



Queen's Speech

2021

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A photograph of Queen Elizabeth II wearing a light blue hat and a grey jacket with a floral pattern, seated in the ornate interior of the House of Commons. The background features gold-colored carvings and a red wall.

Opening Analysis

The Government's second Queen's Speech was delivered with the same confident rhetoric of previous set pieces. The overall theme was one of 'building back' bigger, better, safer, fairer and greener through a raft of legislation announcements and key policy pledges.

The Government pushed forward with a selection of hyper-sensitive and controversial constitutional reform measures, such as introducing a requirement for voter ID and repealing the Fixed-term Parliaments Act, which saw many commentators question the motives behind the announcements. The Runnymede Trust, for example, suggested that the ID proposals would disproportionately affect BME and working class voters.

A lot of the speech did not come as a surprise as many of the measures had been announced before, such as the Advanced Research and Invention Agency (originally the pet project of Dominic Cummings), the much-promised ban on conversion therapy and the long-delayed Environment Bill.

Some proposals were clearly designed with the Government's levelling-up agenda in mind, ensuring the Conservatives continue to enjoy the favour of their new northern seats. For example, the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill will help adults to retrain later in life, with Boris Johnson describing the policy as 'the rocket fuel that we need to level up this country and ensure equal opportunities for all'.

Aside from the measures in the speech, many critics noted matters which it didn't address. Energy and environmental stakeholders were concerned that the speech didn't outline policy to match the ambition of the Government's targets, despite the fact that the UK will be hosting the UN climate change conference COP26 later this year. Another area which has not gone down well with interested parties was social care, which appears to have been kicked into the long grass as the speech merely noted that proposals 'will be brought forward'. Labour leader Keir Starmer claimed it was 'unforgivable that there is no clear plan to fix social care'.

Despite criticism over these stark absences, the Prime Minister defended his Government's programme with bullish ease – a comfortable majority and strong local electoral performance meant today was an opportunity to once again remind his opposition and the public of his growing record of successes.



Beating COVID and Backing the NHS

Today's speech recognises the intense pressure that the health and care system has been under during the pandemic and promises to provide more funding to help the NHS recover as well as long-term reform. The Health and Care Bill commits to a more 'integrated, efficient and accountable' health and care system that is largely based on the NHS Long Term Plan and includes measures such as rolling out Integrated Care Systems across the country. Health improvement continues to be a core component for reform, with promises made on tackling obesity and smoking. Despite these measures, this Queen's speech is likely more notable for what it is missing. The Government has repeated its promise to bring forward proposals on social care, however, details on their plans are lacking, and no legislation has been promised. What is also absent from this Queen's Speech is any indication that the Government will reform terminal illness rules in benefits or publish its long overdue review.

Health and Care Bill

- The Health and Care Bill will lay forward the foundations for a more integrated, efficient and accountable health and care system. This will level up health and care outcomes across the country and build on the proposals set forward in the Long Term Plan.

Key elements of the Bill:

- Integrated Care Systems will be implemented in every part of the country.
- The newly integrated NHS England will be accountable to Government.
- Junk food adverts pre-9pm watershed will be banned and there will be a total online ban.
- The Health and Safety Investigation Branch will be placed on a statutory footing.

Social Care Reform

- The Government is committed to improving the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals in 2021.
- The Health and Care Bill will include provisions to improve the oversight of how social care is commissioned and delivered including facilitating greater integration between health and care services. This Bill will also include provisions get better data and evidence about the care that is delivered locally.

Mental Health Act Reform

- The Government will bring forward reform to the Mental Health Act, as laid out in January's White Paper. The reform will address the current processes on detention and care, and change the law around how people with a learning disability or autism are treated under the Act.

Prevention

- The new Office for Health Promotion will work across the Government to improve health. It will help the whole health system focus on delivering greater action on prevention.
- The Government will restrict the promotions on high fat, salt and sugar food including banning junk food adverts pre-9pm watershed on TV and a total ban online.
- They will introduce secondary legislation to require large out-of-home sector businesses with 250 or more employees to calorie label the food they sell.
- The Environment Bill will include ambitious new air quality targets, with a focus on reducing public health impacts
- A new Tobacco Control Plan will be published later this year, which will focus on levelling up health outcomes.
- The Government is committed to developing a long-term approach to the supply and demand of illicit drugs and testing approaches to reducing harmful recreational drug use.

Vaccines Programme

- The Government is on course to meet the target of offering vaccines to all adults by the end of July 2021. The Government plans a booster vaccine campaign later this year and into the longer term.

NHS Catch-up and Recovery Plan

- The Government will continue to back the NHS as non-urgent services recover and NHS waiting lists are addressed.

Social Care Reform

- The Government will listen and engage with the adult social care workforce.

Mental Health Act Reform

- Reforming the Mental Health Act (Closed Consultation) – Government will respond to closed consultation later this year.

Reaction



Richard Torbett, Chief Executive of the ABPI:

“The response to the pandemic has shown just how critical the UK’s pharmaceutical industry is to our country’s future and the Queen’s Speech has set the ambition for the UK to lead the world in life sciences.

“New NHS legislation will provide a once-in-a-decade opportunity to embed research at the heart of the NHS. During COVID-19, we’ve seen more patients, staff and NHS sites engage in research than ever before and we need to keep this active approach and apply it across every disease.

“Investment in research and skills must support this vision. Plans to boost R&D funding and improve education and training can support our members make the UK a life sciences superpower.”

<https://www.abpi.org.uk/media-centre/news/2021/may/abpi-response-to-queens-speech/#3cff6ff4>



Nuffield Trust Deputy Director of Policy Natasha Curry:

“Further delay to social care reform is a betrayal of the promises made by this government in its manifesto to give people who need care the dignity and security they deserve. From the absence of any detail included in the speech today, it seems the commitments from the Prime Minister are becoming vaguer as time goes on.

<https://www.nuffieldtrust.org.uk/news-item/nuffield-trust-further-delay-to-social-care-reform-a-betrayal-of-commitments-made-by-government>



Danny Mortimer, chief executive of the NHS Confederation:

Nearly two years ago, the Prime Minister Boris Johnson, delivering his first speech, promised the nation that his Government would finally address decades of delay and ‘fix the crisis in social care once and for all’. Yet two years into his premiership, this promise has failed to materialise.

“It is disappointing and disheartening that the Government has once again kicked the issue into the long grass, which means the very real risk that no real progress will now be made on this issue during this Parliament. Social care reform is desperately required, and we need a timetable for reform now, not at some distant future point, and this must be coupled with significant long-term investment.

<https://www.nhsconfed.org/news/2021/05/absence-of-social-care-in-queen-s-speech-disappointing-and-disheartening>



Responding to the Queen’s speech, Dr Jennifer Dixon, Chief Executive of the Health Foundation, said:

‘The Government’s stated desire to address inequalities through the levelling up agenda is welcome but plans for skills, jobs and infrastructure need to be delivered in ways that will improve the health and wellbeing of people across the UK. More than a third of 25-to 64-year-olds in the areas of England with the lowest healthy life expectancy are unable to work because of illness or disability. A lot of ill health is avoidable, and a healthy population is a key asset for long-term economic recovery.’

<https://health.org.uk/news-and-comment/news/queens-speech-shows-government-recognises-major-health-challenges-but-not-scale>

Reaction



Ian Birrell

'Proposals on social care reform will be brought forward. Another promise of reform. No plan, despite Johnson's promise when taking office. No sign of real action. No sign of compassion for a battered and shattered sector

[#QueensSpeech](#)



@PippaCrerar

'Boris Johnson promised 22 months ago a "clear plan we have prepared" to fix the social care crisis "once and for all".

In today's Queen's Speech, this urgent issue only warranted NINE words: "Proposals on social care reform will be brought forward".'

<https://twitter.com/PippaCrerar/status/1392090819654455296>



Building Back Better: Jobs and Economy

As we move into the recovery phase post-Covid and adapt to a future outside of the European Union, the Government's levelling up agenda will play a fundamental role in securing the UK's future prosperity, including investment in infrastructure and jobs for the future. In this aim, the Queen's Speech focused heavily on education and skills – with a Lifetime Skills Guarantee which aims to balance out opportunity across the UK, so people can find quality jobs where they grew up. It will be important to show voters, especially in the North of England and the Midlands that 'levelling up' is more than just a slogan if the Conservatives want to secure the red wall votes they gained in the last general election and the recent local elections. The Government's new parliamentary agenda also seeks to even out regional inequalities in terms of infrastructure, with plans to push forward with the Crewe to Manchester part of HS2 as well as rail and bus reform. The new UK Infrastructure Bank will de-risk infrastructure projects and attract investment and will provide funding that could previously have been secured through the European Investment Bank. The Government have promised to publish a Levelling Up White Paper later this year.

Levelling Up

The Government will publish a landmark Levelling Up White Paper later this year, setting out bold new policy interventions to improve livelihoods and opportunity in all parts of the UK. The White Paper will build on actions the Government is already taking to level up across the UK such as the Levelling Up Fund, the Towns Fund, establishing eight Freeports in England, the £400m 'Strength In Places' Fund, connecting the country with High Speed 2 and the Plan for Jobs, which will particularly help areas at risk of unemployment.

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Support for Living Standards and Plan for Jobs

Introduction

The Government highlighted the unprecedented packages of support introduced to support individuals and household living standards during this difficult time including boosts to Universal Credit, the Test and Trace Support Payment, the COVID Winter Grant Scheme, the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme. To create, support and protect jobs the Government also highlighted their flagship Plan for Jobs, the Kickstart Scheme and the new £2.9bn Restart programme. The Government also highlighted increases in the National Living Wage, tax-free childcare, measures to help people get onto the housing ladder such as the Stamp Duty Land Tax Holiday

and the Affordable Homes Programme that have helped reduce the cost of living.

- The Government will bring forward a Health and Disability Green Paper on continuously improving the support offered to disabled people whilst laying the foundation for sustainable reform.

Support for Businesses

Throughout the pandemic, the Government has protected jobs, livelihoods, businesses and public services across the UK through a £352bn package of support; including cash grants, Government guaranteed loans, tax reliefs and employment support. The Government highlighted the Plan for Growth, published on 3 March 2021, which will take a transformational approach, tackling long-term problems to deliver growth that creates high-quality jobs across the UK and makes the most of the strengths of the Union.

Public Finances

The Queen said the Government will 'ensure that the public finances are returned to a sustainable path once the economic recovery is secure'. The Government highlighted measures announced in the 2021 Budget which will bring debt under control, through a fair and progressive package. This approach asks the largest, most profitable businesses to contribute, and for people to contribute a little more too, in order to continue to fund excellent public services and investment.

Benefiting from Brexit

- The Prime Minister has established a Better Regulation Cabinet Committee, chaired by the Chancellor, to ensure the Government is driving an ambitious programme of regulatory reform that enables and supports growth and innovation across the economy.
- Free from the EU State Aid regime, the Government will introduce a Subsidy Control Bill that implements a domestic UK subsidy control regime to reflect our strategic interests and particular national circumstances, providing a legal framework within which public authorities make subsidy decisions.
- The Government will introduce a Procurement Bill that consolidates the 350+ EU derived regulations and creates a single, uniform framework, including defence procurement, to allow more freedom for suppliers and the public sector to innovate and work in partnership with the private sector.
- The National Insurance Contributions Bill will deliver on our commitment to establish a number of Freeports in England that will drive regeneration by bringing investment, trade and jobs. Discussions are ongoing with the devolved administrations to ensure these benefits are felt UK-wide.
- The Professional Qualifications Bill will create a new bespoke framework for the UK to recognise professional qualifications from across the world to ensure employers can access professionals where there are UK shortages.
- The Planning Bill will simplify and enhance the EU derived framework of environmental assessments for developments.
- Now we have left the EU, the Government are going further in protecting our animals, whether on the farm, at home or in the wild by introducing important legislation this session that addresses the challenges presented to the welfare of animals in both the domestic and international spheres.

Skills and Post-16 Education Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Legislate for landmark reforms that will transform post-16 education and training, make skills more readily available and get more people into work as set out in the Government's Skills for Jobs White Paper.
- Enable people to access flexible funding for Higher or Further Education, bringing Universities and Further Education colleges closer together, and removing the bias against technical education.
- Deliver the Prime Minister's new Lifetime Skills Guarantee.
- Strengthen the powers of the Office for Students to take action to address low quality higher education provision.
- Realigning the system around the needs of employers so that people are trained for the skills gaps that exist now and in the future, in sectors the economy needs including construction, digital, clean energy and manufacturing.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- Putting employers at the heart of the post-16 skills system through the Skills Accelerator, by enabling employers and providers to collaborate to develop skills plans aimed at ensuring local skills provision meets local needs.
- Introducing the Lifelong Loan Entitlement, which will give individuals access to the equivalent of up to four years' worth of student loans for level 4-6 qualifications that they can use flexibly across their lifetime, at colleges as well as universities.
- Strengthening the system of accountability by extending existing powers for the Secretary of State for Education to intervene where colleges have failed to meet local needs, to direct structural change where required to secure improvement, and by amending the regulation of post-16 education and training providers to ensure quality.
- Strengthening the ability of the Office for Students to assess and regulate Higher Education provision in England, ensuring that they can regulate in line with minimum expectations of quality.

Developing the Life Sciences Sector

- The Government's Plan for Growth, published on 3 March 2021, committed to build on the UK's performance and leadership to date to create the most advanced genomic healthcare system in the world and we will bring forward a new Life Sciences strategy this summer.

Research and Development

- The Government is committed to making the UK a global superpower, with a world leading research and development environment.
- The Government's goal is to further strengthen science, research and innovation across the UK.
- The Government is investing £14.9bn in R&D in 2021-22.
- The Government is committed to increasing public expenditure on R&D to £22bn, helping to deliver on the target to increase total UK R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.
- In the R&D Roadmap the Government sets out its priorities for boosting innovation in the economy.
- BEIS will publish an Innovation Strategy this summer.
- The Government has introduced the Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA) Bill, to unleash the potential of the UK's world-class research and science base.
- The Review of Research Bureaucracy will advise on practical solutions to substantially reducing unnecessary research bureaucracy.

Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill

The Bill will:

- Create the Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA) as a new statutory corporation to fund high-risk, high-reward R&D.
- Give ARIA broad powers to take an innovative approach to research funding, and a mandate for higher tolerance for failure when pursuing high-risk research.
- Define ARIA's relationship with the Government, giving it autonomy and freedoms to manage its day-to-day affairs.
- Support this agile operating model by freeing ARIA from some standard public sector obligations.
- Establish an arm's length relationship to Government, set out in ARIA's procedure, membership and appointments processes, with limited information and direction rights for the Secretary of State.
- Provide powers for the Secretary of State to dissolve ARIA that can only be exercised after 10 years.

National Infrastructure Plan

- The Government is committed to transforming UK infrastructure in order to rebuild the economy, level up the country, strengthen the Union and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.
- Spending Review 2020 committed £100bn of capital investment in 2021-22.
- Alongside Spending Review 2020, the Government published the National Infrastructure Strategy.

UK Infrastructure Bank

- The UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB), which will launch later in the spring, will provide financing support to private sector and local authority infrastructure projects across the UK.
- The UKIB will be able to deploy £12bn of equity and debt capital and £10bn of guarantees and is expected to support more than £40bn of infrastructure investment overall.
- The UKIB will be headquartered in Leeds.
- The UKIB is part of the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for the Green Revolution. It will help create and support up to 250,000 highly-skilled green jobs in the UK and generate over three times as much private investment by 2030.

Project Speed

- Project Speed aims to accelerate and improve the delivery of infrastructure projects.
- Project Speed will look at reform of environmental regulations to secure better outcomes for the environment; reform of the planning system to allow infrastructure such as schools and hospitals to be expanded more quickly; transformation of the construction sector to make it more productive, sustainable and internationally competitive.

- Project Speed also aims to improve capability and leadership to ensure local areas and economies benefit from the infrastructure they need.

Planning Bill

The Bill will:

- Create a simpler, faster and more modern planning system to replace the current one that dates back to 1947.
- Ensure homes and infrastructure – like schools and hospitals – can be delivered more quickly across England.
- Transform the planning system to a more efficient and easier to use digital and map-based service, allowing more active public engagement.
- Introduce quicker, simpler frameworks for funding infrastructure and assessing environmental impacts and opportunities.

Rail and Bus Reform

Rail reform

- The Government will publish a White Paper for rail.
- The Government commits to ensuring decisions are taken in the interest of passengers, using new contracts to get trains running on time, introduce modern ways to pay, make rail more accessible and inclusive, and work more closely with local communities.
- The Government will end the franchising model and introduce a new system.

Bus reform

- Through the National Bus Strategy for England, the Government will reform how bus services are planned and delivered.
- The National Bus Strategy outlined how the £3bn announced by the Prime Minister to transform buses outside London will be spent.
- The bus reforms are part of the levelling up agenda by ensuring there are more frequent, cheaper and more reliable bus services across the country.
- £120m will be spent in the 2021-22 Financial Year on supporting the Government's commitment to introduce 4,000 zero-emission buses.

High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill

The Bill will:

- Provide the powers to build and operate the next stage of the High Speed Two (HS2) network from Crewe to Manchester.
- Provide powers to compulsorily acquire the land needed for the railway, to construct and to operate it.
- Set out the way railway regulation will apply to HS2.

Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill

The Bill will:

- Ensure that smart consumer products, including smartphones and televisions, are more secure against cyber attacks, protecting individual privacy and security.
- Accelerate and improve the deployment and use of digital communication networks. This will support the installation, maintenance, upgrading and sharing of apparatus that enables better telecommunications coverage and connectivity.
- Provide a more robust regulatory framework.
- Introduce reforms to the Electronic Communications Code to support faster and more collaborative negotiations for the use of private and public land for telecommunications deployment.

Draft Downstream Oil Resilience Bill

The Bill will:

- Enable the Government to direct companies to take necessary action to ensure resilience and security of fuel supply, if necessary.
- Help to ensure a consistent resilience standard across critical national infrastructure sectors.
- Allow the Government to collect information from the sector to understand the impact of potential or active disruptive events.
- Create a new civil and criminal penalties under which a company and its officers may be liable for failing to comply with a direction, making false statements and failing to provide required information.

National Insurance Contributions Bill

The Bill will:

- Provide employers with a relief from National Insurance contributions for eligible new employees in Freeports for three years, up to earnings of £25,000 per annum. Freeport employers will be able to claim this relief on all new hires from April 2022.
- Provide employers with National Insurance contributions relief for veterans for the first 12 months, up to earnings of £50,000 per annum. This relief will be available to employers on earnings from April 2021.
- Ensure that self-employed people who must, or have had to, self-isolate due to COVID-19 do not pay National Insurance contributions on their self-isolation support payments. This measure is intended to have retrospective effect from 6 April 2020, in respect of the English, Welsh and Scottish schemes which were implemented in autumn 2020.
- Strengthen powers to tackle attempts to avoid tax and National Insurance contributions through introducing changes to Disclosure of Tax Avoidance Schemes.

Subsidy Control Bill

The Bill will:

- Create a consistent set of UK-wide principles that public authorities must follow when granting subsidies.
- Exempt categories of subsidies from certain obligations of the regime or leaving out of scope entirely.
- Prohibit and placing conditions on certain types of subsidies which are at a particularly high risk of distorting markets.
- Obligate public authorities to upload information on subsidies to a new UK-wide, publicly accessible transparency database.
- Establish an independent subsidy control body to oversee the UK's bespoke, modern subsidy control system.
- Provide for judicial oversight and enforcement of the granting of subsidies.

Procurement Bill

The Bill will:

- Enshrine in law the principles of public procurement such as: value for money, public benefit, transparency, integrity, fair treatment of suppliers and non-discrimination.
- Overhaul the current procurement procedures and replace them with three simple, modern procedures.
- Require buyers to have regard to the Government's strategic priorities for public procurement as set out in a new National Procurement Policy Statement.
- Introduce procurement processes that allow contracting authorities to buy at
- pace, for serious situations that are declared a crisis, with strengthened
- safeguards for transparency.
- Establish a single data platform for supplier registration.
- Tackle unacceptable behaviour such as supplier fraud through new exclusion rules and giving buyers the tools to properly take account of a bidder's past performance.
- Reform the process for challenging procurement decisions.

Professional Qualifications Bill

The Bill will:

- Enable the UK to implement its international agreements on professional qualifications and to allow regulators to enter into reciprocal agreements with their international counterparts to facilitate the recognition of professional qualifications.
- Make sure regulators have the information and flexibility they need to regulate professionals effectively who have qualified in a different part of the UK.
- Require regulators to publish details about entry and practice requirements.
- Introduce a new system for recognising all architects who qualified overseas. This will expedite new international entrants to the Architects Register in the UK while requiring them to demonstrate an understanding of the specific UK landscape.

Turing Scheme

- The Government has introduced the Turing Scheme, a new international educational exchange scheme that has a global reach.
- The Turing Scheme is backed by £110m of funding, and in its first year will support around 35,000 participants in universities, colleges and schools.
- The Turing Scheme is UK-wide, with education institutions eligible to apply across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- The scheme will be global, with every country in the world eligible to partner up with UK institutions.

Support for Businesses - Regulatory Reform

- Consultation on gene editing.

Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill

- Consultation on changes to the Electronic Communications Code (Closed Consultation) – Government is analysing responses to ensure reforms deliver required results.

Reaction



"For years now, regions like the North have been waiting for the government to bring forward their promised white paper on devolution in England. We were told to expect it at the last State Opening of Parliament, but it was never delivered, and now it seems to have been abandoned altogether." Erica Roscoe, IPPR North

<https://twitter.com/IPPRNorth/status/1392107232452620288/photo/1>



"Business shares the Government's ambition to turbocharge the UK's recovery post-pandemic and reset the economy. The Queen's Speech provides the building blocks for a decade of transformation and inclusive economic growth. It's right that the golden thread in this legislative agenda is levelling-up the country. We haven't got a moment to lose. The strong focus on skills will support high quality, local jobs. The emphasis on rail, bus and digital will better connect local economies. And a fresh approach to innovation will unlock big, bold ideas and new sources of growth around the country." Matthew Fell, CBI <https://www.cbi.org.uk/media-centre/articles/queens-speech-reaction/>



"Hard not to conclude that's a fairly thin Queen's Speech. Reasonable people might say that's understandable given the Government has had this pandemic thing to deal with. But it's quite a contrast with Biden and government's own build back rhetoric." Torsten Bell, Resolution Foundation <https://twitter.com/TorstenBell/status/1392091008909852679>



"The success of much-needed levelling-up initiatives will hinge on their ability to reach the 5.9 million small businesses and sole traders that drive our economy forward and are at the heart of local communities. From commitments to transport and broadband infrastructure, to a lifetime skills guarantee, to bringing more small businesses into public procurement processes, there's a lot to welcome in today's address." Mike Cherry, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

<https://www.fsb.org.uk/resources-page/firms-call-for-small-business-led-levelling-up-urging-action-on-late-payment-costs-and-infrastructure.html>

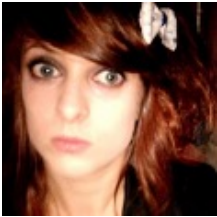


"Legislation outlined in today's Queen's Speech has the potential to address urgent challenges facing the UK. These include ensuring a building control system that is fit for purpose, taking firm decisions on social care funding and pushing forward progress on climate change. We also welcome that the insurance and pensions sector will be included in the dormant asset scheme to ensure that an estimated £2.1 bn of unclaimed assets can be made available to good causes with the asset owners having the right to reclaim their funds at any point." Huw Evans, Association of British Insurers https://www.abi.org.uk/news/news-articles/2021/05/abi-reacts-to-queens-speech/?utm_source=mailshot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=&utm_mailshot=72e86f04-ed72-4cde-b38c-42d50484568f&utm_action=click

Reaction



“If the Tories truly embraced post-austerity economics they could be even more dangerous for Labour but Sunak is still too wedded to “the Treasury view”.”
George Eaton, Senior Online Editor, The New Statesman
<https://twitter.com/georgeeaton/status/1391858806938873868>



“[I] don’t think national media has caught up with what is a big (and popular) political priority in many places outside London and, certainly at one point anyway, for the gov’t. It’s just as important as rail policy, if not more so, given ‘levelling up.’” Jennifer Williams, Manchester Evening News
<https://twitter.com/JenWilliamsMEN/status/1392023521027674113>

Buidling back safer: Protecting the UK and Individuals

The Government highlighted the different areas of protecting the UK domestically and internationally. A series of highly anticipated Bills are put forward to be introduced over the coming year. These include different of areas of ensuring safety, justice and protection. Such as, extending powers of the police force and protection of emergency services. Tackling the backlog of court cases, which have been exasperated because of the COVID pandemic, and modernising the justice system. Addressing domestic abuse concerns and violence/crimes against women, whilst also addressing the world of digital and online safety and introducing regulation of social media platforms.

Internationally, the Government has laid out plans to address asylum challenges and to introduce the new immigration system post Brexit. This also includes global safety against hostile activity by foreign actors and increased defence spending to improve UK arms and resilience.

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

- This Bill will build public confidence in the criminal justice system of law with new powers to stop highly disruptive protests, tackle unauthorised encampments, and reform bail to better protect victims and witnesses.
- This Bill will modernise courts and tribunals, improving the experience of victims, witnesses, and court users.
- The Bill will extend to the whole of the UK, with substantive provisions applying in the main to England and Wales, with some provisions also applying to Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- Main Benefits:
- This Bill will extend the length of time spent in prison by serious and dangerous offenders.
- Longer sentences for those who assault the police and other emergency workers.
- A new Policing Covenant to help ensure we take better care of our police officers and staff
- Providing the police with the necessary powers to deal with highly disruptive protests and tackle unauthorised encampments.
- Allowing courts to make use of new technology as it develops, making permanent the provisions for participants in criminal hearings to attend remotely, and allowing deaf people to serve on juries for the first time.
- Increasing the maximum prison sentence for assaulting an emergency worker from 12 months to two years.
- Creating a statutory requirement for the Home Secretary to report annually on progress made against the Police Covenant.
- The introduction of Serious Violence Reduction Orders. These will be used to prevent serious violence by equipping the police with new powers to stop and search those convicted of knife and offensive weapons offences.
- Reforming pre-charge bail so that bail conditions, such as prohibiting contact, are used more effectively to better protect victims and witnesses.
- Extending the scope of offences in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to capture additional roles, such as sport coaches and religious leaders.
- A new criminal offence to target trespassers using vehicles to reside on land who are causing significant damage or significant disruption to local communities.
- Introducing a new form of youth custodial institution that is designed to place education at the heart of youth custody in order to cut crime.

Main elements:

- Tougher sentences for offences such as rape, manslaughter and wounding with intent to cause Grievous Bodily Harm.
- Ending the automatic release at the halfway point for serious sexual and violent offenders sentenced to a standard determinate sentence of between 4 and 7 years.

Criminal Justice Catch-up and Recovery Plan

- The Government will address the backlog of court cases and ensure the timely administration of justice by increasing capacity in our courts, running Crown Courts to the fullest possible extent, using every judge and courtroom to maximise court sitting days.
- The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will help this go further, introducing measures to improve

the efficiency of courts, creating resilience, and modernising processes.

- The Government has increased funding for victim support services, with £151m this year, including £27m to increase the number of independent advisors for rape and domestic abuse victims by over 40%.
- The Government is also providing an additional £5m to bolster police Witness Care Units in their work to support victims and witnesses through the criminal justice process

Coroners

- The Government will provide a package of coroner measures for England and Wales aimed at putting aspects of the running of the coronial system on the same footing as other courts and tribunals.
- Efficiency will be increased, with measures such as, investigations being discontinued where the cause of death is natural without first requiring a post mortem, and allowing coroner areas to merge across local authority boundaries.
- By ensuring the coroners jurisdiction is in line with other courts and tribunals, delays will be reduced in progressing cases and therefore reducing the distress of bereaved families.

Criminal Courts

- The Government will support court recovery by modernising and streamlining court processes and removing outdated or unnecessary procedures and hearings.
- The Government will extend the powers of criminal courts to serve documents more efficiently, including by electronic means, and simplify proceedings through greater use of written/online procedures for entering pleas.
- Trials will be scheduled as quickly as possible for either-way offences,
- enabling defendants to be sent straight to the Crown Court if they indicate a guilty plea to a triable either way offence.

Employment tribunals

- Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal rule making powers will be transferred to the Tribunal Procedure Committee.
- The efficiency of the process for Employment Tribunal procedures will be aligned with that of other tribunals in the Unified Tribunals structure. This will maximise the impact of ongoing work to tackle the impact of COVID-19 backlogs.

Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

- The Government will bring proposals forward to address violence, including against women and girl.
- The Government will invest record amounts in support for victims, more than £300m this year.

- The Government will publish a new Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy, to better target perpetrators and support victims.
- This will also increase the ability to tackle emerging crime types such as 'upskirting' and revenge porn.
- The Government will conduct a review of the criminal justice response to rape due this summer, looking at how every stage of the criminal justice system handles rape cases, from police report to the final outcome at court.
- The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will overhaul sentencing laws to
- keep serious sexual offenders behind bars for longer and requiring perpetrators to attend behavioural change programmes or to wear an electronic tag.
- The Government will also publish a Domestic Abuse Strategy focused on prevention.
- This will include a £25m investment focused on programmes to work with perpetrators.

Draft Victims Bill

Purpose of the Bill:

- Put into law the simplified and stronger rights that were set out in the new Victims'
- Code and improve victims of crime experience of the criminal justice system.
- Set expectations for the standard and availability of victim support for victims of
- domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- Main benefits of the Bill:
- Ensuring victims are aware of their rights and more consistently supported, helping victims to recover from the impacts of crime and improve their experience as a victim within the criminal justice process.

Main elements of the Bill:

Enshrining the 12 key rights in the new Victims' Code into law. Those key rights include being:

- Kept informed at key stages of the case.
- Provided with regular updates on the progress of their case.
- Referred to organisations supporting victims of crime.
- Given the opportunity to make a Victim Personal Statement and be informed how it was used in court.
- Informed when an offender is released, where eligible under the Victim Contact Scheme.

New Plan for Immigration Legislation

Purpose of the Bill:

- Support the delivery of the Governments New Plan for Immigration, to better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.
- Deter illegal entry into the UK, breaking the business model of criminal trafficking networks and protecting the lives of those they endanger.
- Enable those with no right to be here to be removed more easily from the UK.

- The provisions in the Bill will extend and apply to the whole of the UK.

Main elements of the Bill:

- Ensuring the UK's immigration system does not reward those who enter the UK illegally
- Ensuring those who have travelled through a safe country where they could have reasonably claimed asylum, such as France or Belgium, will not be admitted into the UK asylum system.
- Ensuring that for the first time, whether people enter the UK legally or illegally, will
- have an impact on how their asylum claim progresses
- Ending the cycle of limitless appeals - to ensure that asylum, human rights claims and any other protection claims are made and considered upfront at the very start of the process.
- Ending the use of hotels and moving towards reception centres for asylum
- Seekers – to secure accommodation to stay in while their claims are processed.

Draft Online Safety Bill

Purpose of the Draft Bill:

- Introduce laws to keep people safe online whilst ensuring that users' rights, including freedom of expression, are protected online.
- Build public trust by making companies responsible for their users' safety online, whilst supporting a thriving and fast growing digital sector.
- Designate Ofcom as the independent online safety regulator.

Main Elements of the Draft Bill

- Placing a duty of care on companies to improve the safety of their users online - requiring them to tackle illegal content on their services and to protect children from harmful content and activity online.
- Requiring major platforms to set out clearly in their terms and conditions what legal content is unacceptable on their platform and enforce these.
- Requiring platforms to have effective and accessible user reporting and redress mechanisms to report concerns about harmful content.
- Designating Ofcom as the independent online safety regulator and giving it a suite of robust enforcement powers to uphold the regulation, including large fines of up to £18m or 10% of annual global turnover - whichever is greater - as well as business disruption measures.
- Boosting public resilience to disinformation through media literacy and supporting research on misinformation and disinformation.

Counter-State Threats Bill

Purpose of the Bill:

- Provide the security services and law enforcement agencies with the tools they need to tackle the evolving threat from hostile activity by states and actors.

Main elements of the Bill

- Reforming the Official Secrets Acts 1911, 1920 and 1939 which have failed to keep pace with modern threats and legal standards.
- Creating of a Foreign Influence Registration Scheme to help combat espionage, foreign interference, and to better protect research.
- Considering whether there is a case to be made for criminalising other harmful activity conducted by and on behalf of states, including the consideration of updating treason laws.

Telecommunications (Security) Bill

Purpose of the Bill

- Give the Government new powers to boost the security standards of the UK's telecoms networks.
- Strengthen the security and oversight of technology used in telecoms networks.
- Ensure that the Government can respond to national security threats within our networks now and in the future, as technologies evolve and new threats emerge.

Main Benefits of the Bill

- Ensuring the long-term security and resilience of the UK's telecoms networks and infrastructure and minimising the threat of high risk vendors.
- Giving people confidence in the security of the mobile and broadband networks which they rely upon for business and leisure, where transformative technologies such as 5G and gigabit-capable broadband are emerging.

Main Elements of the Bill

- New legal duties on telecoms firms to increase the security of the entire UK telecoms network.
- New powers for the Government to place controls on use of services and equipment from high risk vendors such as Huawei.
- New responsibilities on Ofcom to monitor telecoms operators' security.
- Fines of up to 10% of turnover or £100,000 a day for failing to meet the required standards.

Defence Spending

- The Government is investing over £24 bn more in defence in cash terms over the four years from 2021-22. This investment, and funding to implement the Integrated Review and the Defence Command Paper, is an unprecedented funding programme to modernise our Armed Forces.
- The Government will drive innovation in game-changing technologies that will give us a decisive edge, investing in agile, inter-connected, and data-driven capabilities that will make generational leaps in our capability to outpace our adversaries.

The additional funding announced will:

- Enable research into artificial intelligence and other battle-winning technologies, with an investment of at least £6.6bn in research and development.
- Enhance the breadth of our space capabilities and our new Space Command.
- Continue the renewal of the UK's nuclear deterrent.
- Deliver plans for eight Type 26 and five Type 31 frigates, and develop the next generation of naval vessels, including Type 32 frigates and Fleet Solid Support ships.
- Further develop Carrier Strike capabilities, with at least 48 UK F-35s by 2025.
- Deliver upgraded Typhoon radars and develop a new Combat Air system for the RAF.
- Providing additional investment in new Army equipment on top of the more than £20bn planned.
- Enable the creation of a new special operations Ranger Regiment, development of the Future Commando Force and a pioneering warfighting experimentation Battle Group.
- Enable an upgrade to the 148 main battle tanks, making Challenger III one of the most protected and lethal in Europe.

Armed Forces Bill

Purpose of the Bill:

- Renew the Armed Forces Act 2006, which underpins the Armed Forces and its governance.
- Deliver the Government's commitment to further incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant into law.
- Maintain the effectiveness of the Service Justice System so that it continues to serve the needs of the Armed Forces.
- Ensuring that those who serve, or have served, and their families are treated with fairness and respect by enshrining the Armed Forces Covenant in law.
- Strengthening and improving the service justice system so that personnel have a
- clear, fair and effective route to justice wherever they are operating.

Main elements of the Bill:

- Renewing the Armed Forces Act 2006.
- Introducing a new duty to require relevant public bodies across the UK, when exercising specified public functions to have due regard to the three principles of the Armed Forces Covenant:
- Recognising the unique obligations of, and sacrifices made by, the Armed Forces.
- Remove disadvantages arising for Service people from membership, or former membership, of the Armed Forces.
- That special provision for Service people may be justified.
- Implementing the recommendations of the independent review of the service justice system that require primary legislation, including:
- Providing clearer guidance for prosecutors on how serious crimes committed by service personnel in the UK should be handled.
- Creating an independent body to oversee complaints, overseen by a Service Police Complaints Commissioner who will ensure there is an independent line of redress if someone is dissatisfied.
- Making the complaints system more efficient by bringing the time given to personnel to lodge an appeal in line with timings offered in the private sector.

Support for Businesses - Regulatory Reform

- Consultation on gene editing.

Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill

- Consultation on changes to the Electronic Communications Code (Closed Consultation) – Government is analysing responses to ensure reforms deliver required results.

Reaction



MONEY AND
MENTAL HEALTH POLICY
INSTITUTE

"We live in a world where the policing of scams is dangerously underfunded, leaving criminals to get away with fraud with impunity. This was a chance to at least deny them the 'oxygen of publicity' by making big tech responsible for the scammers adverts it is paid to publish." Martin Lewis, Money and Mental Health Policy Institute and MoneySavingExpert.com
<https://www.moneyandmentalhealth.org/martin-lewis-scams-queens-speech/>



Which?

"Which? has worked with successive governments on how to tackle the flood of poorly-designed and insecure products that leave consumers vulnerable to cyber-criminals – so we are delighted to see plans for secure by design legislation included in the Queen's Speech." Rocio Concha, Which?
<https://press.which.co.uk/whichstatements/which-response-to-the-online-safety-bill-unveiled-in-queens-speech/>



"We welcome the commitment in the #QueensSpeech to bring forward the much delayed #VictimsBill. Victims are too often let down by the justice system and that must change - rights for victims must be strengthened and put into law." Victim Support
<https://twitter.com/VictimSupport/>



[status/1392105404377743361](https://twitter.com/FullFact/status/1392105404377743361)

"Confirmation in today's Queen's Speech that the Online Safety Bill will finally go ahead is very welcome: good legislation and regulation could make a significant difference in tackling dangerous online misinformation. But Parliament will need to scrutinise the Bill very carefully. Law and regulation for online safety must be balanced with the need to protect - and enhance - freedom of expression, and tackling misinformation shouldn't just be handed over to a Government-appointed regulator." Full Fact
<https://fullfact.org/blog/2021/may/Online-Safety-Bill-Queens-Speech-2021/>



BIG
BROTHER
WATCH

"In the #QueensSpeech, the Government claimed it will strengthen democracy, protect free speech and uphold human rights - because they know this is what the public wants. But their plans will do just the OPPOSITE. This is a Govnt that has a nightmare legislative program in the pipeline and has spent the last year criminalising anything from demonstrations to sitting on a park bench, all by Ministerial diktat." Big Brother Watch
<https://twitter.com/BigBrotherWatch/status/1392101394505682944>

Reaction



“Nothing much new on immigration in the Queen’s Speech today... The speech itself referred to the New Plan for Immigration measures, but the more detailed background notes just give a brief recap of what the New Plan said. No actual bill to implement it is outlined, which makes sense given that consultation has only just closed. Legislation will come along eventually, though.” CJ McKinney, Deputy Editor, Free Movement
<https://www.freemovement.org.uk/immigration-and-the-queens-speech-2021/>



“Oh hey, another set of online content rules just got published? That’s right -- UK confirmed “Online Safety Bill” is (finally) coming, albeit what the rules will actually look like is anyone’s guess.” Mark Scott, Chief Technology Correspondent, POLITICO
<https://twitter.com/markscott82/status/1392084362506690565>

Building back fairer: Improving and increasing opportunity

Building Safety and Renters Rights

The Government has committed to improving building safety, establishing the Building Safety Regulator through the Building Safety Bill as well as introducing a system of Accountable Persons and Dutyholders to establish and maintain safety. The Government have said the Bill will make provision to support the removal of unsafe cladding through a financing scheme too pay for costs and mentions a levy for the development industry. However, there is no timeline for the removal of unsafe cladding or specification of how much industry will contribute to associated costs. To address renters rights, the Government will outline a lifetime tenancy deposit model and improve standards in rented accommodation, but did not go into detail on either issue. Instead, the Government stated the White Paper on renters' reforms will be published in the autumn.

Societal Issues

The Bills announced in the Queens speech touch on a number of societal issues including early years support, the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities and Conversion Therapy. The Government will create a National Centre for Family Hubs and will deliver on the 'Action Areas' set out in the Early Years Healthy Development Review to support all children to reach their potential. They have committed to banning conversion therapy and coercive practices, as well as securing a provider to support victims of this practice by the summer. However, there have been no concrete plans to implement the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities reports' findings and recommendations announced, but the Government will respond 'in due course'.

Dormant Assets and Charities Bills

The Dormant Assets Bill outlined today will enable the social and environmental focus of the English portion of funds to be set through secondary legislation, so that over time the Dormant Assets Scheme is able to respond more flexibly to changing social and environmental needs. This will also bring it in line with devolved policy in this space. The purpose of the Charities Bill is to legislate to support the voluntary sector by reducing unnecessary bureaucracy facing charities, addressing difficulties of administration, and easing financial burdens. The Bill is also to enable trustees to run charities more effectively and rebalance regulation to ensure the law works better for the entire sector.

Wider Education Reform

- The Government is investing an additional £730m into high needs in 2021 – 22, building on the additional £780m in 2020-2021.
- From 2021 the Government will be funding an entitlement for early career teachers in England for professional development.
- The Government will be investing a further £1.3bn over the next 5 years.
- The Government have made available £1.7bn to support education recovery so far.
- The Government are investing over £400 million to support access to remote education and online social care services, including securing 1.3m laptops and tablets.

Early Years

- The Government will deliver on the manifesto commitment to roll out Family Hubs.
- The Government is providing a further £14m investment in Family Hubs.
- This will include a new National Centre for Family Hubs, an evaluation innovation fund to build the evidence base and data and digital products to support practical implementation.
- The Government will deliver the 'Action Areas' set out in the Early Years Healthy Development Review.
- The Government is committed to modernise the Healthy Child Programme over the next few years.
- Building Safety Bill

- The purpose of the Building Safety Bill is to establish the Building Safety Regulator and implement recommendations made in the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety.
- The Bill will update existing building safety regulation, including a new stringent regime for buildings 18 metres or more, or 7 storeys, and introduce a system of Accountable Persons and Dutyholders who will be responsible for making and keeping a building safe.
- The Bill will also make provision to support the removal of unsafe cladding, including through a financing scheme to pay for costs and a levy to ensure the development industry meets a fair share of the cost of remediating unsafe cladding.
- The Bill will extend and apply to the whole of the UK. Substantive provisions would apply in mainly to England, with some provisions applying to England and Wales and provisions related to the Construction Products Regulator applying to the whole of the UK

Leaseholder Reform (Ground Rent) Bill

- The Government is legislating to set in law as a 'peppercorn rent' level, meaning nothing more than a literal peppercorn can be sought from leaseholders.
- The main benefit of the Bill would be ensuring leaseholders of new, long residential leases cannot be charged a financial ground rent for no tangible service.
- The Bill will enforce the charging of a prohibited ground rent by way of a civil penalty regime, including fines of up to £5,000 for freeholders that charge in contravention of the Bill.
- The Government will ensure there can be no financial demand for ground rent for all future qualifying leases.
- The Bill will only have selected exemptions, including some parts of the community-led housing sector, certain financial products which depend on leases where rent replaces interest bearing mortgage payments and business leases.
- The provisions in the Bill will extend and apply to England and Wales.

Renters Reforms

- This year the Government will publish the consultation response on reforming tenancy law to abolish Section 21 'no fault' evictions and improve security for tenants in the private rented sector, as well as strengthening repossession grounds for landlords with valid cause.
- The Government will outline proposals for a new 'lifetime' tenancy deposit model.
- The Government will also bring forward reforms to improve standards in rented accommodation, ensuring well targeted, effective enforcement that drives out criminal

Landlords.

- A White Paper will be published on this reform package in the autumn.
- There will be extensive stakeholder engagement to inform and shape these reforms.
- The package is expected to require all private landlords to belong to a redress scheme, consider further reforms of the private renter sector enforcement system and Explore improvements and possible efficiencies to the possession process in the courts.
- The Government will implement the Charter of Social Housing Residents and develop reform of social housing regulations and look to legislation as soon as practicable.
- Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities
- The Government is considering the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities reports' findings and recommendations in detail and will respond in due course.
- The report recommends a range of measures to tackle racism in society: for example, more resourcing to the Equality and Human Rights Commission to pursue race discrimination cases and more effort from social media companies to tackle online racial abuse whilst maintaining free speech.
- The report also recommends measures to build trust and improve public services.

Conversion Therapy

- The Government will ban conversion therapy.
- The ban will eliminate coercive practices which cause mental and physical harm to individuals.
- The Government will ensure the action they take to stop this practice is proportionate and effective and does not have unintended consequences, and that medical professionals, religious leaders, teachers and parents can continue to have open and honest conversations.
- The Government will launch a consultation before details of the ban are finalised.
- The Government have also commissioned research into the scope of practices and experiences of those subjected to conversion therapy.
- They will shortly invite organisations to bid to develop support for victims of conversion therapy and the chosen provider will be in place by the summer.
- The Government will deliver Safe To Be Me, the UK's first ever International LGBT Conference.

Dormant Assets Bill

- The Dormant Assets Bill will enable the social and environmental focus of the English portion of funds to be set through secondary legislation, so that over time the Scheme is able to respond more flexibly to changing social and environmental needs in England.
- This is in line with the model used in the devolved administrations.

- The Bill will unlock around £880m for social and environmental initiatives across the UK
- The Bill will protect dormant asset owners and participating businesses while putting idle assets to good use.
- The Government will expand the Dormant Assets Scheme into new asset classes and improve consumer protection.
- By aligning the model for how dormant assets funding is allocated in England, Ministers will be able to set more specific purposes for the allocation of funding.
- The Government will improve the Scheme's operation for example by allowing the Scheme's administrator, Reclaim Fund Ltd, to only accept transfers from participants who have undertaken appropriate efforts to trace, verify and reunite the asset with its rightful owner.
- The Bill will extend and apply to the whole of the UK, except for the provision on the distribution of money in England, which will only apply to England.
- The Bill will also ensure public service pensions continue to reward public servants for their service whilst being fairer and more affordable to the taxpayer.
- The main elements of the Bill will be implementing changes across in response to the Court of Appeal judgment in the McCloud and Sargeant cases.
- In this Bill the Government will raise the mandatory retirement age of judicial office holders from 70 to 75.
- The Bill will also place the power to set judicial allowances on firmer legal footing.
- Provisions will extend and apply to the whole of the UK. All substantive pensions measures will apply UK-wide, but some elements of the judicial measures will apply to England and Wales only.

Charities Bill

- The purpose of the Charities Bill is to address a range of issues in charity law by implementing most of the recommendations in the Law Commission's 2017 report 'Technical Issues in Charity Law'.
- In implementing the Bill, the Government will remove inappropriate burdens while safeguarding the public interest in ensuring charities are properly run.
- The Bill will help charities consolidate and restructure by simplifying a number of relevant processes, reducing costs and saving time.
- The Bill will change the law to help charities amend their governing documents more easily with Charity Commission oversight where appropriate.
- The Government will be increasing flexibility for charities to use their permanent endowment (assets or investments where the capital value must be preserved), with checks in place to ensure its protection in the long term.
- The Bill will give trustees advance assurance that litigation costs in the Charity Tribunal can be paid from the charity's funds.
- The Bill will also remove legal barriers to charities merging.
- Public Service Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill
- The purpose of the Public Service Pensions and Judicial offices Bill is to ensure equal treatment for all members within each of the main public service pension schemes.
- The main benefits of the Bill would be to provide public service workers with greater certainty of their benefit.

Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill

- The Competition and Markets Authority has issued consultation letters to two housing developers in relation to potential breaches of consumer protection law.

Renter's Reform

- A new deal for renting: resetting the balance of rights and responsibilities between landlords and tenants (Closed Consultation) – Government response to be published.
- Extensive stakeholder engagement in the sector to inform reforms.

Conversion Therapy

- Consultation to be launched before details of a ban are finalised.

Reaction



“After a decade of neglect and cuts, today is an important step on the journey to ending the snobbery around technical and vocational education. The Prime Minister and Secretary of State have shown their commitment to colleges, we now need this to be met with ambitious and wide-reaching legislation in Parliament, and fair and sustainable funding from the Chancellor.” David Hughes, Association of Colleges <https://www.aoc.co.uk/news/queens-speech-sets-legislation-skills-and-training-reforms-aoc-responds>



“We welcome the commitment to introduce legislation to ban so-called ‘conversion therapy’. However, the news of a consultation is concerning and will be hard for our communities to hear. We don’t need a consultation to know that all practices that seek to convert, suppress, cure or change us are dangerous, abusive and must be banned. Lesbian, gay, bi, trans, intersex and ace communities have been waiting almost three years for the UK Government to follow through on their promise to ban all conversion practices, and any delay leaves us at further risk of abuse.” Nancy Kelley, Stonewall <https://www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/stonewall-statement-conversion-therapy-consultation>



“After 3 years of promises the government have (via the Queen’s Speech) finally announced a pledge to ban gay ‘cure’ practises but it’s significantly caveated.” Minnie Stephenson, Channel 4 News <https://twitter.com/MinnieStephC4/status/1392105230595153922>



“We have long argued that the government’s levelling-up agenda must prioritise people and skills – not just infrastructure. So while the ‘lifetime skills guarantee’ in the Queen’s Speech is a welcome step in the right direction, targeted support is needed at a much earlier age. The pandemic has wiped out a decade of progress in closing the attainment gap and the on-the-ground impact of this cannot be understated. Government must put the needs of low-income young people at the heart of decision making: from post-16 qualifications to the long-term plan for education.” Sarah Atkinson, Social Mobility Foundation <https://www.socialmobility.org.uk/2021/05/ceo-sarah-atkinson-responds-to-the-queens-speech/>



“We are pleased to see a focus on lifetime skills development in the Queen’s Speech today, which highlights the Government’s priorities for level 3 and above qualifications. However, adding ‘rocket fuel’ to higher level qualifications without addressing level 2 risks leaving behind those at lower levels of study, removing vital stepping stones into further education, training and the workforce for some of the hardest-to-reach young people.” Campbell Robb, Nacro <https://www.nacro.org.uk/news/nacro-comments/nacro-response-to-2021-queens-speech/>



“Having gone undercover and been “treated”, having spent 3 yrs getting the first therapist struck off for it, and another decade reporting on gay “cures”, I’ll say this: religious exemptions for conversion therapy are like meat exemptions for vegetarianism.” Patrick Strudwick, Freelance Journalist <https://twitter.com/PatrickStrud/status/1392023155267473408>

Building back greener: Building back a cleaner and greener UK

Compared to the Government's ambitious climate commitments, the measures promised in the Queen's Speech seem rather lacking. A large section on climate change in the accompanying briefing consists largely of policies already announced and promises of future strategies with no additional legislation proposed. Environmental measures are limited to the long-delayed Environment Bill, now to be amended to reflect the growing backbench disquiet over pollution from storm overflows which led Environmental Audit Committee Chair Philip Dunne to introduce a private member's bill in the last session. In contrast, when it comes to animal welfare – a topic which tends to have wide public support and which perhaps requires the Government to make less difficult choices – we are promised no less than three new bills, as well as an action plan.

Climate Change, Net Zero and COP26

- The Government restates that legislation has been laid to set Carbon Budget Six, reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 78% by 2035, compared with 1990 levels, as recommended by the Climate Change Committee.
 - The UK will be hosting COP26, the UN climate change conference, in November and will work with international partners to achieve a significant reduction in emissions via new or updated 2030 targets.
- for single use plastic items.
 - The Bill requires at least two legally-binding targets to be set on air quality for PM2.5.
 - The Bill modernises legislation to manage water sustainably.
 - The Bill mandates 'biodiversity net gain' in the planning system and introduces Local Nature Recovery Strategies and Nature Recovery Networks, as well as giving communities more say in protecting trees.
 - The Bill will prohibit larger businesses from using key agricultural commodities produced on illegally deforested land.
 - Amendments to the Bill will require the Government to publish a plan to reduce sewage discharge from storm overflows by September 2022 and report on Parliament on progress with this.

Environment Bill

- The Environment Bill has been carried out into this session of Parliament, but work to implement it continues, including appointing a chair to the Office for Environmental Protection, developing targets and consulting on a draft Principles Policy Statement, a deposit return scheme and extended producer responsibility.
- The Bill will 'put the environment at the centre of policy making' with a framework for legally-binding environmental targets and measures on recycling, air pollution, water supplies and wastewater services, nature and biodiversity.
- The Bill establishes the Office for Environmental Protection to hold public authorities to account, creates a duty on ministers to make environmental concerns central to policy development, sets legally-binding targets and creates a long-term environmental improvement plan.
- The Bill contains measures to move towards a circular economy, including extended producer responsibility, product labelling, consistent recycling in England, a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, better litter enforcement and powers to introduce charges

Animal Welfare Plan and Legislation

- The Government will introduce an Action Plan for Animal Welfare.
- An Animal Welfare (Sentience) Bill will recognise animal sentience in law.
- A Kept Animals Bill will increase protections for pets, sporting animals and farm animals. Export of live animals for fattening and slaughter will be ended, powers to tackle livestock worrying will be made more effective, the low welfare practice of keeping primates as pets will be ended, zoo standards will be improved, puppy smuggling tackled and conservation enhanced.
- An Animals Abroad Bill will ban the import of hunting trophies from endangered animals and ban low welfare experiences abroad from being advertised.
- The Ivory Act, banning dealing in elephant ivory, will be implementing and further steps to limit trading and sale of foie gras will be considered.
- Working with industry, an Animal Health and Welfare Pathway will be introduced, promoting healthier, higher welfare animals and committing to a 'wide-ranging review into food labelling'.
- Mandatory cat microchipping will be introduced and the operation of current microchip databases (including for dogs) will be reviewed.
- The National 'Petfished' Communications Campaign on responsible dog and cat purchasing will continue, with a newly-created cross-Government taskforce creating recommendations to tackle pet theft.
- The Government will ensure that high animal welfare standards aren't compromised in trade negotiations.

Environment Bill

- Draft Principles Policy Statement is out for consultation.
- Consultation has been launched on a deposit return scheme.

Reaction



WWF

Government's commitment to setting 'binding environmental targets' in today's #QueensSpeech is welcome. Ministers must now set binding targets to reverse #nature decline alongside tackling the UK's global #environmentalfootprint, to strengthen the returning #EnvironmentBill. But for the UK to be truly world-leading, this #parliamentarysession must be when #Government delivers for our planet by keeping 1.5C on the table at #COP26. This must be done by developing action plans for #netzero and committing to a #netzerotest for #Government spending.

https://twitter.com/WWF_UK_Politics/status/1392084366923374598



Battersea

'Legislation will be brought forward to ensure the highest levels of animal welfare' Great news for animals in today's #QueensSpeech!

https://twitter.com/Battersea_PA/status/1392072909242437633



CBI

Matthew Fell, CBI Chief UK Policy Director, said: "... business will feel there were some missed opportunities. Firms were looking for greater impetus on enabling legislation to speed up the race to zero"

<https://www.cbi.org.uk/media-centre/articles/queens-speech-reaction/>



Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) National Chairman Mike Cherry said:

"Small firms are committed to the net zero agenda. We now need to see policymakers working hand in glove with businesses of all sizes to make the transition to a truly sustainable economy manageable at a time when cash reserves are severely depleted.

<https://www.fsb.org.uk/resources-page/firms-call-for-small-business-led-levelling-up-urging-action-on-late-payment-costs-and-infrastructure.html>



RenewableUK's Head of Public Affairs Nathan Bennett said:

"It's great to see the Government putting job creation and in particular the development of new skills and training at the heart of their policy agenda, as part of the green economic recovery after the pandemic. The number of people working in the UK's offshore wind is set to increase from 26,000 currently to over 69,000 over the next five years. We're already working closely with Ministers to ensure the right programmes are in place to maximise employment opportunities – particularly in parts of the country which need levelling up, such as coastal communities, the north, Scotland and Wales".

<https://www.renewableuk.com/news/564866/RenewableUK-welcomes-commitment-to-green-job-creation-in-Queens-Speech.htm>

GREENER UK

Ruth Chambers, Greener UK

"A welcome return for the #EnvironmentBill Great to hear the words "legislation to set binding environmental targets" in the #QueensSpeech But the bill must be further strengthened and return to Parliament quickly."-Ruth Chambers, Greener UK

<https://twitter.com/ruthmchambers/status/1392069954611122178>

Reaction



James Murray, Editor, Business Green

The focus will be on the BS culture war moves, but the most radical part of the Queen’s Speech remains a monarch who has ruled for a major chunk of the fossil fuel age declaring it will largely end inside less than 30 years.

https://twitter.com/James_BG/status/1392089264528179209



Peter Walker, Political Correspondent, The Guardian

The UK is hosting the crucial Cop26 climate summit in autumn, and ministers are keen to show they are serious about the issues – even if critics suggest the measures so far are underwhelming.

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/may/11/what-made-it-into-the-queens-speech-and-what-was-left-out>



Sarah George, Senior Reporter, Edie

Many key figures across the green economy had hoped for more detail on the policy packages mentioned, like the Environment Bill, and for other packages, such as the England Tree Action Plan and Peat Strategy... There were also questions about how compatible some of the policies raised are with the net-zero transition, including the £27bn roads building plan – the largest investment in the sector in UK history – and the forthcoming Planning Bill.

<https://www.edie.net/news/11/-Proposals-fall-far-short---Green-economy-left-disappointed-at-Queen-s-speech/>

Buidling back stronger strengthening the union



The Government seem keen to point out the success of the 'UK Government-led, UK-wide roll-out of Covid-19 vaccines' and how each country has benefited from this work and how the UK Government's actions take over the last year have supported people across the UK. The Government also point out there is more investment coming to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. A number of other domestic measures are set out including, scrapping the fixed-term parliaments act and measures to tackle voter fraud.

Internationally, some steps towards becoming Global Britain are mentioned with the Government pointing out the UK that despite leaving the EU the UK still has ambitions to be a world leader in several areas.

The Union

- The UK Government will host a summit meeting on shared challenges of recovery from the pandemic; the First Ministers of Scotland, and Wales and the First and deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland will be invited.
- Sir Peter Hendy's Union Connectivity Review will have its final report published this summer. To support the aims of the review the Government has allocated £20m of funding so options to improve cross-border connectivity can be assessed.
- The Government is currently consulting on Air Passenger Duty and will consider how the tax can support connectivity throughout the UK.

Electoral Integrity Bill

- The Bill will set out to tackle electoral fraud and prevent foreign interference while making it easier for British expats to vote in elections. This would fulfil a manifesto commitment.
- Voters with disabilities will be better supported to vote.
- The 15-year limit on the voting rights of British expats will be removed.
- Postal vote harvesting will be banned with further protections on postal and proxy voting.
- Identification will be required at polling stations.

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

- Free speech and academic freedom will be strengthened in universities in England.
- Redress methods to be created for staff, students and visiting speakers if they suffer loss due to duties being breached.

- New freedom of speech and academic duties will be placed on higher education providers and students' unions. The Office for Students will be allowed to impose fines for breaches on these duties.
- Director for Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom at the Office for Students will be a role that is created.

Judicial Review Bill

- Reforms to Judicial Review to stop the judiciary being drawn into political discussions and maintain the integrity of the judiciary.
- Judicial Review will have its original purpose of holding the Government and public authorities to account.

Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Bill

- This Bill would deliver on the manifesto commitment of repealing the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011.
- More certainty will be provided around the process of dissolving Parliament.
- Parliamentary votes will be able to be considered matters of confidence and if they are lost, a general election would be triggered.

Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Bill

- More transparency and improved governance arrangements to be implemented in institutions in Northern Ireland. These institutions will be made more robust so they can continue to operate throughout times of political difficulty.
- More time will be allowed for the appointment of Ministers to the Northern Ireland Executive after an election or resignation of First or deputy First Minister.
- An update to the Ministerial Code of Conduct will be made in regard to what is expected of those in public office.

Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions

- This would deliver on a manifesto commitment of preventing public bodies from imposing their own approach or views about international relations.
- Public bodies would not be able to impose their own views in regard to their own boycott, divestment, or sanctions campaign. Public bodies will not be able to take a different approach to the UK Government on sanctions and foreign relations.

Integrated Review

- Action alongside allies and partners will be required to achieve the aims of the Integrated Review.
- The UK will be a more active member of the United Nations, World Trade Organisations, World Health Organisation, and international finance bodies.
- Returning to spending 0.7% of Gross National Income on international development when the fiscal situation allows.

Foreign Affairs

- The UK will look to tackle international challenges from climate change to security to poverty.
- 'Magnitsky' sanctions are being used to hold human rights abusers to account.
- The UK will set out seven key priority areas where its expertise can be used in the greatest way; these areas are climate and biodiversity, COVID-19 and global health security, girls' education, science and research, open societies and conflict, humanitarian assistance, and trade.

Union Connectivity Review

- Current consultation on Air Passenger Duty.

Judicial Review Bill

- The purpose, benefits and elements of this Bill are all subject to the outcome of a consultation.

Reaction

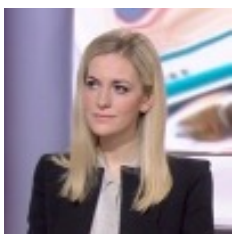


Electoral
 Reform
 Society

"This policy is a solution in search of a problem. Voting is safe and secure in the UK, meaning this policy is just an unnecessary barrier to democratic participation. Ministers need to listen to these concerns and drop these costly plans." Josiah Mortimer, Electoral Reform Society
<https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/queens-speech-senior-conservative-brands-mandatory-voter-id-illiberal-solution-for-non-existent-problem/>

RUNNYMEDE

"Voter ID would #disenfranchise millions of disproportionately BME & working class voters. Focus should be on the fact that voter registration numbers are far lower among the BME electorate, instead of unnecessary Voter ID legislation." Alba Kapoor, Runnymede Trust
<https://twitter.com/RunnymedeTrust/status/1391703171429507077>



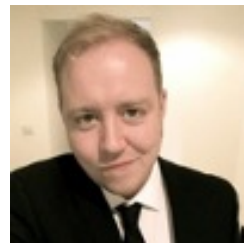
"Govt will introduce 'legacy legislation' on Northern Ireland, Queen's Speech confirms. It will offer 'protections' for veterans & move to 'information recovery & reconciliation'. Seems ban on prosecutions is coming, as Govt says convictions 'increasingly unlikely' at this stage." Lucy Fisher, Deputy Political Editor, The Telegraph
https://twitter.com/LOS_Fisher/status/1392069590608486402

LIBERTY

"Many of the proposals set out today have been subject to fierce resistance from those of us who campaign for equality and justice. This Government appears determined to push through a regressive agenda that will harm people who are already marginalised, and erode the mechanisms available to us to hold it to account." Gracie Bradley, Liberty
<https://www.libertyhumanrights.org.uk/issue/liberty-responds-to-the-queens-speech-an-agenda-to-erode-accountability/>

UCU
University and College Union

"There are serious threats to freedom of speech and academic freedom from campus, but they come from the government and university managers, not staff and students. Widespread precarious employment strips academics of the ability to speak and research freely, and curtails chances for career development." Jo Grady, University and College Union
<https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/11559/UCU-response-to-Queens-Speech?list=1676> Journalists:



"The government's briefing doc on the Queen's Speech cites a KCL study as evidence of growing concern about free speech being curtailed in universities. The study found students do think FoS is under threat...in the country as a whole, but not at their university." Mikey Smith, Politics Correspondent, The Daily Mirror
<https://twitter.com/mikeysmith/status/1392097741665443845>

