

Weekly Political Update

2 July 2018

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

Social Care

Click on link for source

<p><u>Select Committees' report on – 'The long-term funding of adult social care'</u></p>	<p>The Health and Social Care and Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committees have published their joint report on the long-term funding of adult social care.</p> <p>The report sets out the current challenges facing the social care system and recommends a number of measures to raise additional funding.</p> <p>To read a press release on the report, please click here.</p> <p>To read the report in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><u>Oral statement on the 'Long-term funding of adult social care'</u></p>	<p>Following the publication of the Health and Social Care and Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committees' joint report on the 'Long-term funding of adult social care' – the Chair of the Housing, Communities and Local Government Select Committee, Clive Betts MP (Labour, Sheffield South East) made the following statement:</p> <p><i>"...The critical state of social care and the very serious consequences for people who receive care, and those who do not, and their unpaid carers and families, as well as the NHS, is well documented. The evidence was clear that the combination of rising demand and costs combined with reductions in funding to local authorities has placed the social care system under very great and unsustainable strain.</i></p> <p><i>Despite the welcome additional funding provided by the Government in recent years, local authorities face a funding gap of around £2.5 billion in 2020. This has been confirmed by the National Audit Office, the King's Fund and the Nuffield Trust, as well as the Local Government Association. The consequences are extremely serious and widespread, leading to people going without the care they need, and the time and quality of care not being sufficient for many who receive it, leading to unpaid carers having to step into the breach and placing significant pressures on care providers and the care workforce.</i></p> <p><i>A witness to the inquiry, Sir Andrew Dilnot, chair of the 2011 Dilnot commission, told us that the system was consequently now at risk of "fairly significant disaster", which were very strong words indeed. We concluded that considerable extra funding in the order of many billions of pounds would be needed in the coming years for the following reasons.</i></p> <p><i>We need to meet the funding gap that I just referred to and we then need to provide additional funding to meet future demand. The personal social services research unit at the London School of Economics projects that spending on both social services for older people and younger adults will more than double</i></p>

	<p><i>by 2014, even without the improvements to the service that we suggest. It is also important to meet the care needs of a wider group of people—not just those whose needs are critical or substantial, but those who have moderate needs that are currently largely unmet...</i></p> <p><i>“...After successive attempts at reform, the forthcoming social care Green Paper must be the catalyst for achieving a fair, long-term and sustainable settlement. It also ought to recognise the care needs of those of working age with disabilities, as well as the care needs of the elderly. To ensure that, we recommend that our work should now be taken forward by a cross-party parliamentary commission...”</i></p> <p>In response, the Minister for Care, Caroline Dinéage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) said:</p> <p><i>“...As has been made clear by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, we want to integrate plans for social care with the new NHS plan that the Prime Minister announced recently. It would not make sense to publish it before the NHS plan has even been drafted, so our Green Paper will be published at the same time as the plan. It will cover the Government’s proposals on a wide range of social care issues, including, but not limited to, the need for the social care market to be sustainable for the future. It will also build on policies such as our “Carers action plan”: we will, for example, consult on proposals to provide better support for unpaid carers. The report will be incredibly valuable to our work. It will enhance our plans for the Green Paper, and will ensure that it can offer people a sustainable future and the knowledge that as they approach their later years, they will do so in security and safety and with quality provision.”</i></p> <p>To read in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Healthcare

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<p><u>Additional funding to address health challenges</u></p>	<p>The Department for Health and Social Care have announced funding that will be used to address the ‘next generation’ of health challenges.</p> <p>The Department has announced that £215 million will be set aside for research funding that will <i>“give patients greater independence and choice about how they manage their healthcare.”</i></p> <p>In addition, £150 million will fund research over the next five years to address ‘emerging concerns’ - an ageing population is included in this funding package.</p> <p><i>A further £65 million will “go towards 13 National Institute for Health Research policy research units.”</i></p> <p>Adult Social Care; Older People and Frailty and Screening and Early Diagnosis will be included in the 13 units.</p> <p>To read more on the announcement, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Equalities

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Lords debate on the different 'challenges facing disabled people in the United Kingdom in 2018'

Baroness Thomas of Winchester (Liberal Democrats) secured a debate on the 'challenges facing disabled people in the United Kingdom in 2018.' She began her speech by moving the following statement:

"That this House takes note of the different challenges facing disabled people in the United Kingdom in 2018."

Among other things, Lady Thomas in her introductory speech referenced the Access to Work, stating:

"There appears to be a lot of work in progress, which I am sure the Minister will tell us about and which I welcome. Access to Work is a great, if underadvertised, scheme to help disabled people in the workplace. It would make a lot of difference if it could be extended to volunteers and interns, and even made portable?"

Lord Bruce of Bennachie (Liberal Democrats) referenced his role in a number of deaf charities – including Action on Hearing Loss – and set out his speech with reference to the experiences of people with sensory loss.

He stated:

"I wholly support, and have campaigned for, providing communication support for all deaf people. The technology we have developed in recent years, including voice to text, subtitling, text and email, has greatly enhanced the quality of life of all deaf people... When we add in cochlear implants, digital hearing aids and loop systems, it is easy to see how much has been achieved for deaf people of all forms of deafness, acquired at all stages of life. However, sign language users, who are thinly spread across the country, remain frustrated. The voice to text service is cumbersome and not effective and the video relay service is not as freely available as the Government maintain. In Scotland, users can register for access to a wide range of public services using video relay services between 8 am and midnight seven days a week. Why is that service not available in England and Wales? If the Government are not prepared to follow the US example, where it is available 24/7 for all purposes, why not offer it on a limited number of minutes, for example, to registered users? That could easily be absorbed by the telecom companies, which turn over £30 billion a year."

Lord Low of Dalston (Crossbench) made reference the rights of disabled people and the impact of benefit reforms on disabled people. He said:

"While progress has been made in some areas, the overall picture ... is that disabled people are facing more barriers and falling further behind. ... millions of disabled people ... are still not being treated as equal citizens and continue to be denied the everyday rights non-disabled people take for granted, such as being able to access transport, appropriate health services and housing, or benefit from education and employment. The disability pay gap is persistent and widening, access to justice has deteriorated, and welfare reforms have significantly affected the already low living standards of disabled people".

Since 2016, the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has published two reports examining the UK's record on disability. In both reports the committee expressed serious concerns that the level of protection and support provided to disabled people was not adequate. In 2016, the committee considered a formal complaint under the optional protocol from a number of organisations of disabled people and found that, as a result of austerity measures, there was reliable evidence of "grave or systematic violations" of disabled people's rights to an adequate standard of living and social protection, to work and employment, and to independent living. After reviewing the UK in August 2017, the committee published its concluding observations, which raised significant concerns about disability rights in the UK and made over 80 recommendations for action by the UK Government and the devolved Governments of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In March this year, the EHRC published a cumulative impact assessment of the impact of changes to the tax and benefit system since 2010 on different groups—something the Government said could not be done. Households with one or more disabled members are significantly more adversely affected than those with no disabled members. On average, families with a disabled adult have lost about £2,500 a year since the changes in 2010. If the family also includes a disabled child, the impact is just over £6,500—over 13% of average net income. This compares to a reduction of about £1,000 for non-disabled families. Negative impacts are particularly large for households with more disabled members and more severely disabled members. On average, disabled lone parents with at least one disabled child fare even worse, losing almost £3 out of every £10 of their net income. In cash terms, their average losses are almost £10,000 a year."

Going forwards, Lord Low suggested that the Government:

"...begin engaging with disabled people and their organisations, which they are not doing at the moment. They could hold a summit with organisations for disabled people to co-produce an action plan for taking the rights of disabled people forward or, slightly more long term, they could set up a task force with the same agenda..."

Lord Luce (Crossbench) focused his speech on disability and employment. He said:

"The Government have made progress and there is a higher proportion of disabled people in work now than four years ago. I welcome that, but much more needs to be done. Last November the Department for Work and Pensions produced a Command Paper entitled Improving Lives: the Future of Work, Health and Disability...The Government have set the challenge that we must be in a position by 2019-20 to set out a clear direction and strategy for future reform. To their credit they have set up an expert working group on occupational health to champion, shape and drive the work, plus an interministerial group to co-ordinate. I should emphasise that most employers, especially small businesses, cannot afford to employ occupational health people, and it is these small businesses that are most vulnerable and need most support for their employees. There are some good examples of employers who have a very good occupational health service, helping their

employees and co-ordinating with the health service. So I look forward to hearing from the Minister... and how the Government have decided to ...make it work properly, to the benefit of all concerned.”

In her response, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Baroness Buscombe (Conservatives) said:

“...The Government are fully committed to making sure that disabled people can overcome the barriers they face in their day-to-day lives. With 13.9 million people in the UK—that is 22% of our population—reporting a disability, it is very clear we must do everything we can to break down the barriers so that disabled people can be empowered and achieve their aspirations...”

“...A number of noble Lords asked what the Government have done to improve access for disabled people. This Government understand that to achieve real access and inclusion, departments need to work together where their interests overlap. We have set up the Work and Health Unit, a joint venture between the Department of Health and Social Care and my department. Its aim is to create a society where everyone is ambitious for disabled people in respect of work and to understand and act positively upon the important relationship between health and work, something that was touched on by a number of noble Lords and most particularly the noble Lord, Lord Luce. We published the Improving Lives Command Paper in November 2017. We have set a target of 1 million more disabled people in employment by 2027 and we really mean to meet that target...”

“...We have also increased the amount of help an individual may receive from Access to Work. This is important in relation to some of the concerns raised by noble Lords. It depends on their individual needs and personal circumstances, but an individual can now have up to a maximum of £57,200 a year, which is an increase from £42,100 in April 2017. The grant is in addition to the Motability scheme and all other disability benefits. In September 2016 we launched the Access to Work digital service, so people can now apply online. In addition, we are continuing to develop our online offer and have introduced other channels to improve accessibility, for example through video relay service to assist BSL users.

I say to the noble Lord, Lord Bruce of Bennachie, that the Government are committed to ensuring that deaf people are enabled to fulfil their potential and play a full role in society. We fully support initiatives aimed at improving understanding of the needs of deaf people, giving them more say in how they access services and how the barriers they face can be removed or overcome. Deaf people are the largest group of customers supported by the Access to Work grant and their awards in general tend to be higher than those of other groups.

Technology has moved on. There are solutions that help both deaf and deafened people. Those in the deaf community have always been early adopters of new technology, email phones and video phones, as referenced by both the noble Lord, Lord Bruce, and also my noble friend Lord Borwick. The video relay service is an easy option for service providers to communicate with their deaf customers where that is reasonable. But we must not forget that in the deafened community, the majority of people with a hearing impairment are

	<p><i>elderly, and that for the most part they do not use sign language. They need adjustments such as lip-speakers, speech to text, or note takers...”</i></p> <p><i>“...The Government continue to work with business to increase our understanding. The Disability Confident programme is part of that. We are challenging employers’ attitudes to disability, removing the barriers and ensuring that disabled people have opportunities to realise their aspirations. We are working with employers in this way to ensure a substantial contribution towards seeing 1 million more disabled people in work. Over 70% of local authorities are Disability Confident. The Government are leading by example: all main government departments have now received Disability Confident leader status. I could list a number of well-known companies that are already very supportive. However, the Government understand that disabled people still face innumerable barriers, and yes, the Government will continue to break those barriers down and drive all the sectors to do the same...”</i></p> <p>To read the debate in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Transport

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<p><u>Travel information app to receive government funding</u></p>	<p>The Department for Transport has announced a number of projects which – having won a government- funded competition – will go on to receive funding to improve levels of accessibility on the railways.</p> <p>Of the projects that will receive government- funding is ‘Signly’ an app that gives BSL users and people with hearing loss written travel notices to their phones.</p> <p>To read more on the announcement, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Addressing Loneliness

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<p><u>Consultation - Government’s Loneliness Strategy</u></p>	<p>The Department for Digital, Media and Sport is consulting on the Government’s Loneliness Strategy – seeking views on what measures can be taken to reduce the risk and prevent loneliness.</p> <p>The deadline is 10 am on Friday 20th July.</p> <p>Action on Hearing Loss will be responding to the consultation in the coming days and weeks.</p> <p>For further reading, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Education

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<p><u>Written question on recent changes in funding by local authorities to deaf children's education and the impact on the provision of such education</u></p>	<p>Dan Jarvis MP (Labour, Barnsley Central) has asked:</p> <p><i>"The Secretary of State for Education, what assessment he has made of the effect of recent changes in funding by local authorities to deaf children's education on the provision of such education."</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi MP (Conservatives, Stratford-on Avon) MP responded:</p> <p><i>"In relation to meeting with representatives of the National Deaf Children's Society, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 4 June 2018 to Question UIN 146815.</i></p> <p><i>My officials will be in touch with the National Deaf Children's Society in due course to discuss their recent report on local authority funding.</i></p> <p><i>In relation to assessing the recent changes in funding by local authorities to deaf children's education on the provision of such education, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 14 June 2018 to Question UIN 152124."</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on whether the Government will meet with representatives from NDCS to discuss funding for deaf children's education</u></p>	<p>Dan Jarvis MP (Labour, Barnsley Central) has asked:</p> <p><i>"The Secretary of State for Education, if he will meet representatives of the National Deaf Children's Society to discuss funding for deaf children's education."</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi MP (Conservatives, Stratford-on Avon) MP responded:</p> <p><i>"In relation to meeting with representatives of the National Deaf Children's Society, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 4 June 2018 to Question UIN 146815.</i></p> <p><i>My officials will be in touch with the National Deaf Children's Society in due course to discuss their recent report on local authority funding.</i></p> <p><i>In relation to assessing the recent changes in funding by local authorities to deaf children's education on the provision of such education, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 14 June 2018 to Question UIN 152124."</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