

Weekly Political Update

28 May 2019

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

Employment – Access to Work

Click on link for source

<p><u>Written question on what discussions the Minister has had with disability charities on the Access to Work scheme</u></p>	<p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what recent discussions she has had with (a) disabled people and (b) disabled people’s organisations on the Access to Work scheme.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Justin Tomlinson MP (Conservatives, North Swindon) responded:</p> <p><i>“I am committed to ensuring that disabled people and disabled people’s organisations are engaged with and listened to. My diary for this year is filling up with meetings with disabled people and stakeholders, ranging from individual Access to Work customers to larger organisations such as Action on Hearing Loss.</i></p> <p><i>Access to Work has a regular stakeholder forum which brings together disabled people and disabled people’s organisations to discuss how the Access to Work offer works for our customers. This group includes representatives from organisations such as the Thomas Pocklington Trust, Versus Arthritis and the National Deaf Children’s Association. The group is due to meet next month and will discuss plans for future improvements for the Access to Work scheme.</i></p> <p><i>DWP also undertakes regular engagement with stakeholders on specific issues. For example, this week officials held a stakeholder workshop on Access to Work’s Tech Fund policy, exploring strategies for encouraging the take-up of assistive technology to meet support needs. Next week, we are hosting the latest in a series of stakeholder workshops to discuss the Access to Work offer for self-employed people.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on Access to Work support for people who are self-employed</u></p>	<p>Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha De Cordova MP (Labour, Battersea) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps she is taking to ensure that the Access to Work scheme supports disabled people who are self-employed.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Justin Tomlinson MP (Conservatives, North Swindon) responded:</p> <p><i>“We have undertaken significant reform of Access to Work, but there are still further opportunities for improvements and we are committed to listening to our customers and stakeholders.</i></p>

	<p><i>For example, to address points raised about the Access to Work self-employment customer journey in the DWP research report 'Access to Work: Qualitative research with applicants, employers and delivery staff', published in November 2018, we worked closely with customers and stakeholders to identify the issues and develop a new self-employment customer journey for freelancers and contractors.</i></p> <p><i>To support this work, we are also developing an Access to Work 'Workplace Adjustments Passport', comprising a current record of an Access to Work customer's support needs. This 'passport' is designed to be shared with new employers and commissioners, so that Access to Work customers who change jobs or move between contracts can be sure that their support needs are known in advance and adjustments may be put in place swiftly.</i></p> <p><i>We will be announcing the detail of these new reforms later in the year."</i></p>
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Healthcare

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<p><u>NHS England Announcement – 'Veteran Friendly GP practices'</u></p>	<p>NHS England have provided GPs with resources to help them better identify veterans and ensure they have access to the physical and mental health services they need.</p> <p>GP practices that follow additional requirements can also become part of a network of accredited 'Veteran Friendly GP practices'</p> <p>To read more on the scheme, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Social Care

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<p><u>Research Paper – '21st Century Social Care'</u></p>	<p>The think tank – the Policy Exchange has published a research paper into '21st Century Social Care.' The paper, with a forward by Jacob Rees-Mogg MP (Conservatives, North East Somerset), states that calls for social care to be funded through personal insurance should be dismissed.</p> <p>The paper instead, reiterated calls for making complex long-term social care – 'largely free at the point of use' just like the NHS.</p> <p>To read the recommendations in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><u>Report – 'Social Care: Free at the point of need – The case for free personal care in England'</u></p>	<p>The think tank – the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) has published a report on 'Social Care: Free at the point of need – The case for free personal care in England.'</p> <p>One of the key recommendations of the report is for the Government to implement free personal care in England, funded through general taxation. The report recognises that if free personal care is implemented, it would bring England in line with how care is delivered in Scotland.</p> <p>It also notes that free personal care would align social care provision with healthcare delivered through the NHS - ensuring care is free at the point of use.</p>

	To read the report in full, please click on the link on the left.
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Education

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<p><u>Oral question on British Sign Language (BSL) as part of the school curriculum</u></p>	<p>Lord Bruce of Bennachie (Liberal Democrats) has asked:</p> <p><i>“Her Majesty’s Government when they plan to introduce British Sign Language into the school examination curriculum.”</i></p> <p>Government Whip, Lord Younger of Leckie (Conservatives) responded:</p> <p><i>“..The Department for Education is working to develop draft GCSE subject content for British Sign Language as soon as possible. This is a complex process and it is important that we take time to get it right. If it proves possible to meet the requirements that apply to all GCSEs, the department will consider whether to make an exception to its general rule and allow a new GCSE to be introduced during this Parliament.”</i></p> <p>Lord Bruce went on to say that:</p> <p><i>“...Sign language is the principal language for tens of thousands of people and all those with whom they have relationships. Having a GCSE in it, as an academic subject, will help people understand the communication challenges deaf people face, broaden the number of people who have an understanding of it and provide a pool for the basis of training sign language interpreters, who are the means of bridging the gap between the hearing community and the deaf community.”</i></p> <p>The Minister responded to these points by replying that:</p> <p><i>“The Government fully recognise the benefits that a British Sign Language GCSE would bring to the deaf community... However, as I have said, the process of developing a new GCSE is complex. Typically, it takes at least two years from the start of a reform process to the first teaching of a new GCSE. In this case, it might take longer, as there has not been a GCSE in BSL previously.”</i></p> <p>Shadow Spokesperson for Education, Lord Watson of Invergowerie (Labour) stated that:</p> <p><i>“The next Labour Government are committed to introducing a British Sign Language Act, which will ... ensure that it is allowed in schools and that, as with other languages, British Sign Language users are able to access education in their first language... so will the noble Viscount undertake to press his party to mirror that commitment to British Sign Language legislation for schools?”</i></p>
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	<p>Government Whip, Lord Younger of Leckie (Conservatives) replied stating that:</p> <p><i>“...The department takes this extremely seriously...The department reviewed a proposal from the exam board for a BSL GCSE in November 2018. After considering that initial proposal, it confirmed in February 2019 that it would begin the process of developing draft subject content. We think that is the right way forward at present.”</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