



Queen's Speech Briefing 2017

This briefing contains a summary of key points for local government and Solace members raised by Her Majesty in the annual Queen's speech to both Houses of Parliament. See below for further details categorised by sector.

In the speech, there was no Local Government Finance Bill and little detail on the Government's intention to reform social care. These are critical issues on which the sector needs prompt and clear direction. Their absence means we shouldn't expect Parliament to begin to consider them for at least another two years.

You can read a statement from Jo Miller, Solace President and Chief Executive of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council in response to the Queen's Speech [here](#)

BREXIT

Repeal Bill

The Queen has announced that following on from last year's EU referendum, the Government intends to bring forward legislation aimed to safeguard Britain's smooth withdrawal from the EU, ensuring that the same laws apply after Brexit, where possible. The Bill will aim to:

- Repeal the European Communities Act 1972 and convert EU law into UK law as we leave the EU;
- Create temporary powers for UK Parliament to make secondary legislation, enabling corrections to be made to the laws that do not operate appropriately once we have left the EU. It will also allow changes to be made to domestic law to reflect the content of any withdrawal agreement under Article 50;
- Replicate the common UK frameworks created by EU law in UK law, and maintain the scope of devolved decision-making powers immediately after exit. This will be a transitional arrangement intended to provide certainty after exit and allow intensive discussion and consultation with the devolved administrations on where lasting common frameworks are needed.

This will be complemented by legislation to ensure that the United Kingdom makes a success of Brexit, establishing new national policies on immigration, international sanctions, nuclear safeguards, agriculture, and fisheries and new bills on trade and customs aimed to implement an independent trade policy:

- **Customs Bill:** The EU customs code currently applies directly in the UK. This Bill will aim to ensure that the UK has a standalone UK customs regime on exit; flexibility to accommodate future trade agreements with the EU and others; and that changes can be made to the UK's VAT and excise regimes to ensure that the UK has standalone regimes on EU-exit.
- **Trade Bill:** This Bill will aim to cement the United Kingdom's status as a leading trading nation, driving positive global change through trade, whilst ensuring UK businesses are

protected from unfair trading practices. The Bill will put in place the essential and necessary legislative framework to allow the UK to operate its own independent trade policy upon exit from the European Union.

- **Immigration Bill:** With the repeal of the European Communities Act, it will be necessary to establish new powers concerning the immigration status of EEA nationals. The Bill will allow the Government to control the number of people coming to the UK from Europe while still allowing the country to attract the brightest and the best. The Bill is intended to allow for the repeal of EU law on immigration, primarily free movement, that will otherwise be saved and converted into UK law by the Repeal Bill; and make the migration of EU nationals and their family members subject to relevant UK law once the UK has left the EU.
- **Fisheries Bill:** As the UK leaves the EU, the Bill will enable the UK to exercise responsibility for access to fisheries and management of its waters.
- **Agriculture Bill:** This Bill will aim to provide stability to farmers as we leave the EU and protect our precious natural environment for future generations.
- **Nuclear Safeguards Bill:** This Bill will aim to establish a UK nuclear safeguards regime as the country leaves the European Union and Euratom. The Bill will aim to give the Office for Nuclear Regulation powers to take on the role and responsibilities required to meet our international safeguards, and nuclear non-proliferation, obligations. It will also introduce a Special Administration Regime to ensure the continuing operation of the national smart meter service if the provider becomes insolvent.

The Queen announced that the Government will intend to maintain a special partnership with European allies and to forge new trading relationships across the globe. However, a priority will be to build a more united country, strengthening the social, economic and cultural bonds between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The Queen has announced that the Government will work in cooperation with the devolved administrations, and it will work with all of the parties in Northern Ireland to support the return of devolved government.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Draft Patient Safety Bill

The Queen has announced this draft Bill which will set out a framework to help improve patient safety in the NHS and instil greater public confidence in the provision of healthcare services in England. The Bill will propose to establish a statutory Health Service Safety Investigation Body, which will be given clear powers to conduct independent and impartial investigations into patient safety risks in the NHS in England.

The Bill will also create a prohibition on the disclosure of information held in connection with an investigation conducted by the Health Service Safety Investigation Body, enabling participants to be as candid as possible. This prohibition will not apply where there is an ongoing risk to the safety of patients or evidence of criminal activity, in which case the Investigation Body can inform the relevant regulator or the police.

Draft Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill

The Queen has noted that proposals to update the law to help tackle domestic abuse and violence will be introduced. Proposals will be published in draft for scrutiny by MPs and peers to help build a consensus and raise the profile of this issue. The draft measures will bring forward proposals aimed to establish a Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner; define domestic abuse and create a consolidated new domestic abuse civil prevention and protection order; and to ensure that if abusive behaviour involves a child, then the court can hand down a sentence that reflects the devastating life-long impact that abuse has on the child.

The Queen has also announced the Government's intention to reform mental health legislation and

ensure that mental health is prioritised in the National Health Service in England. The Queen's Speech included a note that the Government will work to improve social care and will bring forward proposals for consultation, although no detail has been announced.

CIVIL RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

In the light of the terrorist attacks in Manchester and London, the Queen has announced that the Government's counter-terrorism strategy will be reviewed to ensure that the police and security services have all the powers they need, and that the length of custodial sentences for terrorism-related offences are sufficient to keep the population safe. Furthermore, the Government intends to ensure that critical national infrastructure is protected to safeguard national security.

In addition, the Queen has also announced that a Commission for Countering Extremism will be established to support the Government in tackling extremist ideology in all its forms, both across society and on the internet, so it is denied a safe space to spread.

The Queen also announced that the Government will initiate a full public inquiry into the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower to ascertain the causes, and ensure that the appropriate lessons are learnt. To support victims after a public disaster, the Government will take forward measures to introduce an independent public advocate who will act for bereaved families and support them at public inquests.

DIGITAL LEADERSHIP

Data Protection Bill

A new legislation will be introduced to ensure that the UK retains its world-class regime protecting personal data and proposals for a new digital charter will be brought forward to ensure that the UK is the safest place to be online. This Bill is aimed to make the UK's data protection framework suitable for our new digital age, allowing citizens to better control their data.

This Bill is aimed to make the UK's data protection framework suitable for our new digital age and cement the UK's position at the forefront of technological innovation, international data sharing and protection of personal data. It will also intend to strengthen rights and empower individuals to have more control over their personal data including a right to be forgotten when individuals no longer want their data to be processed, provided that there are no legitimate grounds for retaining it.

The Bill will establish a new data protection regime for non-law enforcement data processing, replacing the Data Protection Act 1998 and it will modernise and update the regime for data processing by law enforcement agencies. The aim is to make the exchange of information between police and judicial authorities quicker and easier with the UK's international partners in the fight against terrorism and other serious crimes.

As part of the Bill, the General Data Protection Regulation and the new Directive which applies to law enforcement data processing will be implemented, meeting our obligations while we remain an EU member state and helping to put the UK in the best position to maintain our ability to share data with other EU member states and internationally after we leave the EU.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The Queen has announced the Government's intentions to strengthen the economy to support job creation of jobs and generate the tax revenues needed to invest in the National Health Service, schools, and other public services.

Through the Industrial Strategy, the Government intends to improve prosperity and the public finances, while keeping taxes low, and it aims to attract investment in infrastructure to support economic growth. The Queen has said legislation will be introduced to ensure the UK remains a world leader in new industries, including the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill and Space Industry Bill. A

new HS2 2A Bill will also be brought forward to deliver the next phase of high-speed rail.

Additionally, the Queen has announced that the National Living Wage will be increased and the Government will seek to enhance rights and protections in the modern workplace. The gender pay gap and discrimination against people on the basis of their race, faith, gender, disability or sexual orientation will also be addressed.

HOUSING

The Queen has announced that proposals will be brought forward to promote fairness and transparency in the housing market and help ensure more homes are built.

The Government intends to deliver the reforms proposed in the White Paper, with the aim to increase transparency around the control of land, to free up more land for new homes, speed up housebuilding by encouraging modern methods of construction and diversify housing developers across the country.

Draft Tenants' Fees Bill

This Bill is aimed to ban unfair 'letting fees' to improve transparency, affordability and competition in the private rental market.

The aim of the Bill is to ban landlords and agents from requiring tenants to make any payments as a condition of their tenancy with the exception of the rent, a capped refundable security deposit, a capped refundable holding deposit and tenant default fees. The Bill will also include measures to cap holding deposits at no more than one week's rent and security deposits at no more than one month's rent.

The Bill will intend to increase competition in the private rental sector, resulting in lower costs overall and a higher quality of service for renters and reduced upfront costs for tenants. An eight-week consultation on banning letting fees paid by tenants closed on 2 June. Responses will be used to inform the draft Bill, and the Government will respond fully in due course.

Leasehold Reform

The Government intends to consult and take action to promote transparency and fairness for leaseholders, looking at the sale of leasehold houses and onerous ground rents, working with property developers, the Competition and Markets Authority and others as outlined in the Housing White Paper. This includes proposals to ban unfair tenant fees as part of the Draft Tenants' Fees Bill. The Government intends to launch a consultation on leasehold in due course.

FINANCE

The Government's programme will include three Finance Bills to implement budget decisions, and Summer Finance Bill 2017 will include a range of tax measures including those to tackle avoidance. However, no detail has been announced in the Queen's Speech today.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The Queen has announced that the Government will work to ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend a good school and that all schools are fairly funded, and to ensure people have the skills they need for the jobs of the future, including through a major reform of technical education.