

## Weekly Political Update

### 25 June 2018

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

### Hearing Loss

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><u>NICE Guideline on Hearing Loss in Adults</u></a></p>	<p>The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published its final guideline on hearing loss.</p> <p>The guideline – which Action on Hearing Loss actively called for – provides information for healthcare professionals on the assessment and management of hearing loss and serves to highlight the importance of hearing aid provision for those who need them.</p> <p>To read the final guideline in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on what steps are being taken by the Government to ensure that patients with sight and hearing impairments are able to access NHS services</u></a></p>	<p>Shadow Minister for Public Health, Sharon Hodgson MP (Labour, Washington and Sunderland West) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps his Department is taking to ensure that patients with sight and hearing impairments are able to access NHS services.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“It is the responsibility of local providers and commissioners of NHS services to make the reasonable adjustments required by the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that disabled people, including those with sight and hearing impairments, are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people. Additionally, under the NHS Constitution, National Health Service organisations are required to provide high quality comprehensive services, based on clinical need, which do not discriminate between patients on the basis of disability, including sight and hearing impairments.</i></p> <p><i>In order to reduce the unacceptable variation in the provision of accessible information and communication support to disabled people, all organisations that provide NHS care or publicly-funded adult social care have been legally required to follow the Accessible Information Standard since 1 August 2016. This ensures that people with a disability, impairment or sensory loss are provided with information they can easily read or understand, with support, so they can communicate effectively with services. This will help ensure that they receive an improved standard of care and be more involved in how that care is delivered.”</i></p>

## Healthcare

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><u>NICE Guideline on Dementia</u></a></p>	<p>The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has also published its guideline on dementia.</p> <p>In addition to providing information on the assessment and management of dementia, this guideline – which was published on the same day as the guideline on hearing loss – refers to hearing loss and cross-references the NICE guideline on hearing loss in adults.</p> <p>To read the final guideline in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Oral question on what steps are being taken by the Government to encourage the adoption of personal budgets</u></a></p>	<p>Sir Henry Bellingham MP (Conservatives, North West Norfolk) and Andrew Lewer MP (Conservatives, Northampton South) have asked the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care:</p> <p><i>“What steps he is taking to encourage the adoption of personal health and care budgets.”</i></p> <p>The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jeremy Hunt MP (Conservatives, South West Surrey) responded:</p> <p><i>“Personal health budgets have a transformative effect on people with very complex health needs, and we plan for 50,000 to 100,000 more people to benefit from them by 2021.”</i></p> <p>Sir Henry went on to ask whether the Health and Social Care Secretary agrees:</p> <p><i>“That a key part of integrating health and social care is giving individuals more say and flexibility in how they use their entitlements?”</i></p> <p>The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jeremy Hunt MP (Conservatives, South West Surrey) then stated:</p> <p><i>“Absolutely...we are currently consulting on giving a right to personal health budgets to people with the most complex health needs. That would be about 350,000 people and would include anyone with a continuing NHS need combined with a mental health need, a learning disability, autism or PTSD. Obviously, it would be hugely significant if we were able to proceed with that.”</i></p> <p>To read in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Innovation in the NHS – Lord Darzi appointed Chair of the Accelerated</u></a></p>	<p>Lord Darzi has been appointed as Chair of the Accelerated Access Collaborative – a group tasked with working with the NHS, industry and the Government to speed-up access to innovative technologies and products into the NHS.</p> <p>To read more please click on the link on the left.</p>

<a href="#"><u>Access Collaborative</u></a>	
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## **Employment**

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<a href="#"><u>Written question on what steps are being taken by the Government to raise awareness and increase take-up of the Access to Work scheme</u></a>	<p>Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, Frank Field MP (Labour, Birkenhead) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to raise awareness and increase take-up of the Access to Work scheme.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) has responded:</p> <p><i>“We will continue to promote Access to Work through our marketing and media activity, building on its success.</i></p> <p><i>In 2016/17, the number of people with provision approved rose 8% overall, including 13% rise for deaf people and 15% rise for those with dyslexia, compared to the previous Financial Year. In addition, provision was approved for record numbers of young people (up 26%), people with learning disabilities (up 25%) and people with mental health conditions (up 37%).</i></p> <p><i>As part of the on-going campaign, we are targeting key influencers such as employers and health professionals, as well as claimants. We work with stakeholders and advisory groups to raise awareness of Access to Work and have been working with Remploy to promote, and increase take up of the Mental Health Support Service. In addition, our Jobcentre partnership managers continue to engage with local stakeholders and partners to promote the support available. Access to Work is also promoted to a range of business leaders through the Disability Confident scheme.”</i></p>
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## **Social Care**

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<a href="#"><u>Announcement on social care Green Paper – Secretary of State for Health and Social Care</u></a>	<p>Following the Prime Minister’s announcement on additional NHS funding, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Jeremy Hunt MP (Conservatives, South West Surrey) made the following statement regarding the long-awaited social care Green Paper:</p> <p><i>“For our most vulnerable citizens with both health and care needs, we also recognise that NHS and social care provision are two sides of the same coin. It is not possible to have a plan for one sector without having a plan for the other. Indeed, we have been clear with the NHS that a key plank of its plan must be the full integration of the two services. As part of the NHS plan, we will review the current functioning and structure of the Better Care Fund to make sure that it supports that. While the long-term funding profile of the social care system will not be settled until the spending review, we will publish the social care Green Paper ahead of that. However, because we want to integrate plans for</i></p>
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	<p><i>social care with the new NHS plan, it does not make sense to publish it before the NHS plan has even been drafted, so we now intend to publish the social care Green Paper in the autumn around the same time as the NHS plan.”</i></p> <p>To read the Statement in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on whether the Government have made an assessment of the potential effect on disabled people of lowering the eligibility criteria for social care</u></a></p>	<p>Neil Coyle MP (Labour, Bermondsey and Old Southwark) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether the Government has made an assessment of the potential effect on disabled people of lowering the eligibility criteria for social care; and if he will make a statement.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“The Care Act 2014 set out the eligibility criteria for social care which is set at a national minimum level. We are not making a specific assessment of the potential effects on disabled people as the Government published an Impact Assessment of the Care Act in 2014. We are currently evaluating implementation of the Care Act as a whole.</i></p> <p><i>Where a person is assessed as having eligible care and support needs, these must be met by their local authority. For those who do not meet the eligibility criteria, local authorities should signpost people to relevant services.”</i></p>

### **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

*Click on link for source*

<p><a href="#"><u>Westminster Hall debate – UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</u></a></p>	<p>Rosie Duffield MP (Labour, Canterbury) moved the following motion:</p> <p><i>“That this House has considered the Government’s response to the UN report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”</i></p> <p>She continued:</p> <p><i>“What I am raising today is something in dire need of urgent and effective remedy. I am referring to the United Nation’s assessment of the UK Government’s ability—inability, I should say—to protect the rights of our disabled citizens... last August a UN report by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities found that the UK was in serious breach of international human rights law. The report found that the UK was lacking in enforcing or upholding equality legislation in sectors including education, justice and employment.”</i></p> <p><i>“...Right now, about 4.2 million disabled people live in poverty across the country. In fact, more than half of those living in poverty are either disabled or living with someone who is. In the UK, half of all disabled people are still unemployed and, even when they do attain employment, not enough provision is in place for them to maintain it sustainably in the long term.</i></p>
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*The report on article 27 of the convention made four key recommendations, which have yet to be implemented. The Government have not yet offered an effective employment policy for disabled people.”*

Rosie Duffield MP concluded that:

*“...The PIP assessment system is highly traumatic and often misassesses... In January this year, the High Court ruled that the PIP system is “blatantly discriminatory” against people with mental health conditions. That criticism is echoed by many mental health and disability organisations.... I am sure we all appreciate that not all wounds and maladies are necessarily physical and observable. A single-day assessment is therefore a ludicrous way of properly gauging whether a person is in need of financial assistance because of mental health conditions.*

*...The convention needs to become part of UK law. The UN committee noted last year that there had not been a full review of the UK’s laws and policies in the light of the convention. There is not enough information on what the UK is doing to stop disabled people being negatively affected as the UK leaves the EU. A statement by Inclusion London explains that*

*“Disabled People’s organisations are seriously disappointed by the Government response and its failure to adequately take on board any of the UN inquiry recommendations. This response brings into question the Government’s commitment to the progressive realisation of Disabled people’s rights.”*

The Access to Work scheme was also mentioned during the debate. Dr. Lisa Cameron MP (Scottish National Party, East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) stated:

*“...The Access to Work fund is a good scheme, but it requires much further publication to increase awareness. Many people in my constituency and beyond, who I have spoken to through the all-party parliamentary group for disability, were not aware of it. Where a scheme has the potential to assist people, we should ensure that they can access it.”*

Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) also said:

*“On the right to work, the Government have not done enough to remove the barriers that disabled people face. There is a lack of high-quality impairment-specific support. The Government’s flagship Disability Confident scheme does not measure the number of disabled people it has directly helped to move into work. Access to Work must be improved, extended and better publicised. Will the Minister consider removing the discriminatory cap?”*

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:

*“...The Government are utterly committed to the convention. Britain helped to develop and shape it, and we were one of the first countries in the world to sign and ratify it, in 2009. We are one of the very few nations that also ratified the convention’s optional protocol, which allows for individual complaints to be raised and permits the UN committee to investigate allegations of violations of the convention....”*

*“...We firmly believe that a disability or health condition should not dictate the path a person is able to take in life, including in society or in the workplace. That is the basis of everything we are doing to try to make sure that disabled people are able to realise their potential, including at work. We engage constructively with the United Nations and we have had constructive meetings, and I will of course meet all the reporting requirements in full.*

*As hon. Members will know, in line with the convention, disability is mainstreamed across the Government. I reassure everyone that we have strong legislation on our statute book to protect disabled people, through the public sector equality duty in the Equality Act 2010 and through the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Those protections are some of the strongest in the world.”*

*“...The proportion of people in absolute poverty in a family in which someone is disabled is at a record low, because we are spending more than £50 billion a year on benefits to support disabled people and people with health conditions. That is up by £7 billion since 2010; it is around 2.5% of our gross domestic product and accounts for more than 6% of Government spending. As a share of our GDP, public spending on disability and incapacity is the second highest in the G7; only Germany spends more. Disability spending will be higher than 2010 in every year through the spending review. There has been no freeze in the benefits that disabled people receive, and those benefits are not subject to the benefit cap....”*

*“Many more people are being supported and helped on PIP than they ever were under the disability living allowance legacy benefit. As we know, the evidence shows that more people receive higher rates of support on PIP than on DLA. Some 30% of people moved on to PIP get the highest levels of support; the figure was only 15% on DLA. It is important that disabled people or people with disabled family members who listen to and follow these debates know that there is support for them and that they should come confidently forward to receive it, in the full knowledge that, when we come across problems with the system, we work tirelessly to improve it.*

*There has been talk about Access to Work. We are very keen to see Access to Work grow and develop. We recently announced that the support available to each person each year is double the average income—that is just under £60,000 per person per year to support an individual into work. It is a demand-led scheme, and I am pleased that it grew by 8% last year. This is one budget that we are happy to see grow, because it means that more people are being supported into work.*

*I welcome the comments on Disability Confident, which is a growing and successful scheme, and I am grateful to the hon. Members here who have signed up to it. I hope more will come next week to the launch of the community challenge, where we will ask leaders in communities—that is us,*

	<p><i>as MPs in our local communities—to spend time in our summer recess dedicating ourselves to visiting businesses and employers and asking them to become disability confident and to provide more opportunities for disabled people in their communities.”</i></p> <p>To read the debate in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Written question on what steps the Government have taken in response to recommendations on the disability employment gap in the 2017 United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities report</u></a></p>	<p>Tulip Siddiq MP (Labour, Hampstead and Kilburn) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department has taken in response to the recommendations of the 2017 report of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities relating to its findings on there being a persistent employment and pay gap for disabled people in the UK.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“This Government is committed to improving employment outcomes for disabled people and those with long-term health conditions. We have made a great deal of progress: there were 600,000 more disabled people in work in 2017 than in 2013, and the employment rate for disabled people has improved by 5.6% in the same period.</i></p> <p><i>Despite this success, we are committed to going further, which is why in November 2017 we set out our ambition to see 1 million more disabled people in work over the next ten years, as well as the actions we are taking to achieve this goal in the workplace, in health services, and in the welfare system.</i></p> <p><i>Estimates from ONS show that, in 2016, the median hourly wage for disabled people was £11.40, compared with £12.20 for non-disabled people. There are a range of factors which could contribute to a difference in median hourly wage – such as working part-time or a difference in occupation.</i></p> <p><i>In addition, and to progress the broader agenda for disabled people we will be setting up a new Inter-Ministerial Group to co-ordinate work across Government, and seeking to reinvigorate our engagement with disability stakeholders to help shape our plans.”</i></p>

### **Disability benefits**

Click on link for source

<p><b>High Court Ruling – Universal Credit</b></p>	<p>The High Court has ruled that the Government unlawfully discriminated against two severely disabled people –TP and AR after their universal credit benefits were reduced after moving from one Local Authority area to another.</p> <p>More on the case can be found in the following <a href="#"><u>article</u></a>.</p>
<p><a href="#"><u>Oral Statement – reforms to Universal Credit</u></a></p>	<p>Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey MP (Conservatives, Tatton) made an oral statement on reforms to universal credit – making reference to the recently published National Audit Office (NAO) report and noting recent changes.</p>

	To read the Statement in full, please click on the link on the left.
<p><u><a href="#">Written question on whether all documents required to make and manage a universal credit claim are available in Easy Read formats</a></u></p>	<p>Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, Frank Field MP (Labour, Birkenhead) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether all documents required to make and manage a universal credit claim are available in Easy Read formats.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Employment, Alok Sharma MP (Conservatives, Reading West) responded:</p> <p><i>“Universal Credit Full Service is designed to be accessed online (98% of claims are made online) and has been built to be accessible. The Department has engaged with MIND to ensure we are following the correct protocols for accessibility.</i></p> <p><i>Where our customers need assistance to access our services and information, we make reasonable adjustments to meet their individual needs. DWP customers who have a specific communication barrier are also able to use a variety of different formats such as Braille, audio, large print, through third party interpreters such as for British Sign Language or non-spoken language, or by arranging for a member of staff to visit the customer in their home.”</i></p>
<p><u><a href="#">Written question on commencement of the pilot scheme and full rollout of video recording PIP assessments</a></u></p>	<p>Chris Ruane MP (Labour, Vale of Clwyd) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the Written Statement of 5 June 2018, on Personal Independence Payments, HCWS733, what the timetable is for the commencement of (a) a pilot scheme and (b) a full rollout of the proposed policy of video recording personal independence payment assessments.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“As part of our commitment to improve the PIP assessment process we are exploring options to video record PIP face to face assessments. We are starting the test this summer, which will inform wider rollout decisions.”</i></p> <p>In Statement HCWS733, Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) stated that video recording will be made a standard part of the assessment process. She stated that it would first be piloted and then rolled out across Great Britain.</p> <p>To read the Statement in full, please click <a href="#">here</a>.</p>
<p><u><a href="#">Written question on what assessment the Government has made of the</a></u></p>	<p>Neil Gray MP (Scottish National Party, Airdrie and Shotts) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment she has made of the potential merits of collecting medical evidence from every</i></p>

<p><u><a href="#">potential merits of collecting medical evidence from every PIP and ESA applicant at application stage</a></u></p>	<p><i>applicant at the application stage of (a) personal independence payments and (b) employment support 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 Government is exploring a number of options to improve the provision of medical evidence for Personal Independence Payments and Employment and Support Allowance as set out in its response to recommendation 5 of the Work &amp; Pensions Select Committee.</i></p> <p><i><a href="https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmworpen/986/98602.htm">https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmworpen/986/98602.htm</a>”</i></p>
<p><u><a href="#">Oral evidence session (20 June 2018) – Work and Pensions Select Committee Inquiry into Benefit Sanctions</a></u></p>	<p>As part of its Inquiry into benefit sanctions, the Work and Pensions Select Committee heard oral evidence on the impact of benefit sanctions on individuals – including:</p> <p><i>“The lack of efficacy of sanctions on disabled people, including an National Audit Office finding that claimants of ESA - a disability benefit - who are sanctioned are less likely to get into work.”</i></p> <p>To read more on the session, please <a href="#">click here</a>.</p> <p>To read the full transcript of the evidence session, please click on the link on the left.</p>

### **Access to Elected Office**

*Click on link for source*

<p><u><a href="#">Government Equalities Office evaluation report – ‘Access to Elected Office for Disabled People Fund 2012-2015’</a></u></p>	<p>The Government Equalities Office, have published its evaluation of the Access to Elected Office Fund pilot, which was established in 2012 to help disabled candidates meet disability-related costs associated with standing for election.</p> <p>The Fund – enabling disabled candidates to apply for a grant of between £250 and £40,000, was established following recommendations in the cross-party Speaker’s Conference report which sought to examine the under-representation of certain groups in civic life. The pilot ended in 2015 and this report provides a full review of its impact.</p> <p>To read the report in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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### **Addressing Loneliness**

<p><u><a href="#">Announcement – funding to help address loneliness</a></u></p>	<p>The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport have announced that £20 million will be made available to charities to fund projects that bring people together – addressing social isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>To read more on the funding, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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## Education

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Written question on what assessment the Government has made of the effect of reductions in local authority specialist education services on support to deaf children and young people

Former Co-Leader of the Green Party, Caroline Lucas MP (Green Party, Brighton Pavilion) has asked:

*“The Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 4 June 2018 to Question 146815, what assessment he has made of the effect of reductions in local authority specialist education services on support to (a) deaf children in early years, (b) deaf children at school and (c) deaf young people over the age of 16.”*

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi (Conservatives, Stratford on Avon) responded:

*“The Department is firmly committed to ensuring that children with special education needs and disability (SEND), including hearing impairments, receive the support they need to achieve in their early years, at school and college.*

*The Children and Families Act 2014 introduced new provisions for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities from birth until the age of 25, including those with sensory impairments, to ensure a joined up approach across the system. The focus of the reforms is on early identification of needs and a clear legal responsibility on education settings and local authorities to identify and address special educational needs, and the introduction of Education, Health and Care plans for those that need them.*

*It is for local authorities to determine how they allocate their resources to effectively meet the needs of their residents, including the provision of specialist services for the children and young people with a hearing impairment. However, to enable local authorities to provide services for those young people who have needs that are less common we are encouraging authorities to work together on such provision. For example, if one local authority does not have many young people with a hearing impairment they might work together with a neighbouring local authority and share the cost of providing services or resources.*

*For the early years, in April 2017 we introduced a Disability Access Fund, (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-business-sustainability-guides-for-providers/extra-sources-of-income-for-early-years-providers>), worth £615 per child, and local authorities are also required to have a SEN Inclusion fund to support children in getting the best from the free childcare entitlements. Our National Funding Formula (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-national-funding-formula-allocations-and-guidance>), has an additional needs factor directing more funding to local authorities with more need.”*

Question 146815 asked whether the Government will meet with the National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS) to discuss cuts to the funding of deaf children’s education. The Minister (Nadhim Zahawi MP) responded that he had met with NDCS and others to discuss support.

To read the Question and the Minister’s response in full, please click [here](#).

Written question on whether the Government will assess the potential merits of introducing British Sign Language as a GCSE qualification

Dr. Paul Williams MP (Labour, Stockton South) has asked:

*"The Secretary of State for Education, if he will make an assessment of the potential merits of introducing British Sign Language as a GCSE qualification."*

Minister of State for Education, Nick Gibb MP (Conservatives, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton) responded:

*"There are no plans to introduce any new GCSEs in this Parliament, to allow schools a period of stability following the recent reforms. The Government is open to considering a proposal for a British Sign Language (BSL) GCSE for possible introduction in the longer term. The Department has indicated this to Signature, the awarding organisation proposing to develop a GCSE in BSL, and the National Deaf Children's Society.*

*Any new GCSE would need to meet the rigorous expectations for subject content, which are set by the Department. It would also need to meet the expectations for assessment and regulatory requirements, which are set by Ofqual, the independent qualifications regulator. The Department and Ofqual will consider carefully the merits of any proposals put forward in due course."*

## 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