

Weekly Political Update

2nd November 2015

Employment

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| Item | Summary |
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| <u>Written question on guidance for last minute Access to Work requests</u> | <p>Steve McCabe MP (Lab, Birmingham Selly Oak) has asked what guidelines and recommended timescales exist for processing last-minute Access to Work extra support requests.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North) said that Access to Work guidance and policy for fast track application requests is that applications are identified and marked as urgent then allocated to an advisory team on the same day. This includes the Access to Work adviser making contact with the customer on the same day to ensure that their request is progressed as far as possible to the point of decision on the level of support if possible.</p> <p>Action on Hearing Loss has previously met with Steven McCabe MP to discuss the Government's handling of the Access to Work scheme.</p> |

Health and Social Care

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| <u>Written question on the Ear Foundation's Bending the Spend Report</u> | <p>Jim Fitzpatrick MP (Lab, Popular and Limehouse) has asked the Department of Health what assessment it has made of the recommendations contained in the report from the Ear Foundation entitled <i>Bending the Spend</i>, published in October 2015.</p> <p>The report '<u>Bending the Spend: Expanding access to hearing technology to improve health, wellbeing and save public money</u>' demonstrates how the introduction of hearing technologies during the 1990s and into this century, has significantly reduced the costs of managing hearing loss – and how hearing technology more than pays for itself when these cost savings are taken into account.</p> <p>In response to the question the Minister of State for Community and Social Care, Alistair Burt MP (Con, North East Bedfordshire) said that the Department of Health in conjunction with NHS</p> |
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| | <p>England published the Action Plan on Hearing Loss in March 2015. He added that:</p> <p><i>“The Action Plan sets out the case for action to tackle the rising prevalence and personal, social and economic costs of uncorrected hearing loss and the variation in access and quality of service.</i></p> <p><i>“The areas highlighted within the Bending the Spend report concur with and further strengthen those in the Action Plan. This includes the need to assess strategies for the earlier identification and management of hearing loss and the development of commissioning guidance to underpin the Action Plan, which NHS England will co-produce with stakeholders such as the Ear Foundation.</i></p> <p><i>“A Cross System Oversight Group had its first meeting on 14 October 2015. This will not only review and monitor progress of the implementation of the Action Plan, but will also provide a forum for government departments, arm’s length bodies and stakeholders within the hearing loss community to engage with each other to ensure connections are made and maintained across the system. Membership of this group includes the Hearing Loss and Deafness Alliance of which the Ear Foundation is a member.”</i></p> |
| <p><u>Health Secretary outlines new measures providing greater patient power</u></p> | <p>The Secretary of State for Health, Jeremy Hunt MP (Con, South West Surrey) has announced that from next year, for the first time, new ‘Ofsted style’ ratings will show patients how their local area’s health service is performing in crucial areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• cancer• dementia• diabetes• mental health• learning disabilities• maternity care <p>The new ratings, broken down by Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), will not only be based on local data but will also be verified by experts in each field. Jeremy Hunt has said that by giving patients access to performance data, healthcare services in local towns and cities will be more accountable to their local population than previously.</p> |

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Welfare

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| Item | Summary |
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| <u>Written question on disability training for staff dealing Personal Independence Payments</u> | <p>Greg Mulholland MP (Lib Dem, Leeds North West) has asked the Department for Work and Pensions what training is given to staff in his Department's Personal Independence Payment Directorate on dealing sensitively with disabled people; and what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of that training.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North) said that all frontline DWP staff are provided with Disability Awareness training on induction into DWP. This includes Equality and Diversity Essentials, Introduction to Mental Health Conditions and Supporting Vulnerable People, with some courses being tailored to Telephony staff. All staff can also access dedicated internal web pages that provide further guidance and details of additional training and support for working with vulnerable claimants. Following training, there is a consolidation process to ensure that it has been successful and a robust quality checking regime in place.</p> <p>Additional training and consolidation on dealing with claims from disabled people is provided to staff processing Personal Independence Payment (PIP) claims within the benefit specific training modules.</p> |

Consultations

Title: Public health post-2013 - structures, organisation, funding and delivery inquiry

Source: Commons Health Select Committee

Deadline for written evidence: 4/12/15

The Health Committee has announced a short overview inquiry into the impact on public health post-2013 of the Health and Social Care Act reforms. The Committee plans to consider the impact of the structural changes at a general level, and is likely to consider in particular:

- The delivery of public health functions
- The effectiveness of local authorities in delivering the envisaged improvements to public health
- The public health workforce
- Public health spending.

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Further details, including on how to submit written evidence, can be found [here](#)

Title: Setting the mandate to NHS England for 2016 to 2017

Source: Department of Health

Deadline for written evidence: 23/11/15

A new mandate to NHS England is due to be published following the completion of the Spending Review, to take effect from April 2016. This consultation document sets out how the government proposes to set the mandate to NHS England for this Parliament. The final mandate will be subject to the outcome of the government's Spending Review.

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