

The Queen's Speech 2019

Overview

With Brexit continuing to take centre stage politically, the Queen's Speech was delivered a 65th time by the current monarch. The Government used this opportunity to illustrate their vision post-Brexit, outlining several measures which will no doubt form central planks of a manifesto if another election is to happen.

Normally a Queen's Speech takes place annually but this is the first one since 21 June 2017 following Theresa May's decision to hold a two-year parliamentary session to focus on Brexit.

Here Political Intelligence summarises the key bills announced during the 2019 Queen's Speech as well as providing an overview of bills announced in the tech, health and transport sectors.



Key bills announced

Of the 26 bills announced, the most eye-catching announcements included:

- The **Immigration and Social Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill** to end freedom of movement and introduce a points-based immigration system from 2021.
- The **Trade Bill** to establish a new trading framework, making the most of the opportunities of having independent trade policy post-Brexit.
- An **Environment Bill** which will set legally binding targets to reduce plastics, restore biodiversity, improve water quality and cut air pollution.
- The **Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill** which will “accelerate” the delivery of fast, reliable broadband to “millions of homes”.



Brexit-related bills

- **European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill** to pass on 31 October, with a “new partnership based on free trade and friendly cooperation”.
- **Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill** will reaffirm the Government’s commitment to ensuring EU citizens who have the right to remain”.
- **Immigration Bill** will be brought forward to end free movement and bring forward a “fair, modern and global immigration system”.
- **Fisheries Bill, Agriculture Bill and Trade Bill** will “work to implement new regimes for fisheries, agriculture and trade, seizing the opportunities that arise from leaving the European Union”.
- **Financial Services Bill** and **Private International Law Bill** will “provide certainty, stability and new opportunities for the financial services and legal sectors”.
- **Foreign Affairs** to ensure that the UK continues to play a leading role in global affairs, defending its interests and promoting its values.



Tech

- **Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill** will help accelerate the delivery of fast, reliable and secure broadband networks to millions of homes.
- On **Online Harms**, the Government will “continue to develop proposals to improve internet safety” set out in the 2019 White Paper.
- As part of efforts to establish the United Kingdom as a world-leader in **scientific capability and space technology**, the government will increase investment in science, create a new National Space Council and launch of a new national space strategy as well as creating a more open visa system to attract global scientific and research talent.

Health

- **New draft legislation will be published to accelerate the Long Term Plan for the NHS**, following the publications of the NHS' set of recommendations in September 2019.
- A **Health Service Safety Investigations Bill** will establish an independent body to investigate serious healthcare incidents.
- A **Medicines and Medical Devices Bill** will capitalise on opportunities to ensure that the NHS and patients can have faster access to innovative medicines, while supporting the growth of the UK's domestic sector.
- The **Mental Health Act** will be reformed to improve respect for, and care of, those receiving treatment, with a view to delivering greater patient choice and autonomy and reforming the practice of detention.
- Proposals will be brought forward to address **adult social care reform** to ensure dignity in old age.



Transport, Energy & Infrastructure

- **Air Traffic Management and Unmanned Aircraft Bill** will provide for the effective and efficient management of the United Kingdom's airspace, ensuring that police are able to effectively tackle the unlawful use of unmanned aircraft such as drones and model aircraft.
- **Airline Insolvency Legislation** will protect passengers in the event of an airline going bust by reforming the insolvency process.
- **Railway Reform** where the Government will publish a **White Paper** on the Williams Review recommendations later this autumn and will implement the reforms from 2020, prioritising improvements for passengers.
- **High Speed Rail 2 (West Midlands – Crewe) Bill** to provide the powers to build and operate the next stage of the High Speed Two (HS2) network (Phase 2a).

In addition the Government will publish a new **National Infrastructure Strategy** **which** will set out a long-term vision to improve the nation's digital, transport and energy infrastructure.



Law & Order

- **Extradition (Provisional Arrest) Bill** will give more powers to the police to arrest individuals who are wanted by “trusted international partners”.
- **Police Protections Bill** will hand officers new protections to “keep the population safe”.
- **Serious Violence Bill** will place a “duty on public sector bodies” to work together to tackle serious violence.
- **Prisoners (Disclosure of Information about Victims) Bill** will bring changes to the parole system.
- A **Foreign National Offenders Bill** will “improve the justice system’s response to foreign national offenders”.
- A new **Sentencing Bill** will see “the most serious offenders spend longer in custody to reflect better the severity of their crimes”.



Other bills announced

The other bills announced were as follows:

- **Pension Schemes Bill** which will crackdown on irresponsible management firms handling private pension schemes.
- **Employment (Allocation of Tips) Bill** will take steps to “make work fairer” including new measures to “support those working hard”.
- **Domestic Violence Bill** to be carried over to “transform the approach to victims of domestic abuse”.
- **Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Bill** aimed at reducing impact of divorce on children.
- 2% of GDP spending on defence.
- **Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Bill** which will include a ban on imports from trophy hunting.



Labour's 'alternative' Queen's Speech

Lost amid all the Brexit-related noise, was Labour Leader Jeremy Corbyn's 'alternative' Queen's Speech delivered last Thursday. Corbyn labelled the Queen's Speech as a 'farce' and declared Labour ready for an election once 'no deal' is taken off the table. In particular, he announced that a Labour Government would:

- Increase the minimum wage to £10 an hour
- Introduce free prescriptions in England
- Scrap of tuition fees
- Scrap universal credit
- A 'final say' Brexit referendum where Labour would put its negotiated deal to a public vote alongside Remain.



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Political Intelligence

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