

## Weekly Political Update

### 11 December 2018

---

For further information on any of the parliamentary terms used in this document, please click [here](#).

#### **British Sign Language – Communication support**

*Click on link for source*

<p><u>Written questions on British Sign Language and Communications provision</u></p>	<p><b>With the support of Action on Hearing Loss</b>, Stephen Doughty MP (Labour, Cardiff South and Penarth) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department’s response to the consultation entitled, Market review of British Sign Language and communications provision for people who are deaf or have hearing loss, published in July 2017, what steps her Department has taken to fill the evidence gaps identified by respondents.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department’s response to the consultation entitled, Market review of British Sign Language and communications provision for people who are deaf or have hearing loss, published in July 2017, what steps her Department has taken to improve the commissioning of British Sign Language interpretation by the public sector.”</i></p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to her Department’s response to the consultation entitled, Market review of British Sign Language and communications provision for people who are deaf or have hearing loss, published in July 2017, what steps her Department has taken to increase the number of fully qualified and registered British Sign Language interpreters.”</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 all three questions:</p> <p><i>“Holding answer received on 10 December 2018</i></p> <p><i>The ‘Market review of British Sign Language and communications provision for people who are deaf or have hearing loss’ was a review of the present state of the market for support that facilitates communication for people who are deaf, deaf-blind or have hearing loss and those that need to engage with them.</i></p> <p><i>DWP worked with a wide range of stakeholders to develop the review’s parameters and criteria. These partners included other government departments; organisations that work for and with people who are deaf, Deafblind or have a hearing loss; and individuals from the communication and language professions. However, as was stated in the Report, it was not within the scope of the review to make policy recommendations based on the evidence received.</i></p> <p><i>The review aimed to look at provision in the UK as a whole, covering all forms of language and communication support. Interested organisations and individuals were publically invited to make a submission to the review. As was explained in the report, DWP did not undertake field research during the</i></p>
---	--

	<p><i>course of this work and the accuracy of information submitted during the review has therefore not been further assured by the department.</i></p> <p><i>This report published in July 2017 was a summary of the responses received. The report highlights current available evidence relating to the areas under review, including relevant published statistical data, and summarises common themes that were evident in the wide range of submissions that were received.</i></p> <p><i>The review was designed to be a useful information resource, which would allow commissioners across both the public and private sector to make more informed decisions. The review is also a resource for policymakers. We have not assessed its impact across the public sector, but we can say that findings from the review informed DWP's decision to increase the Access to Work Cap from £43,100 p.a. to £57,200 p.a. with effect from April 2018. Access to Work is also increasingly supporting the use of video relay services to complement support from face-to-face BSL Interpreters and allow for greater flexibility.</i></p> <p><i>Recruitment levels among British Sign Language interpreters are influenced by a range of market factors, including demand for their services in social and personal situations, which DWP does not directly influence. However, DWP works closely and on an ongoing basis with people who are deaf or have hearing loss, as well as relevant stakeholder groups, to ensure their needs are understood and that initiatives like Access to Work help to meet those needs."</i></p>
--	---

## Healthcare

*Click on link for source*

<p><u><a href="#">Oral question on long-term funding for the NHS</a></u></p>	<p>Jack Brereton MP (Conservatives, Stoke on Trent South) has asked the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care:</p> <p><i>"What steps he is taking to ensure that the NHS has sufficient long-term funding."</i></p> <p>Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matthew Hancock MP (Conservatives, West Suffolk) responded:</p> <p><i>"We are increasing the NHS budget by £20.5 billion in real terms over the next five years. It is a major investment to make sure that the NHS is there for us all."</i></p> <p>Jack Brereton went on to ask:</p> <p><i>"How will the Secretary of State ensure that stressed health economies such as those in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire get a significant share of the additional £20.5 billion?"</i></p> <p>Matthew Hancock MP replied:</p> <p><i>"Clearly, part of the £20.5 billion of extra funding that taxpayers are putting into the NHS over the next five years is for ensuring that services can be put on a sustainable footing, and that includes some of the highly stressed services such as those in Stoke."</i></p>
--	---

<p><a href="#"><u>Oral question on public health funding going to local authorities</u></a></p>	<p>Mike Amesbury MP (Labour, Weaver Vale) has asked the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matthew Hancock MP (Conservatives, West Suffolk):</p> <p><i>“What recent representations he has received on the potential merits of increasing public health funding to local authorities.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Steve Brine MP (Conservatives, Winchester) responded:</p> <p><i>“We have had lots... The Government have a strong track record on public health. Local authorities in England have received more than £16 billion in ring-fenced public health grants over the current spending period. Decisions on future funding for that area of spending are of course for the next spending review.”</i></p> <p>Philip Hollobone MP (Conservatives, Kettering) then went on to ask:</p> <p><i>“...will the Minister consider whether it may not be appropriate in all cases for local councils to manage public health budgets, and whether in some cases it might make sense for the NHS to regain control?”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Steve Brine MP (Conservatives, Winchester) replied:</p> <p><i>“There are active discussions going on between my right hon. Friends the Health Secretary and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government about this, but the bottom line is that Parliament legislated through the Health and Social Care Act 2012 for local authorities up and down the country in England to be public health authorities. We believe that they are well placed to make these spending decisions with the ring-fenced grant—£16 billion—that we have given them.”</i></p>
---	--

## **Employment**

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><u>£40m fund for long term, unemployed disabled people - The Intensive Personalised Employment Support programme</u></a></p>	<p>The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Amber Rudd MP (Conservatives, Hastings and Rye) has today, announced the launch of a £40m fund that will go towards supporting long-time, unemployed disabled people into employment.</p> <p>To read further, please click on the link on the left.</p>
---	--

## **Loneliness**

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><u>Indicators of loneliness – ONS publication</u></a></p>	<p>Following on from the Government's commitment, in its Loneliness Strategy (<i>A Connected Society: A Strategy for Loneliness</i>) to create a national indicator of loneliness, the ONS has published its recommendations for a 'working definition.'</p> <p>To read more, please click on the link on the left.</p>
--	---

## **Equalities**

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><u>Launch of EnAble fund</u></a></p>	<p>Disability Rights UK have announced that they will be administering the Government's new EnAble fund for Elected Office. The fund, which was launched during this year's International Day of Persons with Disabilities (3<sup>rd</sup> December) will allow a disabled candidate to claim funding for the reasonable adjustments needed to stand for election. The fund will be available until May 2020.</p> <p>To read more on the fund, please click on the link on the left.</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