

Employment

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<p><u>Written question on the disability employment gap</u></p>	<p>Dave Anderson MP (Labour, Blaydon) has asked the Department for Work and Pensions how it plans to monitor progress towards halving the disability employment gap. He has also asked what assessment the Government has made of the potential effect on the economy of halving the disability employment gap.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson MP (Conservative, Swindon North) said that the annual report on progress towards full employment, which the Government is legislating for in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill, will include an update on the Government's progress towards halving the disability employment gap.</p> <p>On the economic impact of closing the employment gap Justin Tomlinson said:</p> <p><i>“Bringing disabled people out of inactivity and into employment increases the productive capacity of the economy. While it is not possible to quantify exactly the economic impact of halving the disability employment gap, it would directly benefit both the individuals affected, through higher employment allowing more people to support themselves and their families, and also the wider economy, by supporting economic growth and the public finances.”</i></p> <p>Dave Anderson is an Action on Hearing Loss Parliamentary Champions.</p> <p>Action on Hearing Loss has good communication and meets regularly with Justin Tomlinson on the employment opportunities for people with hearing loss, both individually and through the Disability Charities Consortium.</p>
<p><u>Written question on employment support programmes for people with disabilities</u></p>	<p>Shadow Employment Minister, Emily Thornberry (Labour, Islington South and Finsbury) has asked whether the Government plans to maintain a separate programme of employment support for people with disabilities after the end of the current contracts for the Work Programme and Work Choice. She has also asked whether the Department of Work and</p>

	<p>Pensions plans that referral to welfare to work schemes will be voluntary for people with disabilities after the end of the current contracts for the Work Programme and Work Choice.</p> <p>In response the Employment Minister, Priti Patel MP (Con, Witham) said:</p> <p><i>“Increasing disability employment is a key part of the Government’s aim to achieve full employment. That is why this Government is committed to halving the disability employment gap by creating the opportunity for a million more disabled people to work.</i></p> <p><i>“The Spending Review announced that a new ‘Work and Health Programme’ will replace Work Choice and the Work Programme when current contracts end, restructuring our current provision to providing the best possible support for claimants with disabilities or health conditions as well as those who are long term unemployed. The Department will work with stakeholders on the design, including the structure and how people will be referred to the programme.</i></p> <p><i>“The Government will publish a White Paper next year that will set out reforms to improve support for people with health conditions and disabilities and further reduce the disability employment gap.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on employment support for people who are classed as economically inactive due to long term sickness or disability</u></p>	<p>Shadow Employment Minister Emily Thornberry MP (Labour, Islington North and Finsbury) has asked the Department for Work and Pensions what plans it has to improve employment support for people who are classed as economically inactive due to long term sickness or disability. She also asked what plans the Government has to improve employment support for people with disabilities who are in receipt of the support component of employment and support allowance.</p> <p>In response the Employment Minister Priti Patel (Con, Witham) said that the Government announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review a real terms increase in funding to help people with health conditions and disabilities including those in receipt of the support component of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), return to, and remain in, work. She added:</p> <p><i>“Government will be launching a new ‘Work and Health Programme’ - restructuring our current provision so that it provides the best possible support for people with health conditions or disabilities, including those classed as economically inactive due to long term sickness or disability. At</i></p>

	<p><i>least £115m of funding will go to the Work and Health Unit, including a work and health innovation fund to test new ways to join up health and employment to help people with disabilities and health conditions to return to and stay in work.”</i></p> <p>She also said that the Government will publish a White Paper in the New Year that will set out further reforms to improve support for people with health conditions and disabilities and further reduce the disability employment gap.</p>
<p><u>Oral Question on the disability employment gap</u></p>	<p>Jonathan Reynolds (Lab, Stalybridge and Hyde) tabled an oral question to the Treasury asking what assessment has been made of the potential effect of halving the disability employment gap on the public finances.</p> <p>In response the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Greg Hands MP (Con, Chelsea and Fulham) said that the Government is committed to halving the disability employment gap and supporting an additional 1 million disabled people into work. He added that there were too many unknowns, such as what amounts these people would earn, to predict the impact on the public finances. However he added that this was about ‘<i>more than fiscal impact</i>’.</p> <p>In his supplementary question Jonathan Reynolds asked about the transition from school to employment for young people with autism. He also made a general point of saying that ‘<i>improving the routes into work for young people with autism and other disabilities will be a great thing for our national finances but also for the young people themselves, allowing them to participate in the workforce and lead the independent lives that they want</i>’.</p> <p>Andrew Bridgen (Con, North West Leicestershire) used a supplementary question to note that there are now 3.2 million disabled people in employment and that the Government are looking to increase this number dramatically.</p> <p>Greg Hands said responded by saying that disability employment is one of the most important areas of the Government’s work and that the Government were increasing real-terms spending on disability employment by around 15% by the end of this Parliament.</p>
<p><u>Written question on benefit sanctions on people with disabilities</u></p>	<p>Shadow Employment Minister, Emily Thornberry MP (Lab, Islington South and Finsbury) has asked what assessment the Department for Work and Pensions has made of the effect of sanctions on employment outcomes for people with disabilities.</p>

	<p>In response the Minister of State for Employment, Priti Patel MP (Con, Witham) said that the DWP has not undertaken a specific assessment of the effects sanctions have on the employment outcomes of people with disabilities. She said that <i>'claimants are only asked to meet reasonable requirements taking into account their circumstances and capability, including mental health conditions, disability and caring responsibilities. International evidence is clear that benefit systems supported by conditionality are effective at moving people into work.'</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on increasing the proportion of disabled people undertaking apprenticeships</u></p>	<p>Virendra Sharma MP (Lab, Ealing Southall) has asked the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills what steps it is taking to increase the proportion of disabled people undertaking apprenticeships.</p> <p>In response the Minister of State for Skills, Nick Boles MP (Con, Grantham and Stamford) said that <i>'thousands of disabled people have benefitted from apprenticeships. In 2014/15, 44,090 of those starting an apprenticeship declared a disability or learning difficulty (LDD). This compares with 26,390 in 2009/10.'</i></p> <p>He said that advice is also available to help employers and training providers understand disabilities and how to better support disabled apprentices. An Apprenticeships Equality and Diversity Advisory group helps government understand and address any apprenticeship equality and diversity issues in order to reduce barriers and make apprenticeships as inclusive as possible.</p>

Charity Fundraising

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Item	Summary
<p><u>Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill receives its second reading in the House of Commons</u></p>	<p>The Government's Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill has received its second reading in the House of Commons. The Bill originated in the House of Lords and has already cleared its scrutiny in that chamber.</p> <p>The main purpose of the Bill is to amend existing legislation and give the Charity Commission greater powers to tackle unfit trustees and tackle abuse in the sector. However, following on from the media report of aggressive charity fundraising techniques around the death of Olive Cooke, the Government inserted a new clause into the Bill at report stage in the House of</p>

Lords. This clause (No.14 in the version of the Bill as introduced into the House of Commons) has two strands. The first strand requires all charities with an annual income of over £1m to include details on their approach to fundraising – including the use of commercial fundraisers – and the measures they take to protect vulnerable people in their annual report. The second part requires that all charities ensure that their agreements with commercial fundraisers including provisions designed to protect vulnerable people.

After the Bill left the House of Lords Sir Stuart Etherington published *Regulating fundraising for the future, Trust in charities, confidence in fundraising regulation*. The review recommended a new approach to fundraising regulation including the establishment of a new regulator with a more effective sanctions regime; and a 'Fundraising Preference Service' where individuals could register if they no longer wished to be contacted for fundraising purposes.

Speaking for the Government on the measure the Cabinet Office Minister, Mike Hancock MP (Con, West Suffolk) said:

"We regard the Etherington package, including the fundraising preference service and a move to opt-in for further contact, as the minimum necessary to rebuild public trust. We propose that regulation of fundraising happens on a self-regulatory basis, but that self-regulation must implement the review's recommendations in full. Some people have rightly asked what will happen if self-regulation fails. We want it to work, but we are also clear that practices must change. In Committee, we intend to bring forward amendments that will strengthen the Government's reserve powers to intervene if the self-regulation recommended by Sir Stuart fails. Predatory fundraising targeted at vulnerable people is wrong. It has shaken public confidence in charities and we are determined to stamp it out."

He also indicated that the Government may seek to impose further restrictions on charities political campaigning, saying:

"We took action towards the end of the previous Parliament to ensure that the legal framework for charities and other organisations means that they do not cross over into direct partisan political work. A review is under way into how the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 has worked. There are questions about whether that needs to go further, but the best place to deal with such issues is in the review and during scrutiny of the Bill."

Speaking for the Labour Party The Shadow Cabinet Officer Minister, Anna Turley MP, said that the Opposition would engage with the Government on the issue of fundraising regulation as the Bill went through its committee stage. She also indicated that the Opposition would table amendment to challenge the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Act 2014 and its impact on charity campaigning.

Closing the debate the Cabinet Office Minister with responsibility for the charity sector, Rob Wilson MP (Con, Reading East) said that he would introduce two reserve powers into the Bill during its committee stage:

“one to compel charities to sign up to the new regulator and a second to mandate the Charity Commission with regulation should the sector fail to rise to the challenge.”

He also said that he expected *‘the sector fully to back the new fundraising regulator, both financially and through compliance with its rulings’*.

The Bill was passed without a division (meaning that it was unopposed) and will now proceed to a Public Bill Committee for line-by-line examination. The [Public Bill Committee is accepting written evidence](#) and is likely to call witnesses to give oral evidence before it begins its line-by-line scrutiny.

The day after the Bill received its second reading [Rob Wilson MP gave a speech](#) at a fundraising summit about charity fundraising, the new self-regulator, and the proposed Fundraising Preference Service. In this he gave evidence of the public’s perceptions of charities and their fundraising techniques. He said that charities would be involved in the design and development of the new Fundraising Preference Services. He also reiterated the message that:

“Statutory force remains very much on the table, and if it has to happen it would include an FPS, and would be paid for ultimately by the sector. Many of you will not know just how close we came over the summer to having a full statutory system implemented straight away. It really was on a knife edge but I fought strongly to give charities a last chance to show that self-regulation can work.”

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Item	Summary
Written question on disability hate crime	<p>Greg Mulholland MP (Lib Dem, Leeds North West) has asked the Home Department what steps they are taking to tackle disability hate crime.</p> <p>In response the Home Office Minister Karen Bradley MP (Con, Staffordshire Moorlands) said that the Government will publish a new Hate Crime Action Plan in 2016. She added:</p> <p><i>“I, and other ministers, attended a roundtable on disability hate crime in October. This gave me the opportunity to speak to a range of people, including representatives of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission, researchers and service users. A key part of our action plan will include understanding the issues behind hate crime, and this was an important first step towards this. Officials are taking forward actions from this meeting.</i></p> <p><i>“The Government is currently speaking to a number of organisations and individuals to inform the next steps in developing this action plan. This includes work with the Fulfilling Potential Forum, which is led by the Office for Disability Issues within DWP and is made up of around 40 disability charities, including disabled people’s user led organisations.”</i></p>

Health Social Care

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Item	Summary
Written question on additional money for the Better Care Fund	<p>Peter Kyle (Labour, Hove) has asked the Department of Health if the £1.5 billion for the Better Care Fund by 2019-20 announced in the Autumn Statement 2015 is in addition to existing NHS financial allocations for the next five years.</p> <p>In response the Minister for Community and Social Care, Alistair Burt MP (Conservative, North East Bedfordshire) said that from 2017 the Government will make adult social care funding available to local government, to be included in an improved Better Care Fund, rising to £1.5 billion in 2019-20. This is in addition to the NHS’s mandated contribution to the Better Care Fund, which will continue in real terms over the Parliament.</p>
Oral question on council tax precept for	Shadow Treasury Minister Rebecca Long-Bailey (Lab, Salford and Eccles) used an oral question to the Treasury on local

<p>care funding</p>	<p>authority funding to ask the Government about the impact of the 2% council tax precept for care funding. In her question she quoted the Conservative Vice-Chair of the Local Government Association saying that the situation would create a postcode lottery because “if you are in one of those areas with a very low council tax base, what you are likely to be saying is that, unless you are someone who physically cannot get out of bed . . . you are not going to get any help at all.” She then asked what equalisation measures will the Chancellor take to ensure that there is no disparity between local authorities in the funding they receive and the resultant quality of service they can provide.</p> <p>In response the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Greg Hands MP (Con, Chelsea and Fulham) said that the Government is putting an additional £1.5bn into the Better Care Fund and says that the Local Government Association has been calling for greater flexibility for setting council tax.</p>
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Consultations

Title: Charities and Fundraising (CC20)

Source: Charity Commission

Deadline for written evidence: 11 February 2016

Charity fundraising: a guide to trustee duties (CC20) is the Charity Commission’s guide to charity trustees’ responsibilities in the fundraising context. It will replace the commission’s current guidance which is called Charities and Fundraising (CC20).

In the press release announcing the consultation the Charity Commission has said that the proposed new guidance ‘states more clearly than ever that trustees must take responsibility for the fundraising undertaken by their charities’.

Full details can be found [here](#)

Title: Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill

Source: House of Commons, Public Bill Committee

Deadline for written evidence: 7th January (although the Committee will meet for the first time on 15th December and evidence received by then will have more impact)

The Public Bill Committee for the Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill is accepting written evidence on the contents of the Bill (see above). Although the Committee is accepting evidence until the 7th December it is likely to take account of submissions before this point as the Committee will call witnesses before it starts its substantive line-by-line scrutiny.

Full details can be found [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