

Weekly Political Update

7 February 2019

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

Healthcare

Click on link for source

<p><u>Health and Social Care Secretary gives evidence to Select Committee – Inquiry into ‘Budget and the NHS long-term plan’</u></p>	<p>The Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock MP (Conservatives, West Suffolk) gave evidence to the Health and Social Care Select Committee, as part of its inquiry into the ‘<i>Budget and the NHS long-term plan.</i>’ The Health and Social Care Secretary was joined by Simon Stevens, NHS England, Professor Ian Cummings, Health Education England and Ian Dalton, NHS Improvement.</p> <p>The session began with the Committee’s chair, Dr Sarah Wollaston MP (Conservatives, Totnes) questioning Simon Stevens (CEO, NHS England). She asked how confident he is that the NHS will be able to deliver the plan, given all the unknowns. In particular, Dr Wollaston referred to the unknowns around the workforce plan; funding allocations for Health Education England; and continued delays to the social care green paper.</p> <p>Responding, Simon Stevens recognised that the plan was developed in light of the additional funding allocated the NHS and stated that the NHS was being “<i>pragmatic</i>” in the improvements that it intends to make. He also highlighted the fact that the National Audit Office have reviewed the planning assumptions used for the plan and determined that they were “<i>prudent.</i>”</p> <p>To read the evidence in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
<p><u>Clinical pharmacists – opportunity to expand role</u></p>	<p>More clinical pharmacists in England will have the opportunity to expand their role. They will be able to work in local surgeries across primary care networks to provide expert advice about patient’s prescriptions and other treatments. This follows a successful pilot of the scheme in the GP Forward View.</p> <p>Clinical pharmacists will undergo additional clinical training, delivering medication reviews, improving medicine safety, supporting care homes, and running practice clinics.</p> <p>A recruitment drive to boost the number of clinical pharmacists in each primary care network will also take place.</p> <p>To read more, please click on the link on the left.</p>

Health and Social Care - Integration

Click on link for source

<p><u>Lords debate the NHS’s long-term plan</u></p>	<p>The House of Lords recently debated the NHS’s long-term plan, with former Shadow Spokesperson for Health and Social Care, Lord Hunt of King’s Heath moving the following motion:</p>
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“That this House takes note of the NHS Long Term Plan, published on 7 January, and the case for a fully funded, comprehensive and integrated health and care system which implements parity of esteem, preventative health and standards set out in the NHS Constitution.”

Lord Hunt continued:

“I can say at once that much in the plan is welcome ...Welcome too is the acknowledgement of the role of carers, which appears a number of times in the plan. Particularly ambitious is the aim to transform services, using technology to provide many more online interventions and reduce patient visits to out-patient clinics by up to a third...”

“So the plan’s overall thrust is welcome as far as I am concerned, but my worry is that the Government have not learned from previous efforts to transform and integrate services. For a start, the plan is almost entirely focused on the National Health Service. It is a great pity that it was published in advance of the Green Paper on adult social care. It also shows scant recognition of the crucial role of local government, particularly in the current crisis in social care, yet the intended integration of health and care simply cannot happen without local authorities being full partners and some kind of long-term funding settlement for social care. Similar challenges await the NHS, it seems. The plan promises increased investment in primary and community care, but where will it come from when acute hospital services are at full stretch and demand for services will inevitably grow? Although the plan is a sensible statement of intent, the question is: where is the beef to make it happen?”

Former Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health and Government Whip, Lord O’Shaughnessy (Conservatives) also asked about the role of primary legislation in supporting integration. He said:

“...The structural centrepiece of the long-term plan is the joining up of healthcare delivery in combined authorities called integrated care systems. This marks a significant departure from 30 years of Conservative and Labour health reform, which had previously focused on creating competition within layers in the healthcare system—primary, secondary and so on. My belief, which I think is reflected in the long-term plan, is that this approach has run its course...”

He then went on to suggest that achieving the goal of integration:

“...may need primary legislation. Is this something that the Government are prepared to do?”

Government Whip, Baroness Manzoor (Conservatives) replied to Lord Hunt’s points by saying:

“Many noble Lords, including...the noble Lord, Lord Hunt, inquired about the adult social care Green Paper. The Department of Health and Social Care is in the final stages of preparing it, and it will be published at the earliest opportunity. As noble Lords are aware, building a sustainable care

and support system will require big decisions, and the upcoming Green Paper will place on record the extraordinarily difficult choices that we as a legislature and, more broadly, we as a country, must confront.

I understand the concerns raised...regarding integration. As he indicated, the Green Paper will build on the proposals on integration in the long-term plan, which are the deepest and most sophisticated ever proposed by the NHS. We will invest in models of care that strengthen links between primary care networks and local care homes...alongside innovation.”

In response to Lord O’Shaughnessy’s comments on primary legislation, Baroness Manzoor said:

“...The Government will consider updating legislation only where there is clear evidence that doing so would improve services for patients...”

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

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