

Weekly Political Update
08 November 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><u>Written question on whether the Government will publish information on the number of people supplied with hearing aids by Clinical Commissioning Group</u></p>	<p>With the support of Action on Hearing Loss, Mary Glindon MP (Labour, North Tyneside) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, pursuant to the Answer of 11 December 2017 to Question 117036 on Hearing Aids, if he will publish the information for each Care Commissioning Group.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“Information is not collected centrally on the number of people supplied with a hearing aid by each clinical commissioning group.”</i></p> <p>The Answer of 11 December 2017 to Question 117036 stated the following and can be found here:</p> <p><i>“Information is not collected centrally on the age or gender of people prescribed hearing aids. In 2016, a total of 1,373,444 hearing aids were prescribed by the National Health Service.</i></p> <p><i>The table below shows data on hearing aids provided in the last four years.</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 15%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">2014</th> <th style="width: 15%;">2015</th> <th style="width: 15%;">2016</th> <th style="width: 15%;">2017</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Increase 2014-17</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;"><i>Total NHS</i></td> <td><i>1,265,761</i></td> <td><i>1,310,761</i></td> <td><i>1,373,444</i></td> <td><i>1,362,651</i></td> <td><i>7.7%</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;"><i>Total Private</i></td> <td><i>256,673</i></td> <td><i>275,449</i></td> <td><i>297,449</i></td> <td><i>307,171</i></td> <td><i>19.7%</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><i>Note:</i> ¹<i>Figures up to September 2017.”</i></p>		2014	2015	2016	2017	Increase 2014-17	<i>Total NHS</i>	<i>1,265,761</i>	<i>1,310,761</i>	<i>1,373,444</i>	<i>1,362,651</i>	<i>7.7%</i>	<i>Total Private</i>	<i>256,673</i>	<i>275,449</i>	<i>297,449</i>	<i>307,171</i>	<i>19.7%</i>
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Hearing Loss

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<p><u>Written question on how much funding the Government has</u></p>	<p>Royston Smith MP (Conservatives, Southampton Itchen) has asked:</p>
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<p>allocated to organisations that support deaf people in each year since 2010</p>	<p><i>“The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, how much funding her Department has allocated to organisations that provide support to deaf people in each year since 2010.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“The information requested is in the attached table.</i></p> <p>PQ186395 attached table (Word Document, 20.7 KB)”</p>
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The NHS – Prevention

Click on link for source

<p>Health and Social Care Secretary Speech – Prevention</p>	<p>In a speech delivered to International Association of National Public Health Institutes this week, the Health and Social Care Secretary, Matthew Hancock MP (Conservatives, West Suffolk) highlighted prevention as an important factor in ensuring a sustainable NHS for the future. He stated:</p> <p><i>“...Today, I want to talk about...responsibilities, and our task for the National Health Service to help empower people to take more care of their own health.</i></p> <p><i>I want to talk about how we need to focus more on prevention to transform our health and social care system, save money, eliminate waste and make the extra £20.5 billion we’re putting in go as far as it can.</i></p> <p><i>Because only with better prevention can our NHS be sustainable in the long term.”</i></p> <p>He continued:</p> <p><i>“...Last year, we spent just £11 billion on primary care where the bulk of prevention happens.</i></p> <p><i>Yet the combination of prevention and predictive medicine have more than twice the impact on length of healthy life.</i></p> <p><i>That isn’t just the difference between life and death, it’s the difference between spending the last 20 years of your life fit and active, or in a chronic condition...”</i></p> <p><i>“...So as the government is spending £20.5 billion more of taxpayers’ hard-earned cash over the next 5 years – the single, largest cash injection to the NHS ever – we must see the proportion of funding on primary and community care in the NHS rise. And that is exactly what will happen in the long-term plan.”</i></p> <p>Matthew Hancock MP’s speech appears to set the tone with regards to what is likely to be featured in the NHS’s upcoming ten year plan – noting in particular, references to social prescribing, which was also included in the Department for</p>
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	<p>Digital Culture, Media and Sport’s recently published Loneliness Strategy. The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care stated:</p> <p><i>“...focusing on the responsibilities of patients shouldn’t be about penalising people but about helping people to make better choices.</i></p> <p><i>How do we do that? How can we empower people to take more care of their own health?</i></p> <p><i>By giving people the knowledge, skills and confidence to take responsibility for their own health.</i></p> <p><i>By using new digital technologies, to help people make informed decisions, with more access to primary and community care, and with more social prescribing, all aimed at stopping people from becoming patients in the first place.”</i></p> <p>Matthew Hancock MP also acknowledged the role of different groups of people within society, including employers. He said:</p> <p><i>“It means employers playing a bigger role in helping their staff stay healthy and to return to health after illness.”</i></p> <p>To read his speech in full, please click on the link on the left.</p> <p>A policy paper setting out the Government’s vision regarding prevention and the NHS was also published and can be read in full, here.</p>
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Loneliness

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<p><u>Oral question on the steps being taken by the Government to help tackle loneliness</u></p>	<p>Mike Wood MP (Conservatives, Dudley) has asked:</p> <p><i>“What steps his Department is taking to help tackle loneliness”</i></p> <p>The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Jeremy Wright MP (Conservatives, Kenilworth and Southam) responded:</p> <p><i>“The Government recently published their first ever strategy for tackling loneliness in England. Commitments include a national loneliness campaign, investment in community spaces and local data pilots, and embedding loneliness in our internet safety White Paper and digital inclusion fund. Those commitments are in addition to the £20.5 million of new grant funding for projects to prevent loneliness that was announced by the Government in June.”</i></p> <p>Gareth Snell MP (Labour, Stoke on Trent Central) intervened, asking:</p> <p><i>“What significance does the Secretary of State place on the role of the voluntary sector in helping to tackle loneliness in our country? If, like me, he thinks that it is an important role, will he say what discussions he has had with</i></p>
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	<p><i>the Department of Health and Social Care and with local government to make sure that commissioners of services now understand that the voluntary sector should be taken seriously?”</i></p> <p>Culture Secretary, Jeremy Wright MP replied:</p> <p><i>“I do agree with the hon. Gentleman. He may know that part of the responsibilities of Ministers in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will now include attention to issues of loneliness and he will see that, when we announce those who are the recipients of the £20.5 million that I mentioned a moment or so ago, there are a range of different organisations across the country, all of which play a vital part in this and to which we should all be grateful.”</i></p>
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Subtitles

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<p><u>Written questions on legislative proposals requiring audio description and subtitles on broadcasts</u></p>	<p>Marion Fellows (Scottish National Party, Motherwell and Wishaw) has asked the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport the following questions on requiring audio description and subtitles on broadcasts:</p> <p><i>“..If he will bring forward legislative proposals to increase the number of broadcasts which are required to include (a) audio description for people with sight loss and (b) subtitles for people with hearing loss.”</i></p> <p><i>“...If he will bring forward legislative proposals to make it a requirement that all broadcasters use audio description access on all television channels.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, Margot James MP (Conservatives, Stourbridge) provided the same response to both questions:</p> <p><i>“I refer the Honourable Member to the answer to PQ 186377, answered on 5th November.”</i></p> <p>The Minister’s answer to PQ 186377, answered on 5th November stated the following and can be read in full here.</p> <p><i>“The Communications Act 2003 already requires broadcasters to ensure that they provide access services on linear TV. These are audio description, subtitling, and sign language services. Ofcom are responsible for administering the Code on Television Access Services which sets out what proportion of programming must have access services. The Digital Economy Act 2017 made provision for regulations to ensure that there are also access services for video on demand players. Ofcom consulted on these proposals this summer and are due to submit their report to the Secretary of State shortly.”</i></p>
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Disability benefits

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<p><u>Written questions on what assessments the Government has made of universal credit measures announced in the Budget 2018 and its effect on disabled people</u></p>	<p>Former Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Debbie Abrahams MP (Labour, Oldham and Saddleworth) has asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions the following questions regarding universal credit:</p> <p><i>“What assessment she had made of the levels of spending on social security for disabled people as a result of the provisions of Budget 2018.”</i></p> <p><i>“What assessment she has made of the effect of measures related to universal credit announced in Budget 2018 on disabled people who are (a) in work and (b) out of work.”</i></p> <p>The Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) provided the same response to both questions:</p> <p><i>“We will spend over £50 billion in 2018/19 on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions.</i></p> <p><i>In the budget we have announced that work allowance rates will be increased by £1000 from April 2019 and uprated in line with inflation thereafter. Raising the current work allowances will direct additional funding to working disabled people by allowing them to keep more of their earnings before the earnings taper is applied. By increasing the work allowances many disabled families on UC will be £630 better off, in a package worth £1.7bn in 2023/24.</i></p> <p><i>It has also been announced that income related legacy benefits, Income Support (IS), Income Related Employment and Support Allowance and Income Based Jobseeker’s Allowance will continue for two weeks after a claim for Universal Credit has been made. This change will particularly support vulnerable claimants who may have been on benefits for some time, have little or no savings to fall back on and currently rely on regular payments at shorter intervals.</i></p> <p><i>We have also previously announced that transitional payments for former recipients of Severe Disability Premium (SDP) and protection for those who are receiving SDP as part of their existing benefit entitlement. These claimants will now only move to UC with transitional protection. Those who have already moved to UC will be considered for a lump sum payment that will be back-dated to the start of their UC claim, and will receive ongoing monthly payments.</i></p> <p><i>These regulations provide transitional support to recipients of the SDP while removing the complexity of dealing with different rules for seven different disability additions. 500,000 vulnerable people receive the SDP alongside their benefit awards. All of these people will ultimately move to UC and benefit from this enhanced support.</i></p> <p><i>Not replicating the Severe Disability Premium in UC means the government can target additional support to a wider group. UC provides a higher level of support for the most severely disabled people than the benefit it replaces, worth up to £328.32 per month.”</i></p>
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<p><u>Written question on average waiting times for a universal credit claimant to receive a UC50 form as part of the work capability assessment</u></p>	<p>Christine Jardine MP (Liberal Democrats, Edinburgh West) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average waiting time is for a claimant of universal credit to receive a UC50 form as part of their work capability assessment as a result of a (a) health condition and (b) disability for each of those conditions and disabilities.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Employment, Alok Sharma MP (Conservatives, Reading West) responded:</p> <p><i>“The information requested is not available. The Capability for Work questionnaire UC50 and covering letter is issued to the claimant by first class mail the day after they are referred for a Work Capability Assessment. They have a period of four weeks in which to return the completed questionnaire, and are issued a further reminder letter if they have not replied within three weeks.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on how long people waited to receive elements of universal credit that are paid on the basis of health conditions or disabilities</u></p>	<p>Christine Jardine MP (Liberal Democrats, Edinburgh West) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how long people have waited on average to receive the elements of universal credit that are paid on the basis of health conditions or disabilities by condition in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what comparative assessment she has made of that waiting time with the average waiting time for standard allowance.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“The requested information is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate cost.”</i></p>

Hearing aids – Children

Click on link for source

<p><u>Written question on what recent estimates have been made of the length of NHS waiting times for children waiting for hearing aid repairs</u></p>	<p>Opposition Whip, Vicky Foxcroft MP (Labour, Lewisham, Deptford) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what recent estimate he has made of the length of NHS waiting times for children waiting for hearing aid repairs.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinanage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“The information requested is not held centrally.”</i></p>
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Hearing Loss – Children

[Click on link for source](#)

<p>Written question on what financial support is available to support children with hearing difficulties</p>	<p>Royston Smith MP (Conservatives, Southampton Itchen) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what financial support his Department makes available to support children with hearing difficulties.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“NHS England commissions some services for children with hearing loss as identified in ‘Commissioning Intentions 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 For Prescribed Specialised Services’. These include provision of cochlear implants, bone conduction hearing aids and mental health services.</i></p> <p><i>Clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) are responsible for commissioning other hearing loss services for their local populations. As with other services which CCGs commission, they should take into consideration assessments of local need and any relevant guidance.</i></p> <p><i>‘Commissioning services for people with hearing loss: A framework for clinical commissioning groups’, published by NHS England in July 2016, provides guidance to inform and support commissioners when making local decisions.”</i></p>
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Education

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<p>Written questions on support within the education system for deaf children</p>	<p>Frank Field MP (Independent, Birkenhead) has asked the Secretary of State for Education, the following questions on support within the education system for deaf children:</p> <p><i>“...The Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2018 to Question 169059 on Pupils: Hearing Impairment, what proportion of that funding has been made available to the recruitment and retention of Teachers of the Deaf.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 11 September 2018 to Question 169059 on Pupils: Hearing Impairment, whether the new SEND regional leads have been tasked with engaging with local authority specialist education services for deaf children.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to monitor the adequacy of the number of Teachers of the Deaf.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi MP (Conservatives, Stratford on Avon) provided the same response to the questions:</p> <p><i>“The funding made available through the new Department for Education contracts covers a wide range of activity designed to support the education workforce, support families, and support local authorities and their partners. Within this, £3.4 million has been provided for the special educational needs</i></p>
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and disability (SEND) Schools' Workforce contract, a strand of which is a study to understand the supply, demand and drivers for SEND continuing professional development (CPD). Also included is an exercise to map access to CPD and an analysis of the gaps in training and resources available to schools. The aim of the contract is to ensure that all teachers are equipped to respond to the needs of their pupils, including those with hearing impairment. Supporting teachers of pupils with sensory impairment is part of the contract, but direct funding for Teachers of the Deaf is not included in this activity and the department does not fund the training of Teachers of the Deaf. It is up to local authorities to work with the schools in their area to identify the nature of specialist support services they commission according to the needs of schools in their authority. The SEND Code of Practice makes clear that all local authorities are required to publish a local offer, which sets out information about provision they expect to be available for children and young people with SEND in their area. The local offer must include relevant regional and national specialist provision, such as provision for children and young people with low-incidence and more complex special educational needs (SEN).

Under the SEND Schools' Workforce contract, eight regional hubs will be created, consisting of a Regional and Deputy Regional SEND Leader in each region. Their role is to identify and bring together local SEND networks and to support school improvement, including condition specific networks. As part of that work, they will make links with the SEND leads in local authorities and will use those discussions to identify weaknesses and priorities for school improvement in the area.

Our work with the whole school SEND programme will help us understand the gaps in training and resources available to schools to support pupils with SEND, including the needs of mainstream schools to support pupils with hearing impairments. As we review the conclusions of that analysis, we will also consider the information received from the National Deaf Children's Society on trends in the recruitment of Teachers of the Deaf.

The department is reviewing recruitment and retention data to understand whether special schools and alternative providers are facing teacher shortages and how this compares to mainstream teaching as part of a wider focus on teacher recruitment and retention."

The answer of 11 September 2018 to Question 169059 can be found [here](#) and stated the following:

"We want all children and young people, no matter what their special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), to be able to reach their full potential and receive the right support to succeed in their education and as they move into adult life. That is why, since 2014, we have supported the implementation of significant reforms, putting children, young people and their families at the heart of the system, and focusing on outcomes and transition to adult life.

To support the reforms, we provided £900,000 funding to the National Sensory Impairment Partnership between 2016 and 2018 to equip the school workforce to deliver high quality teaching for pupils with sensory impairments.

	<p><i>We have announced new contracts worth £23.8 million to help provide children who have SEND, including those who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, with access to excellent support.</i></p> <p><i>New SEND regional leads are bringing together practitioners and networks in their local area to help identify and address SEND school improvement priorities and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on how many teachers of the deaf were employed for each of the last five years</u></p>	<p>Preet Kaur Gill MP (Labour, Birmingham Edgbaston) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Education, how many teachers of the deaf were employed for each of the last five years.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi MP (Conservatives, Stratford on Avon) responded:</p> <p><i>“The information requested is not held centrally.”</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