

## Weekly Political Update

6 February 2018

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

### Hearing aids

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on what guidance the Government provides NHS trusts on the advertisement of private hearing aids in NHS hospitals</u></a></p>	<p>Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Andrew Gwynne MP (Labour, Denton and Reddish) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what guidance his Department provides to NHS trusts on the advertisement of private hearing aid services in NHS hospitals.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Health and Social Care, Stephen Barclay MP (Conservatives, North East Cambridgeshire) responded:</p> <p><i>“We have provided no such guidance.</i></p> <p><i>NHS England has issued general guidance to National Health Service organisations on the sale of advertising space to generate additional income. The guidance is clear that third party advertisements should not suggest that the NHS endorses or recommends the advertiser’s goods or services. This guidance is available at the following link:</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhsidentity/faq/can-an-nhs-organisation-sell-advertising-space-to-generate-income/">https://www.england.nhs.uk/nhsidentity/faq/can-an-nhs-organisation-sell-advertising-space-to-generate-income/</a></p> <p><i>Patients who choose to pay for additional private care or services, such as private hearing aid services, will not lose their entitlement to NHS services, which remain free at the point of delivery.”</i></p>
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### Employment

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<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on whether the Government will assess the potential merits of raising the cap on Access to Work grants</u></a></p>	<p>Steve McCabe MP (Labour, Birmingham Selly Oak) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will make an assessment of the potential merits of raising the cap on Access to Work grants.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“In March 2015 the former Minister for Disabled People announced a series of reforms to Access to Work, including a cap on high value awards which would be mitigated by transitional protection for existing customers. In May 2015 the DWP published the report ‘Equality Analysis for the Future of Access to Work’, which laid out the data that had been reviewed in formulating those reforms and the considerations we had taken into account in setting the cap level at 1.5 times the median gross annual earnings for full-time employees (as published annually by the ONS).</i></p> <p><i>In 2017/18, the cap amounted to £42,100 per person per year. In April 2018, the cap will rise to £43,100.</i></p>
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Written question on what evidence the Government has considered regarding plans to introduce a cap on Access to Work grants

*Since the cap came into effect in October 2015, we have monitored the progress of deaf and disabled individuals affected by it, including those who have benefitted from transitional protection. As we made clear in the 2015 equality analysis, we will continue to monitor the effects of capping and, if an adverse impact upon equality is identified, we will consider the case for further flexibilities. Ministers and officials have also conducted extensive engagement with customers and organisations including charities, disabled people's organisations and employers. The most recent engagement was held in January 2018."*

Steve McCabe MP (Labour, Birmingham Selly Oak) has asked "*the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what evidence she has considered in relation to her Department's plans to introduce a cap on Access to Work grants.*"

Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:

*"In March 2015 the former Minister for Disabled People announced a series of reforms to Access to Work, including a cap on high value awards which would be mitigated by transitional protection for existing customers. In May 2015 the DWP published the report 'Equality Analysis for the Future of Access to Work', which laid out the data that had been reviewed in formulating those reforms and the considerations we had taken into account in setting the cap level at 1.5 times the median gross annual earnings for full-time employees (as published annually by the ONS).*

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Written question on whether the Government will stop the implementation of the cap on access to work grants

Steve McCabe MP (Labour, Birmingham Selly Oak) has asked "*the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if she will stop the implementation of the cap on access to work grants.*"

*"In March 2015 the former Minister for Disabled People announced a series of reforms to Access to Work, including a cap on high value awards which would be mitigated by transitional protection for existing customers. In May 2015 the DWP published the report 'Equality Analysis for the Future of Access to Work', which laid out the data that had been reviewed in formulating those reforms and the considerations we had taken into account in setting the cap level at 1.5 times the median gross annual earnings for full-time employees (as published annually by the ONS).*

	<p><i>In 2017/18, the cap amounted to £42,100 per person per year. In April 2018, the cap will rise to £43,100.</i></p> <p><i>Since the cap came into effect in October 2015, we have monitored the progress of deaf and disabled individuals affected by it, including those who have benefitted from transitional protection. As we made clear in the 2015 equality analysis, we will continue to monitor the effects of capping and, if an adverse impact upon equality is identified, we will consider the case for further flexibilities. Ministers and officials have also conducted extensive engagement with customers and organisations including charities, disabled people’s organisations and employers. The most recent engagement was held in January 2018.”</i></p>
<p><u>Oral questions on the implementation of the Disability Confident Scheme</u></p>	<p>Andrew Bridgen MP (Conservatives, North West Leicestershire) and former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Marcus Jones (Conservative, Nuneaton) asked <i>“what progress her Department has made on the implementation of the disability confident scheme”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) replied:</p> <p><i>“There are 5,550 employers currently signed up to the disability confident scheme. The disability confident business leaders group, comprising prominent national businesses, is promoting the scheme to other employers, and all main Departments have now achieved disability confident leader status. I encourage all hon. Members to come along to a drop-in centre I have organised on Wednesday 21 February, 3 pm to 5 pm, in Portcullis House, Room Q, so that they too can become disability confident employers.”</i></p> <p>Andrew Bridgen MP (Conservatives, Nuneaton) responded <i>“...will my hon. Friend give further feedback on the national roll-out of a programme that encourages employers to take advantage of keen, loyal staff who are disabled?”</i></p> <p>The Minister, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) said <i>“...It is important for us to continue to build on the constructive and positive feedback that we receive from employers by giving them practical support, so that they can employ more disabled people.”</i></p> <p>Marcus Jones MP (Conservatives, Nuneaton) asked <i>“...will my hon. Friend, like me, encourage employers in my area to join the disability confident scheme, so that we can give opportunities to those young people, and not just give them hope for the future, but provide the labour market with a number of people who will be able to bring a vast amount of experience and difference to our workplaces?”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) replied:</p> <p><i>“...last year, more than 500 young people took part in supported internships, and this year the Department for Education has made available just under £10 million of additional funding, which will provide more work placements, particularly for young people with special educational needs. I agree with my</i></p>

	<p><i>hon. Friend that it is vital for us to ensure that more of those young people are given the opportunity to work.”</i></p> <p>To read in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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## **Social Care**

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><u>Oral question on the need to consider the Dilnot Commission's proposals on social care</u></a></p>	<p>During Health and Social Care oral questions, Mark Harper MP (Conservatives, Forest of Dean) stated the following:  <i>“As the Secretary of State carries out his social care funding review, I urge him to look carefully at whether we should look again at implementing the Dilnot commission’s proposals. Given that we legislated for them, they are the only way that we are going to tackle the issue with the sufficient urgency.”</i></p> <p>Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jeremy Hunt MP (Conservatives, South West Surrey) replied:  <i>“At the heart of the Dilnot proposals was the idea of risk pooling—that there is a randomness in the illnesses that affect us in the later years of our life which we would want, as a society, to do something about. I will confirm what the Prime Minister said in the election campaign: we will consult on a cap on social care costs.”</i></p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on whether the upcoming consultation on social care will review prices charged by care homes to people funding their own care</u></a></p>	<p>Angel Eagle MP (Labour, Wallasey) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department’s upcoming consultation on social care will include a review of prices charged by care homes to people funding their own care.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Health and Social Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:  <i>“The Government has committed to publishing a Green Paper by summer 2018 setting out its proposals for reform of the social care system.</i></p> <p><i>While the fees charged to a self-funder is a contractual arrangement between self-funding residents and care homes, we are also considering recommendations from the Competition and Markets Authority who highlighted the need for care home providers to be more transparent about their prices.”</i></p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on whether the upcoming consultation on social care will propose specific amounts for a cap on the</u></a></p>	<p>Angela Eagle MP (Labour, Wallasey) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether his Department’s upcoming consultation on social care will propose specific amounts for a cap on the amount someone would have to pay towards their own care.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Health and Social Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p>

<p><a href="#"><u>amount individual's pay towards their care</u></a></p>	<p><i>"An ageing society means that we need to reach a longer-term sustainable settlement for social care. This is why the Government has committed to publishing a Green Paper by summer 2018 setting out its proposals for reform. This will include consulting on a limit on the care costs that individuals face."</i></p>
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## **Disability benefits**

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<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on what plans the Government have to collate and publish data relating to employment support allowance in a similar manner as collated and published for personal independence payments</u></a></p>	<p>Former Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marie Rimmer MP (Labour, St Helens and Whiston) has asked <i>"the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what plans she has to collate and publish data relating to employment support allowance similar to that which is made available on personal independence payments."</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>"In March 2015 the Government announced a new annual limit (known as the cap) on Access to Work (AtW) awards, and set it at 1.5 times the median gross annual earnings for full-time employees (as published annually by the Office for National Statistics). By definition, this is more than most full-time employees earn. In April 2018, the cap will rise to £43,100 per person per year, in line with the latest published median gross annual earnings figure.</i></p> <p><i>At the time of the announcement, we made it clear that customers whose awards were above the cap when it was introduced in October 2015 would retain their current award (subject to their needs remaining the same) until April 2018, to enable them to adjust to new levels of support.</i></p> <p><i>Since 2015, we have written to all affected customers and established specialist teams of Access to Work advisers who will work with employers and customers to explore what extra advice and support those customers may need. We have offered customers workplace assessments to advise on:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• what adjustments an employer might reasonably make,</i></li> <li><i>• the latest range of support and equipment available through AtW, and;</i></li> <li><i>• other ways of meeting support needs – for example through better co-ordination of tasks and support.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>AtW specialist advisers are also providing customers with information about:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>• video relay services or other technological solutions, and;</i></li> <li><i>• the forthcoming trial of managed personal budgets.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>The Equality Analysis published in May 2015 identified 200 customers with awards exceeding the level of the cap. It also highlighted that the average annual award for BSL users is around £10,000 per year – less than a quarter of the level of the cap. Deaf people are the largest customer group and last year (2016/17) the number of deaf people with AtW support approved rose by 13%, compared to an 8% increase in customers with any AtW support approved overall."</i></p>
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<p><u>Written question on whether the Government plans to change the application process for Personal Independence Payment and Attendance Allowance – allowing third parties to help claimants</u></p>	<p>Tonia Antoniazzi MP (Labour, Gower) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether she plans to change the application processes for personal independence payment and attendance allowance to allow third parties to help claimants.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“There are no plans to change the application process for Personal Independence Payment or Attendance Allowance as third parties can already assist the claimant throughout the claim process and beyond.</i></p> <p><i>A third party can assist the disabled person in making the telephone claim for PIP. They can also help the person complete any paper claim form where necessary. Further within the claim process, they can help the claimant complete any evidence gathering forms and can also accompany them to any face to face consultation with a Health Care Professional, at the claimant’s request.</i></p> <p><i>Separately to this, a third party can make a claim under the Special Rules for the Terminally Ill provisions where the claimant has a life expectancy of less than 6 months, without any involvement from the disabled person, although all notifications are sent to the customer.</i></p> <p><i>For claims to Attendance Allowance a third party can assist the disabled person by completing a clerical claim form. In addition, claims to Attendance Allowance can be made via Alternative Offices. These are offices authorised by the Secretary of State, with nominated staff trained from specified partner organisations to receive and check Social Security claims made by Attendance Allowance customers. They can also collect and validate information and supporting evidence and record the first date of claim.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written statement on Personal Independence Payments (PIP)</u></p>	<p>Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey MP (Conservatives, Tatton) made a written statement on Personal Independence Payments. She announced that the Government will go back through cases where claimants with mental health conditions may have been entitled to more; and will backdate payments to those affected. The decision was made in response to a recent High Court judgment.</p> <p>To read in full please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><u>Written question on what the timetable is for claimants to be informed if they are entitled to back payments</u></p>	<p>Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Debbie Abrahams MP (Labour, Oldham East and Saddleworth) had asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Written Statement of 19 January 2018, HCWS414, what the timetable is for claimants to be informed if they are entitled to a back payment.”</i></p>

	<p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) said:</p> <p><i>“We are working with stakeholders to change the PIP assessment guide so that we can implement the judgment. Once we have completed this exercise we will be carrying out an administrative exercise to review cases that may be eligible and ensure that claimants receive the correct award. This will be a complex exercise and of considerable scale, as we will be reconsidering approximately 1.6 million claims. Whilst we will be working at pace to complete this exercise it is important that we get it right.”</i></p>
<p><u><a href="#">Urgent question on PIP back payments</a></u></p>	<p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) asked the following urgent question:</p> <p><i>“To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to make a statement on the process and timetable for the personal independence payment back payments.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“As a result of our decision not to appeal the recent PIP judicial review judgment, we informed the House via a written statement and in a response to a parliamentary question that we will be carrying out an administrative exercise to identify claimants who may now be eligible for more support from PIP. The Secretary of State took the decision less than three weeks ago. As previously said, we will be working with Mind—experts in the field—and doing things as sympathetically and effectively as possible. While efficiency is important, I cannot stress enough that I want the appropriate scrutiny and complete accuracy to be applied to this exercise, so it will not be rushed.</i></p> <p><i>This exercise will include screening the existing PIP caseload of some 1.6 million people to identify the group who may benefit, but the vast majority of claimants will not be affected. As the Secretary of State said last week, we currently estimate that up to 220,000 people will be affected by the judgment. For the group of people who may be affected, we will undertake a detailed review of their applications and awards. We will write to the individuals affected, and all payments will be back-dated to the effective date in each individual claim. There will be no—I repeat, no—face-to-face reassessments of awards. DWP case managers will be conducting a review of the existing information we hold, with a view to establishing whether claimants are entitled to more. If case managers need more information to make a decision, they will contact the claimant and/or their doctor.</i></p> <p><i>I am sure you will understand, Madam Deputy Speaker, that this is a complex exercise, and we need to undertake testing to ensure that we implement it safely. We therefore do not yet have an estimate of how long it will take. Obviously, we will keep the House updated on our progress in this exercise. Based on preliminary calculations, we estimate that the overall costs of implementing the judgment could be up to £3.7 billion by 2022-23. However, this number is highly likely to change as we work through all the impacted cases.”</i></p>

Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) replied:

*“...yesterday we discovered in an answer to a written question that the Government will be reconsidering approximately 1.6 million PIP claims—effectively, everyone currently in receipt of PIP. However, no timetable was issued or detail provided for this process. We know that 55% of people with mental health conditions transferring from disability living allowance to PIP receive a lower award or no award at all. As the High Court found, the Government’s regulations are highly discriminatory....*

*...There are a number of questions that the Minister must answer. By what date will the Department have changed the PIP assessment guide, so that she can implement the judgment? How quickly thereafter will the Department be able to identify affected claimants? Is her Department prioritising the PIP claims it is re-examining? If so, will she publish the prioritisation criteria? By what date will all 1.6 million PIP claims have been reviewed? Will it be weeks; will it be months; or will it be years? Do the 1.6 million claims to be reviewed include those that scored zero points and were not awarded PIP? Will there be an appeals process for the PIP claimants not contacted by the Department who believe that they should receive back payments? Will the Department compensate claimants who have fallen into debt and accrued interest charges? After the equality assessment was published in February 2017, the estimated number to receive the higher rate of PIP went up to 164,000, and it is now 220,000. Will the Minister publish an updated assessment? What assessment has she made of the administrative costs to her Department of undertaking this complex exercise of a considerable scale?”*

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) said:

*“...Moving on to some of the hon. Lady’s more detailed questions, she mentioned the updating of the PIP assessment guide. She is absolutely right: that is the starting point to making sure that we properly and thoroughly implement the recommendations of the appeal. I am delighted to say that Paul Farmer of Mind has agreed to work very closely with us to get that right. I have spoken to Paul Gray, who has undertaken the independent reviews of PIP, and he has also offered his help. I recently met a broad range of our PIP stakeholders and invited them to share their expertise.*

*As I said in my previous response, it is incredibly important to me that we get this right. The exercise will be complex and, to carry it out accurately and safely, we want to ensure that stakeholders and experts are involved. As a result, I cannot set out a timetable at this stage, but I can reassure all hon. Members that we are approaching this with a great deal of vigour and will ensure we do it as soon as possible. We have already started to recruit more people at DWP to help with the PIP review.*

*We want to discuss the prioritisation of the review of PIP claimants very carefully with our stakeholders to ensure that the process is fair, transparent and open. We will be reviewing people who had zero points in their original claim. We are currently considering the best way to handle an appeals process.*



	<p><i>Of course, I will update the House regularly. The Secretary of State said that she would do that from this very Dispatch Box last week. We have oral questions every six weeks, so there are plenty of opportunities for Members to ask us about the progress we are making in this very important work.”</i></p> <p>To read in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Westminster hall debate on Personal Independence Payments</u></a></p>	<p>Shadow Minister for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Laura Pidcock MP (Labour, North West Durham) has moved the following motion:</p> <p><i>“That this House has considered the claimant experience of the personal independence payment process.”</i></p> <p>In her introductory speech, she stated:</p> <p><i>“I called this debate because of the sheer volume of casework my constituency office receives regarding personal independence payments. My constituents find many aspects of the process difficult, not because they are not capable but because the forms are confusing and the assessment procedure is complex and exhausting...”</i></p> <p><i>“Constituents have told me how brutal and gruelling the medical assessments are, as they lay bare the claimant’s disability and how they cope with it, but they are based on a medical model of disability rather than a social one. One person put it brilliantly: they said the assessment was like a functionality test, and that it did not capture or consider how someone can live their life each day. The fact that assessors do not take notice of professional medical assessments from doctors or psychiatrists, and that that information is considered only at tribunal stage, is not even questioned. Assembling that information at assessment stage is such a waste of energy for people, especially since doctors charge for medical assessment letters...”</i></p> <p>Former Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Conservatives, North Swindon) stated:</p> <p><i>“...we are currently spending £3 billion a year extra, and that figure will increase every single year of this Parliament. That is not a cost saving by any definition. Under DLA, only 16% of claimants got the highest rate of benefit, but under PIP it is 26%.”</i></p> <p><i>“...And the reality is that we are spending £3 billion more on supporting the most vulnerable people. That is partly because we have an extremely proactive Minister who, rightly, meets regularly with charities, stakeholders, individual users and MPs from across the House. I did the same when I was a Minister, and the system continues to be improved...”</i></p> <p><i>“..Something on which I agree with the hon. Lady is that we should be able automatically to get access to health records. There are data protection issues, and we would need to get the consent of the claimant, but if they were willing to do it we would all support that approach. It would make everyone’s life a lot easier and the system a lot smoother. There is also huge support for allowing</i></p>

*the claimant, if they wish to, to have sessions recorded. Again, that can be used on appeal.”*

*Rosie Cooper MP (Labour, West Lancashire) stated “I want to make the point that there is a fundamental lack of understanding and compassion among assessors. Unbelievably, one assessor telephoned my deaf constituent and left them a message, which they would never, ever be able to access. How many penalties would they have for that? That is so basic that it is a disgrace.”*

*Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) said:*

*“The assessment framework creates a series of financial problems. Poor-quality decision making has led to disabled people losing vital financial support. The evidence is damning—it is there for all to see. When decisions are challenged, in 68% of cases taken to tribunal the finding is in favour of the claimant. That indicates that there is a problem. The process is lengthy and stressful, and many people do not know how to challenge a decision or what they need to do, so many will go without and lose that financial support.*

*If a claimant wants to challenge a PIP decision, they must first ask for a mandatory reconsideration, as my hon. Friend the Member for North West Durham discussed in detail. That was supposed to improve the claims process, but in reality, it has had the opposite effect. Many disability organisations have noted the number of decisions on claims that have passed through the supposedly rigorous mandatory reconsideration stage, but have gone on to be overturned at tribunal.*

*According to the Department’s own figures, about 20% of PIP MR cases lead to the decision being revised. It seems that the appeal tribunal process is being used as a backstop for poor decisions that should have been resolved at the initial stage or at the mandatory reconsideration.”*

*Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:*

*“I assure all hon. Members that, like my predecessors, I am committed to continuous improvement. We have commissioned independent reviews of the PIP process and we are taking their recommendations on board. We are working closely with stakeholders. Only last week, I had a meeting with my PIP stakeholder group, which includes representatives of all the main UK disability rights organisations and charities, including disability rights organisations from local authorities around the country. I will be setting up panels of ESA and PIP claimants to ensure that we listen directly to their experiences as we embark on our continuous improvement process.*

*It is also important to revisit current experiences. I accept that we always have to make improvements, but 89% of people said that they felt that the assessor treated them with respect and dignity. Undoubtedly we have more to do, but I am committed to making the improvements that we all want to see.”*

## Healthcare – Accountable Care Organisations

*Click on link for source*

<p><u>Oral question on scrutiny of Accountable Care Organisations (ACOs)</u></p>	<p>Steve McCabe MP (Labour, Birmingham Selly Oak) asked “<i>Will the Secretary of State give an assurance that any accountable care organisations that he establishes will not be able to use commercial confidentiality excuses to evade scrutiny under freedom of information legislation?</i>”</p> <p>Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jeremy Hunt MP (Conservatives, South West Surrey) replied:</p> <p><i>“Public money is public money, and Members have a right to know how it is being spent, so we will absolutely ensure that those contracts are signed in a fair way.”</i></p>
<p><u>Oral question on ACOs and private sector input</u></p>	<p>Clive Efford MP (Labour, Eltham) has asked “<i>Does the Secretary of State agree that it would be wholly unacceptable if, as a consequence of creating accountable care organisations, private companies gained control of strategic decisions on local health services?</i>”</p> <p>Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jeremy Hunt MP (Conservatives, South West Surrey) replied:</p> <p><i>“I point the hon. Gentleman to what the King’s Fund says, which is that accountable care organisations and integrated care systems make a “massive difference” in care to patients. The King’s Fund is not a pro-Government organisation; it regularly holds the Government to account at election time and throughout the year. Not just the King’s Fund but Polly Toynbee and many other people are saying that.”</i></p>

## 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