

## Weekly Political Update

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2015

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### Hearing Loss

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Item	Summary
<a href="#"><u>Written question on preventing hearing loss amongst older people</u></a>	<p>Jim Shannon MP (DUP, Strangford) has asked what advice the Department of Health makes available on the prevention of loss of hearing amongst older people.</p> <p>In response the Minister of State for Community and Social Care, Alistair Burt MP (Con, North East Bedfordshire) said that NHS England and the Department jointly published the Action Plan on Hearing Loss in March 2015. The action plan identifies exposure to noise and increasing age as the two major risk factors of hearing loss in working age and older adults. It includes a key objective to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• improve the hearing health of all communities, improving equalities and reducing inequalities through prevention of hearing loss;</li><li>• ensure that diverse communities are aware of the importance of good hearing and communication; and</li><li>• provide effective and up to date communication support for people living with hearing loss to ensure they realise their aspirations.</li></ul> <p>He added that delivery of this objective will be supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NHS England working with partners to promote the development of care programmes to focus on people at risk, including those with dementia, depression, diabetes and cataracts.</li><li>• Public Health England collating existing data on incidence, prevalence and impact of hearing loss in people aged 65 and over and if possible in key groups such as people with dementia; and,</li><li>• The Health and Safety Executive: working with industry stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve compliance with the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005; and, reviewing the feasibility of otoacoustic emissions (OAE) testing as a leading indicator of damaging exposure to noise for workers.</li></ul>

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	<p>Finally, Alistair Burt said that an oversight group with membership from government departments, arm's length bodies and stakeholders in the hearing loss community will review and monitor progress of implementation of the Action Plan on Hearing Loss.</p>
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## Employment

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<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on the number of people supported by the Access to Work scheme</u></a></p>	<p>The Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Owen Smith MP (Lab, Pontypridd), has asked the Government how many disabled people have been helped back to work by the Access to Work scheme in each of the last five years.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North) provided the figures requested, broken down by new and existing customers. The figures show that the total number of people supported by Access to Work has increased from 35,810 in 2010-11 to 36,820 in 2014-15.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on support for disabled people applying for jobs</u></a></p>	<p>Kier Starmer MP (Lab, Holborn and St. Pancras) has asked the Department for Work and Pensions what plans it has to fund additional support for disabled people who might require assistance to fill in job applications and to attend job interviews.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North) said that range of support for people who require assistance to fill in job applications and to attend job interviews. He added that programmes including Work Choice, Work Programme and the new Specialist Employability Support offer tailored support for any participants who need help with their jobseeking – and that Access to Work can provide additional support. He outlined some steps which Jobcentres can take to support people.</p> <p>Justin Tomlinson added that the Government is seeking innovative new ways to deliver support. For example, the Personalisation Pathfinders project running in three Jobcentre Plus Districts, which will test a new localised approach to helping people with Disabilities and long term health conditions.</p>

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## Charity Regulation

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Item	Summary
<a href="#"><u>Written question on the impact of a potential fundraising preference service for the charity sector</u></a>	<p>Dr Tania Mathias MP (Con, Twickenham) has asked the Government what assessment it has made of the potential of a fundraising preference service on the work of the charity sector.</p> <p>In response the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Civil Society, Rob Wilson MP (Con, Reading East) said:</p> <p><i>“The Fundraising Preference Service, recommended by the Etherington review into fundraising, will re-balance power back to individuals and help them to press the ‘reset’ button on their relationship with fundraisers, giving them control over the fundraising communications they receive from charities. It will stop people being inundated with requests which they do not wish to receive and it will stop charities wasting resources on communicating with people that do not wish to hear from them. It also seeks to underwrite public trust and confidence in charities which is vital to the sector’s work.”</i></p> <p>He added that a working group involving charities is being established to develop the detailed plans for the implementation of the service.</p>

## Television

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Item	Summary
<a href="#"><u>On-demand Audiovisual Services (Accessibility for People with Disabilities affecting Hearing or Sight or both) Bill fails to receive its second reading in the House of Commons</u></a>	<p>The On-demand Audiovisual Services (Accessibility for People with Disabilities affecting Hearing or Sight or both) Bill, being led by Lilian Greenwood MP (Labour, Nottingham South) as part of our Subtitle IT! campaign was the second item for debate in the House of Commons on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November. The Bill would have required the Government to publish a legally enforceable code mandating minimum levels of access services on Video on Demand (VOD) programming. However the previous item – a Bill to make CPR a part of the national curriculum – was filibustered by MPs and therefore there was no time for Lilian’s Bill to be debated. Although Lilian’s Bill remains on the Order</p>

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	<p>Paper (it is the ninth item for debate on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February) it now cannot make any progress.</p> <p><a href="#">Action on Hearing Loss responded</a> to the failure of the Bill by renewing our call for the Government to introduce regulations to ensure that VOD services are required to provide minimum levels of subtitling.</p>
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## Consultations

**Title:** People's experience in adult social care services: improving the experience of care for people using adult social care services: Draft scope consultation

**Source:** National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

**Deadline for written evidence:** 23 December 2015

The Department of Health in England has asked NICE to develop a guideline on the experience of people who use adult social care services. This guideline will provide recommendations on the aspects of social care services that are important to the people who use them. It will also provide recommendations on how to improve adults' experiences of social care services.

This guideline will be used to develop the NICE quality standard for this topic.

Further details can be found [here](#)

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## 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

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