

Weekly Political Update
29 April 2019

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

Video Relay Services

Click on link for source

<p><u>Written question on calls to NHS 111 and NHS 111 BSL</u></p>	<p>With the support of Action on Hearing Loss, Rosie Cooper asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what proportion of calls to the (a) NHS 111 and (b) NHS 111 BSL service resulted in the dispatch of an ambulance in the last year for which figures are available.”</i></p> <p>Minister for State for Health, Stephen Hammond MP (Conservatives, Wimbledon) responded:</p> <p><i>“NHS England publishes monthly performance data for the NHS 111 service at the following link:</i></p> <p>https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/nhs-111-minimum-data-set/statistical-work-areas-nhs-111-minimum-data-set-nhs-111-minimum-data-set-2018-19/</p> <p><i>The following table provides the latest data available for ambulance dispositions from NHS 111 and NHS 111 British Sign Language (BSL).</i></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">Total calls to NHS 111</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Calls to the NHS 111 BSL Service (including in total calls)¹</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Number of calls triaged²</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Ambulance dispatches³</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Ambulance dispatches (% of calls triaged)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: left;">2018-19 to date</td> <td>16,782,181</td> <td>476</td> <td>13,135,711</td> <td>1,742,056</td> <td>13.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Source: NHS England</p> <p>Notes:</p> <p><i>1 NHS 111 BSL call data is currently only available up to February 2019.</i></p> <p><i>2 A triaged call is one where the clinical assessment tool has been opened and used.</i></p> <p><i>3 Final NHS Pathways disposition was a referral to the Ambulance Service: Further clinical assessment within the Integrated Urgent Care (NHS 111) or 999 service areas may have indicated that an ambulance response and/or conveyance was not required. The actual percentage resulting in an ambulance being dispatched may therefore be lower.”</i></p>		Total calls to NHS 111	Calls to the NHS 111 BSL Service (including in total calls) ¹	Number of calls triaged ²	Ambulance dispatches ³	Ambulance dispatches (% of calls triaged)	2018-19 to date	16,782,181	476	13,135,711	1,742,056	13.3%
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2018-19 to date	16,782,181	476	13,135,711	1,742,056	13.3%								

	This response provides further data for the period 2018/2019 to date and follows on from the Minister's response to Parliamentary Question 232992 asked on 15 March 2019.
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Disability Benefits

Click on link for source

<p><u>Written question on numbers of disabled people leaving work due to lower rates of support from personal independence payments</u></p>	<p>Member of the Work and Pension Select Committee, Heidi Allen MP (Change UK – The Independent Group, South Cambridgeshire) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate her Department has made of the number of disabled people who have had to leave work as a result of receiving lower rates of support from personal independence payment in comparison to disability living allowance.”</i></p> <p>Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Sarah Newton MP (Conservatives, North Swindon) responded:</p> <p><i>“No such estimate has been made. Personal Independence Payment (PIP) can be paid to disabled people irrespective of their employment status and, as such, no details of an individual’s employment status are gathered during the course of their claim or award.</i></p> <p><i>PIP is a more modern, dynamic and fairer benefit than its predecessor, Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and focuses support on those experiencing the greatest barriers to living independently. 31% of people claiming PIP receive the highest level of support, compared to 15% of DLA’s working-age claimants and 39% of reassessment claimants are getting a higher award on PIP compared to when they were on DLA.</i></p> <p><i>People with a health condition or disability, who require additional support getting to and from work, can apply for an Access to Work grant.”</i></p>
<p><u>IFS – analysis on the impact of Universal Credit</u></p>	<p>The think tank – Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) have recently published analysis showing the impact of Universal Credit on households. Headline findings regarding disability, reveal that disabled people or those living with disabled people are more likely to be <i>“persistently, rather than temporarily, poor.”</i></p> <p>However it also shows that people with disabilities are impacted in different and complex ways – with some people with disabilities being impacted positively and some negatively.</p> <p>To read more, please click on the link on the left</p>
<p><u>Debate on work capability assessments</u></p>	<p>Laura Pidcock MP (Labour, North West Durham) moved the following motion:</p> <p><i>“That this House has considered 10 years of the work capability assessment in relation to employment and support allowance and universal credit.”</i></p>

In her introductory speech, Ms Pidcock said:

“...The work capability assessment for the employment and support allowance and universal credit should be a simple concept: people who have a physical or mental health problem or a disability that means that they cannot work or have a limited ability to work will receive a replacement income from the state...”

She then went on to highlight examples regarding what is currently wrong with the system.

“...In both the application form and the face-to-face assessment, the descriptors that enable a score to be given to assess a person’s ability to carry out tasks are essentially a functionality test. They cannot capture the fluctuating nature of physical and mental unwellness or disability and how that could prevent or limit the ability to work...”

“Many people have told us that they do not feel accurately represented by the reports written about them. Advisers have openly claimed that they see copy-and-paste jobs...”

She continued:

“The system should be designed by people who are experts through experience. Experts who understand how conditions affect the ability to work should be employed...”

In his response to the debate, Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Justin Tomlinson MP (Conservatives, North Swindon) said:

“The Government are focused on this area, and we have rightly increased funding for those with disabilities and long-term health conditions. This year, we are expected to spend £55 billion, which is a £10 billion increase in real terms since we came to office. It is a record high and it is 2.5% of GDP, which is higher than the spend of any other G7 country. It is 6% of total Government spending, and I think every penny is rightly supported by the wider public. The debate today is focused on the 10-year anniversary of the work capability assessment... Clearly, it was not perfect and there has been much-needed improvement since its introduction. We are all committed to playing our part in improving the process and to taking account of the developments in healthcare, modern workplaces and flexible working arrangements.”

He continued:

“Many people have highlighted concerns with the frontline staff and process. Since 2015, the Centre for Health and Disability Assessments has taken over the delivery of the work capability assessment, and the focus has been on improving the operational process. It has increased the number of healthcare professionals by 82% and 1,300 staff are now directly involved in supporting assessments...”

	<p><i>“One very important and welcome addition that has begun to be rolled out is the introduction of customer champions. I absolutely recognise just how anxious and nervous people can be when going for assessment. I absolutely get that. The customer champion can assist those claimants, before and after assessments, to ensure that they receive the best service. We have had good feedback on that, and the intention is that there will be one in every single assessment centre.”</i></p> <p>In drawing his response to a close, the Minister concluded:</p> <p><i>“Over the coming months, we will be doing a series of roundtables and regional events to gather further evidence, with a real emphasis on those with real experience of this area, so that we can further improve the system. We want to build trust, transparency and consistency and we want to improve the claimant’s experience through a more personalised and tailored approach. As a returning Minister, I am committed to supporting disabled people and those with long-term health conditions to claim and receive the benefits to which they are entitled and to ensuring that people are treated fairly and with dignity.”</i></p> <p>To read the debate in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Hearing Loss and Mental Health

Click on link for source

<p><u>Written question on deaf people’s access to specialist mental health services</u></p>	<p>Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, Frank Field MP (Independent, Birkenhead) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what steps he is taking to ensure that deaf people are able to access appropriate, specialist mental health services.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Mental Health, Jackie Doyle Price MP (Conservatives, Thurrock) responded:</p> <p><i>“NHS England commissions specialised mental health services for children, young people and adults who are deaf. These include inpatient and outreach services for children and young people and services for adults who require inpatient care, including care in secure mental health services.</i></p> <p><i>Access to services is based on a clinical assessment of need and conducted with the support and involvement of clinicians, including consultant psychiatrists and mental health nurses, with the skills and experience of working with deaf people with mental illness and are able to communicate using British Sign Language where needed.</i></p> <p><i>To further develop these services, the Specialised Mental Health Clinical Reference Group provides advice and support to NHS England about improving commissioning, including through service specifications and quality schemes.”</i></p>
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Access to Healthcare – Deaf Children

Click on link for source

<p><u>New Auditory Brainstem Implants (ABIs) surgery for young deaf children</u></p>	<p>NHS England has announced that two specialist teams in Manchester and London will be able to conduct Auditory Brainstem Implants (ABIs) surgery for young deaf children.</p> <p>The surgery can be performed on profoundly deaf children aged 5 or under and involves placing a device in the brain to stimulate hearing.</p> <p>To read more, please click on the link on the left.</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