

Weekly Political Update

7 May 2019

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

Social Care

Click on link for source

<p><u>Social Care report (Centre for Policy Studies) – ‘Fixing the Care Crisis’</u></p>	<p>Former First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Damian Green MP (Conservatives, Ashford) has set out his views on how the social care system should be funded.</p> <p>In a report, published by the Centre for Policy Studies, Mr Green proposed a Universal Care Entitlement modelled on the state pensions system. He suggested that a Universal Care Entitlement would allow the state to provide basic levels of support (for the Care Entitlement, this threshold could be adjusted, depending on the individual’s level of need). Individuals could then have the option of <i>“topping-up”</i> their support – paying for additional care themselves.</p> <p>To read more, please click on the link on the left.</p> <p>For more on the importance of including the social care needs of working-age adults, please click on our Chief Executive’s post here: https://twitter.com/MarkAtAction/status/1122799573397835778</p>
<p><u>Economics Affairs Committee Evidence Session with the Health and Social Care Secretary – Inquiry into Social Care Funding in England</u></p>	<p>The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Matt Hancock MP (Conservatives, West Suffolk) recently gave evidence before the Economic Affairs Committee, as part of its inquiry into Social Care Funding in England.</p> <p>Lord Forsyth of Drumlean (Chairman of the Committee) opened the session by immediately asking the Health and Social Care Secretary:</p> <p><i>“when we might expect the Green Paper to appear.”</i></p> <p>Mr Hancock replied by saying:</p> <p><i>“The Green Paper’s publication is coming in due course. Originally when I became Secretary of State, we were committed to getting it out by Christmas; we were aiming to publish it close to and alongside the 10-year plan for the NHS. That was not possible. I was asked in the Commons whether it would be published by April and I thought of course that it would be. This was in January...”</i></p> <p><i>I am afraid it has been delayed... We continue to work on it and improve it. I am grateful to you for holding this time tight and I am glad that we managed to get it in the diary. I wish that the Green Paper had been published by now. We are continuing to work on it in the department, because this is such an important issue. It has been a long-standing policy problem and needs to be tackled.”</i></p>

Lord Forsyth then asked:

“Damian Green, your predecessor in office, published a report yesterday calling for a basic level of social care in which he estimated that it would cost an extra £2.5 billion a year. Do you agree with that and his proposals?”

To which Mr Hancock responded:

“It depends on the quality and provision of social care that we want. The fact of the finances is that over the last three years we have put in total an extra £10 billion into social care. The budget this year is £3.9 billion higher in real terms than it was in 2015-16. After a period of very tight finances, from the spending review that followed the economic crash through to 2015, there has been a 9% real-terms increase. There has been an increase in provision and there are more people employed in social care. That has been broadly within the domiciliary care sector; the number of beds within the residential and nursing sectors together has stayed essentially flat. There has been an increase in nursing beds and a reduction in residential beds.

Stepping back, we want to provide for dignity in old age for every single citizen. We need to ensure that we have the sustainable finances to do that. We also need to make sure that the working-age and children’s social care sectors are appropriately funded. Children’s social care is not my departmental responsibility, but about 50% of local authority funding goes to adult working-age social care, which would be very hard to pay for from any of the more innovative options that have been proposed, including the ones in the report on Monday. We have to look at the taxpayer funding that will inevitably be part of the solution as well as any other options to make sure that we can provide better care. I think it is impossible to put an exact figure on what is needed, because that depends on what we are buying. There is undoubtedly a significant challenge here; in the nine months that I have been Secretary of State, we put in an extra £240 million last year and will put in an £650 million next year. These numbers are rising, and we would expect them to rise over a generation as more and more people live longer.”

With respect to the needs of disabled people requiring long-term care, the Chair asked whether the Health and Social Care Secretary agreed with:

“what most of our witnesses have said: that the system needs more funding to meet long-term needs?”

In return the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care said:

“I would say that we have put in significant amounts of extra funding. A £3.9 billion increase on the 2015 levels of funding is significant, and that 9% growth is faster than the growth in the population of those who need care. So I would say that we have done that.

As to future taxpayer funding, we have a spending review forthcoming to settle the funding question from the end of this financial year onwards, and the Chancellor would be extremely upset if I announced an answer to that here.”

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

Written question on residential and nursing home provision in the UK and in North West England

Luciana Berger MP (Change UK – The Independent Group, Liverpool and Wavertree) asked the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care the following questions on residential and nursing home provision:

“How many residential and nursing homes have closed permanently (a) nationally and (b) in the North West region since 2016.”

“How many residential and nursing home beds were available in each of the last five years in the (a) UK and (b) North West.”

Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinéage MP (Conservatives, Gosport) provided the same response to both questions:

“The Department does not hold data on the number of care home closures since 2016. However, data from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) is available on the change in the number of care homes in England, which reflects both openings and closures over time.

Due to the devolved nature of social care, figures are only available for England and the North West. These are taken from averaging across quarterly CQC data.

The CQC’s data shows that there were 16,839 care homes in England in January 2016 compared to 15,738 in April 2019, giving a net reduction of 901 homes, a 6.5% reduction.

However, the total number of beds in England has remained relatively stable since 2016 because the average size of a care home has increased over that period. There were 461,793 beds in January 2016 compared to 456,333 beds in April 2019, a 1.2% reduction.

The CQC’s data shows that there were 2,039 care homes in the North West in January 2016 compared to 1,914 in April 2019, giving a net reduction of 105 homes, a 6% reduction.

However, the total number of beds in the North West has remained relatively stable since 2016 because the average size of a care home has increased over that period. There were 63,005 beds in January 2016 compared to 61,704 beds in April 2019, a 2.06% reduction.

Nationally, England has seen a decrease of 1.5% in the number of residential and nursing beds from January 2015 to April 2019.

Year	Average Number of Residential and Nursing Beds
2015	463,792
2016	460,763
2017	459,920
2018	459,001

	2019	456,924
<p><i>In the North West, there has been a decrease of 2% in the number of residential and nursing beds from January 2015 to April 2019.</i></p>		
	Year	Average Number of Residential and Nursing Beds
	2015	63,282
	2016	62,969
	2017	62,657
	2018	62,200
	2019	61,920

Fundraising

Click on link for source

<p><u>Charities Aid Foundation Report – UK Giving 2019</u></p>	<p>Survey results recently published by the Charities Aid Foundation highlight key trends in the charitable fundraising environment.</p> <p>The report noted among other things, that fewer people are giving to charities – donations and sponsorships were recorded as being down from 69% in 2016 to 65% 2018. Despite there being less people giving to charities, the report also noted that among those who are giving, the amounts tend to be higher.</p> <p>The report also pinpointed the level of trust in charities. It stated:</p> <p><i>“At a time when trust in institutions is at an all time low according to a number of influential reports, trust in charities has also declined. Just under half of the UK population (48%) say that they believe charities to be trustworthy, significantly lower than 51% in 2017.”</i></p> <p>To read the findings in full, please click on the link on the left.</p>
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Transport

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<p><u>Written question on legislative proposals requiring audio-</u></p>	<p>Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP (Labour, Tooting) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the document entitled, Bus Services Act 2017:Bus Open Data Consultation Response, whether his</i></p>
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<p><u>visual equipment for local bus services</u></p>	<p><i>Department has plans to bring forward legislative proposals to require audio-visual equipment be installed on local bus services.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Nusrat Ghani MP (Conservatives, Wealdon) responded:</p> <p><i>“The Government understands the importance of clear, accessible information in helping bus passengers to make informed journey decisions and to travel with confidence, and in Summer 2018 consulted publicly on plans to improve the availability of open data and to ensure that accessible information is provided onboard local bus services across Great Britain. We continue to analyse responses to the accessible information consultation and expect to announce our next steps regarding the making of Regulations and publication of guidance later in the year.”</i></p>
<p><u>Written question on when the Government will publish next steps regarding accessible information for bus services</u></p>	<p>Thelma Walker MP (Labour, Colne Valley) has asked:</p> <p><i>“The Secretary of State for Transport, with reference to the document entitled, Bus Services Act 2017: accessible information, published by his Department in July 2018, when he plans to publish the steps his Department will take in response to the responses received to that consultation.”</i></p> <p>Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport, Nusrat Ghani MP (Conservatives, Wealdon) responded:</p> <p><i>“The Government understands the importance of accessible on-board information in helping bus passengers to travel with confidence, and in Summer 2018 published a public consultation on proposals to require its provision on local bus services throughout Great Britain. We continue to analyse responses to the consultation and expect to announce our next steps regarding the making of Regulations and publication of guidance later in the year.”</i></p>

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