

## The King's Speech 2024

This year's King's speech included many anticipated announcements for the housing sector. The speech covered around 40 draft bills signalling the beginning of the new UK Labour government's manifesto policies beginning their legislative journey.

The full background briefing to support the King's speech can be read [here](#).

### Housing

#### Renters Rights Bill

This Bill plans to bring forward new legislation to ensure that the private rented sector provides secure homes for those who need it. This will include:

- Abolishing Section 21 'no fault evictions'
- Strengthening tenants' rights and protections by empowering tenants' to challenge rent increases
- Giving tenants the rights to request a pet
- Applying a Decent Homes Standard and Awaab's Law to the private rented sector
- Creating a digital database to bring together key information for landlords, tenants and councils
- Supporting less expensive and quicker resolutions when there are disputes between landlord and tenant by preventing escalation to court proceedings
- Making it illegal for landlords to discriminate against those in receipt of benefits or with children.
- Strengthening enforcement powers for local authorities.

The Bill will extend to England and Wales and apply to England.

#### Draft Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill

This Bill plans to end the feudal system of leaseholding by bolstering leaseholders' rights to extend their lease and buy their freehold, tackling ground rents through regulation and ending the practice of forfeiture. This Bill will apply to England and Wales.

#### Planning and Infrastructure Bill



This Bill announces fundamental changes to the planning system to help unlock developments and aid the delivery of private and social homes. The Bill plans to:

- Streamline the delivery of critical infrastructure through upgrading the national grid and boosting renewable energy.
- Reform compulsory purchase compensation rules to enable more effective land assembly by unlocking more sites.
- Improve local decision making by modernising planning committees and increasing local authority capacity.
- Use developments to fund nature recovery.

This Bill will apply to England and Wales wholly. Some measures will also apply to Scotland.

## Welfare

This budget prioritises wealth creation for all members of society as the route out of the cost of living crisis. The Labour government is committed to making work pay and through the Skills England Bill plans to get people back into employment following the pandemic. The Children's Wellbeing Bill also affirms plans to require free breakfast clubs in every primary school to assist with the cost of living.

No further announcements around Welfare reform were declared today.

## Health and Social Care

### Mental Health Bill

The King's Speech announced plans to reform the Mental Health Act to make it fit for purpose in the modern world. The proposals for reform are:

- Ensuring that detention under the Mental Health Act only takes place where necessary by amending the detention criteria to ensure that people can only be detained under the Act if they pose a serious threat to themselves or others and there is sufficient medical opinion that treatment would be of therapeutic benefit.
- Further limiting the extent to which people with a learning disability and/or people with autism can be detained.
- Strengthening the voice of patients in planning their care
- Removing prisons and police stations as places of safety under the Mental Health Act to ensure people experiencing a mental health crisis are supported in appropriate settings.
- Supporting offenders with mental health needs to get the care they need quickly.

This Bill will apply to England and Wales.

Social care is also mentioned in various other bills including the:



- Employment Bill which has an objective to establish a Fair Pay Agreement in the adult social care sector which will apply to the whole of the UK. Wales already has a commitment in place to pay those working in adult social care the Real Living Wage.
- Digital Information and Smart Data Bill which aims to improve how public services use data and digital platforms. This Bill will introduce information standards to IT systems in the health and social care system.
- Children's Wellbeing Bill aims to make changes to make children social care fairer, happier and safer.
- Skills England Bill hopes to make a formal link between migration data and skills policy so that training in England better responds to the needs of the labour market. This is likely to have a specific focus on health and social care as there has been a 206% increase in the numbers of visas granted for workers in this industry.

## Climate change

### Great British Energy Bill

This Bill plans to set up Great British Energy, a clean energy company which aims to bring down costs. The Bill proposes that Great British Energy would own their own assets by investing in a partnership with the private sector and builds on work previously done to deliver the ambition to achieve clean energy by 2030.

### Water (Special Measures) Bill

This bill strengthens the powers of the Water Regulator by ensuring that water bosses face personal criminal liability for breaking the law. It also plans to further improve accountability for water executives by establishing a new code of conduct. The Bill also introduces powers to bring automatic and severe fines as well as ban the payment of bonuses if environmental standards are not met.

Water companies will also be required to install real-time monitors at every sewage outlet with data independently scrutinised by the regulator.

This Bill will apply to England and Wales.

## Other updates

- **Migration** - The speech announced plans to modernise the immigration system through the Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill
- **Devolution** - The King announced a new Bill to support devolution in England and new powers to local Mayors. As well as plans to strengthen relationships with devolved powers across the UK, including Wales with the hope to improve collaboration between nations.



- **Transport** - A suite of plans were announced aimed at improving transport, including plans to bring rail companies back under government operations.
- **Wider public services** - A bill was announced aimed at improving transparency and accountability within public services. Plans were also declared to increase police presence in communities and support the victims of crime.

## CHC's analysis

Today's King Speech marks the start of a partnership approach between UK Labour and Welsh Labour. We're already seeing an alignment on Planning policy, with Welsh Labour recently announcing the introduction of a new Bill to consolidate and simplify the system by the end of the Senedd term. Although powers to amend housing and planning policies in Wales are devolved to the Welsh Parliament, we expect that the Welsh Government will continue to consider how some of these Bills and provisions could be helpfully applied to Wales.

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