

Parliamentary Report

Health and Social Care

Click on link for source

| Item | Summary |
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| <p><u>National Audit Office publishes report on personalised commissioning in adult social care</u></p> | <p>The National Audit Office (NAO) has published a report <i>Personalised Commissioning in Adult Social Care</i>. The report found that commissioning adult social care services through personal budgets and direct payments is an important way of giving care users more choice and control over their services. When implemented well they improve users' quality of life. However, the NAO advised that the Department of Health requires a deeper understanding of the best ways to implement personalised commissioning.</p> <p>Local authorities spent £6.3 billion on long-term community care in 2014-15. Around 500,000 adults in England received personal budgets in 2014-15, varying between 10% and 100% of users across authorities. The Care Act made personal budgets mandatory for all eligible users from April 2015.</p> |
| <p><u>Written question on the closure of residential care homes and nursing homes</u></p> | <p>Tulip Sadiq MP (Labour, Hampstead and Kilburn) has asked the Department for Health how many residential care homes and nursing homes have closed in the current year and in each of the previous five years.</p> <p>In response the Minister of State for Community and Social Care, Alistair Burt MP (Con, North East Bedfordshire) said that the Department of Health does not hold this information centrally.</p> |
| <p><u>Written question on the Disabled Facilities Grant</u></p> | <p>Liberal Democrat Health Spokesman, Norman Lamb MP (Lib Dem, North Norfolk) has asked the Department for Communities and Local Government how many people applied for disabled facilities grants, how many such applications were successful and what the average grant award was in each year from 2009-10 to 2014-15.</p> <p>In response the Minister of State for Communities and Local Government, Brandon Lewis MP (Con, Great Yarmouth) stated that the Department does not collect information on the number of people who applied for a Disabled Facilities Grant or the number of successful applicants. He did however provide information on the number of grants completed and the average cost per grant for the years 2009-10 to 2014-15. This showed that in the last year for which figure are available, 2014-15, nearly 34,000 grants were made at an average value of £5,453.</p> |

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Medical Research

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| Item | Summary |
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| <u>MPs debate the Government budget for science for science</u> | <p>MPs have held a debate on the floor of the House of Commons on the science budget. The debate took part during an <i>Estimates Day debate</i> on the annual budget for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.</p> <p>The Minister for Universities and Science, Jo Johnson MP (Con, Orpington) used the debate to highlight the Government's commitment to science, saying:</p> <p><i>“the UK's global scientific impact far exceeds our size as a nation. With just 3.2% of the world's R and D spend, the UK accounts for 16% of the most highly cited research articles.... That is why science and research very much sit at the very heart of this Government's economic plan. Last July, our productivity plan clearly set out how we will tackle the UK's long-term productivity problem, with science and research being central to our proposed solutions. This autumn's spending review settlement was an emphatic confirmation of that commitment: an extension of the ring fence around science and innovation until 2020 means a total investment of £30.4 billion during this Parliament.”</i></p> <p>The Minister did not provide the House of Commons with an update on progress against the Nurse Review, saying that the public consultation only closed in mid-January and that a further announcement would be made in the Spring.</p> |

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Charities

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| Item | Summary |
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| <u>Charity Commission issues guidance on charities engagement with the EU referendum</u> | <p>The Charity Commission has issued guidance to charities advising them on public involvement in the debate leading up to the EU referendum on 23 June 2016.</p> <p>The guidance states that any public involvement in the EU referendum would be considered political activities and therefore:</p> <p><i>“Charities should not engage in political activity in connection with the EU referendum unless they can demonstrate that they comply with the terms of the commission’s guidance on Speaking out: guidance on campaigning and political activity by charities (CC9), on Charities, Elections and Referendums, and this guidance. Trustees must be satisfied that such activity is a proper way to support the delivery of the charity’s purposes and is in the best interests of the charity.”</i></p> |

Transport

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| Item | Summary |
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| <u>Written question on audio-visual display systems on buses</u> | <p>Toby Perkins MP (Lab, Chesterfield) has asked the Department for Transport if it will make it its policy to require bus operators to install audio-visual announcements of bus stops on all public buses.</p> <p>In response the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, Andrew Jones MP (Con, Harrogate and Knaresborough) said that ‘systems providing automatic next stop announcements have proven expensive to fit and maintain, meaning that mandating their use would place a disproportionate financial burden on the bus industry’. He added that the Government are supporting low-cost alternatives.</p> |

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Employment

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| Item | Summary |
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| <p><u>Parliamentary ‘ping-pong’ continues over Government changes to Employment and Support Allowance</u></p> | <p>The parliamentary ‘ping-pong’ over the Government proposed cut in Employment Support Allowance (ESA) for member of the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) has continued with the measure being debated again in both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Parliament has been debating whether to reduce the ESA payment by £30 for members of the WRAG, as proposed by the Government in its Welfare Reform and Work Bill.</p> <p>On Monday 29th February the Bill was debated in the House of Lords. The Crossbench Peer Lord Low of Dalton tabled a compromise amendment which stated that the Government couldn’t implement the proposed cut in ESA until the Government has produced a report demonstrating the impact the cut would have on those affected in relation to their mental and physical health, financial situation and ability to return to work.</p> <p>The Government rejected this amendment saying it is a wrecking amendment which would push back the implementation of the cut until 2021. He indicated that the Government couldn’t produce a report showing the impact of the ESA reform because there is no precedent and no way of predicting its impact.</p> <p>The amendment was passed on division by 289 to 219.</p> <p>The Bill subsequently returned to the House of Commons where MPs debated the Lord Low amendment. The Government used the same argument to reject the amendment in the House of Commons. The Lord Low amendment was rejected on division by 309 to 274.</p> <p>The Bill will return to the House of Lords on Monday 7th March.</p> |
| <p><u>Written question on changes to Employment Support Allowance for the Work Related Activity Group</u></p> | <p>Victoria Borwick MP (Con, Kensington) has asked the Department for Work and Pensions what steps it is taking to support disabled people affected by the changes to employment and support allowance work-related activity group.</p> <p>In response the Minister of State for Employment, Priti Patel MP (Con, Witham), said that the Government are providing new</p> |

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| | <p>funding for additional practical support for claimants with limited capability for work from April 2017, when the removal of the work-related activity component will come into effect, rising from £60 million in 2017/18 to £100 million a year in 2020/21. She added that the Government also plans to provide additional funding of £15 million in 2017/18 to increase the local Jobcentre Flexible Support Fund.</p> |
| <p><u>Written question on the impact of changes to Employment Support Allowance for supporting people into work</u></p> | <p>Neil Coyle MP (Lab, Bermondsey and Old Southwark) has asked the Department for Work and Pensions what estimated has been made of how many disabled people will move into work as a result of changes to the employment and allowance work-related activity group; and what research he has conducted into the effects of those changes.</p> <p>In response the Minister of State for Employment, Priti Patel MP (Con, Witham) said:</p> <p><i>“The Government set out its assessment of the impacts of the welfare policies in the Bill on 20th July last year. Whilst the policy is intended to provide the right incentives to help individuals back into work, it is not possible to quantify based on behavioural changes which are difficult to assess.”</i></p> |

British Sign Language

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| Item | Summary |
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| <p><u>London Assembly passes motion in support of the BDA's BSL Charter</u></p> | <p>The London Assembly has passed a motion calling on the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, or his successor to sign up to the BSL Charter created by the British Deaf Association.</p> <p>The motion notes that the Charter establishes the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure better access to information and services;• Promote learning and teaching of BSL;• Support Deaf children and families;• Ensuring staff can communicate effectively in BSL; and• Consult with local Deaf community regularly. <p>The motion also says:</p> |

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“The London Assembly calls on the Mayor to sign up to the Charter on behalf of the GLA, to improve access and rights for deaf BSL users across the functional bodies. The London Assembly further urges the Mayor of London to embody Charter of BSL in his Londonwide equalities strategies, including actively promoting it to Local Authorities across London.”

The motion is not binding and the Mayor is not under any obligation to adopt the Charter.

Consultations

Title: Workplace health: support for employees with disabilities and long term conditions

Source: NICE

Deadline for written evidence: 1st April 2016

NICE has issued a NICE consultation on guidelines identifying the most effective workplace interventions to support employees with disabilities or long term condition. Hearing Loss is mentioned as a relevant condition in the covering information.

Further information can be found [here](#)