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King's Speech 2023

Summary

- 1 Background
 - 2 Bills continuing from the 2022–23 session
 - 3 Bills announced but not yet introduced
 - 4 Bills that might be mentioned in the 2023 King's Speech
 - 5 What happens during the State Opening and the King's Speech?
 - 6 Progress of Bills announced in the Queen's Speech, May 2022
- Appendix: List of contributors

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Contents

Summary	5
1 Background	8
1.1 Recent Queen's Speeches	8
1.2 Previous King's Speeches	9
2 Bills continuing from the 2022–23 session	10
2.1 Bills carried over from the previous session	10
Which bills have been carried over to the 2023–24 session?	10
2.2 Draft bills published in the 2022–23 session	12
Draft Media Bill	12
Draft Victims Bill	12
Draft Mental Health Bill	13
Draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill	13
3 Bills announced but not yet introduced	15
3.1 Bills in the May 2022 Queen's Speech that have not been introduced	15
Conversion Therapy Bill	15
Modern Slavery Bill	15
Transport Bill	16
3.2 Other legislation	16
Legislation that did not complete its passage	16
Draft bills announced	16
4 Bills that might be mentioned in the 2023 King's Speech	18
4.1 Criminal justice measures	18
Required prison sentence for repeat offences	18
Release of prisoners serving sentences for rape	18
Sentencing: Whole life orders	18
Refusal to appear at sentencing hearings	19

Renting prison places abroad	20
Sex offender identity changes	20
Knife crime	20
Intimate images	21
4.2 Raising the age of sale for tobacco products	21
4.3 Implementing legislation for UK accession to CPTPP	23
4.4 Transport	23
4.5 Leasehold and commonhold reform	25
4.6 Changing the Habitats Regulations to 'scrap nutrient neutrality'	25
Previous attempts to remove nutrient neutrality rules	26
5 What happens during the State Opening and the King's Speech?	27
5.1 The State Opening	27
5.2 The Speech	28
5.3 Debate on the King's Speech	28
5.4 History of the State Opening	28
6 Progress of Bills announced in the Queen's Speech, May 2022	29
Appendix: List of contributors	32

Summary

The State Opening of Parliament is scheduled to take place on 7 November 2023.

What is the State Opening?

The State Opening marks the beginning of the parliamentary session. Its main purpose is for the Monarch to formally open Parliament and, in the King's Speech, outline the Government's proposed policies and legislation for the coming parliamentary session.

This is the first speech from the throne in the House of Lords that King Charles III will deliver as King. In May 2022, he delivered the Queen's Speech. He and Prince William were Counsellors of State, acting on Her late Majesty the Queen's behalf.

This briefing identifies issues and bills that may appear in the King's Speech, including legislation that has been carried over from the last session, legislation announced in the May 2022 Queen's Speech that might still be part of the Government's plans, and other issues that might be legislated on.

The briefing also includes general information about the ceremony and a summary of the progress of bills announced at the May 2022 Queen's Speech.

This briefing also includes a summary of the progress of bills announced in the Queen's Speech at the beginning of the 2022–23 session. Details of all Government bills introduced in this Session can be found on the [Find a Bill](#) webpages.

Which bills are in progress?

For a bill to be 'carried over' into the next session, a motion must be agreed by the Commons. In the current session, carry-over motions have been agreed for four public bills:

- Data Protection and Digital Information (No 2) Bill
- Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill
- Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

- Victims and Prisoners Bill

In addition, two hybrid bills will continue to be scrutinised in the 2023–24 session:

- High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill
- Holocaust Memorial Bill

In addition, the Renters Reform Bill was introduced but was still awaiting a second reading when this briefing was published.

Some bills that were announced in the May 2022 Queen's Speech were not taken forward but may appear in the coming session. These are:

- Conversion Therapy Bill
- Modern Slavery Bill
- Transport Bill

Four draft bills were published in 2022–23, one has been formally introduced:

- Draft Media Bill
- Draft Victims Bill (introduced (Victims and Prisoners Bill 2022–23) and to be carried over)
- Draft Mental Health Bill
- Draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

One further draft bill was announced but has not been published:

- Draft Audit Reform Bill

Potential subjects of legislation

The following areas may become subjects of legislation in the 2023–24 session:

- Criminal justice measures, including knife crime and sentencing
- Raising the age of sale for tobacco products
- Implementing legislation for UK accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
- Transport

- Leasehold and commonhold reform
- Changing the Habitats Regulations to 'scrap nutrient neutrality'

Other information

The Library research briefing, [State opening of Parliament – history and ceremonial](#), reviews how the ceremonial and practical arrangements of the State Opening of Parliament have changed over time.

1 Background

The King's Speech to open the next session of Parliament is scheduled to take place on 7 November 2023.¹

1.1 Recent Queen's Speeches

Following the passing of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011, parliamentary sessions generally ran from spring to spring.²

However, following the 2017 General Election and the process of legislating for Brexit, 2017–19 was an unusually long session. The table below notes the dates of the Queen's Speech at the beginning of all sessions from the 2012–13 session onwards:

Session	Date of Queen's Speech
2012–13	Wednesday 9 May 2012 ³
2013–14	Wednesday 8 May 2013 ⁴
2014–15	Wednesday 4 June 2014 ⁵
2015–16	Wednesday 27 May 2015 (after the general election) ⁶
2016–17	Wednesday 18 May 2016 ⁷
2017–19	Wednesday 21 June 2017 (after the early general election) ⁸

¹ HCWS982, 20 July 2023

² [HC Deb 13 September 2010 cc33WS-34WS](#)

³ [HC Deb 9 May 2012 cc3-5](#); the first Wednesday after the local government elections held on 3 May 2012

⁴ [HC Deb 8 May 2013 cc3-4](#); the first Wednesday after the local government elections held on 2 May 2013

⁵ [HC Deb 4 June 2014 cc4-6](#); after combined local and European elections on 22 May 2014

⁶ [HC Deb 27 May 2015 cc31-33](#)

⁷ [HC Deb 18 May 2016 cc3-5](#)

⁸ [HC Deb 21 June 2017 cc34-36](#). Before the 2017 Queen's Speech, the Government announced the session it heralded would last for two years [Office of the Leader of the House of Commons news, [Government to confirm two-year Parliament to deliver Brexit and beyond](#), 17 June 2017]

Session	Date of Queen's Speech
2019	Monday 14 October 2019 ⁹
2019–21	Thursday 19 December 2019 (after the early general election) ¹⁰
2021–22	Tuesday 11 May 2021 ¹¹
2022–23	Tuesday 10 May 2022 (delivered by Prince Charles, Prince of Wales) ¹²

1.2 Previous King's Speeches

This is the first speech from the throne in the House of Lords that King Charles III will deliver as King. In May 2022, when he was still Prince of Wales, he delivered the Queen's Speech. He and Prince William were Counsellors of State, acting on Her Majesty the Queen's behalf.¹³

King George VI delivered a King's Speech on 31 October 1950.¹⁴ However, in 1951, the King was ill. Lords Commissioners¹⁵ were appointed to open Parliament and the King's Speech was delivered by the Lord Chancellor, one of the Commissioners.¹⁶

⁹ [HC Deb 14 October 2019 cc3-6](#)

¹⁰ [HC Deb 19 December 2019 cc31-33](#)

¹¹ [HC Deb 11 May 2021 cc3-6](#)

¹² [HC Deb 10 May 2022 cc4-6](#)

¹³ As above

¹⁴ [HC Deb 31 October 1950 cc6-9](#)

¹⁵ When the Monarch is unable to attend, they are represented by nominated Lords Commissioners who have authority to act on their behalf. Lords Commissioners are appointed by the Monarch by Letters Patent to undertake specific tasks in place of the Monarch

¹⁶ [HC Deb 6 November 1951 cc50-53](#)

2 Bills continuing from the 2022–23 session

2.1 Bills carried over from the previous session

Generally, bills that have not completed their passage through both Houses of Parliament are lost at the end of a session. However, since the beginning of the 2004–05 session, House of Commons Standing Orders have allowed ministers to carry over a bill from one session to the next by putting motions to the Commons.

The Commons can only agree to carry over Government bills that were introduced in the Commons and have not been sent to the Lords. Each bill resumes from the point it reached at prorogation.¹⁷

Under [Standing Order No 80A](#), proceedings on any bill subject to a carry-over motion have to be completed within 12 months as they lapse one year after the bill's first reading in the House of Commons.

The House of Lords has no provision in its standing orders to carry over bills but it has occasionally agreed to carry over public bills. And different arrangements allow hybrid bills to be carried over.

Which bills have been carried over to the 2023–24 session?

Most of the carried-over bills are [public bills](#), meaning they apply to the population of the UK in general, and so follow public bill procedures. However, some are [hybrid bills](#), which also affect the general population but also affect some specific individuals or groups differently, and follow slightly different procedures for carry over.

Data Protection and Digital Information (No 2) Bill

A carry-over motion for the Data Protection and Digital Information (No 2) Bill 2022–23 was agreed on 17 April 2023.¹⁸

¹⁷ Prorogation is the means by which a parliamentary session is ended. For information on prorogation, see the Library briefing, [Prorogation of Parliament](#)

¹⁸ [HC Deb 17 April 2023 c103](#)

For further background, see the Library briefing, [Data Protection and Digital Information \(No. 2\) Bill: Commons stages](#) (9 June 2023).

Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill

A carry-over motion for the Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill 2022–23 was agreed on 17 May 2023.¹⁹

For further background, see the Library briefing, [Digital Markets, Competition and Consumers Bill 2022-23: Digital markets and competition: Progress of the Bill](#) (8 September 2023)

Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill

A carry-over motion for the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill 2022–23 was agreed on 17 May 2023.²⁰

For further background, see the Library briefing, [Economic Activity of Public Bodies \(Overseas Matters\) Bill 2022-23](#) (29 June 2023)

Victims and Prisoners Bill

A carry-over motion for the Victims and Prisoners Bill 2022–23 was agreed on 15 May 2023.²¹

For further background, see the Library briefing, [The Victims and Prisoners Bill](#) (10 May 2023).

High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill

The High Speed Rail (Crewe - Manchester) Bill is a hybrid bill.

The Bill was first introduced in the 2021–22 session. A motion to carry over the Bill into the 2022–23 Session was agreed to on 25 April 2022.²²

A motion to carry over the Bill into the 2023–24 session and, if necessary, into the subsequent Parliament, was agreed on 20 June 2022.²³

The Library research briefing on the [High-Speed Rail \(Crewe to Manchester\) Bill](#) provides information on and background to the Bill.

Holocaust Memorial Bill

The Holocaust Memorial Bill is also a hybrid bill.

¹⁹ [HC Deb 17 May 2023 c928](#)

²⁰ [HC Deb 3 July 2023 c664](#)

²¹ [HC Deb 15 May 2023 c667](#)

²² [HC Deb 25 April 2022 cc551-554](#)

²³ [HC Deb 20 June 2022 cc665-684](#)

The Bill was first introduced in the 2022–23 session. A motion to carry over the Bill into the 2023–24 session was agreed to on 28 June 2023.²⁴

The Bill would disapply provisions in a private act (the London County Council (Improvements) Act 1900) which currently prevent the Government from building a Holocaust Memorial in Victoria Tower Gardens next to Parliament.

The Library research briefing on the [Holocaust Memorial Bill](#) provides information on and background to the Bill.

2.2

Draft bills published in the 2022–23 session

Draft Media Bill

The Draft Media Bill was published by the Government on 23 March 2023.²⁵

The draft bill was scrutinised by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee, which published two reports on the draft bill. The first, on aspects of the draft bill relating to radio, was published on 21 July 2023.²⁶

The Committee said that the evidence it received indicated that the provisions relating to radio were the most contentious, so it hoped that its report would allow the Government to address the concerns before the Bill is introduced in the autumn (which might be in the next session).²⁷

The Committee's final report on the provisions of the draft bill was published on 22 September.²⁸

Draft Victims Bill

The Draft Victims Bill was published by the Government on 25 May 2022.²⁹

The draft bill was scrutinised by the Justice Committee. Its report, [Pre-legislative Scrutiny of the draft Victims Bill](#) (PDF), was published on 30 September 2022.³⁰

²⁴ [HC Deb 28 June 2023 cc377-378](#)

²⁵ Department for Culture, Media and Sport, [Draft Media Bill](#) (PDF), March 2023, CP 822

²⁶ Culture, Media and Sport Committee, [Draft Media Bill: Radio Measures](#) (PDF), 21 July 2023, HC 1287 2022-23

²⁷ As above, paras 4 and 5

²⁸ Culture, Media and Sport Committee, [Draft Media Bill: Final Report](#) (PDF), 22 September 2023, HC 1807 2022-23

²⁹ Ministry of Justice, [Draft Victims Bill](#) (PDF), May 2022, CP 687

³⁰ Justice Committee, [Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Victims Bill](#) (PDF), 30 September 2022, HC 304 2022-23

The Government's response was published on 19 January 2023.³¹

The Victims and Prisoners Bill 2022–23, which included provisions from the draft bill, was introduced to the House of Commons on 29 March 2023. It has been carried over.

Draft Mental Health Bill

On 13 January 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care published a [white paper on Reforming the Mental Health Act](#).³² The paper set out proposed reforms building on recommendations made by an independent review in 2018: [Modernising the Mental Health Act: Increasing choice, reducing compulsion](#).³³

The Government consulted on the white paper's proposals from January to April 2021 and published [a consultation response](#) in July 2021.³⁴ The [Queen's Speech in May 2022](#) included an announcement on draft legislation to reform the Mental Health Act and [the draft bill was published on 27 June 2022](#).³⁵

The draft bill was subject to pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee from July to December 2022. [The Committee published its report](#) on 19 January 2023.³⁶

A Government response to the Joint Committee's report is awaited.

The Government has said it remains committed to reforming the Mental Health Act and will introduce a bill when parliamentary time allows.³⁷

More information can be found in the Library's briefing papers on [Reforming the Mental Health Act](#) and [Mental health policy in England](#).

Draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill

The [draft Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill](#) was published on 2 May 2023. Known as 'Martyn's Law' in recognition of the campaign led by the [mother of one of the victims](#) of the Manchester Arena bombings, it would require those responsible for publicly accessible venues to take steps to reduce the threat

³¹ Justice Committee, [Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Victims Bill: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report](#) (PDF), 19 January 2023, HC 932 2022-23

³² Department of Health and Social Care, [Reforming the Mental Health Act](#),

³³ Independent Review of the Mental Health Act 1983 chaired by Sir Simon Wessely, [Modernising the Mental Health Act: increasing choice, reducing compulsion](#), 6 December 2018

³⁴ Department of Health and Social Care, [Reforming the Mental Health Act: government response](#), 15 July 2021

³⁵ Department of Health and Social Care and Ministry of Justice, [Draft Mental Health Bill 2022](#), 27 June 2022

³⁶ Joint Committee on the Draft Mental Health Bill, [Draft Mental Health Bill report](#), HC 696, HL 128, 19 January 2023

³⁷ PQ 196923 [on [Draft Mental Health Bill](#)], 11 September 2023

to the public from terrorist attacks. These could include terrorism protection training, risk assessment and mitigation, and maintaining security plans.

The Home Affairs Committee conducted pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft bill and published a report in July 2023.³⁸ The Committee welcomed the Government's overall intention behind the draft bill, but expressed 'serious concerns' about its proportionality, especially in relation to the impact on small businesses, voluntary and community-run organisations.

For further information see the Library's briefing paper [Draft Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill](#).

³⁸ [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) draft Bill](#), Home Affairs Committee, 27 July 2023 HC1359

3 Bills announced but not yet introduced

3.1 Bills in the May 2022 Queen's Speech that have not been introduced

The three bills identified in this section were included in the then Leader of the House's written statement of 11 May 2022, in which he listed the bills that were announced in the Queen's Speech the previous day.³⁹

Conversion Therapy Bill

During the 2022–23 session, the Government has said that a draft Conversion Therapy Bill would be published and scrutinised by a Joint Committee. On 12 July 2023, at Questions to the Minister for Women and Equalities, Equalities Minister Stuart Andrew said:

The Government remain committed to publishing a draft Bill on banning conversion practices for pre-legislative scrutiny by a Joint Committee of both Houses in this parliamentary Session.⁴⁰

On 14 September 2023, at Business Questions, Wera Hobhouse asked “whether draft proposals for a full ban on conversion therapy will come to the House before the next King's Speech”. Penny Mordaunt, the Leader of the House of Commons, did not give a date, but she said that “further business will be announced in the usual way”.⁴¹

Modern Slavery Bill

In January 2023, the Government was asked when it would publish its Modern Slavery Bill. Lord Murray of Blidworth, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Home Office, replied:

As the Prime Minister set out in his statement to the House of Commons on 13 December, the Government is determined to tackle the misuse of our modern slavery system. We continue to examine the case for legislative changes to improve the operation of the system and we will make a further announcement in due course.⁴²

³⁹ [HCWS6](#), 11 May 2022

⁴⁰ [HC Deb 12 July 2023 c333](#)

⁴¹ [HC Deb 14 September 2023 c1023](#)

⁴² [PQ HL4709](#), 26 January 2023

The Illegal Migration Act 2023 made some changes to the modern slavery system.

Transport Bill

The Government, when asked about the planned timetable for bringing forward a transport bill, has said “We will progress legislation when parliamentary time allows”.⁴³ See section 4.4 of this briefing for further information on transport legislation.

3.2

Other legislation

Legislation that did not complete its passage

In the course of the 2022-23 session, the Government introduced but then decided not to proceed with three bills that were announced in the Queen’s Speech. The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill and the Bill of Rights Bill were withdrawn;⁴⁴ and the Government said the Schools Bill “will not progress”.⁴⁵

In addition, one Government bill was introduced but has not yet received a second reading, the Renters Reform Bill.

Renters (Reform) Bill

A Renters Reform Bill was announced during the 2019 Queen’s Speech on 19 December 2019;⁴⁶ and in the 2022 Queen’s Speech.⁴⁷ The Renters (Reform) Bill 2022–23 was introduced in the House of Commons on 17 May 2023 but no date has been announced for its second reading.

At Business Questions on 14 September 2023, the Leader of the House said she was unable to give a date for second reading of the Bill but gave an “assurance that we are committed to the Renters (Reform) Bill”.⁴⁸

Draft bills announced

In addition to the bills listed by the then Leader of the House in his written statement, the briefing document on 2022 Queen’s Speech included information on draft bills that would be published in the 2022–23 session.

⁴³ [PQ169415](#), 28 March 2023

⁴⁴ House of Commons, [Votes and Proceedings](#), 8 June 2023 (item 6); [HC Deb 27 June 2023 c145](#); and House of Commons, [Votes and Proceedings](#), 28 June 2023 (Item 25)

⁴⁵ Education Committee, [Oral Evidence: Accountability hearing](#) (PDF), 7 December 2022, Q237

⁴⁶ [Background briefing notes to the Queen’s Speech 2019](#) (PDF), 19 December 2019

⁴⁷ [HCWS6](#), 11 May 2022

⁴⁸ [HC Deb 14 September 2023 c1029](#)

Three of the four draft bills listed in the document were published (see section 2.2 of this briefing for some information on their scrutiny and progress):

- Draft Victims Bill
- Draft Protect Duty Bill (the Draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill)
- Draft Mental Health Act Reform Bill (the Draft Mental Health Bill)

One further draft bill was identified in the briefing document:

- Draft Audit Reform Bill
 - In response to a question about plans for the draft bill, on 29 June 2023, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Business and Trade, Kevin Hollinrake, said the Government wanted to take the legislation forward. He also said the Government was looking to take forward insolvency reform:

We do support reform and are keen to take forward primary legislation when parliamentary time allows. In the meantime, there are measures that we can take through secondary legislation, which we are taking forward. We are also looking to take forward insolvency reform, which is something else that we committed to do.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ [HC Deb 29 June 2023 c417](#)

4 Bills that might be mentioned in the 2023 King's Speech

This section reports statements, government publications and press speculation which suggest areas that could be the subject of future legislation. These topics might be mentioned in the King's Speech or be the subject of draft bills in the next session.

4.1 Criminal justice measures

The Government has committed to legislating on a range of criminal justice matters. Press reports have said that a crime and justice bill will be included in the King's Speech. It is not clear which of the measures proposed will be included in such a bill and which may be added to bills already in progress, such as the [Victims and Prisoners Bill](#).

Required prison sentence for repeat offences

It has been reported in the media that the Government is planning to legislate in a crime and justice bill for mandatory prison sentences for offenders committing repeated offences of shoplifting, burglary, theft and common assault.⁵⁰ Press reports say the number of offences required to trigger the mandatory prison sentence would differ for each of the various offences.⁵¹

Release of prisoners serving sentences for rape

It has been reported in the press that the King's Speech will include legislation to change the release arrangements for prisoners serving sentences for rape. The law would require them to serve their full sentence in prison rather than being released part way through to serve the rest of their sentence in the community on licence.⁵²

Sentencing: Whole life orders

The Government has said it will legislate, at the earliest opportunity, to provide that whole life orders should be mandatory in circumstances where a

⁵⁰ [Build prisons to fit shoplifters, minister suggests](#), The Times, 1 August 2023

⁵¹ [Shoplifters who commit repeat offences to face prison](#), Guardian, 1 August 2023

⁵² [Convicted rapists are to be barred from early release as part of a crackdown on crime to be unveiled by Rishi Sunak](#), Daily Mail, 24 September 2023

whole life order is currently the starting point for sentencing,⁵³ unless there are exceptional circumstances.⁵⁴

In the most serious cases of murder the courts can impose a whole life order. These orders mean that the offender will spend the rest of their life in prison (subject only to the possibility of compassionate release in exceptional cases). For all other life sentences, the judge sets the minimum term that must be served in prison.

When deciding whether to impose a whole life order or a minimum term, the court must have regard to the starting points for different types of murder set out in [Schedule 21 of the Sentencing Act 2020](#). The judge will identify the appropriate starting point and can adjust up or down to take account of any aggravating and mitigating factors.

The proposed legislation would mean that a judge would be required to impose a whole life order in any case where that is the appropriate starting point. They would not be able, except in exceptional circumstances, to instead decide a minimum term to be served.

The Government also intends to legislate to provide that murders of a single adult victim involving sexual or sadistic conduct should be subject to a mandatory whole life order unless there are exceptional circumstances.⁵⁵ It was reported in the press that these measures will be included in a forthcoming crime and justice bill.⁵⁶

The Government has announced that these reforms will apply retrospectively. It intends that people who have committed an offence but are yet to be sentenced will have the new law applied to them when they are sentenced even if the offence was committed before the new law is commenced.⁵⁷

Refusal to appear at sentencing hearings

The Government announced in August 2023 that it would legislate to create a new power for judges to order offenders to attend sentencing hearings. It said offenders convicted of an offence for which the maximum sentence is life imprisonment who refused to attend could receive an additional penalty of up to two years in prison.⁵⁸

The Government has said the legislation will make clear that force can be used in appropriate circumstances by prison staff and prisoner escort and custody services staff where they consider it necessary, reasonable, and

⁵³ As set out in paragraph 2(2) of [Schedule 21](#) to the Sentencing Act 2020

⁵⁴ Justice Committee, [Letter from the Secretary of State for Justice to the Chair of the Justice Committee](#) (PDF), 25 August 2023

⁵⁵ Gov.uk, press release, [PM announces new plans so society's most depraved killers will face life behind bars](#), 26 August 2023

⁵⁶ [Whole-life tariffs deny all possibility of rehabilitation](#), The Times, 29 August 2023

⁵⁷ Gov.uk, press release, [Whole Life Order reforms to be applied to active cases](#), 3 October 2023

⁵⁸ Gov.uk, press release, [Offenders to be ordered to attend sentencing](#), 30 August 2023

proportionate to bring offenders to hearings.⁵⁹ It has been reported in the press that the measures will be included in the King's Speech.⁶⁰

Renting prison places abroad

The Government has announced it will legislate to allow the Government to rent prison cells overseas. In a press release the Government said prisoners would be allowed to be moved to another country's prison estate provided the facilities, regime and rehabilitation are to the same standard as those in England and Wales.⁶¹ The Government has said it will legislate on this issue as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Sex offender identity changes

The Home Secretary, in a speech to the Conservative party conference on 3 October 2023, said the Government would bring forward legislation to prevent sex offenders from changing their identities. Press reports said legislation would provide for an "outright ban on anyone convicted of a sex-related crime changing their identity, making it a new offence".⁶²

Knife crime

In April 2023, policing minister Chris Philp announced a Home Office consultation on a range of legislative proposals to tackle the use of machetes and other bladed articles in crime.⁶³ The consultation ran from April to June 2023.⁶⁴

The Government's response to the consultation was published on 30 August 2023.⁶⁵ In its response, the Government said it would seek to legislate for the following proposals when parliamentary time allows:

- banning certain types of machetes and knives⁶⁶
- introducing a new police power to seize, retain and destroy lawfully held bladed articles in private premises if the police are in the property

⁵⁹ [UIN 198871](#)

⁶⁰ [Law that forces killers to attend sentencing will be in King's speech](#) The Telegraph, 19 August 2023

⁶¹ Gov.uk, press release, [Foreign prison rental to ensure public protection](#), 3 October 2023

⁶² [Suella Braverman to ban sex offenders from changing name and gender](#), The Times, 3 October 2023

⁶³ [HCWS722](#), 18 April 2023

⁶⁴ Home Office, [Consultation on new knife legislation proposals to tackle the use of machetes and other bladed articles in crime](#), April 2023

⁶⁵ Home Office, [Consultation on new knife legislation proposals to tackle the use of machetes and other bladed articles in crime: Government response](#), 30 August 2023

⁶⁶ This change could potentially be made by way of secondary legislation, as it would involve amending the list of prohibited offensive weapons set out in the schedule to the [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(Offensive Weapons\) Order 1988](#), which can be amended by statutory instrument under powers set out in be amended by SI – the power to make the change in this way is granted by [subsection 141\(2\) of the Criminal Justice Act 1988](#)

lawfully and have reasonable grounds to suspect the article will be used in crime

- increasing the maximum penalty for the offence of importation, manufacture, sale and general supply of prohibited and dangerous weapons and the sale of knives to persons under 18 years old
- introducing a new offence of possession of a bladed article with the intention to endanger life or cause fear of violence

Intimate images

Intimate image abuse involves the non-consensual taking, making and/or sharing of intimate images. There is currently no single criminal offence that covers intimate image abuse. Instead, a range of offences exist covering different types of image and different types of conduct.

In a recent review of the law on intimate images, the Law Commission described the existing criminal law as a “patchwork” and noted the offences had failed to keep up with developments in technology and sexual offending.⁶⁷

The Law Commission therefore recommended that the Government replace the existing offences with a new tiered framework, including a ‘base’ offence of taking or sharing an intimate image without consent without the need to prove any additional motivation/intent on the part of the offender.

In a statement on 25 November 2022, the then Justice Secretary Dominic Raab said the Government planned to legislate “when parliamentary time allows” to introduce a package of new offences based on the Law Commission’s recommendations.⁶⁸ He said this was a “medium-term plan” that would involve “the repeal or amendment of several current offences, and the creation of a new, more coherent package of measures”.⁶⁹

Limited changes were introduced by way of the Online Safety Bill, which is currently awaiting Royal Assent.⁷⁰ The other changes recommended by the Law Commission will require further legislation.

4.2

Raising the age of sale for tobacco products

In October 2023, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced Government proposals to ban the sale of tobacco products to anybody born on or after

⁶⁷ Law Commission, [Taking, making and sharing intimate images without consent](#) [accessed October 2023]

⁶⁸ [HCWS388](#), 25 November 2022

⁶⁹ As above

⁷⁰ See sections 4.6 and 9.19 of the Library briefing [Online Safety Bill: progress of the Bill](#)

1 January 2009 through proposed new legislation.⁷¹ The proposal would effectively raise the smoking age by one year, every year, until it eventually applies to the whole population.

Further detail on the proposal was set out in the Government's October 2023 policy paper, [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#).⁷² This set out its ambition to create the first 'smokefree generation', laying out a "route to prevent addiction to smoking before it starts, to support smokers to quit and to stop vapes being marketed to children".⁷³

The Government reports that "this has the potential to phase out smoking in young people almost completely as early as 2040", and the paper further advises on the proposal's expected health and economic gains.

The Government is yet to set out exactly how it intends to legislate for this proposal, but the policy paper notes that:

- The Government's focus is on tobacco retailers, and it will not criminalise smoking.
- It would be an offence for a person over the legal age to conduct 'proxy purchasing' for a person under the legal age.
- The phased approach would mean that anyone who can legally be sold cigarettes now will not be prevented from doing so in the future.

The Prime Minister said the proposal would be subject to a parliamentary vote, and that Conservative MPs would be able to vote as they wished.⁷⁴

The proposal forms part of the Government's wider ambition for England to be 'smokefree' by 2030 (where adult smoking prevalence falls to 5% or less). Further information on this ambition, and associated government policy, is available in the Library's briefing, [The Smokefree 2030 ambition for England](#).

The Government has [launched a consultation](#) to seek views on this and other smokefree proposals.⁷⁵ The consultation, launched on 12 October, will remain open until 6 December 2023.

⁷¹ Conservative Home, "[Be in no doubt it is time for a change and we are it.](#)" [Sunak's conference speech – full text](#), 4 October 2023

⁷² DHSC, [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#), 4 October 2023

⁷³ DHSC, [Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation](#), 4 October 2023

⁷⁴ Conservative Home, "[Be in no doubt it is time for a change and we are it.](#)" [Sunak's conference speech – full text](#), 4 October 2023

⁷⁵ DHSC, [Creating a smokefree generation and tackling youth vaping: your views](#), 12 October 2023

4.3 Implementing legislation for UK accession to CPTPP

The UK has reached agreement to join the [Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership \(CPTPP\)](#). This is a free trade agreement between 11 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Government has identified three areas where primary legislation is required to ensure the UK is compliant with CPTPP requirements. These three areas are:

- Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
- Government Procurement
- Intellectual Property.

The TBT legislation will relate to conformity assessment bodies. These bodies carry out checks to ensure products meet relevant technical standards.

Details of the legislation are set out in section 5 of the [Government's draft Explanatory Memorandum on CPTPP](#). The Government expects CPTPP to come into force in the second half of 2024. This legislation must be passed before that can happen.

Implementing legislation has been required for previous free trade agreements. The [Trade \(Australia and New Zealand\) Act 2023](#) was passed to implement the agreements with those countries.

4.4 Transport

In the 2022 Queen's Speech, the Government announced that there would be a Transport Bill for the 2022–23 session, although such a bill was never presented. In May 2022 the Government said the Bill would:

- legislate for the creation of Great British Railways (GBR) – a so-called ['guiding mind' to co-ordinate the rail network](#)⁷⁶
- legislate for the installation of more electric vehicle charge points
- create a legal footing for the introduction of autonomous vehicles

⁷⁶ Secretary of State for Transport Mark Harper speech, [George Bradshaw address 2023](#), 7 February 2023

- enable the licensing of London pedicabs (also known as ‘cycle rickshaws’)⁷⁷

Ministers suggested the 2022–23 Bill would also legislate to:

- [regulate the use of e-scooters](#)
- deal with [pavement parking](#)
- establish a [Road Safety Investigation Branch](#)
- create [tougher laws against dangerous cycling](#)⁷⁸

However, ultimately this Bill was never presented to Parliament. The Government has not said definitively whether there might be a similar bill in the 2023–24 session and if there is, what its scope might be.

An [article in the Times in May 2023](#) said the Government no longer viewed the creation of GBR as a legislative priority for the 2023–24 session and so it would not be brought forward in the King’s Speech. The article suggested that any transport bill(s) would prioritise legislation for autonomous vehicles.⁷⁹

In July 2023, the rail minister Huw Merriman said many changes to create GBR could be, and are being, made without legislation anyway:

We are working closely with the Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT) and the sector and will introduce legislation when parliamentary time allows. Decisions regarding legislation are made collectively across Government and will be confirmed in the King’s Speech in the Autumn.

Many reforms and tangible benefits for rail users can be delivered ahead of legislation and are underway, such as workforce reform, simplifying fares and continuing the rollout of Pay-As-You-Go ticketing, building local partnerships and simplifying industry practices.⁸⁰

In September 2023, [an article in the Sun newspaper](#) said it was likely the King’s Speech would include legislation to regulate the use of ‘pedicabs’ in London, following a failed attempt to do so via a Private Member’s Bill introduced by Conservative MP Nickie Aiken in 2020.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Prime Minister’s Office Policy paper, [Queen’s Speech 2022: background briefing notes](#), 10 May 2022, p30

⁷⁸ [HC Deb 19 May 2022 c870](#); Transport Committee, [Oral evidence: Work of the Secretary of State for Transport, HC 683](#), 27 April 2022, Q250; Transport Committee, [Oral evidence: Smart motorways: progress update, HC 606](#), 20 July 2022, Q22; Mail Online, [Grant Shapps launches crackdown on killer cyclists: Transport Secretary vows to create new ‘death by dangerous cycling’ law](#), 5 August 2022

⁷⁹ The Times, [Rishi Sunak drops Boris Johnson’s Great British Railways project](#), 18 May 2023

⁸⁰ [PQ 191371 \[Great British Railways\]](#), Answered on 4 July 2023

⁸¹ The Sun, [Rishi Sunak to declare war on pedicab drivers who rip people off on nights out in London](#), 2 September 2023; [Pedicabs \(London\) Bill 2019-21](#)

4.5 Leasehold and commonhold reform

On 20 February 2023, Michael Gove, Secretary of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities referred to the possibility of legislation being included in the King's Speech:

We hope, in the forthcoming King's Speech, to introduce legislation to fundamentally reform the system. Leaseholders, not just in this case but in so many other cases, are held to ransom by freeholders. We need to end this feudal form of tenure and ensure individuals have the right to enjoy their own property fully.⁸²

More information can be found in the Library briefing, [Leasehold and commonhold reform](#) and the constituency casework article [Leasehold reform in England and Wales: What's happening and when?](#)

4.6 Changing the Habitats Regulations to 'scrap nutrient neutrality'

On 23 September 2023, [the Sunday Telegraph reported that the Government was "drawing up plans for a new bill \[...\]"](#) to ditch 'nutrient neutrality' rules" to allow developers to build more homes. The newspaper reported that the bill may be announced in the King's Speech, noting, however, that "nothing is guaranteed" as "another piece of legislation would need to be shelved to make way for such a bill".⁸³

Current nutrient neutrality guidance was issued by Natural England under the [Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017](#) (the Habitats Regulations). It means that housing developments that would release excess substances containing nitrogen and phosphorous ('nutrients', for example, through sewage) into the environment can only go ahead in certain areas where protected habitats are in 'unfavourable condition' if these effects are mitigated.⁸⁴ An excess of these nutrients can cause eutrophication and algal blooms in aquatic environments,⁸⁵ which reduces water quality and damages wildlife.⁸⁶

⁸² [HC Deb 20 February 2023 c3](#)

⁸³ [Sunak to rip up green rules to force through plans to build 140,000 homes](#), The Sunday Telegraph [subscription required], 23 September 2023 [accessed 3 October 2023]

⁸⁴ Natural England, [Strategic Solutions: Nutrient Neutrality](#), August 2022; Natural England, [Nutrient Neutrality and Mitigation: A summary guide and frequently asked questions - NE776](#), June 2022

⁸⁵ Eutrophication is when excess nutrients in water leads to algal blooms, which are rapid and excessive growth of algae. It can give water a green colour. The rapid growth of algae can reduce availability of oxygen to other aquatic wildlife and plants and, in some cases, release toxins that are harmful to wildlife, livestock and people.

⁸⁶ Environment Agency, [Phosphorous challenges for the water environment](#), December 2022; Environment Agency, [Nitrates: challenges for the water environment](#), October 2021

On 2 October 2023, the environmental news website ENDS Report reported that, at the Conservative Party Conference, both the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), Michael Gove, and DLUHC Minister, Rachel Maclean, said that the [Government was still planning to bring forward a bill](#) to “scrap the nutrient neutrality rules”.⁸⁷

Previous attempts to remove nutrient neutrality rules

The Government previously attempted to amend the Habitats Regulations with an [amendment to Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2022–23](#), which would have required local planning authorities to assume that nutrients in wastewater from new housing developments would not adversely affect protected habitats sites.⁸⁸ The amendment was [defeated in the House of Lords](#) in September 2023 and not added to the bill.⁸⁹

For further information about nutrient neutrality, the Government’s announcements and reaction to the proposals, see the [Library briefing on nutrient neutrality](#).

⁸⁷ [Gove to table new nutrient neutrality bill ‘if the prime minister lets him’](#), ENDS Report [subscription required], 2 October 2023 [accessed 3 October 2023]

⁸⁸ Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2022-23, [Seven marshalled list of amendments to be moved on report](#) (PDF), 11 September 2023

⁸⁹ HL Deb [[Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill](#)] 13 September 2023, c1038

5 What happens during the State Opening and the King's Speech?

The State Opening of Parliament marks the beginning of the parliamentary session. Its main purpose is for the monarch to formally open Parliament and, in the King's Speech, deliver an outline of the Government's proposed policies and legislation for the coming session of Parliament.

5.1 The State Opening

State Opening is the main ceremonial event of the parliamentary calendar. It attracts large crowds, both in person and watching on television and the internet. The King's procession from Buckingham Palace to Westminster is escorted by the Household Cavalry.

The King arrives at the Sovereign's Entrance at about 11.15am, and proceeds to the Robing Room, where he puts on the Imperial State Crown and parliamentary robe. A procession then leads through the Royal Gallery to the Chamber of the House of Lords, where the King takes the throne.

The House of Lords official known as 'Black Rod' is sent to summon the Commons. In a symbol of the Commons' independence, the door to their chamber is slammed in Black Rod's face and not opened until Black Rod has knocked on the door with their staff of office. The Members of the House of Commons follow Black Rod and the Commons Speaker to the Lords Chamber and stand behind the Bar of the House of Lords (at the opposite end of the Chamber from the throne) to hear the King's Speech.

In May 2021, due to the pandemic, the State Opening was adapted, with reduced ceremonial elements and attendees.⁹⁰

In May 2022, their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, Counsellors of State, acted on behalf of Her Majesty. The speech was delivered by the Prince of Wales.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Prime Minister's Office news, [Queen's Speech to be held on 11 May](#), 23 March 2021. House of Lords Library, [May 2021 state opening of Parliament: precedents for reduced ceremonies](#), 22 April 2021; House of Lords Library, [State Openings of Parliament: Reduced Ceremonial](#), 6 January 2020

⁹¹ [HC Deb 10 May 2022 cc4-6](#)

5.2 The Speech

The King's Speech is delivered by the King from the throne in the House of Lords, in the presence of Members of both Houses.

Although the King reads the speech, the content is entirely drawn up by the Government and approved by the Cabinet. It contains an outline of the Government's policies and proposed new legislation for the new parliamentary session.

5.3 Debate on the King's Speech

Following the State Opening, a motion to send a 'Humble Address' to the King thanking him for the speech is introduced in both Houses. The Government's programme, as presented in the King's Speech, is then debated by both Houses for four or five days.

In the House of Commons, the debate on the first day is a general one, with the following day's debates on particular subjects (such as health or foreign affairs). The King's Speech is voted on by the Commons, but no vote is taken in the Lords.

5.4 History of the State Opening

Traditions surrounding the State Opening and delivery of a speech by the Monarch can be traced back at least to the 16th century. The current ceremony dates from the opening of the rebuilt Palace of Westminster in 1852 after the fire of 1834.⁹²

The Library research briefing, [State opening of Parliament – history and ceremonial](#), reviews how the ceremonial and practical arrangements of the State Opening of Parliament have changed over time.

⁹² Houses of Parliament, [State Opening of Parliament](#)

6 Progress of Bills announced in the Queen's Speech, May 2022

The last Queen's Speech was held on 10 May 2022.⁹³ The next day, Mark Spencer, then Leader of the House of Commons, issued a written statement in which he listed the bills that were announced the previous day.⁹⁴ He did not include draft bills or a Law Commission Bill, mentioned in the Government's briefing on the Queen's Speech.⁹⁵

His list is repeated below along with an indication of whether each bill was introduced. The measures that have been enacted are noted (**in bold**). Any carry-over motions relating to Queen's Speech bills in the 2022–23 Session are noted (see also section 2.1).

Bill	Summary of progress
Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill*	Withdrawn ^{96**}
Bill of Rights	Withdrawn ⁹⁷
Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions Bill	Carried over: Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill
Brexit Freedoms Bill	Enacted: Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023
Conversion Therapy Bill	Government has said a draft bill will be published this session. ⁹⁸
Data Reform Bill	Carried over: Data Protection and Digital Information (No 2) Bill ⁹⁹
Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Bill	Ping pong#

⁹³ [HC Deb 10 May 2022 cc4-6](#)

⁹⁴ [HCWS6](#), 11 May 2022

⁹⁵ Five draft bills were announced: Audit Reform; Digital Markets, Competition and Consumer Bill; Mental Health Act Reform Bill; Protect Duty Bill; and Victims Bill. And the Electronic Trade Documents Bill was identified as the Law Commission Bill – The Prime Minister's Office, [The Queen's Speech 2022](#) (PDF), 10 May 2022

⁹⁶ House of Commons, [Votes and Proceedings](#), 8 June 2023

⁹⁷ House of Commons, [Votes and Proceedings](#), 28 June 2023; [HC Deb 27 June 2023 c145](#)

⁹⁸ [PQ132618](#), 2 February 2023

⁹⁹ The Data Protection and Digital Information Bill was withdrawn (House of Commons, [Votes and Proceedings](#), 8 March 2023)

Bill	Summary of progress
Energy Security Bill	Ping pong#
Financial Services and Markets Bill	Enacted: Financial Services and Markets Act 2023
Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill	Enacted: Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act 2023
Harbours (Seafarers' Remuneration) Bill	Enacted: Seafarers' Wages Act 2023
High Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill*	Carried over: High Speed Rail (Crewe-Manchester) Bill [hybrid]
Higher Education Bill	Enacted: Lifelong Learning (Higher Education Fee Limits) Act 2023
Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill*	Enacted: Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023
Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Bill	Enacted: Identity and Language (Northern Ireland) Act 2022
Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill	Ping pong#
Media Bill	A draft bill was published. Pre-legislative scrutiny was undertaken by the Culture, Media and Sport Committee (see section 2.2)
Modern Slavery Bill	
National Security Bill	Enacted: National Security Act 2023
Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill	Enacted: Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023
Online Safety Bill*	Awaiting Royal Assent
Procurement Bill	Ping pong#
Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill*	Enacted: Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Act 2022
Public Order Bill	Enacted: Public Order Act 2023
Renters Reform Bill	Awaiting second reading HC
Schools Bill	To make no further progress**

Bill	Summary of progress
Social Housing Regulation Bill	Enacted: Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
Social Security (Special Rules for End of Life) Bill	Enacted: Social Security (Special Rules for End of Life) Act 2022
Trade (Australia and New Zealand) Bill	Enacted: Trade (Australia and New Zealand) Act 2023
Transport Bill	
UK Infrastructure Bank Bill	Enacted: UK Infrastructure Bank Act 2023

* Carried over from 2021–22 Session

** On 7 June 2023, the Leader of the House reported previous announcements saying these bills and the Northern Ireland Protocol Bill would no longer make progress.¹⁰⁰

Ping pong: bill has been debated by both Houses and they are now considering amendments made in the second House

The Government introduced other bills during the 2022–23 Session.

A full list of Government bills introduced in 2022–23, and details of their progress can be found by using the drop-down menus on the [Find a Bill](#) webpage on the parliamentary website.

Not all Government bills were enacted. A list of Government bills that have been carried over is given in section 2.1.

¹⁰⁰ [PQ187539](#), 7 June 2023

Appendix: List of contributors

The following list of topics covered in the briefing is presented in the order in which they appear in the briefing. Library specialists listed provided the information on each topic.

Topic	Contributor
Data Protection and Digital Information Bill (carried over)	John Woodhouse
Draft Media Bill	John Woodhouse
Draft Mental Health Bill	Katherine Garratt
Draft Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill	Joanna Dawson
Criminal justice measures	Jacqueline Beard and Sally Lipscombe
Raising the age of sale for tobacco products	Bukky Balogun
Implementing legislation for UK accession to CPTPP	Dominic Webb
Transport	Roger Tyers
Leasehold and commonhold reform	Wendy Wilson
Habitats regulations and nutrient neutrality	Felicia Rankl

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