

The Queen's Speech

This year's Queen's Speech included many anticipated announcements for the housing sector. Central to the political narrative of the government is the 'levelling up' agenda in all parts of the country and easing the cost of living.

Social Housing Regulation Bill

This Bill will see a more powerful Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) who will be able to impose emergency repairs on tenant's homes where the landlord is unable or unwilling to act or there is evidence of systemic failures by the landlord. Under this bill, regulators will only need to give 48 hours notice before carrying out a survey on a property that allows the regulator to act more quickly when it is concerned about poor quality homes. Non-compliance with these standards will mean harsher penalties for landlords as the RSH is now able to impose unlimited fines to landlords.

This Bill promises to bring major reforms to social housing following the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower Fire in 2017. Additionally, it enhances tenants rights to better quality homes and increases the landlord's responsibility by bringing in new performance measures that social landlords will be judged on including repairs and complaint-handling.

Any social housing tenant, council or RSL will now be able to put in a freedom of information request.

The background notes to the Queen's Speech can be read [here](#) (page 65).

The Bill will extend primarily to England and Wales, and apply to England only, with some provisions extending and applying across the UK.

Renters' Reform Bill

This Bill introduces a new ombudsman for the private sector which will hopefully allow private landlords to resolve issues out of court. Under these proposals, the rights of private renters are strengthened by the new legally binding Decent Homes Standard.

This act abolishes Section 21 'no fault' evictions which currently allows landlords to evict tenants without giving them a reason. However, as this reform has been unpopular amongst private landlords, ministers have promised new stronger possession grounds will be introduced for matters of anti-social behaviour or severe rent arrears.

All this will be delivered alongside the creation of a new property portal where landlords and tenants will be able to access information about their obligations and performance.

The background notes to the Queen's Speech can be read [here](#) (page 67).



Leasehold reforms

The Leasehold (Ground Rent) Act 2022 is evidence of wider housing reform and is evidence of the government's first step towards leasehold and commonhold reform in this parliament. In this session of Parliament, we can expect to see greater interest in improving the transparency of service charges, making it easier for leaseholders to extend their leases and provide options for residents to take control of the management of their building.

Levelling up and Regeneration bill

Building on the work of the Levelling Up White Paper and (abandoned) Planning White Paper, this Bill will bring in the new Infrastructure Levy which will replace Section 106s. It is hoped that these changes will speed up the planning process so that they can be more easily accessible for local communities. As part of this bill, the government is looking at legislating 'street votes' in an effort to ensure that local housing developments have support within communities.

The Bill will, in the main, extend to England and Wales and apply to England only, with some provisions extending and applying across the UK.

The background notes to the Queen's Speech can be read [here](#) (page 25).

Other updates

Devolution

Importantly, the Queen's Speech highlighted this government's commitment to supporting devolution citing the 'huge benefits across the United Kingdom.'

Cost of living crisis

This speech highlighted a commitment to delivering economic growth and improving standards of living.

The Energy Bill will build on the success of the COP26 Summit last year to deliver the transition to cheaper, cleaner and more secure energy. Under this Bill, new measures will be published to create new competition rules for digital markets and strengthen consumer rights to protect households and businesses.

Brexit

This programme of government includes seven measures scrapping EU regulation. This includes a British Bill of Rights which will replace the Human Rights Act. The act also unveiled a new trade agreement with New Zealand and Australia.

MPs will now debate the contents of the speech in the House of Commons for six days.