



SCoD Bulletin

March 2017

Conference Season is upon us!

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



CONNECT
& CAPITALISE

SCoD's "Connect & Capitalise*" Conference 2017

It's almost here! Only 8 days to go...There are still a few places left.

Our third SCoD Conference, 'Connect & Capitalise' will take place on **Thursday 9th March 2017** in Glasgow Doubletree Hilton.

The Minister for Mental Health, Maureen Watt MSP, will be our first keynote speaker at the Conference. Yvonne Strachan CBE Head of Human Rights and Equality at the Scottish Government and Martyn Evans, the Chief Executive of the Carnegie Trust UK will also be speaking on the day.



Is our main supporter.

Our sponsors are:



There will be 9 workshops over 3 sessions to choose from:

- See Hear: Two years on
- Action on Hearing Loss employment and young people
- Deaf Action and Linda Thomson
- Deaf Sector Partnership: Consulting on the BSL National Plan
- NDCS Scotland
- Voluntary Action Scotland: Building Community Assets
- GIRFEC: Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People
- contactSCOTLAND-BSL
- Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists.

For more information about the programme, go to

<http://www.scod.org.uk/scod-connect-and-capitalise-2017/>

We will also have a Marketplace where delegates can find out more about organisations and services in the Deaf Sector.

To book a place for the conference, please go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/scod-connect-capitalise-2017-tickets-29816166958>

We hope to see you at this conference which should be even better than the last two.



LATEST NEWS FROM SCoD

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 in the **Deaf Sector Partnership** section.

Membership

2017 is the year we start our 90th birthday celebrations...Join SCoD and join the party. Over the last 90 years, we have achieved many things with our members – 1930s saw the setting up of work schemes to support young deaf people into work. In the 1940s, the Scottish Association for the Deaf (SAD now SCoD) supported the ordination of Ministers for the Deaf. In the 1960s, missionaries became Welfare Officers and Social Workers for the deaf were being trained. In 1980, Moray House started the first course for interpreters and later in the 1980s, the first course for the training of lip reading tutors was run. In the 1990s, SAD set up the Deaf Register and in 1995, became the umbrella body that SCoD is today. From 1998 onwards, SCoD has influenced policy development in Scotland and contributed to several developments that have made a real difference to the lives of deaf people in Scotland – the Scottish Mental Health Service for Deaf People, the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, the BSL National Advisory Group and the consultation on the first BSL National Plan. There are so many reasons to join SCoD...

Our members are drawn from the Public, Third and Private Sectors. We have organisational and individual options.

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.

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 or telephone 0141 248 2474.

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

Best wishes

Janis & the SCoD Team

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

Deaf Sector Partnership Facebook:

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.



Right to Health: new briefing from NHS Health Scotland

NHS Health Scotland have released an inequality briefing on Human rights and the right to health. This briefing is about the right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. It sets out what the right to health is, what a human rights-based approach to health looks like and gives some suggestions as to how the approach can be used.

To read the briefing, go to <http://www.healthscotland.scot/health-inequalities/the-right-to-health>



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](#).



The Children's Parliament will be 21 in 2017. To mark this special birthday, we are creating an inspiring and brave band of Unfearties.

Unfearties are individuals who are not feart, are making a difference in children's lives, and who are willing to speak up for, and stand alongside, children.

To join our brave band of Unfearties, go to <http://www.childrensparliament.org.uk/about-us/unfearties/become-an-unfeartie/>



Health care needs in schools

The Scottish Government has published the consultation on draft guidance on Healthcare Needs in Schools. This draft guidance has been developed in partnership with a range of key stakeholders representing children and young people, health and education services.

The consultation will run until 24 Apr 2017 and is available from <https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/supporting-learners/guidance-on-healthcare-needs-in-schools/> Responses can be provided online through the consultation hub or using

the consultation response document. Details of where to send the response are contained within the consultation response document. All responses to the consultation will be considered no matter which way they are provided.



Evaluation of Voluntary Action Scotland

[An independent evaluation of Voluntary Action Scotland](#), the national network supporting Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs), by APS Group Scotland (led by Blake Stevenson) has been published by the Scottish Government. The evaluation highlights weaknesses in the effectiveness of VAS, but concludes that the TSI network requires an intermediary body and that the Scottish Government should continue to support VAS, with new partnership agreements and the continuation of recent changes in its governance. SCoD has been working with VAS and the TSI network to improve the access and citizenship opportunities for deaf people, with some success.



Studio Lambert

We are currently producing the second series of the hit BBC Two show “Big Life Fix”, an exciting and innovative science series that sees a skilled team of scientists, engineers and designers create bespoke technology for individuals and groups to transform their lives for the better.

In the first series, our team came up with solutions for a range of issues affecting individuals and communities, including creating a device to counter the effects of Parkinson’s disease for a young graphic designer, building a bicycle for a boy born with no hands or feet, and connecting a remote village in Wales up to the internet.

We’re now planning a second series and looking for more people who feel they could benefit from a tailor-made invention. Perhaps it’s a daily task, a hobby or a lifelong dream that’s proving to be a challenge. Or maybe a disability that needs help managing, or a problem that you and your family, or even your whole community face. We’d love to chat to anyone who would like to apply. If selected, our team will work with them to tackle their problem or challenge using ingenious design and technology.

It would be fantastic if you could circulate this email and attached flyer to anyone you know to help us spread the word about this fantastic opportunity.

If anyone is interested in applying, they can call the casting team on [0203 040 6908](tel:02030406908) or email us at biglifefix@studiolambert.com . All calls are treated in the strictest of

confidence. Alternatively, a short contact form can be filled out here to express interest in the show: <http://www.studiolambert.com/take-part-the-big-life-fix.html>

EVENTS



The status of children & young people in Scotland isn't as high as it should be, and this is our chance to change it!

Does your group or organisation work with children, young people and their families? Or do your members or service users have caring responsibilities for children or young people?

Come along and have a conversation about what works well, what are the challenges, and how we can improve the life experiences of all children and young people in East Renfrewshire.

When: 28th March 2017, 4-7 pm

Where: Voluntary Action East Renfrewshire SCIO,
56 Kelburn Street, G78 1LR, Barrhead

Please book your place, but feel free to come at any time between 4-7 pm.

Book your FREE place today!

To book go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/get-it-right-for-every-child-young-person-tickets-32468872271>

Student Carers in Higher Education Friday 24 March 2017

**Invitation: Student Carers in Higher Education:
Learning and Showcase Event, Friday 24 March
2017.**



We would be delighted if you would join us for the Student Carer in Higher Education - Showcase and Learning Exchange taking place at the **University of Strathclyde, Insight Institute, Collins Building, Glasgow G1 1XQ from 10.00 - 16.00 on Friday 24 March 2017.**

There is no national data on the number of students studying at university in Scotland who care, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction could not cope without their support. But research undertaken by Carers Trust found that 45% of student carers reported having mental health problems, 56% were experiencing difficulties because of their caring role and student carers are four times more likely to drop out of university than those who are not carers.

Our event will provide an opportunity to showcase some of the work that Carers Trust Scotland, universities and national higher education organisations have been undertaking to review and improve identification and support for student carers in Scotland. The event will also provide a platform to discuss the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and considerations for higher education institutions, as well as providing a stage for student carers' voices to be heard about their accounts in higher education and the challenges that they can experience in juggling life, unpaid caring and university. The event will also encourage dialogue between student carers, higher education professionals and decision makers who are present.

This event will aid in informing the university sector and governments on how to better support student carers.

Please **RSVP by Wednesday 15 March 2017** to scotland@carers.org or call us on **0300 123 2008**. Please also circulate this to appropriate colleagues, partners or carers that you are connected with who may be interested in attending.



**International Women's Day
8 March 2017**

Event will take place at 10am – 4pm at Deaf Action's office in Edinburgh

Accessible and free!

For more information contact: keah.kalaitzi@deafaction.org



For more information on International Women's Day including this year's theme #BeBoldForChange, go to <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Theme>

CONSULTATIONS



Discussion Document - National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan

Closes 28 Mar 2017

To ensure we have the right staff for our health and social care services now and in the future, we will publish a National Health and Social Care Workforce Plan in Spring 2017.

This Discussion Document seeks comments and views from individuals and organisations about the issues the National Plan will need to cover. It sets out ideas on workforce planning at national, regional and local level. And it asks questions about a number of key areas, including governance, workforce planning roles, workforce data and recruiting and retaining staff.

[Download the consultation paper.](#)

Why We Are Consulting

Scottish Ministers wish to ensure we have the right staff for our health and social care services now and in future. Different employers in health and social care are at different stages in planning for the workforce they need. It is essential that the roles they play, individually and collectively, and the areas they influence, are well understood. This Discussion Document seeks views on issues which will help improve planning for the health and social care workforce. These views will inform the development of the National Plan to be published in Spring 2017, so that the Plan can bring about improvements where they are needed both now and in future.

<https://consult.scotland.gov.uk/health-workforce/national-health-and-social-care-workforce-plan/>

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.

29th 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.

9th 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

Tel: 0141 314 0032

Fax: 0141 314 0026

SMS: 07979 748694

SSC

Course 25: Deafness and Additional/Complex Needs: Friday, 24th March, 2017

This course is for all professionals working with deaf young people either in mainstream or specialist provision.

This course will explore:

- developing awareness of the incidence and range of additional needs that can accompany deafness;
- understanding the impact of additional needs upon the developing deaf child;
- effective audiological management and assessment of hearing loss;
- understanding of your role as the supporting professional.

These objectives will be achieved through:

- Interactive teaching sessions.
- Workshops.
- Practical activities.
- Sharing of good practice.
- Signposting to resources.

Presenter:

Jane Peters, (ToD), Senior Lecturer Mary Hare Courses & Course leader MA/PGDip Educational Studies (Early Years and Deafness)

Course fee:

£110

Applications are available to download from the following link:

<http://www.ssc.education.ed.ac.uk/courses/deaf/dmar17.html>

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



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 . Or Tel: 07960 683328

VACANCIES

Moray House School of Education



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
The Moray House
School of Education

Two Secondment Opportunities

Institute of Education, Teaching and Leadership, Scottish Sensory Centre

Teachers of Deaf Children: Education CPD Organiser

We invite applications from qualified teachers of the deaf with relevant classroom experience of deaf children for the **seconded** post of 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).

For informal enquiries/discussion interested candidates may contact:

Professor John Ravenscroft

Co-ordinator

Scottish Sensory Centre

0131 651 6501

0131 651 6181 (direct line)

Email: john.ravenscroft@ed.ac.uk .

Skype: (video calls can be organised by arrangement).

NB: Before applying formally all candidates should have the approval of their employing authority to undertake this role.

Closing date for applications is: Friday 24th March 2017

Interview date: Friday 21st April 2017

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) 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 and for more information about Moray House School of Education go to www.ed.ac.uk/education .

CINEMA/THEATRE

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



Moonlight

Mon 27 Feb - Tue 2 March All Shows
(see GFT website listing [Moonlight](#) for details)

Trespass Against Us

Fri 3 March - Thu 9 March All Shows
(see GFT website listing [Trespass Against Us](#) for details)

Viceroy's House

Fri 3 Mar – Thu 16 Mar All Shows
(see GFT website listing [Viceroy's House](#) for details)

Dancer

Fri 10 March – Thu 16 March All Shows
(see GFT website listing [Dancer](#) for details)

Take 2: Ballerina

Sat 11 March (11.30)

(see GFT website listing [Take 2: Ballerina](#) for details)

Personal Shopper

Fri 17 March- Thu 23 March All Shows

(see GFT website listing [Personal Shopper](#) for details)

Sons and Mothers

Wed 22 March (18.00)

(see GFT website listing [Sons and Mothers](#) for details)

PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS, MOTIONS AND DEBATES

**S5O-00693 Specialist Care Services (Highlands and Islands)****Donald Cameron (Highlands and Islands) (Con):**

To ask the Scottish Government what action it is taking to ensure that there is access to local specialist care services across the Highlands and Islands.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health and Sport (Shona Robison):

National Health Service boards are responsible for planning and delivering healthcare services to meet the assessed needs of their resident populations, taking into account strategic frameworks and guidance, within the allocations provided.

Donald Cameron:

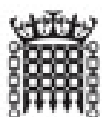
The cabinet secretary might be aware of the plight of Auchinlee care home in Campbeltown, which is under threat of closure. She might also know that, last week, the local integration joint board and the operator agreed to ensure that Auchinlee stays open for one more year. However, local people remain concerned that their loved ones might have to seek alternative support outwith Argyll and Bute if a long-term solution cannot be identified. What assurances can the cabinet secretary give people in the remoter parts of the Highlands and Islands that such care provision will continue to exist, given that suitable local alternatives are often not available?

Shona Robison:

I am aware that many people, including members such as Mike Russell, have been involved in trying to ensure that the capacity of local care facilities is maintained, and a lot of work has been done with the local health and care partnership to ensure that that is the case. I am aware of the challenges that are faced in remote and rural Scotland in ensuring that the right care is provided. Some of that care might well be provided in care home establishments—which must obviously be fit for purpose—but some of it will be provided in community-based facilities. In Highland, some highly innovative solutions have been brought in that have involved building capacity in local communities for those who require care support.

I will be happy to keep in contact with Donald Cameron on the issue. We would expect the local health and care partnerships to address such local matters, but my officials have been heavily involved in this particular matter, as I am sure Donald Cameron is aware, and I am very content for them to continue to be involved to make sure that we get the best solution for local people.

<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10798>



www.parliament.uk

HCWS495 Social Security: Written statement on Personal Independence Payment

Penny Mordaunt (Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work)

Today I am laying before Parliament amendments to the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) Regulations to restore the original aim of the benefit, making sure we are giving support to those who need it most.

PIP is a modern and dynamic benefit which contributes to the extra costs faced by people with disabilities and health conditions. It replaces Disability Living Allowance (DLA), which no longer properly took into account the needs of disabled people. Since PIP's introduction, greater support is going to the most vulnerable; over a quarter of those on PIP receive the highest level of support compared to just 15% of DLA's working-age claimants.

At the core of PIP's design is the principle that non-physical conditions should be given the same recognition as physical ones. That is why we developed the assessment criteria in collaboration with disabled people and independent specialists in health, social care and disability. Now, over two thirds of PIP claimants with mental health conditions get the higher Daily Living award, worth £82.30 per week, compared to 22% under DLA.

The Government continually monitors the effectiveness of PIP to ensure it is delivering its original policy intent and supporting those who face the greatest barriers to leading independent lives. Two recent Upper Tribunal judgments have broadened the way the PIP assessment criteria should be interpreted, going beyond the original intention. In order to make sure the initial purpose of PIP is maintained, we are making drafting amendments to the criteria which provide greater clarity. This will not result in any claimants seeing a reduction in the amount of PIP previously awarded by DWP.

The first judgment 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, like dialysis, undertaken at home. Until this ruling, the assessment made a distinction between these two groups, on the basis that people who need support to manage

therapy of this kind are likely to have a higher level of need, and therefore face higher costs.

The second held that someone who cannot make a journey without assistance due to psychological distress should be scored in the same way as a person who needs assistance because they have difficulties navigating. By way of example, the first group might include some people with isolated social phobia or anxiety, whereas the second group might include some people who are blind. Until this ruling, the assessment made a distinction between these two groups, on the basis that people who cannot navigate, due to a visual or cognitive impairment, are likely to have a higher level of need, and therefore face higher costs.

If not urgently addressed, the operational complexities could undermine the consistency of assessments, leading to confusion for all those using the legislation, including claimants, assessors, and the courts. It is because of the urgency caused by these challenges, and the implications on public expenditure, that proposals for these amendments have not been referred to the Social Security Advisory Committee before making the regulations.

PIP is being devolved to the Scottish Government and I will continue to work closely with Scottish Ministers on the transfer of responsibilities.

The Social Security (Personal Independence Payment) (Amendment) Regulations 2017, Explanatory Memorandum and Equality Analysis will be available on legislation.gov.uk.

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2017-02-23/HCWS495/>

908765 Personal Independence Payments
Sir David Amess (Southend West) (Con)

What recent representations he has received on the process for assessment and reassessment of personal independence payments.

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

I receive regular representations from disability organisations and hon. Members regarding personal independence payments. As I have previously stated, we want to do more to create real-time feedback across the whole country. We will shortly be introducing service user panels to feed directly back from claimants on PIP and employment and support allowance.

Sir David Amess

Unfortunately, I have to tell my hon. Friend that I am still receiving complaints from constituents about the procedures regarding personal independence payments, so what is she doing to improve the process, reduce delays and support people through what is often a traumatic assessment process?

Penny Mordaunt

The goal is clearly swift, accurate and admin-lite assessments. Good progress has already been made in many areas—for example, reducing the average time it takes for a claim from point of registration to decision by more than three quarters from over 40 weeks to 10 weeks as of October last year—but there is more to do. One reason we have set up the service user panels is that it is incredibly important to be aware that, while things may be generally going well, there are certain hotspot areas where they are not, and identifying those in real time is critical—but there are many other things in the PIP improvement plan as well.

Liz McInnes (Heywood and Middleton) (Lab)

Yet again, one of my constituents has been to see me about a PIP assessment that has led to her Motability vehicle being taken away from her. She is currently appealing, and I have written to the Minister about the case. What reassurance can she give me and my constituent that this vehicle, which she needs, will be returned to her?

Penny Mordaunt

There are 70,000 more people making use of the Motability scheme than there were in 2010. The hon. Lady will know that there are improvements that we want to make to the Motability scheme. We have been working very closely with that independent organisation; we are now attending its board meetings and are able to work much more strategically. I have spoken at length, so I will not repeat it, about the areas where we wish to see better customer service. We hope to be able to make some announcements shortly.

Mr Philip Hollobone (Kettering) (Con)

Will the Minister make strong representations to the Ministry of Justice that it should reduce the length of time that unsuccessful claimants are having to wait for their tribunal, so that they can process their claim successfully?

Penny Mordaunt

We are concerned with all aspects of the claims process, whether for ESA or PIP. We want this to be swift and admin-lite, and we have some opportunities, which I have already outlined, to achieve both those things.

Carol Monaghan (Glasgow North West) (SNP)

Last year, the Government announced that those with chronic progressive conditions would not be subjected to continual work capability assessments. Why are constituents of mine with progressive conditions like multiple sclerosis continually being called for reassessment?

Penny Mordaunt

If the hon. Lady has cases she wishes me to look at, she must write to me about them. We are currently still outlining the criteria for the scheme to be introduced, but in the meantime, as she will know, we do not wish to call people for reassessment who would be in that category, so if she has cases where that is happening, she must let me know.

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

At present, 65% of all claimants have their PIP appeal upheld by tribunal—an all-time high. It should be a source of huge embarrassment to the Government that,

even after the introduction of mandatory reconsideration before appeal, the majority of claimants who go to tribunal win their case. How does the Minister justify forcing vulnerable claimants to navigate the complex and gruelling process that the appeal system demands, often with little or no support? Will she now get a grip and reform this clearly broken system?

Penny Mordaunt

I welcome the hon. Lady to her post. She is not correct: 6% of the caseload is overturned, but there are many things that we wish to do to ensure that that is improved. Some opportunities will come after the consultation in the Green Paper with the reforms that we want to make to this part of the system to improve it and reduce the administrative burden on those also claiming PIP.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-02-20/debates/C866BE9F-908D-4076-BE94-C70953A91A34/PersonalIndependencePayments>

PIP Assessments

908776 Holly Lynch (Halifax) (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)

We are committed to ensuring that claimants receive high-quality, objective, fair and accurate assessments. The Department monitors assessment quality through independent audit. Assessments deemed unacceptable are returned to the provider for reworking. A range of measures, including provider improvement plans, address performance falling below expected standards.

Holly Lynch

My constituent Neville Cartwright is living with just one lung following a battle with lung cancer, yet he lost his Motability car when his PIP was cut last year. He began his appeal in June, but has still not had a tribunal hearing. Does the Minister agree that an eight-month wait to find out the result of an appeal is totally unacceptable?

Penny Mordaunt

I do agree with the hon. Lady, which is why we have been trying to work more strategically with Motability, thrashing through the issues I am very aware of on appeals and on matters such as when an individual leaves the country. We are looking to reduce the amount of time that appeals take and at what we can do with the running of the scheme so that the precise scenario she outlines does not happen.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-02-20/debates/31146194-F445-4BC8-9A80-3A15F1F9B5E5/PIPAssessments>

Personal Independence Payments

Stephen Timms (East Ham) (Lab)

(Urgent Question): To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to make a statement on the cuts to entitlement to personal independence payment.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Damian Green)

Recent legal judgments have interpreted the assessment criteria for PIP in ways that are different from what was originally intended by the coalition Government. We are therefore now making amendments to clarify the criteria used to decide how much benefit claimants receive in order to restore the original aim of the policy previously agreed by Parliament, which followed extensive consultation.

I want to be clear about what this is not. It is not a policy change, and nor is it intended to make new savings. I reiterate my commitment that there will be no further welfare savings beyond those already legislated for. This will not result in any claimant seeing a reduction in the amount of PIP previously awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions.

Mental health conditions and physical disabilities that lead to higher costs will continue to be supported, as has always been the case. The Government are committed to ensuring that our welfare system provides a strong safety net for those who need it. That is why we spend about £50 billion to support people with disabilities and health conditions, and we are investing more in mental health than ever before, spending a record £11.4 billion a year.

Personal independence payments are part of that support, and they provide support towards the additional costs that disabled people face. At the core of PIP's design is the principle that support should be made available according to need, rather than a certain condition, whether physical or non-physical. PIP is also designed to focus more support on those who are likely to have higher costs associated with their disability. PIP works better than disability living allowance for those with mental health conditions. For example, there are more people with mental health conditions receiving the higher rates of PIP than there were under the old DLA system.

This is about restoring the original intention of the benefit, which has been expanded by the legal judgments. It is entirely appropriate for the Government to act to restore clarity to the law, as Governments have done before and will no doubt continue to do in the future.

Stephen Timms

In a written statement published without warning on Thursday, Ministers announced the cuts to which the Secretary of State has just referred, which will take effect in two weeks' time. Over the weekend, another Member in government said that this was to stop the payment of benefits to people

“taking pills at home, who suffer from anxiety”.

Why is so little notice being given, with no opportunity at all for parliamentary scrutiny of these substantial cuts? Will the Secretary of State confirm, as stated in the impact assessment published with the regulations, that people suffering from schizophrenia, learning disability, autism and dementia will be among those worst affected by the cuts? The cut is being achieved by taking the benefit away from people whose

mobility impairments are the result of “psychological distress”. According to the wording of the regulations, they will no longer be entitled to benefit. Does that not directly contradict the Prime Minister’s commitment to treat mental health on a par with physical health?

Damian Green

I thought every part of that question was based in error, if I may say so. Nobody is losing money compared with what they were originally awarded by the DWP, so that part of the right hon. Gentleman’s question is simply factually incorrect.

Far from being slipped out, the Department made a huge effort to let people know that this was happening. I left a message for the shadow Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Oldham East and Saddleworth (Debbie Abrahams), and I spoke to the Chairman of the Work and Pensions Committee, the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Frank Field). I know that my hon. Friend the Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work also spoke to a number of colleagues, so the idea that this was slipped out is simply ridiculous.

The right hon. Gentleman talks about individual conditions, and I can only repeat what I said earlier: PIP is awarded not for conditions, but for the living or mobility difficulties that result from such conditions. All that the regulations do is to restore the situation to what it was in late November, before the two court judgments. This is not a new policy or a spending cut; this is simply restoring the benefit to what was intended when it was first introduced under the coalition Government.

Stephen Crabb (Preseli Pembrokeshire) (Con)

Does my right hon. Friend agree that any welfare payment, especially one providing a tiered range of cash payments to people living with enormously diverse physical and mental conditions, requires clear assessment criteria and clarity in law? The new regulations will restore precision to the law, which will benefit all users of the system.

Damian Green

I completely agree with my right hon. Friend, who obviously has huge expertise in this area, that we need clarity. In particular, the vulnerable people receiving PIP deserve clarity. I reassure them and the House that all the regulations will do is to restore us to the situation that everyone knew they were in late last year, and in which they have been ever since PIP was introduced.

Debbie Abrahams (Oldham East and Saddleworth) (Lab)

As we have heard, on Thursday the Government issued the new regulations by which disabled people or people with a chronic condition will be assessed for eligibility for personal independence payments. PIP helps disabled people to fund their living costs and, in particular, the additional costs that they face because of their condition. The regulations will come into force in just over two weeks’ time, but they were issued without any consultation with the Social Security Advisory Committee. The Government have said that this is because of the urgency of the issue.

The Government are in effect overturning two tribunal rulings that allow chronic “psychological distress” to be included in the PIP assessment. However, if the Secretary of State was so unhappy with the tribunal rulings, why did he not use his

powers under sections 25 and 26 of the Social Security Act 1998 and regulations 21 and 22 of the Social Security and Child Support (Decisions and Appeals) Regulations 1999 to challenge those rulings in the courts?

The Secretary of State's actions not only undermine the judicial process, but reduce eligibility to PIP support for over 164,000 people with debilitating mental health conditions, including those not able to go outside their own homes. What discussions has the Secretary of State had with disabled people's organisations ahead of bringing forward these regulations? What is his assessment of the effects on the health and wellbeing of the people affected by the cuts? Given that disabled people are twice as likely to live in poverty as non-disabled people as a result of the extra costs they face, how many disabled people will be driven into debt or face poverty as a result of these cuts? What is the cumulative effect of these cuts along with the employment and support allowance work-related activity group cuts that are due to come into effect in April, which will affect 500,000 disabled people? Finally, why are the Government contradicting their earlier argument in the 2015 upper tribunal case of *HL v. the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions* in which they argued that "psychological distress" should be included in PIP assessments?

We have been arguing for parity of esteem for mental health with physical health for some time now. Indeed, the Prime Minister famously said that people with mental health conditions need more support. Why will the Government not honour that?

Damian Green

Let me deal with some of the detailed points raised by the hon. Lady. Incidentally, we are appealing the judgments, but because of the lack of clarity that would be caused by leaving the current regulations in limbo following the upper tribunal's decisions, it is better to move quickly. I should also say that the tribunal has itself said that the assessment criteria are not clear. If the tribunal believes that, I am more than happy to accept it—indeed, I am grateful to it for telling us that the criteria are not clear—so I am now taking the opportunity to clarify the existing regulations.

The hon. Lady talked about the effect on disabled people. I absolutely agree with her that that is the central core of what we are trying to do. I point out to her that over two thirds of PIP recipients with a mental health condition get the enhanced rate daily living component, compared with just 22% who used to receive the highest rate of DLA care. That is why PIP is a better benefit than DLA. That happened previously under the existing regulations, and I am now restoring that situation.

The hon. Lady's questions were predicated on this being a cut. It is simply not a cut; it is not entirely honest of her to say that it is a cut. If she looks at the facts of the case, she will recognise that people claiming PIP—specifically those with mental health conditions—have been and are better off with PIP. We are making the benefit clear. We are making the change so that the benefit is paid as it has been since it was first introduced, which is better for people, particularly those with mental health conditions.

To read the rest of the debate, go to <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2017-02-28/debates/1BC73580-FC7B-4DDA-9B66-B47A33894733/PersonalIndependencePayments>



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