

# Action Cerebral Palsy

## Political & Parliamentary Monitoring

### Week Commencing 15<sup>th</sup> October 2018

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond, has announced that this year's Budget will be held on October 29<sup>th</sup>, as speculation rises that tax increases are in the pipeline to provide extra funding for the increase in NHS spending. Theresa May announced at the Conservative Party Conference that, by in large, austerity was over, and that Government spending would now begin to increase at a faster rate than the public had experienced over the last eight years.

Theresa May's announcement, coupled with the Government's plans for an additional £20 billion in funding for the NHS by 2021/22, will put additional strain on The Treasury, which has also committed itself to 'fiscal restraint'. Now, Mr Hammond has said that "people will have to contribute a little extra in the future to pay for our ageing population", adding "that will mean a little more tax to pay for the service".

These comments have caused division in the Conservative Party, with Brexit Secretary, Dominic Raab, saying that he would much rather focus on cutting waste than increasing taxes. Pro-remain MPs, such as Anna Soubry, have also pounced on comments, questioning why the additional funding for the NHS is coming from taxation rather than dividend that the Leave campaign claimed could be injected in to the National Health Service.

At the same time, a group of health faculties and royal colleges have urged the Chancellor to use the Budget to invest long-term in adult social care and health services, or "risk the NHS failing to meet demands". The letter, jointly signed by 11 institutions, including the Royal College of Physicians and the Royal College of Surgeons, reminds Mr Hammond that a healthier population is key to the long-term sustainability of public services.

***ACP will welcome any additional funding for the NHS, with the understanding the early diagnosis and treatment has the potential to save money in the longer term. Whitehouse will also be making representation to Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, regarding investment in better provision and services for children with cerebral palsy.***

## Overview

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## New funding round to test programmes to improve SEN student outcomes

[A new funding round](#) of the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) will test different programmes and strategies to improve attainment and other outcomes for children with special educational needs disabilities, it has been announced. The Education Endowment Foundation is an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement, and invests in programmes to create a more accessible education system. Official figures show that there is a larger attainment gap for pupils with SEND than any other group, with students with disabilities twice as likely to come from disadvantaged homes compared to their peers without special needs.

In 2016, just 14 per cent of pupils with SEND achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and maths at age 11, compared to an average of 53 per cent amongst that age group. Additionally, students with special needs may face additional challenges when trying to access teaching and facilities, and thus struggle to receive the same face-to-face teaching hours as other students. The new funding round is both an opportunity to test SEND projects and learn more about best practice, and will allow schools developing new programmes to fund this. Projects could include pilots to increase inclusiveness, or targeted intervention for pupils with particular needs.

To date, the EEF's funding has focused on improving the outcomes of socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. Much of this work has generated evidence which has helped the wider education sector adapt and improve. Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of the EEF, said, "Pupils with special educational needs may face significant challenges in their learning... whilst much of our work to date has relevance to teaching pupils with special educational needs, I'm pleased that – for the first time – we're committing to fund projects focused specifically on improving outcomes for this group".

***This news will interest ACP, given its campaign to increase provision for students with SEND. Whitehouse will inquire with the EEF about whether there have been any applications for funding projects or programmes centred on cerebral palsy. Where necessary we will then engage with the EEF and programme leads.***

## GP trainee recruitment target surpassed for the first time

Secretary of State for Health & Social Care, Matt Hancock MP, has [announced](#) that nearly 3,500 GP trainees were recruited this year, above the 3,250 target set for 2017/18 and a rise of ten per cent on last year. Speaking to the Best Practice conference, Mr Hancock announced that “we have a record number of GPs in training”, adding that NHS England is on track to see an increase in the number of other staff working in general practice rising by 5,000 by 2020.

Celebrating the news, Mr Hancock said that working in General Practice should have the same prestige as being a consultant or a surgeon, because of their role as “the bedrock of the NHS”. Mr Hancock also announced that the NHS needed to explore new business modes, including mutuals, whereby clients own part of the business. Reacting to the news about GP numbers, Dr Krishna Kasaraneni, a British Medical Association GP Committee Executive Workforce Lead, said that, whilst he welcomed the news, we must not forget that new GPs take ten years to train and that, without urgent action and investment, more doctors will leave the profession.

Mr Kasaraneni added that “whilst the Health Secretary again promises an extra 5,000 GPs in the workforce, the Government continues to push the deadline for achieving this back as overall numbers dwindle”, adding that “while the news on recruitment is very welcome, there is still more work to be done on retention.” Additional GPs are required in the Health Service if it is to meet the rising demand. At the same time, this winter is set to be the busiest on record, with multiple hospitals [warning](#) of staff and funding shortages.

***ACP will welcome the news that additional GPs are now undergoing training compared with a year ago, especially given the long delays in diagnosis, referral and treatment which many young people experience in the National Health Service. Whitehouse is in the process of writing to Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, to highlight the need to properly resource cerebral palsy provision as part of its 10-Year Forward Plan.***

## Isolation rooms used to remove pupils with SEND from classroom

An [investigation](#) for the *Schools Week* publication has found that a majority of primary and secondary schools are using isolation rooms in order to remove ‘troubling’ and ‘distracting’ pupils from mainstream lessons. Research for the specialist magazine found that over two-thirds of the country’s largest academy trusts have schools that use some form of isolation, although with varying labels from “inclusion units” and “consequence booths” to “time-out spaces” and “calm rooms”. At least four academy trusts use isolation and intervention spaces on primary school pupils.

Whilst exact policies regarding how long students are excluded for varies between different academy trusts, the maximum time that secondary school pupils can be excluded from the classroom, without a permanent exclusion, is a week. Some trusts said that pupils in exclusion units received similar tasks and lessons to that of their peers who remained in class, though others admitted that students in the units were instructed to use online resources. The news that exclusion units are now commonplace in both primary and secondary schools has sparked concern, as students with underlying special needs are often more likely to be forced to use them.

Many academy trusts informed *Schools Week* that isolation rooms are an alternative to fixed-term exclusions. Given the recent news that disproportionately high numbers of pupils with SEND have been excluded from school and labelled 'disruptive', there is widespread concern that exclusion units may also be creating a vicious circle for students with special needs. Paul Dix, Chair of the alternative-provision TBAP Multi-Academy Trust, told the investigation that he believed more than 80 per cent of pupils in any isolation room were likely to have additional needs. Leora Cruddas, Chief Executive of the Confederation of School Trusts, said that interventions should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, whilst the Department for Education – which does not require schools to record data on the number of pupils referred to exclusion units – has yet to comment.

***This news will concern ACP greatly. Given the rise in the number of SEND pupils unfairly excluded from schools in a practice known as 'off-rolling', to hear this may also be happening within academies and state-maintained schools is alarming. Forcing pupils with SEND out of the classroom environment and away from their friends and peers detrimentally effects educational attainment and prevents cohesion, potentially inhibiting their development.***