</p> <p>Answering a question about how the NHS will generate the £22bn efficiency savings identified in the Five Year Forward View Simon Stevens presented new figures which suggested that:</p> <p><i>"about £6.7 billion of it will be delivered nationally through a range of measures that the NHS nationally, the Department of Health and wider Government will be able to take, and that leaves us £14.9 billion to secure locally. Of that, £1 billion we already have in hand, so that leaves us just under £14 billion, of which £8.6 billion will come from the 2% provider tariff efficiencies and the rest from service change and the process that is now under way through the local planning processes—the sustainability and transformation plans that are being developed in 44 geographical footprints across the country. In a nutshell, although £22 billion is the number that everybody focuses on, in fact it is under £9 billion that is to come from conventional provider efficiencies and it is under £15 billion that is to come from the local health service as against the national action that we are taking."</i></p>
<u><a href="#">Written question on the proposed Clinical Reference Group (CRG) for Rehabilitation and Disability</a></u>	<p>Shadow Health Minister Lord Hunt of Kings Heath (Lab) how many clinicians will serve on the proposed Clinical Reference Group (CRG) for Rehabilitation and Disability; and how that number compares with the current CRGs that cover the same areas.</p> <p>In response the Health Minister Lord Prior of Brampton (Con) said that:</p> <p><i>'to ensure that Clinical Reference Group (CRG) work dovetails with the revised operating model for specialised commissioning,</i></p>

*NHS England proposes to simplify the operation of CRGs. It is recommended that the new CRG for Rehabilitation and Disability replaces the existing Specialist rehabilitation for patients with highly complex needs (Complex Rehabilitation) and Complex Disability Equipment Clinical Commissioning Groups.'*

He said that the minimum requirements of the new groups membership would include '*a minimum of one member with expertise in augmentative and alternative communication aids*'.

## 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

