

Weekly Political Update

30 January 2018

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Employment

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<p><u>Oral evidence on the cap on Access to Work awards</u></p>	<p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) provided oral evidence to the Work and Pensions Select Committee. The following is taken from evidence on the Access to Work scheme:</p> <p>Heidi Allen MP (Conservatives, South Cambridgeshire) asked the Minister:</p> <p><i>“Access to Work, everybody raves about it and think it is brilliant but not enough people get to hear about it. I have two questions. One, do you think it should be access to work experience, access to job interviews? Access to Work to me feels like you get the fuel for the car when you need it for the journey, not when you have reached your destination. People need assistance to get into work. Would you look at expanding the scope to that?”</i></p> <p><i>The second question is around whether the cap on Access to Work supports, for example, the deaf community, where we understand that the typical cost for somebody to help you with language interpretation, the cap does not cover that. It is two aspects.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“Can I go back to the first question, which is around what support we are giving people with health conditions, whether they are mental health conditions or physical health conditions or a combination of the two, or disabled people into work? Access to Work, you are right, is a really successful programme. More people every year are supported, 8% growth from last year. We do have more money to invest in that.</i></p> <p><i>It is important to note it is not the only thing we do. People who are going into the jobcentre on ESA, of course they have that £330 million of support package there that is available. The job coaches in the jobcentre have discretionary pots of money. We are, as you know, rolling out the work and health contracts. They came live from December and the rest go live in January. That is £500 million as well. There is a range of support, and that would be to go directly to your point, helping people even to get to interviews, all the support they might need, not only in terms of a CV, but practice interviews, supported work experience, having a coach, all of those things.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) continued:</p> <p><i>“Going back to the point you raised about the cap, the desire for the cap was to make sure it provided as much help to as many people as possible but it was</i></p>
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	<p><i>also fair. It is set as a ratio to average income. It is one and a half times the average income, so £43,100 is the cap that has been set. People who had packages that were above that, they have had a transition period and they are being helped to look at, for example, technologies, different approaches to bring the cost down.</i></p> <p><i>There is about 200 people affected whose packages are above the cap. The Minister at the time when the cap was brought in said there would always be flexibility, there would always be a review as to what more we can do to support them. I have met myself with people affected through British sign language. There are people who at the moment their packages are above that cap. I have called a meeting in the Department and with MPs who have made representations with me on this, and with stakeholders, to look and see those affected by the cap and what more they can do to very much address the issue that the Chairman raised.”</i></p> <p>Heidi Allen MP (Conservatives, South Cambridgeshire) responded: “<i>you are looking for alternative solutions.</i>”</p> <p>To which the Minister, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded: “<i>yes</i>”</p> <p>To read the evidence in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><u>Written question on what steps are being taken by the Government to ensure that the Access to Work cap does not affect deaf employees applying for promotion or developing a career</u></p>	<p>Alex Sobel MP (Labour, Leeds North West) has asked “<i>ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps his Department has taken to ensure that the cap on Access to Work funding does not affect deaf employees (a) applying for a promotion or (b) developing a career.</i>”</p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, 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"> <i>• what adjustments an employer might reasonably make,</i> <i>• the latest range of support and equipment available through AtW, and;</i>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>other ways of meeting support needs – for example through better co-ordination of tasks and support.</i> <p><i>AtW specialist advisers are also providing customers with information about:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>video relay services or other technological solutions, and;</i> • <i>the forthcoming trial of managed personal budgets.</i> <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>
<p><u>Written question on what cost-benefit analysis the Government use to measure the effectiveness of the Access to Work scheme</u></p>	<p>Neil Coyle MP (Labour, Bermondsey and Old Southwark) has asked “<i>the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what cost benefit analysis his Department uses to measure the effectiveness of the Access to Work programme.</i>”</p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“We are in the process of commissioning a piece of feasibility work to investigate robust methods for estimating the quantitative impact of Access to Work on employment entry and retention.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on how much the Government plans to spend on promoting the Access to Work scheme in the next 12 months</u></p>	<p>David Drew MP (Labour, Stroud) has asked “<i>the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Answer of 18 October 2017 to Question 106843, how much her Department plans to spend on promoting the Access to Work scheme in the next 12 months.</i>”</p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Work and Health, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“Funding for 2018/2019 to promote Access to Work has not been finalised. For our marketing approach, I refer the Hon Member to PQ 106839. Last year saw an 8% rise in number of people who had an Access to Work award approved.”</i></p>
<p><u>Debate on the Disability Confident Scheme</u></p>	<p>Luke Graham MP (Conservatives, Ochil and South Perthshire) has moved the following motion “<i>That this House has considered the Disability Confident scheme.</i>”</p> <p>In his introductory speech, Luke Graham MP said “<i>I wish to cover three key components of the scheme in depth: the intent to provide equal opportunities for disabled people to be active participants in society; how the scheme contributes to reducing the disability employment gap; and how to encourage and engage employers to become more confident in employing and retaining disabled people.</i></p>

First, let me expand on what I mean by intent. The Government should work to ensure that disabled people are not under-represented in the workplace. Over the past seven years, it has been a common refrain of the Government not only that work should pay but that it is the most effective way of contributing to society. The logic of that belief is sound and has led to the Government overseeing the lowest unemployment in 43 years and, since 2010, the fastest rate of job creation..."

"Such opportunities help to provide work to formerly workless households and to provide disabled and non-disabled individuals with purpose, colleagues and community—factors that are widely recognised as helping to contribute to good physical and mental health. The Disability Confident scheme is consistent with that belief and complements other Government initiatives in work, welfare and health.

My second point is about the disability employment gap, which is defined as the difference between the employment rates among disabled and non-disabled people. There are currently 3.4 million disabled people in employment, which is approximately 49% of all disabled people. On its own, that sounds reasonable, but 80% of non-disabled people are currently in employment. The overall unemployment rate is 9% among people with disabilities but only 3.8% among people without disabilities. We should be determined to close that gap."

John Lamont MP (Conservatives, Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk) interjected, asking:

"I congratulate my hon. Friend on securing the debate. Does he agree that we should aggressively pursue the UK Government's target to halve the employment gap between disabled and non-disabled people, and that Disability Confident will help to reduce that gap?"

Luke Graham MP (Conservatives, Ochil and South Perthshire) responded:

"I could not agree more. That is a laudable target, but we should always try to go a little further. In my view, the target is there to be exceeded, and I am sure that the Minister will do everything she can to achieve that."

Mr Graham continued:

"My third point is about employer engagement and retention. The Disability Confident campaign was set up by the Government in July 2013 and aims to help employers improve how they attract, recruit and retain disabled workers. The scheme also aims to educate employers about the benefits of employing disabled people. Some 5,000 employers have signed up to the scheme since 2016, including my own parliamentary offices, Clackmannanshire Council and Perth and Kinross Council, which both cross through my constituency, and several other businesses in my constituency..."

"In researching for this debate, I came across a number of exciting case studies, including a company in my constituency that has signed up for the Disability Confident scheme. The Glenalmond Timber Company in Methven has been signed up for two years and has taken on a number of employees through the scheme. Most recently, it hired Colin, who is deaf. Colin started

only a few weeks ago, but in that time he has been made to feel part of the team. Jed, his team manager, helped him to settle in by learning sign language. Jed commented that he “saw the man, not the disability”. In return for that commitment, the company gets an enthusiastic, hard-working and happy employee....”

Jim Shannon MP (DUP, Strangford) asked “...Although I very much support the scheme—that is why we are all here—many small and medium-sized business in Northern Ireland do not have the resources to participate in it. Companies that want to be part of the scheme but have upstairs offices or would have to widen doorways for people who use wheelchairs or take measures to allow visually disabled people to fully participate cannot take part because of the cost of renovating their buildings. Does he agree that that is a shortfall of the scheme? Perhaps the Minister will address that in her response.”

Luke Graham MP replied: “I realise that the scheme is a start, and later in my speech I will come to a number of areas that I hope the Minister and the Government will seek to develop further.”

Richard Graham MP (Conservatives, Gloucester) interjected to ask Luke Graham MP whether he agrees “that there may be a good case for the Government to consider doing what they did so successfully with apprenticeships: to provide small employers with an incentive to hire people with disabilities? If that were in the form of a national insurance break, that might be the catalyst that enables us to move at the pace we want in taking people with disabilities into employment.”

Mr Luke Graham replied “Indeed... The Government’s proposals are all laudable and aspirational, and I am sure they will receive cross-party support in their implementation. I also ask the Minister to ensure that any new provisions are UK-wide and not limited by devolution settlements anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Luke Graham MP continued “The Disability Confident scheme is about creating a movement for change, getting employers to think differently about disability and to act to improve recruitment and retention of disabled workers. The scheme has three levels that have been designed to support employers on their Disability Confident journey. An employer will complete each level before moving on to the next.

At the start of an employer’s Disability Confident journey, it can sign up via gov.uk with its Disability Confident commitments and identify at least one thing it can do that will make a difference for disabled employees. The second step is to become a Disability Confident employer.... The final level, achieved by some Government Departments, is level 3, a Disability Confident leader. For that, an employer needs to meet two additional elements... By working through the scheme, employers also get access to a wide range of information, good practice and other resources, including links to Department for Work and Pensions programmes that can provide practical assistance. For example, Access to Work provision rose by 8% last year, and for some groups it rose at an even faster rate. For example, the number of deaf people who had support approved increased by 13%... Those metrics are all encouraging, and the scheme has the right intent and policies to progress. However, no scheme is

perfect, as alluded to by other Members, so I ask the Minister and the Government team to look at continuously improving the scheme over the next few years and ensure that it is regularly reviewed so that we can check progress and see if anything can be done to provide UK employer incentives, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises, where cash is more constrained and it is more difficult to make the changes that would allow extra people to enter our workforce and increase our productivity..”

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

“The Disability Confident scheme was designed to address the clear failures of our employment support system. However, we have so far seen very little evidence of its success at tackling the problem. That is demonstrated by the employment gap...

How are we supposed to assess whether the Disability Confident scheme is actually improving people’s access to employment? There is a clear need for a meaningful method of evaluating the scheme and its effects in terms of getting disabled people into work.

Many disability organisations have sent us briefings, and Disability Rights UK has highlighted the concerns. When the Department for Work and Pensions launched the scheme, it did not refer to how it would look at job outcomes. What is more important is evidence—we do not see the attitudes of employers and their understanding of disability employment. For one thing, many of the employers that have signed up to the scheme are large employers that transferred from the old legacy scheme—the two ticks system. Obviously, what we need to do, looking at the numbers going forward, is see how we can continue to encourage other employers. As has been made clear, the scheme has about 5,000 members, which is great, but we have to consider that in context: there are more than 4 million small and medium-sized enterprises in this country. I would be keen to hear the Minister say a bit more today about what we are doing to encourage more businesses to become part of the scheme...

Not many employers are familiar with the Access to Work scheme. We all know that that is probably one of the most popular schemes. It is effective in its results in supporting people in work, and it supports people to stay in work. However, I always say, as I heard another hon. Member say that it is one of the best kept secrets, because so many people are not aware of it and what it can do. How can the Disability Confident scheme grow and expand if employers are not aware of the Access to Work scheme and the important role that it plays in supporting disabled people into work?”

“...Between 2014-15 and 2016-17, the Government spent about £13,500 on promoting the Access to Work scheme. I think we would all agree that a little more needs to be done on improving and raising awareness of the scheme. It would be very welcome if the Minister outlined what plans we have to raise awareness and for ensuring that Access to Work will be adequately funded. Obviously, we all want demand for the scheme to increase, because we all want more disabled people to get into work. I therefore want to hear more about ensuring that the scheme is adequately funded.

Disability Confident is a voluntary scheme. There is a question about how we can further encourage and incentivise employers to become part of it. The scheme is good in part and well intentioned. As I have said, it is sometimes difficult to measure the good impact. Not evaluating the impact is how we end up with a scheme under which, as has been pointed out, it is possible to achieve level 3 accreditation without actually employing a single disabled person. More needs to be done to ensure evaluation. I therefore ask the Minister again whether she agrees that the Disability Confident scheme should measure the number of disabled people moving into work. To build on the current scheme, there should be some sort of independent evaluator to monitor and evaluate progress under the scheme and how well employers are doing in recruiting disabled people and retaining them in work.”

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

“First, on the scale of our ambition, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister could not have made it clearer that she believes in a country that must work for everyone, not just the privileged few. For our nation to be successful, we need to build on all the talents of all our citizens, which includes people with disabilities and health conditions. We are very ambitious to ensure that people who are disabled or have health conditions can play their full part in society, which of course includes employment, to the extent that they can, so we are determined to do everything that we can to build on the progress that we have seen. We have heard today about the hundreds of thousands of people now in employment that were not previously. Just in the past few years, we have made a significant improvement, but we are ambitious to do more. We have set ourselves a target of 1 million, which is a really good starting point, but like my hon. Friend, I believe that targets are there to be busted—to be exceeded. We will all be celebrating when we get past that point.

“Improving Lives: the future of work, health and disability” sets out a very comprehensive strategy for delivering on our ambitions. We have firm plans, which are detailed in that document. We are taking action across three settings: in welfare, with the work that the DWP does; in the workplace, in partnership with employers; and, very importantly, in the health system. For the first time, we have a joint unit between the DWP and the Department of Health and Social Care. Colleagues have rightly made much today of the importance of different parts of Government working together. That joint unit is a step in the right direction. In addition, I will be chairing a meeting of Ministers across Government to ensure that we are doing everything we can in each Department. We have heard about the work that we need to do with the Department of Health and Social Care and with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. I see the industrial strategy, clearly setting out that we want to see growth right across our country, as a key part of enabling me to deliver on my targets. We will be setting out very clearly how we can work with employers to create healthy, inclusive workplaces where people can thrive. Part of the problem is not just getting people into work—most people will acquire their disability during their life—but enabling adaptations to be made in the workplace, so that people can stay in work. That is probably more important with mental health than anything else. “Improving Lives” was our response to the Stevenson/Farmer review, where we adopted all of the

	<p><i>recommendations that were made. We are encouraging employers to look carefully at what more they can do to support people with mental health issues...</i></p> <p>Heidi Allen MP (Conservatives, South Cambridgeshire) asked the Minister, Sarah Newton MP</p> <p><i>"It has always occurred to me that Access to Work is a great tool when someone has their job, but a bit like a journey, they need petrol to put in the car to get to the journey. There should be access to work experience and job interviews. What does the Minister think about expanding the scheme to cover those as well?"</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>"...Access to Work can be used in all of those circumstances. Perhaps in the past not all of the job coaches in all of the jobcentres knew about that. We have made a massive investment in training our job coaches so that they are fully aware of all of these opportunities, and we have trained additional specialist disability advisors in the jobcentres, as well as our community partners, with their lived experience..."</i></p> <p><i>"..I want to reassure everyone that Access to Work is a demand-led funding pot. As the demand grows, so does the funding. Year after year we put more money into that pot. The amount of money one can have every year goes well over £40,000, so it is a considerable amount of money to enable people into work and to stay in work. Under the Equalities Act 2010 employers have responsibilities to make reasonable adjustments."</i></p> <p>She continued:</p> <p><i>"We have committed to look at what incentives would work for employers. I am very engaged with large, small and medium-sized businesses. I am fortunate to have a great leadership group of people from businesses of all sizes and all different sectors working with me, to really help get this right for employers."</i></p> <p>To read the debate in full please click the link on the left.</p>
<p><u>Written question on how many deaf people receive Access to Work payments in Camberwell and Peckham and the London Borough of Southwark in the last three years</u></p>	<p>Harriet Harman MP (Labour, Camberwell and Peckham) has asked:</p> <p><i>"the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many deaf people were in receipt of Access to Work payments in (a) Camberwell and Peckham constituency and (b) the London Borough of Southwark in each of the last three years."</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP's response (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth):</p> <p><i>"The information is not readily available and has not previously been published as official statistics. The Department's analysts are currently exploring the feasibility of including payments data in the next publication of Access to Work Statistics."</i></p>

<p><u>Written question whether the Government will commission specialist external providers, providing impairment specific employment support to help disabled people into work</u></p>	<p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova (Labour, Battersea) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability, published in November 2017, Cm 9526, if he will take steps to commission specialist external providers to make available high-quality, impairment-specific employment support to help disabled people into the workforce.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth):</p> <p><i>“We have just published Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability. This outlines the action taken over the past year, provides a comprehensive strategy and sets out plans over the next ten years, focusing in particular on the next steps planned over the next two to three years. This has been put together in partnership with stakeholders from across the work, health and disability spectrums and follows a thorough 15-week consultation via the Green Paper, which received around 6,000 responses. We have started building an extensive evidence base and are running a series of trials to build this further.</i></p> <p><i>Improving Lives includes plans for a broad programme of employment support for disabled people, with a mix of internal and external provision and pan-disability and specialist support. A range of specialist providers are involved, for example in the mental health area where we plan to: double the scale of Individual Placement and Support (IPS) for people with mental health conditions; trial IPS in new settings and for new population groups; and significantly increase the capacity of the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service. A proof of concept of local supported employment will work with experts in helping people with learning disabilities and autism into work. Specialist Employment Support includes providers with specialist expertise in sensory impairments. We have also progressed with roll-out of the Personal Support Package, a range of new measures and interventions designed to offer support which can be tailored to people’s individual needs.</i></p> <p><i>Implementation of the Work and Health Programme started at the end of November 2017. This will provide innovative support through local organisations for around 200,000 disabled people over the course of the programme, with the type of support personalised to the needs of each participant. Examples of the type of support available includes participants having a personal key worker with regular 1:1 face to face contact, mentoring and peer support, integrated access to specialist support networks at a local level including health and wellbeing professionals and support from dedicated employer experts with knowledge of the local labour market and job opportunities.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on whether the Government will commission specialist external providers, providing employment</u></p>	<p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova (Labour, Battersea) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to the Government paper Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability, published in November 2017, if he will consider the commissioning of specialist external providers to provide employment support to disabled people.”</i></p>

<p><u>support to disabled people</u></p>	<p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth):</p> <p><i>"I refer the hon. Member to my answer to UIN 119269 on 20 of December 2017."</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on exact references from the Office for Budget Responsibility and other bodies providing evidence on the relationship between increased participation of disabled employees and productivity</u></p>	<p>Co-leader of the Green Party, Caroline Lucas MP (Green Party, Brighton Pavilion) has asked:</p> <p><i>"Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to his Answer of 12 December 2017 to Question 118240, what the exact references are from reports by the Office for Budget Responsibility, the Institute for Fiscal Studies and other bodies which provide evidence of a relationship between increased participation in the workforce by disabled people and average productivity or overall productivity measurements."</i></p> <p>Exchequer Secretary, Andrew Jones MP's response (Conservatives, Harrogate and Knaresborough):</p> <p><i>"At the Treasury Committee, the Chancellor made a broader point about economy-wide labour productivity. Both the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Office for Budget Responsibility have suggested that increasing overall employment may have influenced measures of productivity. The Chancellor was not suggesting – and does not believe – that increased participation by people with disabilities has had any negative impact on the economy. There is no evidence of a relationship between aggregate productivity measures and an increase in workforce participation of people with disabilities. It has however helped to increase economic growth and it is something we can be very proud of as a country."</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on whether the Government will publish the evidence that suggests that greater employment of disabled people is a significant drag upon the British level of productivity</u></p>	<p>Shadow Minister for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, David Drew MP (Labour, Stroud) asked:</p> <p><i>"Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will publish the evidence that suggests the greater employment of disabled people is a significant drag upon the British level of productivity as stated in his oral evidence to the Treasury Select Committee on 6 December 2017."</i></p> <p>Exchequer Secretary, Andrew Jones MP's response (Conservatives, Harrogate and Knaresborough):</p> <p><i>"The Chancellor is extremely proud of our record of helping over 600,000 disabled people into employment over the last four years. At the Treasury Committee, he made a broader point about workforce productivity. Both the Institute for Fiscal Studies and the Office for Budget Responsibility have suggested that increasing overall employment may have had an effect on measures of productivity. The Chancellor was not suggesting – and does not believe – that increased participation by people with disabilities has had any negative impact on the economy. It has helped to increase economic growth and it is something we can be very proud of as a country."</i></p>

Social Care

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<p><u>Written question on the adequacy of the capacity of care homes</u></p>	<p>Jim Shannon MP (DUP, Strangford) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Health, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the capacity of care homes in the next three years.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health, Jackie Doyle Price MP’s response (Conservatives, Thurrock):</p> <p><i>“High quality care is not just about care home beds. Of those aged 65 and over who need local authority support, 62% are cared for in their own home. Since 2010 there has been a growth in home care agencies of more than 3,140.</i></p> <p><i>The total number of beds in care homes has remained broadly flat since 2010.</i></p> <p><i>We have given local authorities in England an extra £2 billion over the next three years to maintain access for our growing ageing population and allow councils to sustain a diverse care market including care home places.</i></p> <p><i>In addition the Government has announced we will consult on plans to improve the social care system and to put it on a more secure financial footing.”</i></p>
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Transport

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<p><u>Written question on whether the Government will include in the Accessibility Action Plan ways of helping disabled people to get to hospital appointments</u></p>	<p>Peter Kyle MP (Labour, Hove) has asked <i>“the Secretary of State for Transport, whether his Department plans to include in the Accessibility Action Plan means to assist people with disabilities in getting to hospital appointments.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Paul Maynard MP’s response (Conservatives, Blackpool North and Cleveleys):</p> <p><i>“The Government’s ambition is to ensure people with disabilities have the same access to transport and opportunities to travel as everyone else. This includes transport to attend hospital appointments.</i></p> <p><i>In August, the Department for Transport published its draft Accessibility Action Plan (AAP), setting out proposals for addressing the gaps in existing provision of transport services which serve as a barrier to people with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>The Government will publish its response to the AAP consultation in early 2018 and a revised AAP in summer 2018. The revised Plan will include our updated proposals for improving passenger transport across all modes so that people with disabilities can travel to the destinations and appointments they need to. The Department for Transport will work with Other Government Departments, including the Department of Health as part of its development of the revised Action Plan.”</i></p>
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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