

Dear Colleagues,

2020-7 Public Services: Health & Social Care; Education

Thank you to everybody who participated in our consultation on workers and families. If you have not already seen the public summary of our consultation on [infrastructure, investment and devolution](#), then do take a look at our website. As usual, a more detailed summary was sent to the relevant Party and Government leaders.

Following the well-deserved peerage bestowed upon Andrew Sharpe, who has been a veritable champion for the CPF on the Party Board since June 2017, Groups will be pleased to note that the Board has formally appointed Peter Booth as our new CPF Vice-Chairman. We are grateful to Lord Sharpe for helping us to raise the profile of the CPF and we trust that those of you who do not already know Peter will have the opportunity to meet him in due course.

This discussion paper continues our series considering the Government's programme for legislation, as presented in last December's Queen's Speech, by exploring another of its major sections—namely, public services. As this is a large area, we would encourage groups to **split the consultation over two meetings**: one for health and social care, another for education. Both sets of questions directly affect young people, so we would strongly encourage you to get the input of younger members in your constituency/constituencies.

A couple of groups have recently suggested that CPF "not be afraid to adjust its annual programme" and that we allow "time to fit in other topics of local concern." In view of this and the above suggestion to discuss this paper over two meetings, we are extending the advertised deadline for submissions to **24th January**. This means that the schedule for the subsequent discussion papers will be adjusted accordingly:

Topic	Publication date	Submissions deadline
The Union and Constitution	25 January 2021	21 March 2021
The Justice System	10 May 2021	4 July 2021
Tell No.10 (member-led topic to be confirmed)	5 July 2021	5 September 2021

Please send your responses to the questions in this paper to CPF.Papers@conservatives.com, using the associated response form published alongside the paper on the CPF website.

A summary of responses to this consultation paper will be sent to the Prime Minister's Policy Unit, relevant Ministers, Party Chairman and CPF Chairman by the end of January. We look forward to hearing your ideas as, together, we continue to level up the country and unleash its potential.

Kind regards,

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The Big Picture

"The idea that every child, in every part of the country, should have a fair chance...is not only the most important thing we can do to unleash the UK's potential, but is at the heart of creating a fair and just society." (2019 Conservative & Unionist Party Manifesto, p.13)¹

Delivering on our manifesto promise for a long-term NHS plan, the Government began the year by enshrining in law the largest cash settlement in NHS history, placing a legal duty on the Government to guarantee a minimum level of spending every year.² (See p.4 for details of further recent action.)

In the spring, the CPF held its consultation on the government's response to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. From the first of our weekly reports, CPF groups were clear in warning of "the damaging impact that the current restrictions are having on many areas of our national life—from individuals' physical and mental health to the education of school children and university students."³

Several months on, the early indicators have become clearer. A government report in July concluded that "the health impacts from a lockdown and lockdown induced recession are greater...than the direct COVID-19 deaths." It cautioned, "Much of the health impact, particularly in terms of morbidity, will be felt long after the pandemic is assumed to last. ... The main morbidity impacts of the lockdown are expected to come from an estimated increase in musculoskeletal conditions, increased domestic abuse, and increased mental health problems."⁴

Another government report expressed concern in September over the "disproportionate impact of some of the measures taken to stop the spread of the disease" on, among other areas, children's education, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).⁵ According to education charities, this is expected to have "substantial negative labour market impacts for those from less-well off groups, their chances of social mobility, and on the economy in general."⁶

All of this reinforces why we pledged in our manifesto to use part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund⁷ to "give disadvantaged people the skills they need to make a success of life."¹

Part One: Health & Social Care

"We already know that we need a fairer system for paying for care, that protects people from the exorbitant costs that require them to sell their home. And that we need to get more money overall into social care and fix the funding shortfall. Achieving this will involve bold reforms, not just about funding, but also effective structures for oversight and accountability." (Health & Social Care Secretary, Rt Hon Matt Hancock MP)⁸

In response to the 2018 CPF consultation on health and social care,⁹ CPF Groups highlighted that "Health outcomes are the most important measure of success." Specific proposals included:

- Integrate NHS & Social Care budgets and consider making CCGs accountable to their local population by devolving responsibility to regionally-elected "Health Commissioners".
- Publicise and implement the Dilnot Commission's recommendations.¹⁰

As part of our manifesto commitments to reduce health inequality and to treat mental health with the same urgency as physical health, the Health & Social Care Secretary has since set out two goals for the NHS: to extend healthy life expectancy by five years by 2035; and to increase public confidence in the NHS by making the NHS "as good at process and admin as it is at medicine."¹¹

Questions for discussion

1. Should the Government play a role in local NHS decision-making? If so, in what ways?
2. How could the health and social care systems be joined up better?
3. What mental health support would you expect from central government and from workplaces?
4. How can we best provide support for children and young people's mental health?
5. Is there any other observation you would like to make?

Part Two: Education

"There has never been a more important time to speak about mental health and wellbeing – especially for thousands of children, young people and teachers who are adapting to education and different ways of living and learning in these unprecedented times."
(Children and Families Minister, Vicky Ford MP)¹²

In 2017 we held a consultation on higher education.¹³ CPF Groups proposed measures such as:

- Establish an open, transparent and fair, national clearing-house for apprenticeships, just as we have UCAS for university places.
- More transparency and accountability on university costs.
- Immediately abolish the 6% compound interest rate on university loans.

In May 2019, a wide-ranging review of post-18 education led by Dr Philip Augar was published.¹⁴ As our manifesto noted, this "made thoughtful recommendations on tuition fee levels, the balance of funding between universities, further education and apprenticeships and adult learning."¹

Delivering on our manifesto commitment to invest in schools and technical education, the Government recently announced a Lifetime Skills Guarantee. This will give adults the chance to take free college courses valued by employers and to obtain flexible loans that allow courses to be taken in segments, boosting opportunities to retrain and enhancing the nation's technical skills.¹⁵

Questions for discussion

6. To what extent should the awarding of A-Level and GCSE grades in 2021 seek to recognise that some students will have faced more disruption this year than others? In what circumstances, if any, should provision be made for some students to get a grade without sitting an exam?
7. How can we best keep universities open and ensure a fair deal for students?
8. What are the most important interventions the Government should make to support further education, retraining and technical/vocational skills?
9. Is there any other observation you would like to make?

The Queen's Speech

The Queen's Speech¹⁶ set out a variety of measures to support public services:

- Legislation will enshrine in law the **largest cash settlement** in the NHS's history and we will deliver the **NHS Long Term Plan** in England to ensure our health service is fit for the future.
- A **Medicines and Medical Devices Bill** will ensure that our NHS and patients can have faster access to innovative medicines, while supporting the growth of our domestic sector.
- We will also establish the world's first independent body—the **Health Service Safety Investigations Body** (HSSIB)—to investigate patient safety concerns and share recommendations to prevent similar incidents recurring.
- We will provide extra funding for **social care** and will urgently seek cross-party consensus for much needed long-term **reform** so that nobody needing care should be forced to sell their home to pay for it.
- We will continue work to modernise and **reform the Mental Health Act** to ensure people get the support they need, with a much greater say in their care.
- We will increase levels of funding per pupil to ensure all children can access a high quality **education**.

Recent Government Action

- Linking up the NHS and social care at a local level through the Better Care Fund, ensuring services are more joined up for patients.¹⁷
- Publishing a new adult social care winter plan, to help curb the spread of COVID-19 throughout the winter months. This includes limiting the movement of staff between care homes and delivering free PPE for care workers and for people receiving social care.¹⁸
- Launching the largest hospital building program in a generation: to build 40 new hospitals and upgrade 20 more, including 300 new MRI and CT scanners;¹⁹ and to modernise the mental health estate and expand A&E capacity.²⁰
- Legislating in 2012 for parity of esteem to the treatment of mental health, with plans to reform the Mental Health Act to give people greater control over their treatment, so that they receive the dignity and respect they deserve.²¹
- Expanding access to community-based mental health services, providing counselling, mentoring and wellbeing programmes, including school and college-based mental health support teams, to meet the needs of more children and young people.²²
- Levelling up funding across the country, so every pupil in every school gets a funding boost.²³
- Establishing free schools and academies, so more children have access to a good school place. The 500 free schools that have opened since 2010 have created 133,000 school places across the country. Over 40 per cent are in the 30 per cent most deprived communities in the country and 18 per cent of all free schools are dedicated to special needs or alternative provision.²⁴
- Introducing new inspection measures to boost standards in schools, enabling Ofsted to conduct longer inspections covering the full breadth of a school's activity, no notice inspections, and end inspection exemptions for outstanding schools.²⁵

Endnotes

¹ *Get Brexit Done, Unleash Britain's Potential*, The Conservative and Unionist Party Manifesto 2019, [link](#)

² *NHS funding bill enters Parliament*, Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), 15 January 2020, [link](#)

³ *Summary of CPF consultation on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic*, CPF, 21 May 2020, [link](#)

⁴ *Direct and Indirect Impacts of COVID-19 on Excess Deaths and Morbidity*, DHSC, Office for National Statistics, Government Actuary's Department and Home Office, 15 July 2020, [link](#). Also Rice K et al, *Effect of school closures on mortality from coronavirus disease 2019: old and new predictions*, BMJ, 7 October 2020; [371:m3588](#)

⁵ *The Government's response to COVID-19: human rights implications*, Joint Committee on Human Rights, 14 Sept 2020, [link](#)

⁶ *Lost Learning, Lost Earnings*, The Sutton Trust, 1 October 2020, [link](#). Also *Learning during the lockdown: real-time data on children's experiences during home learning*, Institute for Fiscal Studies, 18 May 2020, [link](#)

⁷ *The UK Shared Prosperity Fund*, House of Commons Library, 22 May 2020, [link](#)

⁸ *The future of healthcare*, DHSC, 30 July 2020, [link](#)

⁹ *Health and Social Care Summary*, CPF, 1 June 2018, [link](#)

¹⁰ *Fairer Funding for All*, Commission on Funding of Care and Support, July 2011, [link](#). Also *Social care: Announcements delaying the introduction of funding reforms (including the cap) (England)*, House of Commons Library, 23 Feb 2018, [link](#)

¹¹ *Putting the national, the health and service into NHS*, DHSC, 27 February 2020, [link](#)

¹² *Extra mental health support for pupils and teachers*, Department for Education, 7 June 2020, [link](#)

¹³ *New Deal for a New Generation?*, CPF, 31 January 2018, [link](#)

¹⁴ *Review of Post-18 Education and Funding*, Department for Education, May 2019, [link](#)

¹⁵ *Major expansion of post-18 education and training to level up and prepare workers for post-COVID economy*, Prime Minister's Office, 29 September 2020, [link](#)

¹⁶ *The Queen's Speech 2019*, Prime Minister's Office, 19 December 2019, [link](#)

¹⁷ *Better Care Fund*, NHS England, [link](#)

¹⁸ *New plan to help protect care homes from coronavirus over winter*, DHSC, 18 September 2020, [link](#)

¹⁹ *New hospital building programme announced*, DHSC, 29 September 2019, [link](#)

²⁰ *PM: A New Deal for Britain*, Prime Minister's Office, 30 June 2020, [link](#)

²¹ *Queen's Speech Background Briefing*, Prime Minister's Office, 19 December 2019, [link](#)

²² *NHS Long Term Plan*, NHS England, 7 January 2019, [link](#)

²³ *Every pupil in England to see another rise in funding in 2021*, Department for Education, 20 July 2020, [link](#)

²⁴ *PM pledges thousands more good school places*, Prime Minister's Office, 9 September 2019, [link](#)

²⁵ *Government announces plans for universal school inspections*, Department for Education, 10 January 2020, [link](#)