

## Weekly Political Report

31<sup>st</sup> May 2016

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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
<p><b><u>Oral question on the disability employment gap</u></b></p>	<p>Shadow Foreign Office Minister Diana Johnson MP (Lab, Hull North) tabled an oral question to the Minister for Women and Equalities asking about their conversations with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the Disability Employment Gap.</p> <p>The question was answered by the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North) – who sits within the DWP. He stated that there are 365,000 more disabled people in work than two years ago and that the ambition to halve the disability employment gap is a key priority for the Government.</p> <p>During the supplementary questions the SNP Spokesman for Fair work and Employment, Neil Gray MP (SNP, Airdrie and Shotts), asked:</p> <p><i>“What rationale was there for the Secretary of State for Work and Pension scrapping the White Paper on the health and work programme and punting the issue back to a Green Paper for an indeterminate time? Surely punting it into the long grass will, from a health or disability perspective, harm the chances of people returning to work.”</i></p> <p>The Minister for Disabled People responded by saying that the Green Paper gives an opportunity for stakeholders with genuine, first-hand real life experience to help shape Government’s future policies.</p> <p>Shadow Equalities Minister Cat Smith MP (Lab, Lancaster and Fleetwood) noted that the jobcentre disability employment service has a ratio of one adviser providing support per 600 disabled people; and asked if this <i>‘inadequate ratio is part of the reason the Government are set to fail to reach their employment targets for people with disabilities’</i>.</p> <p>Justin Tomlinson responded by saying that the Government recognise that support in jobcentres is important. He said that all job coaches have extensive training and are multi-skilled. He</p>

	<p>added that the Government accepts the criticism on the provision of advisers and will be 'increasing the numbers'.</p> <p>In the topical questions for this session Steven Paterson MP (SNP, Stirling) asked:</p> <p><i>"Given the importance of the health and work programme, which supports disabled people who are unable to work or gain access to work, will the Minister ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to publish his Green Paper as a matter of urgency, so that disabled people do not have to wait any longer to access support?"</i></p> <p>In response the Minister repeated his defence that the Green Paper would allow stakeholders to shape Government policy.</p>
<p><b><u>Written question on the number of people with hearing loss using Access to Work</u></b></p>	<p>Liz Kendell MP (Lab, Leicester West) asked how many people with a health condition affecting their hearing have received support from Access to Work grants to (a) start work, (b) stay in work and (c) move into self-employment.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North), said:</p> <p><i>"Access to Work is available to individuals who are in or about to start paid employment and whose disability or health condition affects the way they do their job. The Department does not distinguish between those helped into new employment opportunities, including self-employment, and those helped to retain existing work. "5,580 people whose primary medical condition is listed as 'Deaf and hard of hearing' were helped by Access to Work in the period 2014/15."</i></p>

## **Transport**

*Click on Link for Source*

<b>Item</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<p><b><u>Written question on Government statistics for accessible buses</u></b></p>	<p>Shadow Buses Minister, Daniel Zeichner (Lab, Cambridge) has asked the Department for Transport why it does not publish statistics on the number of buses in England that are fitted with audio-visual systems; and whether the Buses Bill will make provision to do so.</p> <p>In response Transport Minister Andrew Jones MP (Con, Harrogate and Knaresborough) said that:</p> <p><i>"Department's annual survey of local bus operators was amended in 2013/14 to include a question on the number of buses providing audio/visual information. In line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, statistics should be produced to a level of quality that meets users' need. To date, the statistics</i></p>

	<p><i>relating to this question have not been published by the Department because of concerns about the robustness of the data.</i></p> <p><i>“The Department, as part of it’s statistical quality management process, will take steps to improve the quality of the audio/visual data. Once these quality concerns are met so that what is produced does not risk misleading users, the Department will look to publish the information, in line with the majority of data collected through the local bus survey.”</i></p> <p>He added that the Government have no plans to introduce such a requirement through the forthcoming <u>Bus Services Bill</u>.</p> <p>Daniel Zeichner has also asked the Department for Transport what alternatives to the mandatory provision of audio-visual display systems the Government is pursuing and what steps are being taken to achieve better audio-visual information on buses.</p> <p>Andrew Jones responded that:</p> <p><i>“The technology for providing information on upcoming stops is evolving, and recent trials have tested lower cost alternatives to traditional systems, wearable devices and smartphone applications. The Department is supportive of such initiatives, and continues to review the options available, encouraging the bus industry to take the lead in recognising the potential benefits for all passengers and in delivering improvements in accessible on-board information.”</i></p>
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## Hearing Loss

[Click on Link for Source](#)

Item	Summary
<p><b><u>Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee takes oral evidence on the Accessibility of Sports Stadia</u></b></p>	<p>The House of Commons Culture, Media and Sports Committee has held two oral evidence session as part of its inquiry into the accessibility of sports stadia for people with hearing loss.</p> <p>In its first session the Committee heard evidence from Joyce Cook OBE, Chair, Level Playing Field, and Ruth Hopkins, General Manager, Level Playing Field. Level Playing Field is a charity which works to provide disabled people with equal access to sports stadia. During the evidence session Nigel Huddleston MP (Con, Mid Worcestershire) asked the witnesses about the current level of provision for people with sensory loss.</p> <p>Joyce Cook responded by saying that:</p> <p><i>“We have had a significant number of complaints from hard of</i></p>

	<p><i>hearing and deaf fans, and I think this is a community that perhaps around sports spectating is less understood. Some clubs will have a portable hearing or induction loop at a customer-facing point such as the ticket centre, but very often we find it comes back again to disability awareness and access awareness training. Nobody knows how to switch the unit on or use it, so it gathers dust in a corner. At most stadiums, there is an inbuilt induction loop system within the stadium bowl. Then when you think of other ways of communicating with deaf and hard of hearing fans, there does not necessarily seem to be much empathy around that. It is a subject we have tried to raise. This is not every club, but in the broad there is a real lack of understanding.”</i></p> <p>In the <u>second evidence session</u> the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North) also commented on the lack of staff awareness, citing the example of sports ground who had working hearing loops but had no staff members who knew how to work or maintain these facilities.</p>
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## **Consultations**

**Title:** Consultation on power to disqualify from acting as a trustee

**Source:** Charity Commission

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

The Charity Commission has launched a consultation on its new power, provided by the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Act 2016, to disqualify individuals from acting as trustees. While a person is disqualified under this power they are also disqualified from holding senior management positions in the charity or charities concerned.

The power will enable the commission to disqualify, for a proportionate period, individuals who are unfit to be a trustee in order to protect a charity or charities generally, other trustees and the public.

Further details can be found [here](#)

**Title:** Matters of material significance

**Source:** Charity Commission

**Deadline for written evidence:** 11 September 2016

The Charity Commission for England and Wales (CCEW) and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) previously published a single list of matters to be reported to the regulators by Auditors and Independent Examiners which was consistent for England, Wales and Scotland. The proposed new list of material matters to be reported to the regulators follows the establishment of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI).

All three charity regulators are seeking views on:

- whether the matters outlined are the correct matters which should be reported to us
- the descriptions of the matters – are they clear and helpful?
- if there are any other matters which should be included, or indeed any matters which should be removed, and if so, why?

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