



HANSARD - 12 January 2011

Richard Burden (*Birmingham, Northfield, Labour*)

To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to ensure that disabled children are able to access the health services that they require.

Under Secretary of State (*Public Health, Health; Guildford, Conservative*)

The Government is committed to improving the lives of children and young people who are disabled and providing more support for their families and carers. This is reflected in this year's Operating Framework, where we identify disabled children as a specific group that the national health service should pay particular attention to when commissioning and providing services. Subject to the passage of the Health and Social Care Bill, the NHS and public health reforms will also provide a significant opportunity to improve the range and quality of services available to children and young people with disabilities and complex needs. The role of health and well-being boards, which will include local authority directors of children's services as a core member, will play a key role in examining the health needs of their local population, including children and young people, and designing a joint health and well-being strategy to meet those needs.

This strategy will also be informed by local people—again including all children and young people—through the local HealthWatch. Again, HealthWatch will be a member of each health and well-being board, well positioned to ensure the strategy properly reflects the needs of the local population.

Our reforms propose that clinical commissioning groups and local authorities' commissioning plans should be informed by the local joint health and well-being strategy—including services for children and young people. In addition, many of the indicators within the NHS and Public Health Outcomes Frameworks, either directly or indirectly require improvements in services for all children and young people. **HANSARD -**