

Weekly Political Update

27 November 2018

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

Hearing loss – apps

Click on link for source

<p><u>Written question on apps to manage hearing loss</u></p>	<p>Stephen Timms MP (Labour, East Ham) asked the following question following a recent meeting with Action on Hearing Loss:</p> <p><i>“To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, whether NHS England plans to approve an app to support patients in managing hearing loss; and if he will make a statement.”</i></p> <p>Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinenage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) responded:</p> <p><i>“There are no hearing loss specific apps yet on the apps library.</i></p> <p><i>Developers of apps with health applications can seek National Health Service approval for them through the NHS England Digital Assessment Questionnaire process. Having gone through this process, successful apps will be given an NHS accreditation and uploaded to the NHS Apps and Wearables library. NHS England is in discussions with a number of companies to go through the apps library process.”</i></p>
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Employment

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<p><u>Written question on what steps are being taken to ensure disabled people have fair and equal opportunities to become successful business leaders</u></p>	<p>Dr Lisa Cameron MP (Scottish National Party, East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps her Department is taking to help ensure that disabled people have fair and equal opportunities to become successful business leaders.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“The Government is committed to seeing a million more disabled people in work by 2027 and ensuring that disabled people have fair and equal opportunities to become successful business leaders. The latest figures (published Tuesday 13 Nov) show that disability employment has increased by 973,000 in the last five years.</i></p> <p><i>The Equality Act 2010 legally protects disabled people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations.</i></p>
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	<p><i>We actively support disabled people to enter employment through initiatives like the Work and Health Programme, which is expected to support 220,000 disabled people over 5 years; and the Personal Support Package for those on ESA and Universal Credit equivalents.</i></p> <p><i>We also support new and existing disabled workers with Access to Work, which approved support for 27,730 disabled workers in 2017/18, an increase of 11% on 2016/17. The support Access to Work offers includes a discretionary grant of up to £57,200 pa, without which many disabled business leaders might not be able to achieve their employment goals.</i></p> <p><i>We engage with employers through Disability Confident. Over 9,500 employers are currently signed up to Disability Confident and that number grows weekly.</i></p> <p><i>We are integrating Access to Work communications into Disability Confident promotions so employers can easily understand how they can receive support with the costs of making workplace adjustments.</i></p> <p><i>Potential disabled entrepreneurs who are claiming benefits such as ESA or UC equivalents may receive specialist self-employment support through Work and Health Programme and Personal Support Package. The Work and Health Programme includes integrated access to specialist support networks at a local level. In addition, claimants who wish to start their own businesses and become entrepreneurs may be able to receive start up support through the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA). Around 1 in 4 people who start on the NEA have a self-declared disability.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on disability employment targets</u></p>	<p>Dr Lisa Cameron MP (Scottish National Party, East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if her Department will make an assessment of the potential merits of reintroducing a disability employment target that measures progress against employment levels of non-disabled people.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“We set out our continued commitment to improving employment rates for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions in Improving Lives: the Future of Work, Health and Disability. We believe people should get the support they need whatever their health condition or disability, whether that’s from their employer, from the health system or from the welfare system.</i></p> <p><i>Too many people are missing the opportunity to develop their talents and connect with the world of work, which is why Improving Lives also set out our ambitious, specific and time-bound goal to see 1 million more disabled people in work by 2027.</i></p> <p><i>However, no single measure can capture everything that we want to achieve. Improving Lives made it clear that “alongside monitoring the number of disabled people in work, we will also consider other useful statistical indicators which give more information about how disability and employment change over this time period, and inform our actions”.</i></p> <p><i>For example, the ad hoc statistical update released on 1 November 2018, by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health and</i></p>

	<p><i>Social Care, included estimates of the number of disabled people in employment, their employment rate, and the gap between the employment rates of disabled and non-disabled people.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on the level of progress made on reforms to the work capability assessment</u></p>	<p>Dr Lisa Cameron MP (Scottish National Party, East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, with reference to page 53 of the Government’s White Paper entitled Improving lives: the future of work, health and disability, in November 2017, what progress her Department has made with Initiative No.5 on reform of the work capability assessment; and if she will make a statement.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) responded:</p> <p><i>“We are committed to assessing people with health conditions and disabilities fairly and accurately, helping people to access the right support. We made a clear commitment in Improving Lives: The Future of Work, Health and Disability to reform the Work Capability Assessment and recognise the importance of getting this right. We are therefore testing new approaches to build the evidence base for what works, and working with external stakeholders to inform future changes to the WCA. We have established a policy forum, with a focused group of academics, think tanks and disability charities to bring together evidence for reform options and will also gather views from wider stakeholder groups, including individuals with lived experience of disability.”</i></p>
<p><u>Voluntary Framework – disclosing the number of disabled employees</u></p>	<p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, Truro and Falmouth) has launched a new voluntary framework that would allow employers to disclose how many of their employees have a disability. It will also enable employers to highlight what they are currently doing to support disabled employees.</p> <p>To read more, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><u>Disability Employment Funding</u></p>	<p>The Department for Work and Pensions has announced almost £4 million has been dedicated to 19 projects to realise the Government’s ambition of getting one million more disabled people into employment by 2027. The £4 million forms part of the Work and Health Challenge Fund.</p> <p>To read more about the Fund, please click on the link on the left.</p>

Healthcare

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<p><u>Healthtech Advisory Board established</u></p>	<p>The Healthtech Advisory Board – an expert technology panel of IT experts and academics that is tasked with discovering how technology can be utilised within the NHS, has been officially established having recently met for the first time.</p> <p>To read more please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Education

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<p><u>Written question on education provision for children with hearing loss</u></p>	<p>Matthew Offord MP (Conservatives, Hendon) has asked;</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Education, what steps his Department is taking to improve the provision of education services to children with a hearing impairment.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Education, Nadhim Zahawi MP (Conservatives, Stratford on Avon) responded:</p> <p><i>“I am determined that all children and young people, including those who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, receive the support they need to achieve the success they deserve. I am meeting with the National Deaf Children’s Society in November to find out more about their concerns.</i></p> <p><i>In April, the Whole School special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) consortium, led by the National Association for Special Educational Needs, were awarded a two-year contract for a new programme of work which will focus on building the skills of teachers working in mainstream and special schools and ensuring the schools’ workforce are equipped to identify and meet their training needs in relation to SEND. The National Sensory Impairment Partnership are part of the consortium.</i></p> <p><i>Local authorities play a key role in providing support to children and young people with sensory impairment. They are best placed to determine local priorities and make funding decisions in consultation with local people and having regard to the range of statutory responsibilities placed on them. High needs funding, for children and young people with more complex SEND, increased from £5 billion in 2013 to just under £6 billion this year.”</i></p>
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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