



**\*Please note: at the end of this bulletin is a template. If you want information included in future bulletins please copy and use this template. Thank you.**

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Scottish Council on Deafness Bulletin | Bi-Monthly Magazine for SCoD Members

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## **SCoD's "Connect & Capitalise\*" Conference 2017**

Although the closing date for feedback was Friday 31 March 2017 we are keeping the deadline open for another week Friday 7 April 2017.

We would appreciate it if those who attended could give us their feedback as this will help us to plan for next year's "Connect and Collaborate 2018" conference. Watch out for the email coming out with the link to the survey on it.

The Conference report will be available early summer.

We are starting to work on the next conference which will take place on 8 March 2018. The theme will be Connect and Collaborate and will be around the topic Integrities. If you have any ideas or wish to help with sponsorship, please contact [claire@scod.org.uk](mailto:claire@scod.org.uk)



## Consultations

The consultation on the draft first BSL National Plan has started. This consultation gives you the chance to give your views on whether or not the Scottish Government's National Advisory Group, government departments and national public bodies have got the right content in the plan – goals and how these will be achieved.

There is more about the consultation below on the **Deaf Sector Partnership** website: <http://deafsectorpartnership.net/>

## Membership

We are starting to engage with our members Oh yes invoices will be coming out soon.

We have three categories of membership:

- Full members. These are the organisations that make up the National Council and can put forward nominations to the SCoD Board.
- Associate members - organisations. These are organisations who cannot be full members or do not want the responsibility of full membership.
- Associate members - individuals. These are individuals, people who are deaf or have an interest in deafness and want to support our organisation.

We also want to recruit new members to support our work.

- On BSL language development
- Communication barriers and Solutions
- General awareness

If you want to know more about joining SCoD and being part of the Deaf Sector, please contact our membership worker, Kirsty, at [kirsty@scod.org.uk](mailto:kirsty@scod.org.uk) or telephone 0141 248 2474.

If you are a BSL user, you can use [contactSCOTLAND](#) to contact us.

Best wishes

Janis & the SCoD Team

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## GENERAL NEWS

### DSP / BSL NAG Update



### **Scottish Government's Draft British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan is now open for consultation**

The Scottish Government's consultation on the Draft British Sign Language (BSL) National Plan will run for the next three months until Wednesday 31 May 2017.

The draft plan covers the Scottish Government and over 50 national public bodies that Scottish Ministers have responsibility for. This BSL National Plan will cover the next six years to 2023.

To find out more, please go to the Scottish Government consultation website:

<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/equality-unit/bsl-national-plan/>

Scottish Government Consultation Facebook:

<http://fb.me/bslnationalplan>

Deaf Sector Partnership Website:

[www.deafsectorpartnership.net](http://www.deafsectorpartnership.net)

Deaf Sector Partnership Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/groups/1470165406637765/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/1470165406637765/)

This is a public consultation and anyone can respond to it.

The Scottish Government will accept responses in BSL or in English.

If you have any questions about the BSL NAG or the DSP, please get in touch with Derek Todd, DSP Coordinator by email at [admin@deafsectorpartnership.net](mailto:admin@deafsectorpartnership.net).

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### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014 – COMMENCEMENT OF PART 1 AND REPORTING PERIOD FOR PART 3 – 1 APRIL 2017**

For information this letter has gone which reminds relevant public authorities of the commencement of Part 1 (duties of public authorities in relation to the UNCRC) and the reporting period for Part 3 (Children's Services Planning) of the Children and

Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 (2014 Act), which both take effect from 1 April 2017.

“Part 1, section 2 (Duties of public authorities in relation to the UNCRC)

As you will be aware, Part 1, section 2, of the 2014 Act places a duty on specified public authorities, including all local authorities and health boards, to report every 3 years on the steps they have taken in that period to secure better or further effect of the requirements of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The first report is due as soon as practicable after 31 March 2020.

The public authorities subject to these new duties are listed in schedule 1 to the Act and also in the annex to this letter. Non statutory guidance to support implementation can be accessed at: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/4047>. The guidance encourages a child-rights based approach, which places children and young people at the centre of policy development, delivery and evaluation.

Part 3 (Children’s Services Planning)

Part 3 of the Act places a duty on each local authority and the relevant health board to jointly prepare a children’s services plan for the area of the local authority covering a 3 year period. A range of other relevant local and national bodies are expected to be either consulted with, or obliged to participate, at various stages of the development of the plan. It also requires the local authority and relevant health board to jointly publish an annual report detailing how the provision of children’s services and related services in that area have been provided in accordance with the plan.

Statutory guidance on Part 3, which can be accessed at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/12/8683>, provides local authorities and health boards, working in partnership with other public bodies and organisations, with information and advice about how they should exercise the functions conferred by Part 3.

All local authorities and relevant health boards are required to have their children’s services plan for the first three year period (1 April 2017 – 31 March 2020) in place on 1 April 2017. As set out in the previous email correspondence of 23 December 2016 from the Children’s Rights and Participation team, please note that all Part 3 duties will apply from 1 April 2017.

As set out in Part 3 (section 10) of the Act, a copy of the children’s services plans must be sent to the Scottish Ministers as well as to each of the other service providers. In addition, the children’s services plans must be published in such manner as the local authority and relevant health board consider appropriate.

I would be grateful if you could send your children’s services plan to Scottish Government officials, on behalf of the Scottish Ministers, either by email to [ChildrensRightsandParticipation@gov.scot](mailto:ChildrensRightsandParticipation@gov.scot) or to the Children’s Rights and Participation Team, Area 2C North, Victoria Quay, Scottish Government, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.

As the first children's services plans are required to be in place on 1 April 2017, and should be sent to us as soon as reasonably practicable thereafter, we would expect to receive these plans by 30 April 2017.

I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you in ensuring that the rights of our children and young people are respected, protected and fulfilled and that our public services continue to give them the best start in life.

If you have any questions about this letter, the Scottish Government's Children's Rights and Participation Team would be happy to provide further advice at the email address above"

If you have any queries or information contact [ChildrensRightsandParticipation@gov.scot](mailto:ChildrensRightsandParticipation@gov.scot)

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## **New online Money Manager tool for Universal Credit claimants**



A new [online support tool](#) has been launched to help Universal Credit claimants manage their money.

Money Advice Service's Money Manager provides free, impartial budgeting information and advice for claimants, based on their personal circumstances. For example, it provides:

- advice and guidance on how to manage a monthly income
- money-saving hints and tips
- signposting to other services

Claimants who have already used the tool have said that they found it helpful and user-friendly.

The Money Manager is a new addition to the existing budgeting support Universal Credit claimants can access. Face-to-face support is still available locally for those who need it.

Universal Credit in Action has published a [YouTube video on how the Money Manager can help claimants manage their Universal Credit payments](#).



**Peer Support for Work Hubs - SUSE**

Over the past month there has been significant progress with our hubs and we have five in Edinburgh either started or starting imminently with Glasgow following suit very soon. The Peer Support for Work hubs are a really important space for Disabled People or those with Long Term Health Condition to come together to share lived experiences, useful information and build the confidence required to progress into work.

The importance of your input as a provider or employer cannot be underestimated. We need you to encourage clients/disabled staff to just come along or refer them to us where appropriate.

We are all working towards a common aim to ensure everyone has the right to work and to the support they need to get there.....

We would particularly welcome the new members to our hub at the Ocean Terminal Shopping Centre Community Space in Edinburgh. This Group meets every Thursday 1pm-3pm and we will be inviting along guest speakers, having lively discussions and with it being in a shopping centre there's always an opportunity for people to make friends and do a little socialising afterwards.

For more information on this hub and others please contact:

Elsbeth Ferguson – Peer Support Coordinator

[elsbeth@susescotland.scot](mailto:elsbeth@susescotland.scot)

**0131 669 1133** or **07793 146 231**, Please find below, for information, a link to an article published today in Third Force News online from John Swinney, Deputy First Minister, following the Statement to Parliament earlier this month on information sharing provisions in relation to Part 4 and Part 5 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. We would be extremely grateful if you could share this with your partners and stakeholders via your own communications channels.

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## **First Minister's Parliamentary Statement**

<http://thirdforcenews.org.uk/blogs/swinney-not-all-that-has-been-said-about-the-named-person-scheme-has-been-h>

Please also find below the links to the Deputy First Minister's Parliamentary Statement and other information on the Scottish Government website.

<https://news.gov.scot/speeches-and-briefings/deputy-first-minister-ministerial-statement>

<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>

We look forward to keeping you up to date as we work towards introduction of the Bill and as we develop draft guidance and other information materials.

Should you require any further information in the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact Jan Murray| Communications Manager at [Jan.Murray@gov.scot](mailto:Jan.Murray@gov.scot)

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## Social Security Experience Panels

We would appreciate your help and support to promote the Panels widely to all those with an interest, particularly with a view to encouraging local participation. Scottish Ministers have made it clear that they want to reach as many people with recent experience of benefits as possible, and it is crucial that we get a wide representation across all of the devolved benefits.

See below the resources that we highlighted at the session today:

- ['Have Your Say' Invitation](#)
- [Registration Form](#) (online)
- [Registration Form](#) (print and return)
- [Information Pack](#)
- [Poster - A4](#)
- [Poster - A3](#)

**More information is available at:** [www.gov.scot/socialsecurity](http://www.gov.scot/socialsecurity)

If you wish me to send you further hard copies of the packs for local distribution please let me know, or if you supply me with the mail addresses I can arrange for them to be posted direct.

We look forward to working with you over the next few weeks to encourage individuals to join the Panels, as well as throughout the life of this initiative. If you are planning any local awareness sessions or events across your networks please keep us in the loop – we would be happy to come along to talk about the Experience Panels.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any further questions or any general enquiries can be sent to [SocialSecurityExperience@gov.scot](mailto:SocialSecurityExperience@gov.scot)

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## Equality and Human Rights Commission



I wanted to let you know that the EHRC are conducting an Inquiry into housing for disabled people to try to understand the reasons behind a shortage of accessible homes and access to adaptations.

Disabled people's insights and experiences will help influence this inquiry and inform the recommendations and as part of our evidence gathering we have launched a survey for disabled people their families and carers. I was wondering if you would be able to share the survey with your members via your newsletters or social media?

This is the link for the survey for disabled people, their families and carers – it should take about 20 minutes to complete.

All the responses we receive will be treated as **strictly confidential and no individual or organisation will be identified in the final report without their consent.**

If you are part of a network or group, we would be grateful if you would forward this to anyone who you think might be interested. Thank you in advance for your support with this.

If you have any questions about the Inquiry please feel free to get in touch with Helen Miller

DDI: 0141 228 5958 | Mob: 07888 760856

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## **What Deaf and Disabled women want from Local Councils**

This is an [event from Inclusion Scotland, Engender and Women 50:50](#). It is taking place on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> April at Hayweight House, Edinburgh.

Councils make decisions about things like housing, social care, transport, education and leisure. Issues that matter to Deaf and Disabled women are often ignored. At this event we will talk about how councils can represent Deaf and Disabled women better.

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## **Outcomes for Children who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired Friday, 23rd June, 2017**

This day is a great opportunity to hear from a leading international expert, Professor Greg Leigh.

Greg is s active in research and has published widely on aspects of education of deaf children and related areas. He is a member of the Editorial Boards of The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, Deafness and Education International, and Phonetics and Speech Sciences and is Deputy Director of The Centre for Special Education and Disability Studies at the University of Newcastle. He has served on several Australian Government consultative committees including the New South Wales Ministerial Standing Committee on Hearing and the National Neonatal Hearing Screening Working Party. He is currently Chairman of the Australasian Newborn Hearing Screening Committee. He is a former National President of the Education Commission for the World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf and is Chair of the International Steering Committees of both the Asia-Pacific Congress on Deafness (APCD) and the International Congress on Education of the Deaf (ICED).



This day will cover aspects from Greg's research interests:

- Newborn Hearing Screening - implementation and standards for delivery.
- The impact of earlier identification of hearing loss on infant development.
- Early psychosocial development of deaf and hard of hearing children.

Communications access by deaf and hearing impaired children and adults (captions and related media accessibility).

- Teachers' use of simultaneous communication.
- Literacy development in deaf children and adults.

Presenter:

Professor Greg Leigh, AO, PhD, FACE, Conjoint Professor and Director, RIDBC Renwick Centre, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, NSW Australia.

Course fee:  
£110

Applications are available to download from the following link:

<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/courses/deaf/djun17a.html>

If you wish to pay by card please use the link below:

[http://www.epay.ed.ac.uk/browse/extra\\_info.asp?compid=1&modid=1&prodid=2355](http://www.epay.ed.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?compid=1&modid=1&prodid=2355)

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## EVENTS

### **Superdrug Launches British Sign Language Video Interpreting In Store For Deaf Customers**



Superdrug are now offering a British Sign Language (BSL) video interpreting service for deaf customers in selected stores in the Essex/Manchester/Leicestershire area for a trial period. Having this service in store will ensure that deaf customers can communicate in their first language, BSL, with any hearing team member, whether they have a general enquiry, or need more detailed assistance from a pharmacist.

The service in Superdrug, provided by SignVideo, is the first to be available in a

health and beauty retailer.

Mark Hudson, Managing Director of SignVideo, said: "It's great that Superdrug have partnered with us to trial providing equal access to their customer services in store for deaf BSL users. Deaf BSL customers are often forgotten in customer services provision, especially in stores or branches. Superdrug are ahead of their game to recognise that a step change is needed and we encourage other retailers to follow their example and support our British Sign Language community."

*Jeff McWhinney, Chairman and Founder of SignVideo and a BSL user himself continues* "It's fantastic to have another leading retailer on board. Superdrug has engaged us, SignVideo, to ensure that their BSL using customers have access to their in-store customer services on an equal basis as for their hearing customers. By having video interpreters available within seconds, Superdrug has shown the way forward for more retailers really improve the BSL customer's store experiences."

*Adam Jordan, Customer Experience Project Manager said* "We are very excited to be able to offer this service in selected Superdrug stores for deaf BSL customers, and have been inspired to work with SignVideo to provide this service. We hope as many customers will take advantage of the service as possible so we can not only meet but exceed your expectations when shopping with us."

The local stores where you can find this service in Superdrug are [here](#).

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## **Scottish Sensory Centre / Adept**

**Adept is the Association of Deaf Education Professionals and Trainees**

**International Conference at the University of Edinburgh:**

***Aiming higher for deaf students - What works? What could work?***

Date: June 24<sup>th</sup> 2017, 10 am – 5 pm

Paterson's Land, University of Edinburgh,

EH8 8AQ

Delegate fee £50

Key note speakers:

Professor Greg Leigh, University of Newcastle, Australia, will explore issues of deaf children and young people's attainment and factors in their school success.

The logo for the Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC) features the letters 'SSC' in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. Below the letters, the words 'scottish sensory centre' are written in a smaller, lowercase, black sans-serif font.

Dr. Audrey Cameron, University of Edinburgh, will examine the effects and implications of the British Sign Language Glossary of curriculum terms in the policy context of the BSL (Scotland) Act.

This conference marks the end of a 10-year period in Scottish deaf education which has included the passing of an historic piece of legislation in 2015, the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act, the introduction of a new school curriculum, and the growth of a curriculum resource for signing deaf students, the BSL Glossary of technical terms, hosted at the Scottish Sensory Centre. These developments run concurrently with very early identification of deafness through newborn screening, early cochlear implantation, and much better spoken language outcomes for many deaf children in the early years. The potential for improvements in outcomes for deaf children has never been clearer.

However, other research from Scotland in this period has shown the very variable outcomes of all deaf children, regardless of the level of deafness.

On this one-day conference we will explore the theme of raising achievement for deaf students, not focusing exclusively on academic achievements. We welcome papers which consider ways in which deaf students could gain better access to the curriculum and assessment, how they could be more involved in decision making, and how creativity in school and beyond can contribute to their success.

The conference is for anyone interested in deaf education. We expect that it will be attended by teachers, support staff, interpreters, members of d/Deaf communities, parents of deaf children, third sector professionals and academics. The conference fee is £50.

The conference will be fully accessible to a deaf and hearing audience with BSL/English interpreters and speech to text reporters.

There will be stalls from organisations, posters about projects and a lunch included in the conference price of £50 per delegate. Cheques to be made payable to the University of Edinburgh. See booking form downloadable from conference website.

Contact for conference bookings:  
Ruth Simpson: [sscworkshops@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sscworkshops@ed.ac.uk)

Contact for booking a stall for your organisation:  
Kellie Mote  
[kellie.mote@gmail.com](mailto:kellie.mote@gmail.com)  
<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/courses/deaf/adeptconference.html>

Booking form can be downloaded from here

@Scottishsensory

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## Deaf Links their Tartan Glamour Ball Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August 2017



Join us in sparkling reception, 3 course meal,  
music & raffle, while raising vital funds for Deaf Links advocacy service.

dancing,

This will take place at West park conference centre, Perth road, Dundee.

Ticket prices: early special before 30<sup>th</sup> June - £36 or table of 10 £350

After 30<sup>th</sup> June - tickets £40 or table of 10 £390

For any more information please contact [Vikki@deaflinks.org.uk](mailto:Vikki@deaflinks.org.uk)

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## BDA SCOTLAND EVENT – UNIVERSITY TOUR

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH DEAF ACTION AND EDINBRUGH  
UNIVERSITY



Are you 16 – 20?

Interested in University?

Date: Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Time: 10:00am to 2:00pm

Meet at 9.30am at Student Disability Service

University of Edinburgh,

The Main Library Building,

George Square, Edinburgh, EH 8 9LJ

TO BOOK YOUR PLACE:

Contact Charlene Dolan:

Text/SMS: 07795822102

Email: [transitionscot.drp@bda.org.uk](mailto:transitionscot.drp@bda.org.uk)

ooVoo: charlenedolan

Lunch will be provided on the day.

Facebook Link:

<https://www.facebook.com/BritishDeafAssociation/videos/1432391106823206/>

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## **INVITATION TO NEXT NORTH LANARKSHIRE THIRD SECTOR COMMUNITY JUSTICE NETWORK MEETINGS**



Following successful initial launch and development activity in 2016, third sector organisations with an interest in the fields of reducing reoffending and victim engagement are invited by Chair organisations Sacro and Victim Support Scotland respectively to attend one (or both if appropriate) of the next North Lanarkshire Third Sector Community Justice Network meetings, as detailed below:

### **NORTH LANARKSHIRE THIRD SECTOR REDUCING REOFFENDING NETWORK MEETING** (invitation from Sacro)

Thursday 20 April 2017 | 10.00am-12noon | One Wellwynd Social Enterprise Centre, 35 Wellwynd, Airdrie, ML6 0BN

### **NORTH LANARKSHIRE THIRD SECTOR VICTIM SERVICES AND ENGAGERS NETWORK MEETING** (invitation from Victim Support Scotland)

Thursday 20 April 2017 | 1.00pm-3.00pm | One Wellwynd Social Enterprise Centre, 35 Wellwynd, Airdrie, ML6 0BN

The purpose of the Networks are to progress third sector contributions to and activity within North Lanarkshire Community Justice Partnership. The Community Justice Partnership was established by North Lanarkshire Partnership following the introduction of The Community Justice (Scotland) Bill 2015, and aims to provide strategic direction for Community Justice interventions in the local area. The Partnership recognises that the third sector makes a significant contribution to Community Justice across North Lanarkshire, and as such is keen to ensure that third sector organisations are suitably connected to strategic developments through participation in the Third Sector Community Justice Networks.

A Networking lunch will take place from 12noon-1.00pm on the day for members of both Networks to participate in. Reports from the last Network meetings held on Wednesday 7 December 2016 are attached for your information. **To confirm attendance at either Network meeting** (if you have not already received invitation and done so), please contact Craig Russell at Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire on **01236 748011** or e-mail [craig.russell@vanl.co.uk](mailto:craig.russell@vanl.co.uk).

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**British Deaf Association Scotland, Deaf Action and  
Edinburgh University**  
**Friday 28 April 2017 from 10a.m to 2p.m**



Are you Deaf, age 16 – 20? Interested in University? Book a place on a tour of Edinburgh University. This is an opportunity to experience the transition to university. BSL/English interpreters provided. Booking is essential as places are limited. Lunch is provided.

Meet at 9.30a.m. at the Student Disability Service, University of Edinburgh, The Main Library Building, George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LJ.

For more information please contact Charlene Dolan at [Transitionscot.drp@bda.org.uk](mailto:Transitionscot.drp@bda.org.uk) or text 07795 822102. Skype/ooVoo charlenedolan

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**BSL Yoga Workshop Glasgow**  
**Saturday 17 June 2017 – 10am – 2pm**

The Courtyard Studio, Merchant City Yoga, 49 Virginia Street, Glasgow, G1 1TS

- 4 hours of yoga guidance in British Sign Language with a fully qualified yoga teacher
- Introduction to pranayama (yogic breathing)
- Suitable for all levels of flexibility and experience
- Both men and women welcome

To book email: [bslyogayork@gmail.com](mailto:bslyogayork@gmail.com) or find us on facebook: @bslyogayork

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## **CONSULTATIONS**

The Scottish Health Council has commissioned a short scoping exercise of the rationale, appeal and feasibility of the establishment of a pan-Scotland collaborative approach to young people's participation in the planning and delivery of health and social care services. The scoping work will help the Scottish Health Council to inform the development of the Out Voice vision for young people across Scotland, see [http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/patient\\_public\\_participation/our\\_voice/our\\_voice.aspx](http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org/patient_public_participation/our_voice/our_voice.aspx)

This short exploratory exercise is taking place between January and March 2017, and includes this short survey of stakeholder views about the rationale, appeal and feasibility of the establishment of a pan-Scotland collaborative approach to young people's participation in the planning and delivery of health and social care services. There are two version of the survey:

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For adults – targeted to practitioners – working with and for children and young people. Please click on the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SHCYPParticipation>

For young people: please click on the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SHCYPParticipationYOUNGPEOPLE>

The survey will close on Friday 24th March so that the findings can be presented at Scottish Health Council's event: "Our Voice, Transforming How We Engage with Young People".

If you would like any information about this event, please email Keir McKechnie, Senior Project Officer, Strengthening the Voices of Children and Young People Project, Scottish Health Council [Keir.McKechnie@scottishhealthcouncil.org](mailto:Keir.McKechnie@scottishhealthcouncil.org) Please remember that this is an initial short scoping exercise, and not a full consultation.

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## TRAINING



### **A Unique Opportunity for Freelance Interpreters The Effective Freelancer & What Are You Worth 2017?**

A two-day workshop to develop freelance interpreters' business, professional and personal skills in providing interpreting in an ever changing world. Both workshops have been refreshed for 2017. They are delivered by experienced interpreter practitioners in a positive, frank manner and include presentations, discussions, practical exercises, resources and business tools, and Q&A sessions.

Whether you are new to the profession or an experienced freelance interpreter the workshops are a '101' back to basics programme dealing with aspects of establishing, promoting and growing your interpreting business for the long term.

#### **29<sup>th</sup> April 2017 we start with "The Effective Freelancer..."**

A workshop focussed on your development as a business.

We start by looking at our individual approaches to business, including our motivation and attitude to risk-taking, building on that to explore a variety of popular business models, and the advantages and disadvantages of each.

We then take a practical look at how to run our business efficiently; considering back office functions, streamlining of administration, realistic budgeting, dealing with ATW, and utilising technology. We'll also cover the A B C of how to develop your own website.

Our last session of the day focusses on your negotiation skills, client care, developing your brand, networking and planning for growth.

This workshop is run by Ben Phillips.

**9<sup>th</sup> September 2017, we return five months later for our second workshop, “What Are You Worth?”**

Having had five months to put into practice your learning from “The Effective Freelancer”, this workshop explores your business skills in greater depth, and sets it in the context of your collective business development.

First run in 2010, WAYW has already been attended by a large percentage of the UK’s freelance interpreters.

In this workshop we explore the psychology of negotiation, review your business models to understand the actual costs involved in delivering sign language interpreting services, Building on the effective freelancer workshop in April we take an in depth review to understand the actual costs involved in delivering sign language interpreting services, develop your realistic business model in the context of the evolving political and economic scene, explore advanced strategies and professional skills needed to build into our businesses for the long term, and throughout the day set this in the context of collegiate and collective action.

This workshop is run by Ben Phillips & Darren Townsend-Handscomb

For more information, contact Deaf Perspective on

Email: [info@deafperspective.co.uk](mailto:info@deafperspective.co.uk)

Tel: 0141 314 0032

Fax: 0141 314 0026

SMS: 07979 748694

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**Are you deaf or hard of hearing? Aged 16-25?  
Wednesday 5 April 2017**



Want to learn or improve your sign language or lip-reading skills?

Join us for a 1 day course and learn communication skills from trained professionals

ATLA

Lipreading Taster session – 11:30 – 1:30

British Sign Language taster session – 2:30 – 4:30



When: Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017

Where: NDCS, 131 West Nile Street, Glasgow. G1 2RX

For more information and to book your place, contact:

Ray Bradshaw, Employment Adviser

Tel: 0141 341 5337 Textphone: 0141 341 5350

Email: [ray.bradshaw@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:ray.bradshaw@hearingloss.org.uk)

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# SSC

## **Outcomes for Children who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired Friday, 23rd June, 2017**

This day is a great opportunity to hear from a leading international expert, Professor Greg Leigh.

Greg is s active in research and has published widely on aspects of education of deaf children and related areas. He is a member of the Editorial Boards of The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education, Deafness and Education International, and Phonetics and Speech Sciences and is Deputy Director of The Centre for Special Education and Disability Studies at the University of Newcastle. He has served on several Australian Government consultative committees including the New South Wales Ministerial Standing Committee on Hearing and the National Neonatal Hearing Screening Working Party. He is currently Chairman of the Australasian Newborn Hearing Screening Committee. He is a former National President of the Education Commission for the World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf and is Chair of the International Steering Committees of both the Asia-Pacific Congress on Deafness (APCD) and the International Congress on Education of the Deaf (ICED).

This day will cover aspects from Greg's research interests:

- Newborn Hearing Screening - implementation and standards for delivery.
- The impact of earlier identification of hearing loss on infant development.
- Early psychosocial development of deaf and hard of hearing children.
- Communications access by deaf and hearing impaired children and adults (captions and related media accessibility).
- Teachers' use of simultaneous communication.

- Literacy development in deaf children and adults.

**Presenter:**

Professor Greg Leigh, AO, PhD, FACE, Conjoint Professor and Director, RIDBC Renwick Centre, Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, NSW Australia.

**Course fee:**

£110

Applications are available to download from the following link:

<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/courses/deaf/djun17a.html>

If you wish to pay by card please use the link below:

[http://www.epay.ed.ac.uk/browse/extra\\_info.asp?compid=1&modid=1&prodid=2355](http://www.epay.ed.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?compid=1&modid=1&prodid=2355)

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## Centre for Good Relations

### Want to take a business unusual approach to mediation?



Join our four-day course on **Civic Mediation – A Methodology for Conflict Transformation. Theory and Practice.**

When? **Monday 24th April – Thursday 27th April 2017.**

Where? **The Bay Hotel, Burntisland Road, Kinghorn, Fife, KY3 9YE.**

What is Civic Mediation? Civic mediation uses mediative processes to seek constructive changes to societal challenges. It values the role of building relationships within a system to bring about effective change, and works to transform conflict to achieve long-term positive outcomes.

What will the course cover? Personal and group responses to conflict; theories, tools and approaches for analysing multi-party conflicts; developing strategies to manage and transform complex conflicted situations. It will provide case studies where civic mediation has been applied in community resilience and peace-building, effective policy development, and environmental conflicts.

Who should attend? We are inviting participants from across the UK and beyond as part of Centre for Good Relations strategy to develop civic mediation practice. We'd welcome participants who would be interested to explore how we can work together to deliver our strategy.

If you are:

- Mediators or facilitators who would like to develop your skills to work with complex multi stakeholder relationships in a range of settings.
- Someone who wishes to build their understanding of how the quality of relationships impact on policy change.
- Interested in moving away from a traditional mediation toolbox and want to try something new.
- Someone who would like to become part of a network to embed civic mediation as a way of transforming conflict in our society.

Then this course is for you.

Cost: £500 for the full four days including all training materials, lunch and refreshments.

For further information and to register your interest, please contact Abdul Rahim at Centre for Good Relations by email: [abdul@centreforgoodrelations.com](mailto:abdul@centreforgoodrelations.com) . Or Tel: 07960 683328

## VACANCIES

### **Institute of Education, Teaching and Leadership: Scottish Sensory Centre**

#### **Deaf Education CPD Organiser**

Applications are invited for the secondment: Deaf Education CPD organiser. This part-time, one day a week secondment during school term time will contribute to the work of the Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC).

The Scottish Sensory Centre (SSC) is funded by the Scottish Government through the Additional Support for Learning Division and the University of Edinburgh. The Centre is one of several national centres within the Institute of Education, Teaching and Leadership at the Moray House School of Education and has been based at the Holyrood Campus, now part of the University of Edinburgh, since 1991.

The SSC promotes innovation and good practice in the education of deaf, visually impaired, and deafblind pupils and students in Scotland. The Centre collaborates with all those interested in education (including deaf, visually impaired, and deafblind pupils, their parents and voluntary organisations) and provides high quality career professional development and knowledge exchange. An annual programme of Career-Long Professional Learning (CLPL) training courses cover issues in the education of deaf, visually impaired, and deafblind pupils and is supported by professional expertise and relevant research from within the University of Edinburgh as well as outside it. The SSC website ([www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk)) and specialist library support CPD and research with additional reading and detailed information on a range of topics relating to deafness, visual impairment and education.

The SSC is a multidisciplinary team. Individuals have specific roles but they also support each other in the running of the Centre (“all hands on deck” environment).

For more information on both secondments and how to apply, go to <http://www.scod.org.uk/information/vacancies/>

General information about the SSC can be found at [www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk](http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk) and for more information about Moray House School of Education go to [www.ed.ac.uk/education](http://www.ed.ac.uk/education) .

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## NHS



**NHS Fife** is responsible for protecting and improving the health of the 368,000 population of Fife and is committed to building on and improving these services with the involvement and support of the public and their partners. NHS Fife is looking for one new member to join its Board.



**NHS Lothian** is responsible for protecting and improving the health of the 850,000 population across Lothian and works closely with local authorities and third sector partners in providing an integrated system of community-based health and social care. NHS Lothian is looking for three new members to join its Board.

Attached for your information is a copy of the applicant information pack for the Member appointments to the Fife and Lothian NHS Boards

Please find full details via our website: <http://bit.ly/2mVgQV0>

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## Mentoring Opportunity for recently qualified Teachers of the Deaf

We have recently trained experienced practitioners in mentoring/coaching techniques in a number of local authorities. If you think you would benefit from mentoring/coaching, please send in your request with a note of your years of experience and reason why you would like to be mentored. There may not be a mentor from your area but contact tends to be by telephone/email so it may be that you will be matched up outwith your local area. There is a guideline document for mentor and mentee on expectations and support to be agreed between both parties.

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## Set yourself up for a bright future with an apprenticeship

An apprenticeship is a great way to get ahead in your career, giving you the chance to work, learn and earn to gain industry-recognised qualifications.

There are more than 25,500 new Modern Apprenticeship opportunities across Scotland each year and with over 80 different types available in hundreds of jobs, there's bound to be one for you.

The logo for Skills Development Scotland, consisting of the text 'Skills Development Scotland' in white sans-serif font on a dark teal rectangular background.

Skills  
Development  
Scotland

From financial services and healthcare to construction and IT, each apprenticeship is developed by industry to suit their needs.

This means that apprentices can build valuable work experience from day-one and gain an accredited qualification which is recognised by industry.

We aim to ensure everyone has the same access to apprenticeship opportunities. No matter your background, you can get your career off to a great start across a wide range of jobs with an apprenticeship, whether you begin yours at school or once you have left.

Find out what it's really like to do an apprenticeship from [Stewart](#) who is profoundly deaf.

Learn more about apprenticeships and view employers apprenticeship opportunities at dedicated website [www.apprenticeships.scot](http://www.apprenticeships.scot)

The Scottish Apprenticeship Awards 2017 have launched, with a deadline for entries of Wednesday 28 June.

For any information please contact Susan Hay, External Communications Executive, Skills Development Scotland – [susan.hay@sds.co.uk](mailto:susan.hay@sds.co.uk) / 0141 285 6171

Link within copy to Stewart's case study - <https://www.apprenticeships.scot/shared-content/case-studies/stewart/>

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## **Play Scotland Vacancies Trainer/Assessors Required**

There is an exciting opportunity to deliver a new qualification which has been designed specifically with a view to support organisations/local authorities interested in analysing the play sufficiency of their services. The development of the qualification was driven by the Scottish Government Play Strategy, which aims to promote and improve play and play spaces for children and young people in Scotland.

The PDA: Strategic Planning for Play, is a CPD qualification developed by a partnership of Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Scottish Government, Play Scotland, SkillsActive and Inspiring Scotland.

The key outcomes of the Scottish Play Certificate are:

- Play and Play Spaces
- Play, policy and community
- Evaluating and analysing the impact of play on children and young people
- Evaluating Play Sufficiency

As the qualification is to be delivered in local authorities across Scotland, we are seeking to employ either sessional trainers/assessors or self employed trainers/assessors to deliver the qualification locally.

Applicants should be motivated, able to work on their own initiative, with a very good knowledge of the importance of play and the playwork principles, and experience in consulting with children and young people. Applicants should have a relevant qualification in play, childhood studies or community work at SCQF Level 8 or above, and have an assessor qualification.

Please send your CV in the first instance to – Cherie Morgan at [cheriemorgan@playscotland.org](mailto:cheriemorgan@playscotland.org)

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## British Deaf Association

### APPRENTICESHIPS IN SCOTLAND:

Do go along and find out more about the different apprenticeships on offer.

<https://www.apprenticeships.scot/scottish-apprenticeship-w.../>



And, if you want more information, do contact me as below or via the BDA website. Thank you.

CHARLENE DOLAN

Transition Officer

Deaf Roots and Pride Project

BDA Scotland | Suite 58 | Central Chambers | 93 Hope Street | Glasgow G2 6LD |

email: [transitionscot.drp@bda.org.uk](mailto:transitionscot.drp@bda.org.uk)

m/sms/facetime: 07795 822102

skype/oovoo: charlenedolan

T: 0141 248 5565

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## Advertisement of Members to HIS and NSS



**Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS)** is a national improvement organisation that works with local communities, people who need support and the people who provide support to improve health and social care across Scotland. HIS supports the health and social care system to design and provide high quality, sustainable and compassionate care for the people of Scotland. Strong relationships and partnership working with other organisations are central to helping us to deliver improvement. HIS is looking for one new member to join its Board.

**NHS National Services Scotland (NSS)** is a public sector organisation that has been providing services to NHSScotland for over 40 years. It is a vital part of NHSScotland, providing a range of specialist support services that enable the NHS Boards to focus their efforts in delivering health improvement and care. We also offer our expertise and national scale shared services more widely across the public sector in support of public service reform and, in particular, the integration of health and social care.

Attached for your information is a copy of the advert and applicant information pack for the Members appointment to the Healthcare Improvement Scotland and NHS National Services Scotland Boards.

Please find full details via our website: <http://bit.ly/2n6BaTb>

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## CINEMA/THEATRE



Subtitled/Captioned Accessible Cinema!  
2,000+ shows nationwide!

This month, Visible Cinema is delighted to present the darkly comic debut feature from Sightseers Alice Lowe, Prevenge followed by a Q&A with actor Kate Dickie\* on Wednesday 19 April.

You can find more information on the screening here: <http://glasgowfilm.org/shows/visible-cinema-prevenge-15>

Subtitled/Captioned Accessible Cinema! 1,600+ shows nationwide!

Subtitled:

Ghost in the Shell, Beauty and the Beast, The Boss Baby, Free Fire, Life, Power Rangers, Smurfs Lost Village, Lost City of Z, Get Out, Kong Skull Island, Logan, Viceroy's House & more:

<http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/films.html>

Entertain AND Educate! Cheap subtitled kids shows!

<http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/kids.html>

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<http://www.yourlocalcinema.com/appdownload.html>

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## PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS, MOTIONS AND DEBATES



## **BBC Alba (Funding)**

**S5O-00705 Angus MacDonald (Falkirk East) (SNP): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it is making in securing additional funding for BBC Alba.**

### **The Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs (Fiona Hyslop):**

The Scottish Government has made strong, clear and consistent representations to the BBC to secure additional funding for BBC Alba. On 22 February, the BBC announced that it will cover the £1.2 million cost of Gaelic programmes that BBC Alba has funded to date, which will release welcome funds for BBC Alba. Separately, the BBC will support weekend news coverage. We look forward to receiving further details from the BBC to understand more fully what the implications and benefits of the recent announcement will be. We will continue to press the BBC to deliver more for Gaelic broadcasting, so that we move towards parity with the resources that are afforded to S4C.

### **Angus MacDonald:**

I join the cabinet secretary in welcoming the extra £1.2 million for BBC Alba. That said, the cabinet secretary might be aware of concerns in the Gaelic community following last week's announcement that the creation of the new channel could have a detrimental impact on funding for BBC Alba. With the commitment that was given last week to up to 7.2 hours of fresh in-house programming for BBC Alba per week, the BBC investment that was announced falls well short of what BBC Alba needs to sustain its historic success and continue to be an effective contributor to the revitalisation of Gaelic.

The cabinet secretary has given a commitment to impress upon the BBC the need for an in-house contribution of 10 hours per week and I urge her to continue to do that.

### **Fiona Hyslop:**

The case for BBC Alba is well made. Indeed, it has been instructional in showing how BBC programme making can help to develop and support the creative industries. We will have a debate later today on that very matter. However, it is essential that an in-house contribution of 10 hours per week is secured for BBC Alba. That is not what has been secured to date and we will continue to support it and make the case for it.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10815>



**S5O-00714 Daniel Johnson (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab): To ask the Scottish Government what progress it is making with the implementation of section 179 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 regarding disabled access.**

**The Cabinet Secretary for Justice (Michael Matheson):**

Section 179 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 requires individuals applying for a liquor premises licence to provide a disability access and facilities statement along with their application. The statement is to contain information about disabled access to the premises and facilities, and any other provision available to aid the use of the premises by disabled people. Failure to provide a statement is not a ground for refusing an application, but it means that the premises application would be incomplete and could not be considered by the licensing board.

The provision does not interfere with the existing duty under equality law to make reasonable adjustments to make sure that a disabled person can use a service as close as it is reasonably possible to get to the standard that is usually offered to non-disabled people. Section 179 cannot be commenced in isolation; it is also necessary to update secondary legislation to provide the necessary statutory forms, alongside providing guidance to applicants. We intend to complete that work within the remainder of this year.

**Daniel Johnson:**

In 2010, an amendment to the legislation was passed, with cross-party support, following "Barred!", which was a campaign run by Mark Cooper in association with Capability Scotland. The amendment was to ensure that licensed premises must provide the information that the cabinet secretary has outlined. Unfortunately, the Government has yet to commence the provision. It has stated that it would do so by the end of this session of Parliament, which would obviously mean a delay of more than a decade, so I welcome the cabinet secretary's commitment today. Will he act without delay and ensure that the provision is commenced this year? Does he agree with me that, for many disabled people, a beer delayed is a beer denied?

**Michael Matheson:**

It is important to recognise that, although there was cross-party support for the amendment, the provision does not require a licence holder to commit to any amendments or alterations to their premises; rather, the provision is about the factual information that must be provided at the time when an application for a liquor licence is being made.

As Daniel Johnson will recognise, a significant amount of new regulations on licensed premises have been introduced, including on licensing for scrap metal companies and air weapons. We have tried to take forward the legislation on a phased basis, in order to make sure that we manage the process for those who require to have a licence or to apply for a licence. There are secondary legislation issues accompanying the provision; we will seek to make progress on it over this year. I will try to make sure that the work is taken forward as early as possible. At this stage, I cannot give the member a final date on when the process will be completed.

## **Social Housing (Older People)**

**S5F-00950 Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP): To ask the First Minister what measures the Scottish Government will take to ensure that there is appropriate social housing to meet the requirements of disabled, vulnerable and frail older people.**

### **The First Minister (Nicola Sturgeon):**

We are committed to expanding social housing in communities across Scotland, which is why 35,000 of our 50,000 affordable homes target will be for social rent. Good social housing is important for disabled, vulnerable and frail older people, and the homes that are delivered through the programme will match councils' local housing strategies.

We will shortly publish our refreshed "Age, Home and Community" strategy. As well as improving access to suitable housing, it will take account of changing needs and demographics and help to address issues of isolation that older people can face.

### **Christine Grahame:**

Although the integration of healthcare and social care to help people to stay at home instead of in hospital, is welcome, it hits the buffers if appropriate housing is in short supply. Notwithstanding what the First Minister has just said, is she aware of a recent report that highlights the dearth of sheltered and very sheltered housing, especially for frail elderly people, and calls for a commission to consider and report on long-term funding and provision of supported accommodation? Will the First Minister commit to such a commission?

### **The First Minister:**

Yes, indeed. I think it important not only that we have that strategic approach in place, but that we commit to sustainable funding. We share the housing sector's concerns about the United Kingdom Government's changes to funding for supported accommodation, which are part of a broader approach to welfare cuts that is having a considerable impact on people across the country. We will carefully consider the recently published report on effective supply of supported housing and look at its recommendations, which include the setting up of a commission to ensure that older people can access the housing and support that they need. We are also absolutely committed to working with the sector to protect the most vulnerable people and ensure that supported accommodation is put on a sustainable and secure financial footing.

## **Public Petitions Committee**

### **Concessionary Transport (Carers) (PE1632)**

#### **The Convener:**

The second new petition that we will consider is **PE1632**, by Amanda Macdonald, on concessionary transport for carers. Members have a note by the clerk and a Scottish Parliament information centre briefing.

**The petition calls for free concessionary transport for carers, and the petitioner has highlighted the financial difficulties that many carers face, the limits that are placed on their social lives, and the impact that that has on mental health.**

Members will see from the SPICe briefing that it is estimated that in Scotland there are 759,000 adult carers aged 16 and over and 29,000 carers under the age of 16. The SPICe briefing also explains that the existing concessionary travel scheme is available to people aged 60 and over, and to disabled people.

There is, of course, provision for so-called companion cards, which eligible companions can use when they assist a person who is eligible for concessionary travel. Those cards can be used for journeys that commence and terminate at the same locations that the eligible person who is being assisted will be at.

Do members have any comments or suggestions for action to take on the petition?

**Brian Whittle:**

Last year, I attended a young carer's event that included a round-table discussion at which it was highlighted that young carers have to pay out of their own pocket while they are working for the person who is being cared for—for example, if they have to get on a bus to go and collect a prescription. It seems to me that it would be a logical, and not costly, step, in those circumstances, to allow them free transport. I understand that it would be really difficult to apply that across the whole of the care system.

**The Convener:**

We know that some carers have to give up work in order to look after the person whom they care for, so their financial and emotional wellbeing is affected by being a carer. We also know that some young people take on caring roles. Would there be an issue about identification of those carers?

**Brian Whittle:**

I think that there would be, but that does not negate the real-life problems for people in that situation. Identification should not prevent our looking at the problem, especially in the case of young carers. If someone who is on welfare payments has to pay out a few pounds here and there every time they have to go out and pick up a prescription or accompany the person whom they care for, that will have an impact. That should not happen.

To read the full debate, go to

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10824>

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**Social Security Committee  
Social Security Legislation  
The Convener (Sandra White):**

Good morning, and welcome to the fourth meeting in 2017 of the Social Security Committee. I remind everyone to turn off their mobile phones, as they interfere with the recording system.

The main agenda item today is an **update** from Jeane Freeman, Minister for Social Security, on **forthcoming legislation on social security**. Welcome, minister, and thank you for coming along to update us. The accompanying Scottish Government officials are David Signorini, head of communities' analytical services, and Chris Boyland, legislation and delivery team leader. I believe that you want to make an opening statement, minister.

**The Minister for Social Security (Jeane Freeman):**

Thank you, convener. I am grateful for the opportunity to come back to the committee and provide this update. I would like to start with the issues that were raised around the statement that I made to the chamber last week, when I highlighted areas of disagreement in our negotiations with the United Kingdom Government.

The first of those concerns housing benefits for 18 to 21-year-olds. Since June 2016, at both official and ministerial level, we have been pursuing a means by which both Governments could meet their specific objectives. As members will recall, the UK Government's objective is to remove eligibility to housing benefit for 18 to 21-year-olds, and ours is to retain that eligibility. Our solution is to use section 11(4) of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, which allows the Department for Work and Pensions to vary the calculation of the housing element of universal credit, rather than section 11(5), which allows the DWP to change eligibility and is the section that it intends to use and on which it has produced draft regulations. The reason for our position is that, under the Scotland Act 2016, the Scottish Ministers have no power to restore eligibility, but we do have powers under section 11(4) of the 2012 act. I am afraid that not only would the UK Government not consider our approach, but it has also refused so far to commit to our alternative solution, which is to add 18 to 21-year-olds living in Scotland to what is already a long list of exceptions that it has made to its own policy.

The second area of disagreement concerns the UK Government's intention to apply its benefit cap to individuals who are considered to have income above the benefit cap level as a result of our abolition of the bedroom tax at source—members will recall that that abolition is a clear manifesto commitment for the Scottish Government. Our position is very clear and is well founded on the Smith commission, the fiscal framework and the enduring settlement, which all state explicitly, as at paragraph 89 of the fiscal framework,

“that any new benefits or discretionary payments introduced by the Scottish Government must provide additional income for a recipient and not result in an automatic offsetting reduction by the UK government in their entitlement elsewhere in the UK benefits system.”

Angela Constance and I have both raised those issues on a number of occasions, in addition to the work of our officials. We have raised them at ministerial level with Caroline Nokes, Damian Hinds and David Mundell, in the hope that agreement could be reached. We finally raised them at last week's joint ministerial working group—the

appropriate place and process—where we specifically challenged both David Mundell and Damian Hinds to explain to us why the DWP could not simply flag people in Scotland for whom the bedroom tax was abolished and disapply the UK Government’s benefit cap from their universal credit award. The answer remains no, although, as I said in the chamber last week, we still do not have a clear explanation as to why not.

The solution that is being offered to us is for the Scottish Government to provide any capped individuals with a discretionary housing payment equal to the amount of universal credit that they have lost.

I am very clear that we cannot agree to that. It would involve additional DHP expenditure by the Scottish Government and would, in effect, result in our paying twice to abolish the bedroom tax because we would, of course, also need to pay the DWP for the bedroom tax income that it had not received as a consequence of our abolishing the bedroom tax.

A cumbersome approach has been suggested. It relies on the individual self-identifying at a local authority office after the cap has been applied, and it does not support the person-centred social security system that we intend to see. What we have proposed instead is simple and straightforward, and would be a better use of public funds.

To read the rest of the debate, go to

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10823>

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## **Schools (Support Staff)**

**S50-00736 Miles Briggs (Lothian) (Con): To ask the Scottish Government how it ensures that schools have adequate numbers of support staff.**

**The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills (John Swinney):**

It is for education authorities to ensure that schools have adequate numbers of support staff. Education authorities will take resourcing decisions based on their commitments, including statutory duties under the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004, and local circumstances and priorities.

**Miles Briggs:**

I am sure that the cabinet secretary will acknowledge that support staff play a vital role in our schools in helping teachers to support pupils with additional needs. Under the watch of this Government and the Scottish National Party-Labour Party-run City of Edinburgh Council, the number of support staff in Edinburgh’s secondary schools has declined by almost 20 per cent since 2010, which is one of the largest drops in Scotland. How does the cabinet secretary reconcile that record with the Scottish Government’s desire to close the attainment gap?

**John Swinney:**

Around the country, the number of staff who support pupils with additional support needs was 12,572 in 2008 and, in 2016, it was 12,883. That demonstrates the ability

of local authorities around the country to make decisions, because they have those powers. That is as it should be.

What I find quite strange about Miles Briggs's question is that, at the weekend, his party leader called for more powers to be given to local authorities. Miles Briggs is complaining about local authorities exercising the powers that they currently—

**Miles Briggs:**

What is the cabinet secretary doing about it?

John Swinney:

I am respecting local authorities' decisions. It is up to local authorities to take decisions within the resources that are available to them. Mr Briggs cannot have it both ways—he cannot argue for more powers for local authorities, then complain when they exercise those powers and make the choices that they want to make.

**Jenny Gilruth (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP):**

I remind members that I am the parliamentary liaison officer to the cabinet secretary.

**What are the cabinet secretary and Scottish ministers doing to give effect to the measures in the British Sign Language (Scotland) Act 2015, including supporting children with a hearing impairment in their education?**

**John Swinney:**

The Scottish Government is taking forward a number of measures to support individuals who are British Sign Language users. We were the first Government to introduce BSL legislation and, last week, the Scottish Government launched a consultation on the first British Sign Language national plan. The consultation, which will run until 31 May 2017, will actively seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders. The draft plan includes the actions that the Scottish Government—and the national public bodies for which Scottish ministers have responsibility—proposes to undertake to support the promotion of British Sign Language.

We are committed to supporting children with a hearing impairment to reach their full potential. My officials are working with key stakeholders to identify and develop the actions that are needed to respond to the Education and Skills Committee inquiry into the attainment of pupils with sensory impairments. I understand that the development of the action plan is at an advanced stage and will be finalised shortly.

All those actions are based on the very positive initiative that was taken by Mr Griffin in the previous parliamentary session to advance legislation on BSL.

**Johann Lamont (Glasgow) (Lab):**

Given the importance of the assessment of need in securing additional help through support staff for a child, the cabinet secretary will be aware that 28 per cent of pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds have been assessed as having additional support needs in comparison with 16 per cent of pupils from the least disadvantaged backgrounds, according to his Government's figures for 2015. Despite that, only 1.3 per cent of pupils from the most disadvantaged backgrounds have a co-ordinated support plan in comparison with 2 per cent of pupils from the least disadvantaged backgrounds.

Why does that inequality in support exist? What action will the cabinet secretary take to ensure that young people secure the support that they need to sustain their place in mainstream education? Does he recognise the importance of the level of support staff for young people in disadvantaged areas who already face significant barriers to learning?

**John Swinney:**

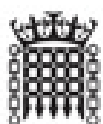
Every young person who should have a co-ordinated support plan must have a co-ordinated support plan, regardless of their background. The commitment that we make with regard to our work to get it right for every child means that, whatever the circumstances of the young person, they should have the assistance that they require. Fundamentally, that issue is handled by local authorities in exercising their statutory duty. We had a discussion at the Education and Skills Committee this morning about some of those questions and whether there are enough requirements and obligations to ensure that that is the case. I undertook to take that issue away and to consider it further.

My commitment, which is on the record, is that regardless of a child's circumstances any child who requires a co-ordinated support plan should have one. If we need to provide support to families from deprived backgrounds to secure the support to which their child has an entitlement, the Government will give consideration to that issue.

On the question of support for young people who have additional needs, the way in which the Government is taking forward pupil equity funding puts resources into schools to enable them to take decisions on many of these questions.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10828>

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www.parliament.uk

**Independent review of the Personal Independence Payment assessment**

The independent review of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) assessment carried out by Paul Gray CB has been published on 30 March 2017.

The Government welcomes the review and will publish a detailed response in due course.

Minister of State for Disabled People, Penny Mordaunt, has issued a Written Ministerial Statement to announce the publication of this review.



Department  
for Work &  
Pensions

**Lord Henley (The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions) HLWS575:** My honourable Friend The Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Penny Mordaunt MP) has made the following Written Statement. The Second Independent Review of the Personal Independence Payment Assessment by Paul Gray is being published today. This is the second of the two Independent Reviews as required by the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Building on the recommendations from the First Independent Review, Paul Gray has explored how closely the on-going implementation of the Personal Independence Payment reflects the policy intent. He has considered:

- How effectively further evidence is being used to assist the correct claim decision, and the speed and effectiveness of information-gathering;
- The degree of claimant confidence and transparency in the claim process; and
- How to further promote quality and consistency to produce fair outcomes for all.

The Government welcomes the publication of the Review and will consider its findings and issue a detailed response in due course.

**The Paul Gray report is now available at**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-independence-payment-pip-assessment-second-independent-review>

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Early day motion 1128: RBS Branch Closures in North-East Fife

**Primary sponsor: Stephen Gethins**

That this House regrets the decision of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) to close branches in Anstruther, Cupar and Leven, putting pressure on the St Andrews branch as the only remaining branch in the area; notes that these branches constitute 75 per cent of current RBS branches in North East Fife; is concerned about the impact that those closures will have on customers, especially the elderly, the vulnerable and those who are not online and value face-to-face contact; further notes that small businesses that rely on local services will be particularly affected by those closures; calls for assurances that RBS will secure the jobs of those affected; supports those affected by branch closures throughout Fife as well as the rest of Scotland; and encourages RBS to reconsider its decision and to provide support for those affected by the closures.

<http://www.parliament.uk/edm/2016-17/1128>

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Universal Credit: Highlands

**Drew Hendry (Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) (SNP):**

I am grateful for the opportunity to debate the universal credit full service roll-out in the highlands. My constituency was a pilot area for the programme before it went to



full service, and at the time I was very wary of the prospect. I was told that that would provide an opportunity to iron out all the problems and difficulties to make sure there were none when it came to full service roll-out, but I am afraid that that has not been the case. The problems have not been ironed out, and the situation is causing pain, anxiety and hardship for people in my constituency.

The aim of the debate is to highlight the problems, to offer solutions to the Minister and, I hope, to get him to accept the need to pause this harmful roll-out. I am sure that the intention behind universal credit was not to cause this type of difficulty, and I am also sure that the Minister is not intent on punishing people by continuing with the programme as it is. I hope that an outcome of the debate will be an understanding by the Minister of the problems that exist and his commitment to take action.

I was grateful to the Minister for a letter that he wrote to me on 14 March in response to my very detailed letter to him. It is important, in the interests of clarity, that I refer to a number of points in that letter. He wrote:

“We are building and developing the universal credit service all the time.”

By definition, “building and development” means that the process is not completed—it is incomplete. In fact, I contend that at the moment the system is unfit for use. During the period in which we were building and developing a house, we would not allow somebody to live in it. That is tantamount to what is happening to my constituents just now—this is dangerous to their health.

My constituency office alone has seen more than 100 cases involving issues with universal credit. That is just us—the number does not include the other agencies involved. The number does not cover the countless many, many more people who are not getting any help at all because they do not know where to turn. One constituent of mine who contacted us is called Ian. He waited for six weeks without any money. He had to eat at a food bank and to go for days without electricity, all with a two-year-old living in his house. That is not acceptable, and he did not even get any explanation of why that happened.

The Minister said in his letter:

“I recognise that Inverness Jobcentre Plus covers a large geographical area, and many claimants live some distance from the Jobcentre. Claimants are required to submit their evidence, for example childcare cost receipts, to the Jobcentre before the end of the Assessment Period.”

Submitting evidence is not that easy, as we found out when another of my constituents, Jane, had to travel from Grantown-on-Spey to Inverness to hand in her childcare vouchers. That is a journey by public transport of an hour and a half each way—a three-hour return trip. It would have been bad enough if, after she had put in her childcare vouchers, that had been the end of it, but the jobcentre lost the data and Jane had to make several more trips. The matter is still not resolved—that is not acceptable. People are not able to upload the information online; they actually have to hand in the vouchers at the jobcentre. Why is it not possible for them to go to

another local authority location to take care of the business? There should be far more flexibility in the system.

The Minister went on to say:

“Universal credit is designed as a digital service to be accessed online”—

as I have just pointed out, that aspect of the system is not complete—and that if people were having difficulty, they could use an 0345 number. He said further that operators

“will offer to call a customer back if concerns are raised over the cost of the call.”

If we look at the issue of digital by design, we find that there is a big gap. Some 17% of people in the highlands have never used the internet, and there are other big areas of digital exclusion.

**George Kerevan (East Lothian) (SNP):**

My East Lothian constituency was the first in Scotland to implement the full service roll-out. Has my hon. Friend had the same experience as us that because so many clients either lack access to IT equipment or are inexperienced at using it, they have to seek help from the citizens advice bureau, local library staff or local social security staff? That has the result that full service roll-out can be implemented only with the addition of massive amounts of staff time from all those bodies?

**Drew Hendry**

I absolutely agree with my hon. Friend, and I shall provide some further examples in a few moments.

For people who suffer from digital exclusion, that is not the end of the problem, because that 0345 number is, in effect, a premium phone line. Another constituent, Claire, was in tears in my office because she had used her last £20 of credit for her mobile phone while being held on the phone for 30 minutes waiting to get through. When her call was eventually answered, after she had used up all that credit, she was promised a call back—she was looking for money to feed her children, by the way—but that call back never came. Two days later she appeared in our office, and when we phoned, it took 34 minutes to get through so that we could get an answer on her case.

The Minister said in the letter:

“Our latest data from February has shown a speed of answer time of between 8 and 9 minutes and I can reassure your that more resource is planned”—

I can tell him that more resource is definitely required. That is a big change from what I was told in a written answer that I received, and it is as an admission that the length of time is increasing, even if the Government’s figure is not accurate. On 16 December, when I asked the Minister what the average call time was, I was told that it was three minutes 27 seconds. That is clearly not correct, even according to the Minister’s letter. Citizens Advice and my constituency office decided to undertake an experiment in which we timed the calls, so the Minister does not have to take just my

word for it. It took 28 minutes on average to get through to that line. There is a requirement for a free 0800 support line, and I hope that the Minister will take that on board.

In response to my claim that there was no support line for agencies or MPs, the Minister's letter said:

"As I mentioned earlier Universal Credit is designed to be accessed online", and that there is a "once and done" service. It might be "once and done" for the DWP, but it is certainly not "once and done" for my constituents who are under pressure.

To read the rest of the debate, go to <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-20/debates/57AA4CF5-3DA9-4BEF-8E60-D67A74D60D40/UniversalCreditHighlands>

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## **Personal Independence Payments**

**909437 Kerry McCarthy (Bristol East) (Lab) : What discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on the effect on disabled people of recent changes to the level of personal independence payments.**

**The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Welfare Delivery (Caroline Nokes)**

Recent changes to the PIP regulations clarify the original criteria used to decide how much benefit claimants receive. This is not a policy change, nor is it intended to make new savings. It will not result in any claimants seeing a reduction in the amount of PIP previously awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

### **Kerry McCarthy**

The Minister, in response to the Labour Front Bench, batted away suggestions that we need a full debate and vote on the Floor of the House on this issue, but given that the Government's own equality impact assessment says that 164,000 people with debilitating mental health conditions will be affected, does she not think it is her job to go to the DWP and tell them we want a proper vote?

### **Caroline Nokes**

Supporting people with mental illness is a priority, which is why we are spending more on mental health than ever before, and an estimated £11.4 billion this year. PIP does ensure parity between mental and physical conditions, and it achieves this by looking at the impact of conditions on an individual, not which conditions they have. As I have previously said, it is of course up to the usual channels to decide whether there will be further debate on the subject.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-23/debates/86198554-F35E-40E1-A827-EB2A4F8CA9DE/PersonalIndependencePayments>

**909475 Lilian Greenwood (Nottingham South) (Lab): What steps his Department is taking to ensure that personal independence payment assessments are undertaken fairly and efficiently.**

**909490 Mr Stephen Hepburn (Jarrow) (Lab): What steps his Department is taking to ensure that personal independence payment assessments are undertaken fairly and efficiently.**

**The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Penny Mordaunt)**

The Department robustly monitors provider performance and independently audits assessments. Assessment reports deemed unacceptable are returned for rework. A range of measures, including contractual remedies, are used to address performance falling below those standards.

**Lilian Greenwood**

A constituent contacted me after she submitted a claim for personal independence payment and then had to wait 12 weeks for the home assessment appointment she needed. Capita finally telephoned, giving less than 48 hours' notice of the visit, only to cancel 10 minutes before the appointed time. After three and a half months, she is still no nearer to receiving the support she needs. I know from my discussions with the Meadows Advice Group that she is just one of dozens of disabled people being let down by the Minister's Department. When will the Minister address this catalogue of failure?

**Penny Mordaunt**

If the hon. Lady would let me have sight of that case, I will look into it in particular, because it is unacceptable and falls below the performance and the courtesy, quite frankly, that we would want from our providers. People's personal experience is very important in getting this process right. I am pleased to be able to say that from April we will commence the user rep panels, with about 300 people initially, across the UK, to whom we will give real-time experience of PIP and ESA—employment and support allowance.

**Mr Hepburn**

We have all had cases like that, but cannot it only be an arrogant Tory Government who ignore legal decisions that override expert medical opinion in order to deprive people with mental health issues of the right to benefits? What level of cuts has the Minister promised the Chancellor in order to get this policy through?

**Penny Mordaunt**

I am afraid that the hon. Gentleman is being very irresponsible in saying that. He knows that there is no change to policy, to budget or to award amounts. I remind him that people with mental health conditions are receiving higher levels of benefit than they did under DLA. This benefit is not about people's conditions; it is about the impact that those conditions have on the individual's ability to thrive and live their life as they would wish. It is quite wrong and irresponsible to suggest anything otherwise.

**Justin Tomlinson (North Swindon) (Con)**

The vast majority of successful appeals are due to late additional submitted evidence. Therefore, to avoid unnecessary appeals, what steps is the Minister taking to automatically access medical reports with the consent of the claimant?

**Penny Mordaunt**

This is one of the key reasons why not only is 3% of the PIP caseload being overturned at appeal, but we are not getting the right decision at mandatory reconsideration stage. We have been doing a number of trials to improve that, including telephoning claimants to ensure that all the healthcare information that is required for a good assessment and a good decision is in place. There are other measures as well. I hope that this will improve the situation.

**Caroline Ansell (Eastbourne) (Con)**

Any delay in making the PIP award is stressful for the person in need of that support and creates inefficiencies in a very pressed system. A number of cases successful at first tier tribunal are challenged by the Department and then ultimately upheld. Can the Minister assure me that this number is monitored, statistically insignificant, and, in light of improvements in assessment, falling?

**Penny Mordaunt**

I can give my hon. Friend those assurances. In addition to the measure that I have mentioned, there are a number of other trials going on and a number of changes that our providers are making—for example, sitting down with someone and talking about the effects of their condition on their ability to live their lives prior to a medical history being gathered.

**Ronnie Cowan (Inverclyde) (SNP)**

One thousand and ninety-nine people currently use the Motability scheme in Inverclyde. It can be over eight weeks before a successful appeal, and during that time claimants are without their car. What is being done to address this specific issue?

**Penny Mordaunt**

As I have reported to this House before, we have been working ever closer with Motability— a great scheme in its 40th year. We are looking at a number of issues, such as appeals; people who may wish to leave the country, whether for study, work experience, or any other reason; and potentially extending the scheme to other groups. We will report on that review as soon as we can.

**Andrew Bridgen (North West Leicestershire) (Con)**

Can the Minister confirm that far from cutting support for disabled people, disability spending will increase every year to 2020 relative both to 2010 and today?

**Penny Mordaunt**

My hon. Friend is absolutely right that spend will increase, but it is also vital that this Government look at other issues, as we are doing—for example, on the consumer agenda. It is no good our spending money and getting the employment support right if buildings are not accessible and people cannot make use of these opportunities.

**Ms Marie Rimmer (St Helens South and Whiston) (Lab)**

Last Thursday, at business questions, the Leader of the House stated that there would be a debate on the Government's emergency PIP regulations, which will affect the eligibility for PIP of more than 160,000 people, mainly those with mental health conditions. However, he failed to give a date, and the praying against period comes to an end on 3 April. If there is no debate and vote before the House rises for Easter, even if the House votes against the regulations next month they will not automatically be revoked. That represents a huge democratic deficit. Will the Minister now commit to scheduling a debate and vote this week?

**Penny Mordaunt**

The hon. Lady will know that that is not within my gift; it is for the usual channels. It is not correct to say that the regulations will affect 160,000 people. [Interruption.] No, there is no policy change. There is no change to the budget, and there is no change to the guidance that we have issued to our assessment providers. It is quite wrong to raise fear by saying to people that they will be affected. No awards will be affected, and we are operating exactly the same policy and guidance in our assessment practices as we have done before.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-27/debates/4099B523-7C3E-4431-92E6-95396FC2E448/PersonalIndependencePayments>

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**909476 Dr Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) (SNP): What assessment he has made of the effect of recent personal independence payment changes on the income of people with mental illnesses.**

**909487 Mr David Hanson (Delyn) (Lab): What estimate he has made of the number of disabled people who will be affected by the changes introduced by the Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.**

**909489 Paul Blomfield (Sheffield Central) (Lab): What estimate he has made of the number of disabled people who will be affected by the changes introduced by the Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) (Amendment) Regulations 2017.**

**The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work (Penny Mordaunt)**

Recent changes to the PIP regulations clarify the original criteria used to decide how much benefit a person receives. This is not a policy change or a budget change, and it will not result in any claimants, regardless of their health conditions, seeing a reduction in the amount of PIP they have been awarded.

**Dr Philippa Whitford**

Former Sergeant William Bradley, who is one of my constituents, developed severe PTSD and depression while serving in the Gulf war, and he was medically discharged from the Army in 2003. He had been on the enhanced PIP rate since 2014, but it was cut to the lower rate last year. Following an appeal, it has now been removed completely. The reply from the PIP hotline was that someone with mental health issues can work, and that this is really a benefit for people with severe physical disabilities. Will the Minister meet me to discuss this awful case, or, if PIP is not the right benefit for those with mental illness, can she explain what is?

**Penny Mordaunt**

What the hon. Lady tells me has happened is truly shocking. I would be incredibly surprised if somebody who was manning that hotline said those things to the hon. Lady. I am not saying that I doubt her story, but I would like to see that and I would like to know, if possible, the exact time that that conversation took place, because that is quite wrong. I would be happy to meet the hon. Lady.

The statistics show that if someone has a mental health condition—if they have PTSD, dementia, a psychological disorder or another mental health condition—they are better served under this benefit. It is important that people know that.

**Mr Hanson**

Why did the Minister not consult the Social Security Advisory Committee, where her contentions about the impact of this benefit could have been challenged?

**Penny Mordaunt**

The Committee is within its rights to look at the decision. It did so, and it concluded that it would not formally review that decision. We have used the urgency procedure, as it was within our rights to do, to establish certainty. We do not want there to be a long period of uncertainty around this, and we do not want to be in the position of having to take money off people. What we have done is to restore that certainty. Everyone knows where they are, and people know that there is no change and their awards will not be changing.

**Paul Blomfield**

It was a constituent of mine whose case led to the recent tribunal ruling that clarified the eligibility criteria for PIP, and to the Government's subsequent amendments to the regulations. She lives with multiple health problems and was supported by Sheffield Citizens Advice, which is due to publish a report later this week on the wider impact of the shift from DLA to PIP and the particular effect that it is having on the over-65s. Will the Minister agree to meet me and Citizens Advice to discuss its recommendations?

**Penny Mordaunt**

I would be very happy to meet the hon. Gentleman to do so. PIP is a better benefit than DLA—it serves a wider range of people with a wider range of conditions better—but we can always make improvements to the system, and I would be very happy to meet him.

**Kevin Foster (Torbay) (Con)**

In relation to PIP, will the Minister assure me that the DWP is engaging with those with experience of mental health conditions to ensure that our programmes and our frontline staff have a proper understanding of how a mental health condition can have an impact on someone's life?

**Penny Mordaunt**

I can give my hon. Friend such an assurance. In addition to the user rep panels that we are introducing in April, we have been conducting a trial since mid-March—it will take about six weeks—looking at audio recording, which should involve about 400 claimants. That is a tool not just to guarantee quality, but to provide reassurance to the claimant.

**Mr David Burrowes (Enfield, Southgate) (Con)**

Some of those who are eligible for PIP may well lose entitlement to the work-related activity group element come 1 April. Will the Minister reassure me that whether through the flexible support fund, the hardship fund or indeed third-party deals, there will be full mitigation for the losses they incur from 1 April?

**Penny Mordaunt**

I can give my hon. Friend such an assurance. People are open to apply to the financial channels he mentions if they need further support. We have been doing some work in the Department on social tariffs and budgeting, which will be rolled out across our Jobcentre Plus network, and all the elements of the support offer for that group are already in place.

**Mr Alistair Carmichael (Orkney and Shetland) (LD)**

Last week I had to deal with a constituent whose benefits had been stopped because she missed an appointment to be assessed for PIP. She missed that appointment because she was an in-patient in hospital in Aberdeen. Even after evidence of that had been exhibited to the Minister's Department, it twice refused to reinstate her benefits because it said that it had done nothing procedurally wrong. Is the Minister content that that is how the system is supposed to work?

**Penny Mordaunt**

The right hon. Gentleman will know that that is not how the system is supposed to work. If there is a reasonable reason why someone has not attended an appointment, missing it should not count against them. I am quite happy to look at the case that he cites, but that should not be happening.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-27/debates/F0BF1FFF-F519-4005-AFD0-0754BF432309/PersonalIndependencePayments>

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**Personal Independence Payment: Regulations: Emergency debate (Standing Order No. 24)**



### **Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab)**

I beg to move,

That this House has considered changes to Personal Independence Payment Regulations.

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for granting this vital debate on the new personal independence payment regulations. Although I welcome the opportunity to debate this issue, it is highly regrettable that the Government have had to be dragged to the House to be held to account for this nasty piece of secondary legislation.

As the House will know, the Government have ignored two urgent questions on this matter, an early-day motion signed by 179 Members calling for these punitive regulations to be annulled, and a 38 Degrees petition, signed by more than 185,000 people, asking them not to make the changes. When pushed at business questions on Thursday, the Leader of the House said there would be a debate, but could not say when. Only late last night did it become clear that the debate has now been hastily scheduled for 19 April. What particular kind of arrogance or disregard for democracy are the Government revealing? This does not bode well for their accountability to this place in the future negotiations.

For the record, we should note that today's debate does not allow for a substantive vote on the regulations. As the Government have failed to allow a debate before the EDM praying-against period comes to an end on 3 April, the regulations will not be automatically revoked, should the House vote against them on 19 April. I would be grateful to the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work if she explained why, given that we have risen early twice this week, the Government have been incapable of finding time for such a debate before the Easter recess. The Government are hoping that because they have delayed the debate, the objection to the regulations will be kicked into the long grass, but it will not be.

### **Toby Perkins (Chesterfield) (Lab)**

On behalf of many of my constituents, I thank my hon. Friend for securing this debate. Does she agree that the very least we owe to people who find themselves, through no fault of their own, in the most difficult of circumstances is to tell them whether we have voted for decisions made in Parliament that are having an appalling impact on their incomes?

### **Debbie Abrahams**

My hon. Friend makes an excellent point. That is what we have been trying to do since the emergency regulations were laid before Parliament.

Let us remind ourselves how the emergency regulations were introduced and what they have changed. The regulations, which were laid before the House on 23 February and came into force two weeks ago, amended the legislation under which disabled people or people with a chronic condition are assessed for eligibility for personal independence payments. The new regulations followed two upper tribunal rulings. The first judgment on 28 November 2016 held that needing support to take medication and monitor a health condition should be scored in the same way as

needing support to manage therapy, such as dialysis, undertaken at home. The second, also on 28 November, ruled that people who find it difficult to leave their house because of severe psychological distress should receive the enhanced rate of support under the mobility component of PIP.

In a letter to me last week, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions said that he became aware of the rulings on 8 December. Two and a half months later, the Government laid their emergency legislation before Parliament. I am sure that the irony of something taking two and a half months in an “emergency” has not been lost on you, Mr Speaker. During those two and a half months, not only were the Government unable to bring the regulations before the House, but they also bypassed their own Social Security Advisory Committee. They have ignored SSAC’s recommendations on wider engagement, testing or piloting changes, and the analysis of impacts.

### **Mr Ranil Jayawardena (North East Hampshire) (Con)**

I note what the hon. Lady says about legal cases, but is not the point that those legal cases broadened the provisions, and that the regulations will simply restore the policy to what it has been and should be, which is one of targeting support at those who need it most?

### **Debbie Abrahams**

I will come on to that in a moment, because I think Members have unfortunately been hoodwinked, and I will absolutely expose what the Government have said.

This move undermines and subverts not just our democracy, but independent tribunal judgments. It is unprecedented, and we should be concerned about future actions that the Government may take in relation to court cases that they lose. It is also highly unusual for such a fundamental change to be introduced by a statutory instrument under the negative procedure, bypassing debate and scrutiny in this House.

To read the full debate, go to <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-29/debates/80B479C2-C920-4BB5-A785-BCE26664EB4B/PersonalIndependencePaymentRegulations>

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## Cochlear Implantation

### **Jim Fitzpatrick (Poplar and Limehouse) (Lab)**

I am grateful for the opportunity to raise the question of the funding and assessment of cochlear implantation, and I do so as chair of the all-party group on deafness. I am pleased to see the Health Minister in his place; I know he has this issue on his radar.

The starting point is a petition calling for a review of the tests for implants approved by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence. I have been contacted by my right hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton South East (Mr McFadden) and my hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham (Sarah Champion) on behalf of their constituents Lamina Lloyd and Diane Matthews respectively.

Both constituents fall foul of the Bamford-Kowal-Bench test—the BKB test. It is this aspect that concerns them and their MPs, and they want it reviewed and changed. I will come back to that later, as well as to the case of Robert Gee, a constituent of the hon. Member for Daventry (Chris Heaton-Harris), who I am pleased to see in his place on the Treasury Bench. I want to register my appreciation for Action on Hearing Loss, the Action Group for Adult Cochlear Implantation, Professor Chris Raine and the Ear Foundation for their assistance with briefings for this debate.

I shall start with papers sent to me by the Ear Foundation. Sue Archbold writes:

“I was at the World Health Organisation in Geneva for the meeting on World Hearing Day, 3rd March...with WHO for the first time confirming that cochlear implants and hearing aids are cost-effective and should be made more widely available globally”.

The WHO has produced two documents: “Global costs of unaddressed hearing loss and cost-effectiveness of interventions” and “Action for hearing loss”. I am sure the officials at the Department will have brought them to the Minister’s attention.

Professor Chris Raine, who I believe is one of the UK’s leading clinicians in this field, emailed me and wrote:

“CIs”— cochlear implants—

“are funded for health and NICE only look at this aspect. What needs to be addressed is, value for the taxpayer. For example, in education: children with CIs are now going into the mainstream sector which results in a significant saving of education funding of special classes. We have a generation now going through higher education, and this means better employment prospects and more people paying more tax. Adults who go deaf can expect better health outcomes with CIs. Deafness is associated with illness and unemployment. Also, studies in the USA and France have shown improvement and reduction in dementia in the elderly. We are spending £13 billion on dementia.”

Professor Raine concludes with the recommendation that

“we need adult hearing screening”.

The Ear Foundation has produced a document, “Improving access to cochlear implantation: Change lives and save society money”, written by Brian Lamb OBE, Sue Archbold, PhD, and Ciaran O’Neill, PhD. It recommends, for instance,

“That NICE urgently conducts a formal review of its current guidance on cochlear implants”,

and that the review

“considers lowering the current audiological threshold for candidacy...That any cost benefit analysis done...ensures...real world benefits are taken into account”,

including those relating to social care. It also states:

“A screen for candidacy for cochlear implants should be built into routine audiological appointments.”

Action on Hearing Loss writes:

“More adults could benefit from cochlear implantation than are currently doing so. NICE...should review and update its current guidance on cochlear implantation”.

It also writes:

“74% of children who could benefit from cochlear implantation aged 0-3 have received them, increasing to 94%, by the time they reach 17 years of age. The comparable figure for adults who have severe or profound hearing loss is only around 5%.”

I am sure that the Minister is aware of that.

“Research is also currently underway to see whether the BKB...sentence test... could be excluding adults who could benefit.”

The document recommends a review of guidelines, as well as the raising of awareness of cochlear implantation among the public and NHS organisations and professionals.

Brian Lamb also writes, this time on behalf of the Adult Cochlear Implant Action Group:

“Hearing loss is one of the most challenging health and social issues facing the UK...Those with hearing loss have higher rates of unemployment and underemployment.”

Hearing loss is associated with the risk of developing dementia:

“Those with severe hearing loss are at five times the risk of developing dementia as those with normal hearing”.

I remind the Minister again of the billions that we are spending on dementia.

“In older age people with hearing loss are at greater risk of social isolation and reduced mental well-being”.

Yet we have never had better solutions to address hearing loss.

The ACIAG states:

“Hearing aids can make a huge difference to the majority of people, but for those who are severely or profoundly deaf cochlear implantation offers the main way of hearing spoken language again. We now have world-leading technology in cochlear implants to address hearing loss, but many more people could benefit from this transformative technology than currently do.”

It also states:

“There are an estimated 100,000 people with a profound hearing loss and 360,000 with a severe hearing loss who might benefit from implantation at any one time. Yet”

—as I said earlier—

“only 5% receive CIs.

The UK currently has one of the most restrictive tests across the whole of Europe...In this country it is not until the hearing loss is over 90 dB that people qualify, while in Europe the majority of clinics use a measure between 75-80 dB.

We also use a word test, the BKB test, which is no longer fit for purpose according to a recent review by experts in the field who concluded, ‘use of this measure... alone to assess hearing function has become inappropriate as the assessment is not suitable for use with the diverse range of implant candidates today’.

The guidelines have been in place since 2009 and not reviewed since 2011.

The Action Plan on Hearing Loss, published by DoH” —the Department of Health—

“and NHS England in 2015, made clear that there should be ‘timely access to specialist services when required, including assessment for cochlear implants’.”

That action plan was widely welcomed when it was published, and I, along with others, commended the Department, Officials and Ministers at the time, but much of it seems to be being ignored by a number of clinical commissioning groups. Indeed, some are following policies that contradict the plan. The ACIAG requests more research on the links between hearing loss and dementia, and mental health issues. In conclusion, it writes:

“The NHS has been a leader on cochlear implant technology and helped transform many people’s lives. The NICE guidance was welcome when originally produced in 2009, but we are now falling behind the access available in many developed countries. It is our health and social care services which will pay the cost of not intervening early for those who could benefit.”

I wear two hearing aids, primarily because of damage to my ears sustained while I was in the fire service, although I am sure that age has now added to the problem. I am one of the 11 million people in the UK—one in six of the population—who suffer from hearing loss. Despite the annoyance I cause friends and family by asking them to repeat things, the use I make of the House of Commons loop system, and the assistance I seek here from the sound engineers and technicians, who are always very helpful, I still rely on my hearing aids because they work for me, despite sometimes having limitations. However, I have listed the problems for people suffering profound hearing loss, which are much more serious. We can do something about this; we have the technology, and it is not a matter of costs, because it should save money. It should save the NHS and the taxpayer money, as well as allowing profound hearing loss sufferers to live more complete and productive lives.

In conclusion, I return to the emails from the constituents of my colleagues. One of them writes:

“Lamina passes the pure tone threshold for a cochlear implant, but had to take a speech recognition test in what she regarded as a ridiculously false atmosphere of a soundproof booth with very simplistic sentences in an environment totally different

from real conversation or the normal outside world. She is, in her own words, too deaf to hear, but not deaf enough for an implant.”

Robert Gee, the constituent of the hon. Member for Daventry, writes similarly, but gives more details of what 70 dB actually is. He says:

“Now just to give you some benchmarks: 60 dB equates to the volume of conversation in a restaurant. 70 dB is twice that volume (busy traffic). 80 dB is 4 times that volume (an alarm). And 90 dB is 8 times (factory machinery etc).”

He then refers to the sentence comprehension test:

“A candidate qualifies if they can only hear (with hearing aid fitted) and repeat less than 50% of the sentences which are played over speakers. The problem with this test is that it is conducted in a soundproof booth with the sentences played at 70 dB...double the volume level of standard conversation. This test does not represent reality at all.”

I give the last word to Mrs Diane Matthews, who started the petition to ask NICE for a review. She writes:

“I started a petition for NICE to revise their cochlear implant tests after refusal again for a CI in January this year...The tests are in a soundproof room at a sound intensity of 70 dB. Whilst I understand there has to be set parameters, this does not mirror the real world. There should be a test with background noise and the sentences should be comparable with adult conversation...A CI is life-changing and whilst it’s not a cure, it’s the best option. To know there is something to help and be denied is heart-breaking when you want to work and contribute to society.”

I hope that NICE will accept the requests from individual patients, professional clinicians and campaign organisations, and I hope that the Minister in his response can articulate something in the way of support, or at least acceptance and understanding that there is a major issue out there, and obviously write to NICE directly as well.

We have a solution. It is at worst cost-neutral, and in reality offers huge cost benefits both in productivity and economically, and in human wellbeing. I am looking forward to hearing the Minister’s response.

For the Minister’s response, go to <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-03-24/debates/0154C58F-7CC8-4D67-92E0-D7873386BFCC/CochlearImplantation>

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## **Information for Inclusion in the SCoD Bulletin**

We appreciate the time that you take to send us your training information, events, and news articles for the SCoD bulletin. Sometimes we are not getting enough information, sometimes the information is not clear, and at other times, we have a great article, but no contact details.

In order that we get the information we need to put in the bulletin and you reach your intended audiences, we have put together a template that we would appreciate it if you use to send us information/articles. We cannot use posters, but we are willing to “share” your posts on our Facebook and re-tweet your “tweets” on our Twitter account. You might have information on your website or YouTube or Vimeo in BSL – please share the links, so that we can.

Organisation Name	
Article/News Item/	Maximum 400 words
Important date (s)	
Contact details for the bulletin	

Link(s) in social media – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube	
Organisation's Logo (if you want it included)	



#### Copy Deadline for the Next Issue

As always, the deadline is the end of this month.

Please forward your contributions for the next bulletin to: [admin@scod.org.uk](mailto:admin@scod.org.uk) .

We are happy to publish details about your news, information, events, training courses and conferences. Please send us the **text** you want to be included in the bulletin.

If **you are not a member of SCoD** and would like to advertise an event, training courses or conferences, please contact us at [admin@scod.org.uk](mailto:admin@scod.org.uk) before you send us the text as there will be an admin charge.

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