

Weekly Political Update

9th November 2015

Hearing Loss

Click on link for source

Item	Summary
<u>Oral question on the prevalence of hearing loss and the threat to NHS hearing aids</u>	<p>Shadow Defence Minister Toby Perkins MP (Lab, Chesterfield) used the weekly business statement to highlight the recent Action on Hearing Loss report, Hearing Matters, and ask the Leader of the House of Commons, Chris Grayling MP the following question:</p> <p><i>“I am one of 11 million Britons who suffer from hearing loss. Yesterday, there was a parliamentary reception for Action on Hearing Loss, and it was revealed that some health authorities, including North Staffordshire, no longer prescribe hearing aids for people with moderate hearing loss. That can be incredibly isolating for them. One in six people in Britain has a hearing loss, and it is likely to be one in five by 2035, so may we have a debate in Government time about how health authorities and health resources can be used to ensure that people with hearing loss do not suffer unnecessary isolation?”</i></p> <p>In response the Leader of the House of Commons, Chris Grayling MP (Con, Epsom and Ewell), said that ‘good work is done by all political parties in raising awareness of the challenges faced by people with hearing loss’. On the issue of hearing aid provision he said:</p> <p><i>“Rightly or wrongly, of course, we have taken a decision to devolve responsibility to local areas for commissioning and spending decisions on healthcare matters. I hope that the hon. Gentleman’s advocacy will encourage those parts of the country that might have taken a decision with which he disagrees to change their views. It is a consequence of devolution that there will sometimes be different decisions in different areas, whether we support them or not.”</i></p> <p>Action on Hearing Loss will be following up with Toby Perkins on this issue.</p>

<p>Westminster Hall Debate on the regulation of Care Homes</p>	<p>Peter Heaton-Jones MP (Con, North Devon) led a Westminster Hall debate on the regulation of private care homes in order ‘to highlight what I believe to be serious shortfalls in the current system for the regulation, inspection and investigation of private care homes and nursing homes’. He stated that of the 700 care homes most recently inspected by the CQC, a staggering 44% have been rated as either “Requires improvement” or “Inadequate” and that this represented a failure of the system to improve standards.</p> <p>He argued that the current system of regulation did nothing to drive up standards and that a lack of inspectors was one of the reasons why so few establishments have been inspected.</p> <p>The Minister of State for Social and Community Care, Alistair Burt MP (Con, North East Bedfordshire) responded to the debate and explained the current framework for inspections, saying:</p> <p><i>“The new fundamental standards include two important new registration requirements. The first—the duty of candour—requires providers to be open with service users about all aspects of their care, and to inform them when there are failures in their care. The second—a “fit and proper person” requirement for directors—ensures that accountability for poor care can be traced all the way to the boardroom if necessary. The CQC’s model does not just assess whether providers are meeting the fundamental standards. The CQC asks five key questions of each service: is it safe? Is it caring? Is it effective? Is it responsive? Is it well led? All inspections deliver a rating for each of these five key questions on a scale running from “inadequate”, through “requires improvement” and “good”, to “outstanding”. Inspections also result in an overall rating for each location.”</i></p> <p>He also said that the figures provided by Peter Heaton-Jones may not reflect the state of the sector, arguing that the CQC had started its inspections in those homes in which it had a prior concern.</p>
---	--

[Type here]

Employment

Click on link for source

Item	Summary
<u>Written question on the disability employment gap</u>	<p>Jonathan Reynolds MP (Lab, Stalybridge and Hyde) asked the Department for Work and Pensions what 'fiscal steps' it is taking to support the Government's aim of halving the disability employment gap.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Con, Swindon North) said that the target to halve the disability employment gap required the Government to 'transform policy, practice and public attitudes'. He said that the Government have already:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• extended Access to Work to provide support to more disabled people in pre-employment, such as work experience and also to undertake employment-based training, such as supported internships, traineeships and self-arranged work experience.• launched Specialist Employability Support, an innovative new programme which provides intensive, specialist support to the disabled people who need the most help.• continued to work with employers through our Disability Confident campaign to ensure that they understand the benefits of recruiting and retaining disabled people in work.• announced new funding in the Budget of up to £100m per year for additional practical support to provide the right incentives and support to enable those who have limited capability, but who have some potential to prepare, for work to move closer to the labour market, and when they are ready, back into work.• committed to spending £43m over the next 3 years to develop the evidence base on what works for those with common mental health conditions retain and return to employment. This will be done through a range of voluntary mental health and employment pilots that will go live next year <p>He also stated that the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health has established the Work and Health unit in the summer to bring together the Work and Health agendas, to help disabled people and people with health conditions get into work, stay in work, and return to work with the right support and that the Government are developing our plans in this area. He added that the Government will set out its</p>

[Type here]

	spending plans for this Parliament in the Spending Review, due on November 25 th .
--	---

Transport

Click on link for source

Item	Summary
<u>Written question on involving disabled people in the design of better access to public transport</u>	<p>Stephen Timms MP (Labour, East Ham) has asked the Department of Transport what steps it is taking to involve disabled people in the design of better access to public transport.</p> <p>In response the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Andrew Jones MP, said that the Department of Transport sponsors the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC). DPTAC has a Chair and 12 members with a range of impairments. It advises the government on transport legislation, regulations and guidance and on the transport needs of disabled people, ensuring disabled people have the same access to transport as everyone else.</p>

[Type here]

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

[Type here]