



**POLITICAL  
INTELLIGENCE**

What to expect  
from  
Queen's Speech 2022

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## Overview

The Conservative government is scheduled to set out its legislative plans for the coming months in the Queen's Speech, the centerpiece of the State Opening of Parliament, on 10 May 2022.

This year's speech—which is written by ministers but delivered by the monarch-- represents a key opportunity for Prime Minister Boris Johnson to relaunch the government's agenda and enthuse voters and Conservative MPs in the wake of the May 5 local elections dominated by the cost-of-living crisis and the Number 10 Covid "partygate" scandal. Experts say this speech also comes at a crucial stage in the parliamentary cycle for the government to have sufficient time to achieve its policy ambitions before it turns its attention to contesting the next general election, which must be held by January 2025.

The speech, which takes place at around 11:30am, will be followed debate in both chambers, with different days dedicated to specific subject areas. In 2021 the House of Commons debated the following themes over five days:

- Better Jobs and a Fair Deal at Work
- A Brighter Future for the Next Generation
- Safe Streets for All
- Affordable and Safe Housing for All
- The NHS and Social Care

After both Houses have concluded their debates, the Queen's Speech is voted on in the Commons, but [rarely in](#) the Lords. It is unusual for the Queen's Speech to be voted down, as governments usually have a majority in the House. Losing the vote would suggest a loss of confidence in the government's ability to deliver its legislative agenda. Once the Queen's Speech is passed in the Commons, the government proceeds with its legislative plans according to its timetable.

This Dods Political Intelligence briefing lists the new laws--including bills carried over from the previous session--that the government is expected to put forward in this Queen's Speech. The bills are set out in alphabetical order with a brief explanation and some context.

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## What to expect in Bills and policy to look for in Queen's Speech 2022

### Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill

This Bill was first introduced in the House of Commons in June 2021 but did not complete all stages prior to prorogation. It received a carry-over motion and so will continue its passage in the next parliamentary session. Principally, the Bill seeks to prohibit the export of live cattle, sheep, pigs and goats and equines for slaughter, including for fattening for subsequent slaughter, while also addressing the issue of illegal puppy imports. When the Bill was [launched](#) in June 2021 the government said it aimed to improve the UK's "world-leading" standards following Brexit outlines in its Action Plan for Animal Welfare. It also includes a ban on keeping primates as

pets, give police new powers to protect livestock from dangerous and out of control dogs, and improve zoo regulations.

### **Animal Welfare (Animals Abroad) Bill**

This Bill is designed to tackle animal cruelty and support conservation efforts overseas, including a ban on trade in hunting trophies and the domestic sale and advertising of experiences overseas that are cruel to animals. The ban on hunting trophies can be attributed to the efforts of a Private Members Bill introduced by John Spellar MP, which resulted in the government including the spirit of the bill in their proposed Animals Abroad Bill. The plan to bring forward this legislation was first outlined in the 2019 [Animal Welfare](#) strategy. The Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs Committee paused its inquiry into the Bill in September 2021 saying that scrutiny of the proposed legislation could not continue until the Bill was published.

### **Bill of Rights**

The government opened a [three-month consultation](#) in December 2021 to gather views on their proposal to replace the Human Rights Act 1998 and replace it with a British Bill of Rights which would also strengthen the role of the UK Supreme Court. The consultation outcome has not yet been published; however, it is widely expected that a Bill of Rights will be introduced in the 2022 Queen's Speech.

The government has said its plans reflect an "enduring commitment to liberty under the rule of law". Critics however have questioned the extent to which proposals are necessary, and whether they will help or hamper human rights protections in the UK. The Equality and Human Rights Commission, the UK's national equality body, has warned that some of the government's current proposals ["risk reducing protections and lack evidence"](#).

### **Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Bill**

This Bill, which aims to prevent public bodies from taking a different approach on boycotts, divestment, and sanctions to the UK government, was introduced in May 2021 but is expected to be brought forward in the coming parliamentary session. The government had intended this Bill to ensure a unified UK approach in foreign relations and may have greater significance following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Some civil society organisations [have argued that public](#) bodies should have the right to decide whether to purchase goods from companies or countries that abuse human or workers' rights or damage the environment.

### **Brexit Freedoms Bill**

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in [January](#) that the government would bring forward a new Brexit Freedoms Bill to end to the special status of EU law and ensure that it can be more easily amended or removed. It said many EU laws kept on after Brexit were agreed as a "messy compromise" between 28 EU member states and often did not reflect the UK's priorities or objectives. The Bill would be accompanied by a drive to reform, repeal and replace outdated EU law, a move the government has said would cut £1 billion of red tape for UK businesses.

## Broadcasting Bill

The [Broadcasting white paper](#), published just before the end of the 2021-22 session, has promised reforms to create a new “golden age of British TV” and help the nation’s public service broadcasters thrive. It included key policy aims, such as freezing the BBC TV Licensing Fee, selling Channel 4, and introducing a Video-on-Demand Code which would be similar to the Broadcasting Code. The white paper also seeks to change the remit and purpose of public service broadcasters. The government has argued that its reforms will allow broadcasters to invest and compete better, freeing them up from being subject to a complicated set of “purposes” and “objectives” from laws made in 2003. The white paper also proposes that public service broadcasters will have exclusive rights to air TV’s major sporting events such as the FIFA World Cup and Wimbledon. But critics say the plans risk selling off and undermining British corporations. The already vocal opposition to the plans—particularly the sale of Channel 4—suggest this Bill, championed by Nadine Dorries, the sometimes-controversial Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, could be one of the most contentious pieces of legislation in the coming session.

## Carers’ Leave Bill

A [Carers’ Leave Bill](#) would aim to deliver paid neonatal leave and carers’ leave. These provisions were originally through to be part of a wider Employment Bill which is no longer expected to be on the agenda. Conservative MP Jack Brereton had sponsored a private members’ bill in the last session called the Employment (Caring Leave) Bill which aimed to give employees who are unpaid carers the right to one week’s unpaid leave for caring purposes, but it failed to make any significant progress before parliament was prorogued.

## Competition (including Digital Markets Unit)

This Bill would aim to bolster the Competition and Markets Authority, enhance consumers’ rights and put the Digital Markets Unit (DMU) on a statutory footing. In April 2021, the DMU was set within the Competition and Markets Authority. In March, Business Minister Paul Scully [said the government](#) would be responding to a consultation on digital markets and the DMU’s role “in the coming weeks” and passing legislation on it “when parliamentary time allows”. The consultation set out the government’s proposals for a new “pro-competition” regime for digital markets, which aims to drive greater dynamism in the UK tech sector.

## Conversion Therapy Bill

The government first announced the plan to ban so-called conversion therapy in the 2021 Queen’s Speech.

In March 2022, Minister for Equalities Mike Freer reaffirmed the government’s intention to legislate to outlaw the controversial practice following a backlash to reports that it had abandoned the plans and was seeking to stop conversion therapy using existing laws and other measures. However, the government has said it will [ban](#) conversion therapy for gay and bi-sexual people, but not for transgender people, a move which has been criticised by some LGBT groups and MPs. The charity Stonewall has defined conversion therapy as any practices which seek to “cure, change or cancel a person’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity.” The government has previously said the practice can cause mental and physical harm, while NHS England and other psychological bodies have said conversion therapies are unethical



## Counter-State Threats Bill

This Bill was introduced in May 2021 but is expected to be brought forward in the coming parliamentary session. In 2021 the government [opened a consultation](#) on how best to legislate counter state threats, including creating new offences to disrupt hostile activity and protect official data. Legislation to support this is expected to include reforming the Official Secrets Act and the creation of the long promised Foreign Influence Registration Scheme. One issue that is expected to be an area of contention with the Bill is the impact of press freedoms and freedom of expression.

## Counter-terrorism

The government's [independent review](#) into its Prevent strategy—which aims to stop people being attracted to commit or support acts of terrorism—has missed three separate reporting deadlines. However, any recommendations when published may form part of a wider package of reforms for the UK's counter terrorism strategy. The government has said it will look at bringing forward a '[Protect duty](#)' that would improve security in public venues without placing an undue burden on organisations.

## Data

The government is expected to propose a Bill to reform the UK's data laws after its exit from the EU, such as GDPR and Data Protection Act, with a focus on reducing barriers and creating greater flexibility. In September, [the government published](#) their proposals for reforming the UK's data protection regime. Key proposals focussed on deregulation and innovation and included measures to remove mandatory data protection officer requirements and protection impact assessments.

## Draft Downstream Oil Resilience Bill

[Published by the government](#) in June 2021, the Bill is expected to continue in the new parliamentary session with the aim of ensuring a secure and reliable energy supply. The Bill would grant the Secretary of State powers to prevent possible disruption to the downstream oil sector, which refers to the import, supply, storage, distribution and retail of petroleum and petroleum products in the UK. The Bill has already undergone scrutiny by the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee, which supported its intentions but warned that its powers were "unusually and unacceptably broad."

## Energy Bill

The government is expected to introduce a wide-reaching Energy Bill in the new session, following the publication of its Energy Security Strategy in April 2022. The Bill is likely to support the creation of a Future System Operator to oversee the UK energy system, boost energy security and accelerate the transition to net zero. According to industry sources, the new body would effectively amount to a renationalisation of key responsibilities for managing UK energy supply and demand. The Bill is also expected to provide new financing models for low-carbon hydrogen and carbon capture technology, as well as introduce regulations to extend the household energy price cap beyond 2023. Measures announced in the [Energy Security Strategy](#) can also be expected, including on the construction of more nuclear power stations and offshore energy developments.



### Financial Services Bill

A Financial Services Bill is expected to refresh and reform the post-Brexit financial services regulatory regime to create an open, green, and innovative financial sector. In particular, the industry will be anticipating major reforms to Solvency II rules, which at present maintain the status quo of EU law. Based on consultation proposals and speeches from the Chancellor, [Solvency II reforms](#) will seek to free up billions of pounds for innovative investment and facilitate long-term investment in infrastructure and 'green' projects.

Another likely aspect of the Financial Services Bill will focus on access to cash and protecting the UK's cash infrastructure long-term, first promised in the 2020 Budget. Proposals may include setting geographic access requirements so that a specified service point is always in reach.

### Free Trade Agreement

The Queen's Speech could include a Free Trade Agreement Bill to govern trade agreements that the government is consulting on or negotiating. These new deals are expected to be debated, with the government adhering to the Constitutional Reform and Governance (CRAG) Act 2010 which provides for a minimum of 21 sitting days before the UK ratifies any agreement.

There is also speculation that the first Bill to be signed off could include changes to the Trade Remedies Authority.

### Gene Editing Bill

The government may propose a Gene Editing Bill, the [Sunday Times](#) has reported. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) said the relaxation of the rules would enable faster development of beneficial changes to the genes of plants and animals. They have pledged to bring forward primary legislation to amend the regulatory definitions of a genetically modified organism, which would allow genome-edited crop plants to be genetically changed if these changes could occur naturally or via existing conventional breeding techniques.

### Harbours Bill

Following the P&O Ferries scandal, where it sacked 800 staff and replaced them with agency workers at short notice, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said the government would amend the Harbours Act 1964 to give UK ports new powers to refuse access to ferry services that did not pay crew the national minimum wage.

He told the [Transport Select Committee](#) the Bill would see minimum wage requirements applied to operators on voyages which travelled through the UK. Enforcement would be undertaken by the Maritime Coastguard, but Ports would be required to ask for clarification and confirmation that the relevant pay was being made to staff, he said.

### Health disparities white paper

A [health disparities white paper](#), which was first announced following the government's levelling up white paper in February, could feature in the Queen's Speech. The white paper is expected to propose ways to shrink gaps in life expectancy across the country.

The government said in February that two reviews would help inform the paper: the first, looking into ethnic inequalities for medical devices, will be led by Professor Dame Margret Whitehead; the second, looking into how to make England smoke free by 2030, will be led by Javed Khan, the former CEO of the children's charity Barnardo's. The latter will also be used to inform the new Tobacco Control Plan expected later this year.

### **High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill**

The High-Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill was introduced in last year's Queen's Speech. The hybrid bill will make provision for the building of Phase 2a of HS2. The Bill has been carried over from the previous parliamentary session, having so far only received its first reading in January. The second reading is expected to take place before the summer recess.

### **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill**

This Bill, originally introduced in May 2021, received a carry-over motion and will be brought forward into the new parliamentary session. It aims to [extend and strengthen existing legislation](#) to uphold freedom of speech and academic freedom in registered higher education providers and students' unions. It will also bolster the role of the Office for Students (OfS) in investigating concerns around free speech on campus, as well as a new OfS director of free speech. In recent weeks, the government has reaffirmed its commitment to introducing this legislation.

### **Illicit Finance legislation**

Following the introduction of the [Economic Crime \(Transparency and Enforcement\) Act](#) in March 2022, the government committed to introducing further measures to tackle illicit finance in the UK. The wider package of reforms is expected to be introduced in the new parliamentary session and will focus on reforms to Companies House, as well as new powers to facilitate the seizure of crypto assets. Following pressure to stamp out illicit finance after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the government published [a white paper](#) on reforming Companies House including plans to legislate to strengthen corporate registration framework and the biggest changes in the role of the registrar since it was created.

### **Infrastructure Bank Bill**

The UK Infrastructure Bank was launched in June 2021, tasked with accelerating investment into infrastructure projects, cutting emissions and levelling up every part of the UK. The government is expected to introduce the Infrastructure Bank Bill, to establish the UKIB as a statutory body as promised in the 2021 Budget.

### **Insolvency Reform**

A [government consultation](#) which concluded in March 2022 has pointed to plans for an overhaul of insolvency rules. The reforms, which aim to modernize and strengthen the insolvency regulatory regime, would require primary legislation to be brought forward. The proposals include the establishment of a single regulator of Insolvency Practitioners, a public register of insolvency firms, and a compensation scheme.





### Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill

The government has pledged to enshrine the 12 national missions of Levelling Up outlined in its [white paper](#) in law to ensure progress is made on them by this and future parliaments. The missions include increasing productivity, devolution deals and investment in public transport and education. Media reports suggest a watered-down version of last year's controversial planning reform bill could be included in this Bill.

### Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE)

As part of wider reforms to the higher education (HE) system, the government has pledged to introduce a lifelong loan entitlement (LLE) to replace the two existing systems of publicly funded higher education loans. This was included in the recently-passed Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, but the government is [consulting on the scope of the LLE](#) before bringing further primary legislation, in time for it to be rolled out in 2025.

### Mental Health Act (Reform) Bill

Following [a review in 2017](#), the government found that the Mental Health Act was not always working well for patients and their loved ones. To address this, the Department of Health and Social Care published a white paper on reforming the Mental Health Act in January 2021.

The [white paper](#) set out aims to improve the Mental Health Act by increasing the choice and autonomy of people detained under the act; to use less restriction when in care; to improve therapeutic benefits so people can be discharged more quickly; and to ensure that patients are treated as individuals.

The [consultation response](#) was published in July 2021, at which point the government said it would work with stakeholders to further refine proposals, and that they would share a draft Mental health Bill for pre-legislative scrutiny when parliamentary time allowed. It is now expected that reforms will be announced in the 2022 Queen's Speech.

### Modern slavery

The Foreign Secretary announced that [financial penalties](#) would be introduced for organisations who failed to meet their statutory obligations to publish annual slavery statements, which will require primary legislation in the next parliament.

### Nature Bill

This Bill aims to legislate for elements of the government's response to Julian Glover's Landscapes Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Environment Secretary George Eustice has [said the](#) response will contribute to the government's commitment to protect 30 percent of land by 2030 and boost biodiversity. The [government's response to Glover review](#) implies that the Bill will seek to create a more coherent national network, improve access to landscapes and support local economies to protect landscapes, and boost local delivery of outcomes.

### Online Safety Bill

The passage of the draft Bill, which has been updated following input from stakeholders and MPs, will continue in the new session after it received its second reading in April. With new sections for cyber flashing offences and more duties to be placed on companies, the government argues the Bill is tougher and will make the UK the safest place to be online. The sharp rise in use of digital forms of communication for work and leisure during the Covid pandemic, and the increasingly powerful role of social media platforms in modern society, promise to make this one of the most closely watched Bills. Recent high-profile cases of online harms have meant the government must balance growing pressure to strengthen regulation of Internet companies while respecting freedom of expression and protecting people's privacy. The importance of regulatory reform to large mostly US-based tech giants means this Bill is likely to have a more significant international dimension than most, with European Union legislators and others also seeking to make similar progress on this issue.

### Planning Bill

This Bill is expected to be put forward after last year's proposed changes to the planning system were deemed too controversial, particularly amongst southern backbench Conservative MPs with rural constituencies. The government has yet to outline its new proposals although Michael Gove, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has expressed his support for streamlining building procedures for brownfield land and radical ideas such as "street votes" earlier in the year. However, sector experts remain sceptical about whether the government can achieve its goal of building 300,000 new homes per year.

### Prison and probation scrutiny bodies

In December the government published a [Prisons Strategy white paper](#) which suggested a number of legislative reforms, including plans to formally recognise the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman (PPO) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons (HMI Prisons), as well as confirm existing powers to other bodies. The government has said the legislation would be the first step in a comprehensive review of prison and detention scrutiny. The Bill comes against a backdrop of growing pressure on the government to clear substantial backlogs in courts system which have been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.

### Procurement Bill

A Public Procurement Bill, which was first announced in the 2021 Queen's Speech, is expected to be brought forward in the coming session. The Bill would aim to reform the procurement regime--which currently reflects EU law-following Brexit to make it more innovative, specific to the UK, and less bureaucratic. The government's 2020 green paper on transforming public procurement and [concluded consultation](#) on proposals, suggest the Bill will include measures to simplify the current legislation into a single regulatory framework, raise the standard of suppliers, and embed transparency throughout the commercial procurement lifecycle.

### Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill

This Bill, introduced in November 2021, aims to support the rollout of future-proof, gigabit-capable broadband and 5G networks, one of the government's key so-called Levelling Up aims,

and better protect citizens, networks and infrastructure against the harms enabled through insecure consumer connectable products. The Bill is split in two sections: Product Security measures and telecommunications Infrastructure measures. It received a carry-over motion and will be brought into the next parliamentary session. The fourth of government's 12 Leveling Up missions announced in February sets a target of delivering nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage, with G coverage for the majority of the population, by 2030.

### **Schools' policy**

The schools white paper, [published in March 2022](#), outlined the government's ambitions for changes across the education system. In response the Department for Education (DfE) has [confirmed it is](#) committed to legislate to create a registration system for children not in school and requirements for schools to publish their attendance policies. The white paper also indicates legislation will be introduced to increase Ofsted's powers to inspect schools that are not registered and address risks to the safeguarding and education of children who attend them.

The Director General for schools, Andrew McCully, has also [told the Education Committee](#) to expect legislation on academy accountability in the Queen's Speech, another component of the white paper. The white paper commits to allowing local authorities to set up multi-academy trusts (MATs), and ensure freedoms and protections afforded to faith schools apply to religious academies.

Changes to the National Funding Formula (NFF) are also expected, following the government's consultation on [schools funding](#) published in March. The response confirmed the DfE's intention to proceed with the introduction of an NFF with a reduced role for local authorities in deciding allocations, for which it will bring forward legislation "at the earlier opportunity". A second stage consultation on this is expected in Spring 2022.

### **Social Housing Reform**

Almost two years after the government's [social housing white paper](#) was published the Queen's Speech is expected to include a Bill addressing social housing reform. The government has said the main aims are to drive up safety standards, data collection and increase accountability for "rogue landlords". It is expected that this will include the government pledge to "name and shame" social housing landlords who perform poorly or struggle to adapt to new government regulations.

### **Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms**

A consultation was launched in March on the government's [SEND and alternative provision \(AP\) green paper](#), following a review into the SEND system launched in 2019. The green paper includes plans to legislate for new national SEND standards to create consistency of provision across England for the early years and education sectors, covering ages 0-25. It also includes legislative proposals to enable local multi-agency partnerships and new backstop powers for local authorities to direct admissions in schools. A national SEND delivery plan is expected later in the year.



## Transport Bill

Following the publication of the [Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail](#) last year, the government is expected to introduce a Bill which will establish Great British Railways as a new body with powers and duties to plan the use of the railway network. While the mandate of the body was set out in the Plan for Rail, further details are expected on how it will operate.

In a Transport Committee session, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps [also hinted](#) that the Bill would include measures to legalise and regulate e-scooters following two years of trials.

## Victims Bill

A Victims Bill, designed to improve the experience and rights of victims in the criminal justice system, which was first introduced in the 2021 Queen's Speech is expected to be put forward in the coming session. The Bill is expected to be based on proposals set out in a Ministry of Justice consultation on [‘Delivering Justice for Victims’ which was concluded in February. The consultation included](#) plans for a new Victims' Law that would guarantee greater consultation during the criminal justice process to ensure victims' voices are properly heard, and that agencies such as the police, Crown Prosecution Service and courts service are held to account for the service they provide.

## About Dods Political Intelligence

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## Contact Us

For further information, please visit [dodspoliticalintelligence.com](https://www.dodspoliticalintelligence.com) or contact us at [customer.service@dodsgroup.com](mailto:customer.service@dodsgroup.com) or  
UK customer service +44 207 593 5500 or  
EU customer service +32 274 182 30