

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH 2015

Press Office
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27 May 2015

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An Introduction by the Prime Minister

When we came to office in 2010, Britain was on the brink. Our task was urgent: to rescue our economy from the mire. With that economy now going in the right direction, we are once again on the brink – but this time, on the brink of something special. We have a golden opportunity to renew the idea that working people are backed in this country; to renew the promise to those least fortunate that they will have the opportunity for a brighter future; and to renew the ties that bind every part of our United Kingdom. We now have the mandate to deliver that renewal. And it starts with this Queen's Speech: a clear programme for working people, social justice, and bringing our country together – put simply, a One Nation Queen's Speech from a One Nation Government.

The first task of a One Nation Government is to help all working people have security. And nothing is more crucial to that than a job. A new Bill will help to create two million more jobs this Parliament. That means there should be a job for everyone who wants one – in other words, full employment. To help people get those jobs, we'll train them up; three million more will start apprenticeships over the next five years. We will also reward work by letting people keep even more of the money they earn – for the first time putting it into law that the Minimum Wage is and always will be tax free. That will be alongside a five-year tax lock which means there will be no income tax, VAT or National Insurance rate rises in this Parliament.

For too long we've been a two-speed country. Some could afford childcare; others could not. Some could afford a home of their own; others could not. A One Nation Government will change that. Our Childcare Bill will grant working parents 30 hours free childcare a week for 3 and 4 year olds, and because of our reforms, for the first time, childcare will get proper tax relief. Our Housing Bill will dramatically extend the Right to Buy to the tenants of Housing Associations – putting home ownership within the reach of 1.3 million more families. We will require councils to sell high-value council houses and put the money into building affordable homes. We will get 90 per cent of suitable brownfield land ready for development. And we will build 200,000 discounted Starter Homes for young first-time buyers. All this will mean there are more houses for people to buy.

The second big focus of this Queen's Speech is championing social justice. That starts with education: a decent schooling for every child, no matter where they're from. Our school reforms in the last Parliament were bold; one million more children are now learning in good or outstanding schools. In this Parliament they will be bolder still: taking over and turning into Academies not just failing schools but coasting ones too, as part of our new Education and Adoption Bill; opening not just a few more Free Schools, but 500 more. Of course, there is nothing that embodies the spirit of One Nation and the cause of social justice more than our NHS, which is there for everyone, whoever they are, regardless of their ability to pay. So we will continue increasing spending on our health service, by at least £8 billion a year by 2020, and make it a truly 7-day NHS.

We will also continue our welfare reforms that help people into jobs, reducing the benefit cap further, to £23,000. Our reforms will incentivise work – so people are always better off after a day at the office or factory than they would have been sitting at home. That's true social justice – not handing people benefit cheque after benefit cheque with no end in sight, but turning workless households into working households; the misery of unemployment into the purpose and dignity of employment; and the welfare system into a lifeline, not a way of life.

Third, this Queen's Speech will bring every part of our United Kingdom together. Our legislation will make sure this recovery reaches everyone, from the oldest industrial towns to the remotest rural villages. Our High Speed 2 Bill will help bring our great northern cities together in a Northern Powerhouse that rivals the biggest cities in the world.

For our different nations and regions to coexist as One Nation, people must have more direct power over the areas in which they live. So our *Cities Devolution Bill* will allow them to bid for an elected mayor, with far more sway over planning, transport, policing and health. We will have a Scotland Bill, a Wales Bill and a Northern Ireland Bill, and will put into practice our promises on devolution – making Holyrood the most powerful devolved Parliament in the world. Governing with respect means respecting the wishes of the English too. That's why we will address the fundamental unfairness devolution causes in England, by introducing English votes for English laws. And the UK will have more control over its affairs, as we bring forward proposals for a British Bill of Rights to replace the Human Rights Act. We will also legislate to have an EU Referendum before the end of 2017, putting the question to the British people for the first time in 40 years: the European Union – in or out. Underpinning all of this is security. With an Extremism Bill, an Investigatory Powers Bill and a Policing and Criminal Justice Bill, we will keep our people safe.

That's our legislative programme. It's challenging but doable; optimistic but realistic. It's the bold first step of a One Nation Government – a Government for working people. And this is the Britain we're setting out to create: a Britain where you can get a decent job, have a good education, buy a home of your own, have dignity when you retire, and feel safe and secure throughout your life. In the last Parliament we laid the foundations for that; in this Parliament we will use them to build something special. We've now got the majority we need. With this Queen's Speech we're going to get on and do it – for every single person in this great nation.

Prime Minister David Cameron MP

EMBARGOED
before Her Majesty's Most Gracious Speech
to both Houses of Parliament 27 MAY 2015

**HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF
PARLIAMENT**

WEDNESDAY 27 MAY 2015

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government will legislate in the interests of everyone in our country. It will adopt a one nation approach, helping working people get on, supporting aspiration, giving new opportunities to the most disadvantaged and bringing different parts of our country together.

My Government will continue with its long-term plan to provide economic stability and security at every stage of life. They will continue the work of bringing the public finances under control and reducing the deficit, so Britain lives within its means. Measures will be introduced to raise the productive potential of the economy and increase living standards.

Legislation will be brought forward to help achieve full employment and provide more people with the security of a job. New duties will require my ministers to report annually on job creation and apprenticeships [**Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill**]. Measures will also be introduced to reduce regulation on small businesses so they can create jobs [**Enterprise Bill**].

Legislation will be brought forward to ensure people working 30 hours a week on the National Minimum Wage do not pay income tax, and to ensure there are no rises in income tax rates, value-added tax or national insurance for the next five years [**Finance Bill and other legislation**].

Measures will be brought forward to help working people by greatly increasing the provision of free childcare [**Childcare Bill**].

Legislation will be introduced to support home ownership and give housing association tenants the chance to own their own home [**Housing Bill**].

Measures will be introduced to increase energy security [**Energy Bill**] and to control immigration [**Immigration Bill**]. My Government will bring forward legislation to reform trade unions and to protect essential public services against strikes [**Trade Unions Bill**].

To give new opportunities to the most disadvantaged, my Government will expand the Troubled Families Programme and continue to reform welfare, with legislation encouraging employment by capping benefits and requiring young people to earn or learn [**Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill and other legislation**].

Legislation will be brought forward to improve schools and give every child the best start in life, with new powers to take over failing and coasting schools and create more academies [**Education and Adoption Bill**].

In England, my Government will secure the future of the National Health Service by implementing the National Health Service's own five-year plan, by increasing the health budget, integrating healthcare and social care, and ensuring the National Health Service works on a seven day basis. Measures will be introduced to improve access to general practitioners and to mental healthcare.

Measures will also be brought forward to secure the real value of the basic State Pension, so that more people live in dignity and security in retirement. Measures will be brought forward to increase the rights of victims of crime.

To bring different parts of our country together, my Government will work to bring about a balanced economic recovery. Legislation will be introduced to provide for the devolution of powers to cities with elected metro mayors, helping to build a Northern powerhouse [**Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill**].

My Government will continue to legislate for high-speed rail links between the different parts of the country [**HS2 Bill**].

My Government will also bring forward legislation to secure a strong and lasting constitutional settlement, devolving wide-ranging powers to Scotland [**Scotland Bill**] and Wales [**Wales Bill**]. Legislation will be taken forward giving effect to the Stormont House Agreement in Northern Ireland [**Northern Ireland Bill**].

My Government will continue to work in cooperation with the devolved administrations on the basis of mutual respect.

My Government will bring forward changes to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. These changes will create fairer procedures to ensure that decisions affecting England, or England and Wales, can be taken only with the consent of the majority of Members of Parliament representing constituencies in those parts of our United Kingdom.

My Government will renegotiate the United Kingdom's relationship with the European Union and pursue reform of the European Union for the benefit of all Member States. Alongside this, early legislation will be introduced to provide for an in-out referendum on membership of the European Union before the end of 2017 [**EU Referendum Bill**].

Measures will also be brought forward to promote social cohesion and protect people by tackling extremism [**Extremism Bill**]. New legislation will modernise the law on communications data [**Investigatory Powers Bill**], improve the law on policing and criminal justice [**Policing and Criminal Justice Bill**], and ban the new generation of psychoactive drugs [**Psychoactive Substance Bill**].

My Government will bring forward proposals for a British Bill of Rights.

Members of the House of Commons

Estimates for the public services will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

My Government will continue to play a leading role in global affairs, using its presence all over the world to re-engage with and tackle the major international security, economic and humanitarian challenges.

My Ministers will remain at the forefront of the NATO alliance and of international efforts to degrade and ultimately defeat terrorism in the Middle East.

The United Kingdom will continue to seek a political settlement in Syria, and will offer further support to the Iraqi Government's programme for political reform and national reconciliation.

My Government will maintain pressure on Russia to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, and will insist on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

My Government looks forward to an enhanced partnership with India and China.

Prince Philip and I look forward to our State Visit to Germany next month and to our State Visit to Malta in November, alongside the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. We also look forward to welcoming His Excellency the President of The People's Republic of China and Madame Peng on a State Visit in October.

My Government will seek effective global collaboration to sustain economic recovery and to combat climate change, including at the climate change conference in Paris later this year.

My Government will undertake a full Strategic Defence and Security Review, and do whatever is necessary to ensure that our courageous armed forces can keep Britain safe **[Armed Forces Bill]**.

My Government will work to reduce the threat from nuclear weapons, cyber attacks and terrorism.

Other measures will be laid before you.

My Lords and Members of the House of Commons

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

UK Economy and Fiscal

“My Government will continue with its long-term plan to provide economic stability and security at every stage of life. They will continue the work of bringing the public finances under control and reducing the deficit, so Britain lives within its means. Measures will be introduced to raise the productive potential of the economy and increase living standards.”

SUMMARY

The Government’s long-term plan is working: with the UK the fastest growing economy in the G7 last year and the deficit more than halved as a share of GDP. There are more people in work than ever before, unemployment is falling and wages are continuing to rise well above inflation. But the job of fixing the public finances is not yet done which is why we will continue working through the plan to build a resilient British economy.

UK ECONOMY

- The UK was the fastest growing major advanced economy last year, growing at 2.8 per cent – the best performance since 2006. Latest data shows UK GDP growth was 0.3 per cent in Q1 2015, following growth of 0.6 per cent in Q4 2014. For 2015, the OBR forecasts the UK economy to grow by 2.5 per cent.
- There are more people in work than ever before (31.1 million) and the employment rate is now the highest on record at 73.5 per cent. Unemployment is continuing to fall with the UK unemployment level currently at 1.83 million and the unemployment rate (5.5 per cent) the lowest it has been for almost seven years. Both the claimant count level and rate are also at their lowest level since 1975 (at 763,800 and 2.3 per cent respectively)
- Wages are rising above inflation (total economy pay grew +1.9 on the year in 3 months to March) for the seventh month in a row. The record low inflation (-0.1%) is good news for working families, helping their budgets stretch further with lower food and fuel costs: in the year to April 2015, food prices fell by -3.0 per cent and prices of motor fuels fell by -12.3 per cent.

Rebalancing and making our economy more productive.

- Poor productivity growth has been a long-term issue affecting the UK economy.
- Improving the productivity of our country is the route to raising standards of living for everyone in this country. Fixing the UK's long-running productivity weakness is one of the government's biggest challenges over the next five years.
- Part of raising productivity is about making sure all parts of the country perform strongly. That's why the government has placed building a Northern Powerhouse at the heart of our plan to rebalance the UK economy, ensuring we have real, sustained growth that supports great public services. As part of this, the new City Devolution Bill which we are introducing will give greater local control of transport, housing, skills and healthcare to cities with elected metro mayors.

FISCAL

We have halved the deficit as a share of GDP but need to complete the task of getting the public finances into surplus.

- The deficit has now more than halved as a share of GDP from its post-war peak in 2009-10 (10.2 % of GDP / £153bn), reaching 4.8% of GDP (or £87.7bn) by the end of 2014-15. Public sector debt is also forecast to be falling as a share of GDP in 2015-16.
- The OBR's March 2015 forecasts expect the first surplus in 18 years in 2018-19 of £5.2 billion, rising to £7.0 billion in 2019-20.
- The progress achieved to date shows that the government's long-term plan is working, but there is more still to do to ensure the public finances are returned to a more sustainable path.
- Running a surplus will speed up the process of debt reduction, reducing the burden on taxpayers and strengthening the ability of future governments to respond to economic shocks.
- A surplus would reduce our national debt and keep our economy secure.

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HM Treasury
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27 May 2015

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Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill

“Legislation will be brought forward to help achieve full employment and provide more people with the security of a job. New duties will require my ministers to report annually on job creation and apprenticeships...

“To give new opportunities to the most disadvantaged, my Government will expand the Troubled Families Programme and continue to reform welfare, with legislation encouraging employment by capping benefits and requiring young people to earn or learn.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Deliver the Government’s commitment to freeze the main rates of a number of working-age benefits, tax credits and Child Benefit, and to reduce the level of the benefit cap.
- Create duties to report on:
 - Progress towards our commitment to achieving full employment.
 - Progress against meeting our target of 3 million new apprenticeships
 - Progress on the Troubled Families Initiative.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- To ensure that it pays to work rather than to rely on benefits; and deliver fairness to the taxpayer while continuing to provide support for those in greatest need.
- To help create two million new jobs and help move young people into paid employment by giving them the support, skills and experience they need to fulfil their potential

The main elements of the Bill are:

Working-age benefit freeze

- The new legislation would freeze the main rates of the majority of working-age benefits, tax credits and Child Benefit for two years from 2016-17.
- Pensioners would be protected, as would benefits relating to the additional costs of disability.
- Statutory payments, such as Statutory Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption Pay would also be exempted.

Lowering the benefit cap

- The new legislation would lower the benefit cap so that the total amount of benefits a non-working family can receive in a year would be £23,000.
- A cap at £23,000 is equivalent to gross family earnings of up to £29,000.
- Households are exempt where someone is entitled to Working Tax Credit or is in receipt of benefits relating to additional costs of disability, or War Widow's and Widower's Pension.

Statutory duties to report on progress

The Bill includes statutory duties to report on:

- Full employment: The Bill includes a statutory duty to report on progress towards our objective of achieving the highest employment rate in the G7. The details of how we would measure this would be set out when the Government produces the first annual report on progress.
- Apprenticeships: The Bill includes a duty to report annually on progress against meeting our target of 3 million new apprenticeships.
- Troubled Families Programme: The Bill includes a duty to report annually on progress of the Troubled Families programme. The Bill also seeks to place a

requirement on public bodies to provide information to the Secretary of State in order that he may fulfil that duty.

In addition, our future youth offer will:

- Put in place a new Youth Allowance for 18-21 year olds with stronger work related conditionality from Day 1. After 6 months they will be required to go on an apprenticeship, training or community work placement;
- Remove automatic entitlement to housing support for 18-21 year olds;
- Provide Jobcentre Plus adviser support in schools across England to supplement careers advice and provide routes into work experience and apprenticeships.

Related documents:

Benefit Cap Evaluation:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-cap-evaluation>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/benefit-cap-review-of-the-first-year>

Benefit Cap statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/benefit-cap-statistics>

Labour Market Statistics:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/labour-market-statistics-may-2015>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- The Universal Credit Regulations 2013

- The Benefit Cap (Housing Benefit) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Welfare Benefits Up-rating Act 2013
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- The Benefit Cap (Housing Benefit) Regulations 2012
- The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 (amended by Schedule 1 to the Deregulation Act 2015)
- Social Security Administration Act 1992

Devolution:

For the benefit freeze and the benefit cap:

The Bill's provisions would apply to England, Scotland and Wales with Northern Ireland expected to make mirroring arrangements.

For the statutory duties to report:

- The duty will apply to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. We will work with the devolved administrations to consider how it interacts with their responsibilities.
- The duty to report on apprenticeships would apply to England only.
- The duty to report annually on the progress of the Troubled Families programme would apply to England only.

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Caxton House
Tothill Street
London SW1H 9NA
020 3267 5144

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Enterprise Bill

“Measures will also be introduced to reduce regulation on small businesses so they can create jobs.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Cement the UK’s position as the best place in Europe to start and grow a business, by cutting red tape and making it easier for small businesses to resolve disputes quickly and easily.
- Reward entrepreneurship, generate jobs and higher wages for all, and offer people opportunity at every stage of their lives.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Progressing our commitment to cutting red tape and saving businesses at least £10 billion over this Parliament.
- Creating a Small Business Conciliation Service to help resolve business-to-business disputes, especially over late payment.
- Improving the business rates system ahead of the 2017 revaluation, including by modernising the appeals system.
- Other measures to help strengthen the UK’s competitiveness and back businesses to create jobs.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Deregulation

- Extending the Government’s ambitious target for cutting red tape to cover the activities of more regulators to enable them to contribute to the deregulation target.
- Require regulators to be more transparent by reporting against their compliance with existing statutory better regulation requirements. This will

ensure that regulators design and deliver services and policies to best suits the needs of business.

- Extension of the Primary Authority scheme to streamline regulation around the country.

Small Business Conciliation service

- Establishing the Small Business Conciliation Service that will handle business-to-business disputes without the need for court action, tackling in particular, late payment issues.

Public Sector Redundancy Pay

- Introducing a cap on exit payments made to public sector workers to end six figure payoffs for the best paid public sector workers.

Business rates

- Introduction of business rates appeals reform, including modifying the Valuation Tribunal powers to consider ratepayer appeals.
- Allow for the Valuation Office Agency to share information with local government to improve the system for both local government and ratepayers.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015
- Deregulation Act 2015
- Regulators Code 2014
- Groceries Code and Adjudicator Act 2013
- Public Bodies Act 2011
- Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008
- Local Government Finance Act 1988

Devolution:

The Bill's provisions extend to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Where the Bill deals with matters that are devolved we will engage with the Devolved Administrations as necessary.

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London SW1H 0ET
020 7215 3234

27 May 2015

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Personal Tax Allowance

“Legislation will be brought forward to ensure people working 30 hours a week on the National Minimum Wage do not pay income tax”

The purpose of the legislation is to:

- Reward those who work hard and do the right thing.
- Ensure that future increases to the income tax personal allowance reflect changes to the national minimum wage, so that individuals working 30 hours a week on the national minimum wage do not pay income tax.

The main benefits of the legislation would be:

- The Government has a commitment to raise the personal allowance to £12,500. This will go further and ensure that in the future, individuals working 30 hours at the national minimum wage will not pay income tax.
- Increases in the personal allowance this Parliament will benefit around 30 million individuals.

The main elements of the legislation are:

- The legislation would ensure that future increases to the income tax personal allowance reflect changes to the national minimum wage, so that individuals working 30 hours a week on the national minimum wage do not pay income tax.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- The personal allowance is set annually through the Finance Bill.

Devolution:

- The income tax personal allowance is a reserved matter (UK wide).

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1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1H 2HQ
020 7270 1895

27 May 2015

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Tax lock commitment – National Insurance Contributions Bill/Finance Bill

“Legislation will be brought forward to ensure...there are no rises in income tax rates, value-added tax or National Insurance for the next five years.”

The purpose of the legislation is to:

- Ensure there are no rises in income tax rates, VAT rates or National Insurance contributions (NICs) rates for individuals, employees and employers.
- Ensure that the NICs upper earnings limit (the point at which the Employee NICs rate reduces to 2%) is no higher than the income tax higher rate threshold (the point at which income tax increases to 40%).
- Ensure there will be no extension of the scope of VAT.

The main benefits of the legislation would be:

- Preventing any increase in Income Tax rates, VAT rates, or individual, employee or employer rates of National Insurance, above the current rates.

The main elements of the legislation are:

- To set a ceiling for the rates of Income Tax and VAT, and the individual, employee and employer National Insurance rates, so that these rates cannot be raised above their current levels.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Finance Act 2015
- Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992
- Social Security Contributions and Benefits (Northern Ireland) Act 1992

- Various National Insurance Contributions Acts

Devolution

The legislation's provisions will extend to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Press Office
HM Treasury
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ
020 7270 1895

Childcare Bill

“Measures will be brought forward to help working people by greatly increasing the provision of free childcare.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Help support working people from the start of their family life.
- Deliver on the Government’s election manifesto commitment of giving families where all parents are working an entitlement to 30 hours a week of free childcare for their three- and four-year olds for 38 weeks of the year (equivalent of the school year).

The main benefits of the Bill would be to:

- Help hard-working families with the costs of childcare and support parents in work.
- Help ensure that parents are able to access information about the additional free childcare being introduced and about other childcare provision or services which may help them to meet their childcare needs.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- To provide for an increased entitlement to 30 hours a week of free childcare (for 38 weeks of the year) to be made available to eligible working parents of three and four year olds
- To require local authorities to publish information about the provision of childcare in the local authority area, and other services or facilities which might be of benefit to parents or prospective parents, or children or young persons in their area.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- The Local Authority (Duty to Secure Early Years Provision Free of Charge) Regulations 2014
- The Childcare Act 2006
- The Childcare Act 2006 (Provision of Information to Parents) (England) Regulations 2007'

Devolution:

The Bill applies to England only.

Press Office
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT
020 7783 8300

Housing Bill

“Legislation will be introduced to support home ownership and give housing association tenants the chance to own their own home.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Help provide more hard working people with the chance to own their own home.
- Increase housing supply and access to home ownership.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Helping more tenants of housing associations to buy a home of their own.
- Increasing the supply of new Starter Homes (to be exclusively offered to young first-time buyers, at a 20 per cent discount below their open market value).
- Helping those wishing to build their own home.
- Ensuring local people have more control over planning.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Home ownership

- To enable the extension of Right to Buy levels of discount to housing association tenants.
- To require local authorities to dispose of high-value vacant council houses, which would help fund the Right to Buy extension discounts and the building of more affordable homes in the area.
- To provide the necessary statutory framework to support the delivery of Starter Homes.
- To take forward the Right to Build, requiring local planning authorities to

support custom and self-builders registered in their area in identifying suitable plots of land to build or commission their own home.

Housing supply

- To introduce a statutory register for brownfield land, to help achieve the target of getting Local Development Orders in place on 90% of suitable brownfield sites by 2020.
- To simplify and speed up the neighbourhood planning system, to support communities that seek to meet local housing and other development needs through neighbourhood planning. .
- To give effect to other changes to housing and planning legislation that would support housing growth.

Related documents:

Consultation on Starter Homes and Government Response – March 2015:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/stepping-onto-the-property-ladder>

Building more homes on brownfield land: consultation proposals – January 2015:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/building-more-homes-on-brownfield-land>

Consultation on Right to Build, and Government response – March 2015:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/right-to-build-supporting-custom-and-self-build>

Neighbourhood planning: Government response to consultation – December 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/technical-consultation-on-planning>.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 No.637
- Housing and Regeneration Act 2008
- Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- Housing (Right to Buy) Regulations 1997 No. 619
- Housing Act 1996
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Housing Act 1985

Devolution:

The legislation will cover England and Wales – but will initially be applied only to England. Any application to Wales will be a decision for the Welsh Government. The provisions relating to planning will apply only to England.

Press Office
Department of Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
030 344 41201

27 May 2015

Energy Bill

“Measures will be introduced to increase energy security.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Ensure there will be affordable and reliable energy for businesses and families.
- Give the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) the powers it needs to become a robust, independent and effective regulator, and enable it to maximise the economic recovery of oil and gas from UK waters.
- Change the law in line with the manifesto commitment to give local communities the final say on wind farm applications.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Increasing industry collaboration, driving down costs for consumers and attracting further investment to improve the overall competitiveness of the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS).
- Bringing revenue to the UK contributing to economic growth and creating jobs
- Maximising the economic recovery of offshore oil and gas reserves, prolonging the life of the basin and helping to ensure our energy security.
- Ensuring local planning authorities have consenting powers for all onshore wind farms.

The main elements of the Bill are:

To establish the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA)

- The Bill would formally establish the OGA as an independent regulator, which would take the form of a government company, charged with the asset

stewardship and regulation of domestic oil and gas recovery.

- The Bill would transfer the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change's existing regulatory powers to the OGA. The Secretary of State's regulatory functions in relation to the environment would not be transferred.
- The Bill would give the OGA additional powers including access to company meetings; data acquisition, retention and transfer; dispute resolution and sanctions.
- The Bill would increase the scope of fees and charges to target the costs of the OGA more closely to those who directly benefit from its services and functions.

Fee Schemes for Environmental Regulation of Offshore Oil and Gas

- The Bill would introduce provisions in relation to charges for the regulator's services to the industry.

Onshore Wind

- The Bill would make legislative changes to remove the need for the Secretary of State's consent for any large onshore wind farms (over 50MW).
- This, in effect, would devolve powers out of Whitehall by transferring the existing consenting powers, in relation to onshore wind, to local planning authorities.
- This will mean that in future the primary decision maker for onshore wind consents in England and Wales will be the local planning authority. These changes will be supported by changes to the national planning policy framework to give effect to the manifesto commitment that local communities should have the final say on planning applications for wind farms.
- These changes would not impact on the planning regime in Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- The commitment to end new subsidy for onshore wind farms will be delivered separately, and DECC will be announcing measures to deliver this soon.

Related documents:

Wood Review – Final Report:
<http://www.woodreview.co.uk/>

Wood Review Call for Evidence:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/wood-review-call-for-evidence>

Implementing the Wood Review - Government Response to the Call for Evidence:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/implementing-the-wood-review-recommendations>

Existing legislation in this area is:

Wood Review Implementation

- Infrastructure Act 2015 – maximising the economic recovery of oil and gas from UK waters.
 - Section 41 introduces the principal objective of maximising economic recovery of oil and gas reserves from UK waters.
 - Section 42 introduces a levy making power, enabling regulatory costs to be recovered from industry.
- Energy Act 2011
- Petroleum Act 1998
- Relevant petroleum licenses based on model clauses set out in legislation

Fee Schemes for Environmental Regulation of Offshore Oil and Gas

- The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009
- The Energy Act 2008
- The Offshore Petroleum Activities (Conservation of Habitats) Regulations 2001 (as amended)
- The Offshore Petroleum Production and Pipe-lines (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1999 (as amended)
- The Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention) Regulations 1998

Onshore Wind

- Planning Act 2008
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Electricity Act 1989

Devolution:

Wood Review Implementation

The substantive provisions would extend to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. For the purposes of implementing the Wood Review, they will apply to the UK's territorial waters and the UKCS. The provisions will respect the relevant devolution settlements.

The intention is that the licensing of onshore exploration and extraction of oil and gas will be devolved in respect of Scotland and Wales.

Fee Schemes for Environmental Regulation of Offshore Oil and Gas

Offshore oil and gas matters are reserved. The proposals apply to all of the UK's territorial waters and to the United Kingdom Continental Shelf.

Onshore Wind

These changes would not apply in Scotland or Northern Ireland. These changes would apply to England. We are considering how this will apply to Wales in the context of the St David's Day process.

Changes proposed by the Silk Commission would mean that Wales will in future have the power to decide how they wish to manage planning applications for onshore wind up to 350MW.

The Government will consult with the Devolved Administrations on changes to subsidy regimes for onshore wind farms.

Media Team
Department of Energy and Climate Change
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0300 068 5476

Energy Security

“Measures will be introduced to increase energy security”

The UK is one of the most energy secure countries in the world. The Government is committed to keeping the lights on and powering the UK economy.

To ensure secure supplies in the medium term, we are investing in new energy infrastructure and we have a capacity auction which will ensure security of electricity supply from 2018/19 onwards. A further measure to be introduced is:

- Delivering more secure and diverse energy supplies in the UK, through the proposed Energy Bill (see establishment of Oil and Gas Authority)

Investing in domestic oil and gas production is important because it helps reduce our reliance on imports of oil and gas. In 2014 oil produced on the UK Continental Shelf (UKCS) was equivalent to around 56% of UK oil demand, and domestic gas was similar. This approach ensures our resilience to energy disruption is improved and helps make a significant contribution to our economy.

Oil currently constitutes 41% of the UK Energy mix and is the main energy source for transport (97%). Gas constitutes around 34% of the UK Energy mix and is an important fuel in domestic and commercial heating, industrial processes, and electricity generation. The UK has enjoyed extremely good security of oil and gas supplies to date sourced mainly from the UK Continental Shelf and also from a diverse range of international sources.

Given the right business conditions which promote investment, the UK's Oil and Gas industry can continue to supply a significant proportion of our needs to 2020 and beyond.

The Government is also working with National Grid to put in place an effective plan to secure electricity supplies. We will continue to reform the electricity market to ensure the necessary investment is made to transition to a low carbon electricity system at the lowest cost to consumers, whilst maintaining security of supply.

Together, these measures support the Government's approach to ensure that UK homes and businesses can rely on affordable and secure energy supplies, specifically by:

- Ensuring we have a resilient power supply in the event of major disruption, regardless of whether it is due to cyber-attack or any other cause;
- Continually assessing the risks to security of supply and system stability across GB. National Grid has the right tools in place to deal with even the toughest system conditions, including plant being unavailable;
- Addressing issues of electricity supply and demand. We ran a successful capacity auction last winter which brought forward new investment at good value for money; and National Grid's New Balancing Services meant we maintained a healthy capacity margin throughout; contrary to some press forecasts late last year.
- In the medium term, the capacity auction mechanism will ensure we have enough capacity on the system to meet peak demand.
- To ensure our energy security, we are also investing in new energy infrastructure such as new nuclear and new renewables, as well as exploring for gas.

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030 0068 5476

Immigration

“Measures will be introduced... to control immigration.”

The purpose of the legislation is:

- Control immigration, making sure we put hard working British families first.
- To support working people, clamp down on illegal immigration and protect our public services.

The main benefits of these clauses would be:

- Dealing with those who should not be here, by rooting out illegal immigrants and boosting removals and deportations.
- Reforming our immigration and labour market rules, so we reduce the demand for skilled migrant labour and crack down on the exploitation of low-skilled workers.

The main elements of the clauses are:

- Illegal working: The Bill will introduce an offence of illegal working, making it clear to migrants who have no right to be here that working illegally in the UK is a crime, with consequences for their earnings. This will provide a firm legal foundation for the wages paid to illegal migrants to be seized as proceeds of crime.
- Work: We will create a new enforcement agency that cracks down on the worst cases of exploitation. Exploiting or coercing people into work is not acceptable. It is not right that unscrupulous employers can exploit workers in our country, luring them here with the promise of a better life, but delivering the exact opposite, and the full force of the State will be applied to them. A new single agency will have the scale and powers to do this. The Bill will also make it illegal for employment agencies to recruit solely from abroad without advertising those jobs in Britain and in English.
- Skills levy: A consultation will be carried out on funding apprenticeship schemes for British and EU workers by implementing a new visa levy on businesses that use foreign labour.

- Services: A clearer bar on access to services by illegal migrants. We will build on the national roll-out of the landlord scheme established in the Immigration Act 2014, and make it easier to evict illegal migrants. We will ensure banks take action against existing current accounts held by illegal immigrants.
- Appeals: Extend the principle of “deport first, appeal later” from just criminal cases, to all immigration cases. In 2014 the last government cut the number of appeal rights but other than foreign criminals, migrants retain an in-country right of appeal against the refusal of a human rights claim. We will now extend the “deport first, appeal later” principle to all cases, except where it will cause serious harm.
- Tagging: Require all foreign offenders released on bail to be tagged, so we always know exactly where they are. This will prevent absconding and increase the number of criminals deported.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Immigration Act 2014.

Devolution:

- Immigration is a reserved matter.

Press Office
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
020 7035 3535

27 May 2015

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Trade Unions Bill

“My Government will bring forward legislation to reform trade unions and to protect essential public services against strikes.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Pursue our ambition to become the most prosperous major economy in the world by 2030.
- Ensure hardworking people are not disrupted by little-supported strike action.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Ensuring that strikes are the result of clear, positive and recent decisions by union members.
- Ensuring that disruption to essential public services has a democratic mandate.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Trade Union reform

- Introduction of a 50% voting threshold for union ballots turnouts (and retain the requirement for there to be a simple majority of votes in favour).
- In addition to the 50% minimum voting turnout threshold, introduction of a requirement that 40% of those entitled to vote must vote in favour of industrial action in certain essential public services (health, education, fire, transport).
- Tackling intimidation of non-striking workers during a strike.

- Introduction of a transparent opt-in process for the political fund element of trade unions subscriptions. This will reflect the existing practice in Northern Ireland.
- Introduction of time limits on a mandate following a ballot for industrial action.
- Making changes to the role of the Certification Officer.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

Devolution:

The Bill's provisions extend to England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Where the Bill deals with matters that are devolved we will engage with the Devolved Administrations as necessary.

Press Office
Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET
020 7215 3234

Education and Adoption Bill

“Legislation will be brought forward to improve schools and give every child the best start in life, with new powers to take over failing and coasting schools and create more academies.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Give all children the best possible start in life.
- Strengthen our intervention powers in failing maintained schools. It will be clear that the solution for inadequate schools is to become a sponsored academy. It will also give us powers to intervene in coasting schools and will allow us to require action from those schools which have not seen pupils make sufficient progress.
- Introduce measures that will enable us to deliver regional adoption agencies

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

Schools

Speeding up intervention in failing schools and being clear that these inadequate schools will become sponsored academies.

- Creating new power to academies coasting schools.

Adoption

- It would increase the scale at which adoption services are delivered, by introducing regional adoption agencies. These agencies will work across local authority boundaries to match children without delay.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Schools

- The Bill would give Regional Schools Commissioners powers to bring in leadership support from other excellent schools and heads, and would speed up the process of turning schools into academies.
- An inadequate Ofsted judgement would usually lead to a school being converted into an academy, and barriers would be removed to ensure swift progress towards conversion.
- It would make schools that meet a new coasting definition, having shown a prolonged period of mediocre performance and insufficient pupil progress, eligible for academisation.
- A coasting definition will be set out in due course according to a number of factors.

Adoption

- The Bill would give the Secretary of State a new power to direct one or more named local authorities to make arrangements for any or all of their adoption functions to be carried out on their behalf by one of the local authorities named or by another agency. In practice, this means that the Secretary of State can direct a number of local authorities to have adoption functions carried out on their behalf in order to create regional adoption agencies.
- When directing local authorities, the Secretary of State can list which adoption functions the arrangements should relate to. The functions which can be specified in a direction are functions in relation to: the recruitment, assessment and approval of prospective adopters; decisions about which prospective adopters a child should be matched with; and the provision of adoption support services.

Related documents:

Schools causing concern:

[Schools causing concern: statutory guidance for local authorities](#)

Existing legislation in this area is:

Schools

- Academies Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

Adoption

- Children and Families Act 2014
- Adoption Agencies Regulations 2005
- Adoption and Children Act 2002

Devolution:

Relates to England only

Press Office
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT
020 7783 8300

Health and Social Care

“In England my Government will secure the future of the National Health Service by implementing the National Health Service’s own five-year plan, by increasing the health budget, integrating healthcare and social care, and ensuring the National Health Service works on a seven day basis. Measures will be introduced to improve access to general practitioners and to mental healthcare.”

This Government’s vision is for a modern, efficient and sustainable NHS that provides high quality care for patients seven days a week, and is there for everyone throughout your life.

We will prioritise patient access to all services – from GP access to hospital and social care – backing NHS England’s plan for modernising the NHS.

We will increase investment into the NHS by £8 billion a year by 2020 to support the transformation of services across the country, including an increase in the number of GPs, faster access to new drugs and treatments and a greater focus on mental health and healthy living.

The Prime Minister’s GP Access Fund is already extending opening hours across the country and by the end of this year 18 million patients will have access to a GP at evenings and weekends. That access will be expanded further and action taken to deliver more seven day access in hospitals too.

We will support the NHS to deliver its long-term plan to join up health and social care for patients, and to offer more tests and treatments closer to patients’ home, thus avoiding unnecessary trips to hospital.

We are ensuring that people with mental health problems can get the right care at the right time by introducing access and waiting time standards for mental health services, including talking therapies and specialist care for people experiencing their first episode of psychosis.

The shift to seven day a week opening with improved access and better links between services will help to deliver a safer, more sustainable NHS and more lives saved.

Press Office
Department of Health
Richmond House, 79 Whitehall
London SW1A 2NS
020 7210 5477

State Pension

“My government will continue to secure the real value of the basic State Pension so that more people can live in dignity and security in retirement.”

During the previous Parliament the Government introduced the triple lock – which meant the basic State Pension was increased by the highest of the growth in average earnings, prices inflation or 2.5%.

The triple lock protected pensioner incomes during a period of unusual uncertainty in the economy, where for example earnings rose more slowly than prices, as happened during the last Parliament.

As a result of this policy pensioners received a 2.5 per cent increase in the basic State Pension this April and the full rate increased to £115.95 a week.

Under the triple lock the basic State Pension has risen to the highest share of average earnings for over two decades.

The Government is continuing to put pensioners at the heart of the long-term economic plan as the country recovers. As part of this commitment the triple lock will continue to apply to the basic State Pension for the duration of the Parliament.

This will ensure that pensioners who have worked hard and made a contribution during their working lives have their incomes protected.

Continuing the triple lock will give pensioners the financial security and certainty that they deserve and ensure pensioners see adequate increases in the basic State Pension.

In addition the Government will continue to protect other pensioner benefits, including Winter Fuel Payments, free bus passes, TV licences, and free prescriptions.

Press Office
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London SW1H 9NA
020 3267 5144

Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill

“To bring different parts of our country together, my Government will work to bring about a balanced economic recovery. Legislation will be introduced to provide for the devolution of powers to cities with elected metro mayors, helping to build a Northern Powerhouse.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Fulfill the Government’s commitments on devolving powers and budgets to boost local growth in England.
- Work through our long-term economic plan to rebuild our economy.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Boosting growth and increasing productivity and efficiency in local government.
- Providing the legislative framework necessary to deliver the Greater Manchester deal and other future deals – both in large cities which choose to have elected mayors and in other places.
- Making early progress on moving powers out of Whitehall and building a Northern Powerhouse.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- The Bill would provide new primary legislative powers to fulfill the Government’s manifesto commitments.
- Together with existing powers under the Localism Act 2011, the Bill would also enable the Government to empower towns and counties, building on the programme of Growth Deals which the Government implemented in the last Parliament.
- The provisions in the Bill would be generic (to be applied by order to specified combined authorities and their areas) and would enable:

- An elected mayor for the combined authority's area who would exercise specified functions and chair the authority.
- The mayor to undertake the functions of Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the area.
- Where a mayor is to have PCC functions, allow the current PCC term of office to be extended until the mayor is in place.
- Remove the current statutory limitation on its functions (currently these are limited to those on economic development, regeneration, and transport).
- Enable local authority governance to be streamlined as agreed by councils.

Related documents:

The Chancellor's Northern Powerhouse speech of 23 June 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chancellor-we-need-a-northern-powerhouse>

Greater Manchester devolution deal:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/369858/Greater_Manchester_Agreement_i.pdf

The Chancellor's "Building a Northern Powerhouse" speech of 14 May 2015:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chancellor-on-building-a-northern-powerhouse>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Localism Act 2011
- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007
- Local Government Act 2003
- Local Government Act 2000
- Local Government Act 1999
- Local Government Finance Act 1988

- Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- Representation of the People Act 1983
- Local Government Act 1972

And secondary legislation made under these Acts of Parliament.

Devolution:

The main provisions apply only to England.

Press Office
Department for Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
030 344 41201

27 May 2015

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High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Bill

"My Government will continue to legislate for high-speed rail links between the different parts of the country."

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Provide the Government with the legal powers to construct and operate phase 1 of the High Speed 2 (HS2) railway. On becoming an Act, it would give the Government deemed planning permission for the railway between London and the West Midlands.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- To allow the Government to build phase 1 of HS2 – a transformational scheme to help rebalance the UK economy and bring greater prosperity to the midlands and the north.
- HS2 would free up space on our crowded rail network, improving connectivity between London, the Midlands, the North and Scotland. It would promote regeneration, boost local skills and generate tens of thousands of jobs, helping secure the UK's future prosperity.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- Giving the Government powers to compulsorily acquire or temporarily take possession of land required for the scheme, and construct and operate the railway.

Related documents:

High Speed Rail (London-West Midlands) Bill:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/high-speed-rail-london-west-midlands-bill>

HS2: on track:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-on-track>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- High Speed Rail (Preparation Act) 2013
- Railways Act 1993 (as amended by the 2005 Act)

Devolution:

The Bill would apply to the UK, but concerns the HS2 route in England.

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London SW1P 4DR
020 7944 3232

Scotland Bill

“My Government will also bring forward legislation to secure a strong and lasting constitutional settlement, devolving wide-ranging powers to Scotland.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Ensure wherever you live in the United Kingdom, that you have a government that is on your side and representing your interests.
- Honour the commitment made to the Scottish people before last year's independence referendum to transfer significant new powers to the Scottish Parliament, making it one of the most powerful devolved parliaments in the world.
- Deliver in full the Smith Commission Agreement, which the five main Scottish political parties signed-up to in November 2014. The Smith Commission was established the morning after the people of Scotland voted decisively (55% to 45%) to remain part of the United Kingdom.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- The Scottish Parliament would become one of the most powerful devolved parliaments in the world, with considerable new powers over taxation (including income tax) and spending.
- Along with more powers would come more responsibility to a Scottish Parliament more accountable to the Scottish public.
- For the first time, more than half the money spent by the Scottish Government would be raised by the Scottish Parliament. It will be responsible for raising around 40% of Scotland's taxes and for deciding around 60% of its public spending.
- Along with a more powerful and accountable Scottish Parliament, Scotland would also retain the huge benefits of being part of a strong United Kingdom with a large UK economy, a UK pound, UK pensions and UK armed forces – just as the Scottish people made clear they wanted in last year's independence referendum.

The main elements of the Bill are:

New tax powers

- The Bill would enable the Scottish Parliament to set the thresholds and rates of income tax on earnings in Scotland and keep all the money raised in Scotland.

The Bill would provide the Scottish Parliament with the first ten percentage points of standard rate VAT revenue raised in Scotland (and 2.5% reduced rate).

- The Bill would also devolve responsibility for Air Passenger Duty and the Aggregates Levy to the Scottish Parliament.
- Additional borrowing powers will also be agreed between the UK and Scottish Governments as part of a new fiscal framework for Scotland.

New welfare powers

- The Scottish Parliament would get around £2.5 billion worth of new welfare powers.
- The Bill would allow the Scottish Government to vary the frequency of Universal Credit payments in Scotland.
- The Bill would give the Scottish Parliament the power to set the rules over a range of benefits which affect carers, disabled people, the elderly and to control programmes which help people find work.

Fiscal framework

- To implement the Smith Commission, a new fiscal framework for Scotland will be negotiated alongside the Bill. This should ensure Scotland enjoys the benefits of economic decision-making closer to home within a strong and secure UK system and shared UK currency.
- The Barnett formula would be retained but would account for a smaller share of the Scottish Parliament's revenues because more than half of it would now be raised by tax decisions made at Holyrood.

Related documents:

Smith Commission Agreement:

<https://www.smith-commission.scot/smith-commission-report/>

Scotland in the United Kingdom: An enduring settlement (UK Government draft clauses):

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/397079/Scotland_EnduringSettlement_acc.pdf

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Scotland Act 2012
- Scotland Act 1998

Devolution:

The Scotland Bill would devolve significant new powers to the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Ministers.

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1 Melville Crescent
Edinburgh EH3 7HW
0131 244 9053

Wales Bill

“My Government will also bring forward legislation to secure a strong and lasting constitutional settlement, devolving wide-ranging powers to...Wales.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Ensure wherever you live in the United Kingdom, that you have a government that is on your side and representing your interests.
- Deliver a clearer, more stable devolution settlement for Wales and devolve important new powers to the National Assembly for Wales and the Welsh Government.

The main benefits of the Bill would be to:

- Make Welsh devolution clearer by introducing a reserved powers model to clarify the division of powers between the National Assembly and Parliament.
- Make Welsh devolution stronger by devolving important powers to the National Assembly over energy, transport and local government elections in Wales.
- Give the National Assembly control over its own affairs including what it should be called, its size, electoral system, elections and voting age.
- Reflect the permanence of the Assembly and the Welsh Government in statute.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- A new reserved powers model for Welsh devolution including a list of policies that are reserved to the UK Parliament.
- Powers devolved to Welsh Ministers over consenting for energy developments in Wales up to 350 Megawatts for both onshore and offshore projects
- Powers devolved to the Assembly over ports, taxi regulation, the registration of bus services, speed limits, and sewerage services in Wales.

- The devolution of licensing for onshore oil and gas exploration to Wales, enabling the Welsh Government and the National Assembly to decide whether exploration for shale oil and gas takes place in Wales.
- Powers transferred to the National Assembly over Assembly and local government elections in Wales, enabling the Assembly to decide whether 16 and 17 years olds should vote in those elections.
- Provisions to place the permanence of the National Assembly and the Welsh Government on a statutory footing and enshrine the legislative consent process in law.
- The Bill would devolve to the National Assembly control over its own affairs including what it should be called, its size and the electoral system used to elect its Members.
- The Bill would implement those non-fiscal Smith Commission proposals that are appropriate to be taken forward for Wales.

Related documents:

Powers for a Purpose: Towards a Lasting Devolution Settlement for Wales:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/408587/47683_CM9020_ENGLISH.pdf

Existing legislation in this area is:

- The Wales Act 2014
- The Government of Wales Act 2006
- The Government of Wales Act 1998

Devolution

Provisions will extend to the UK but most would apply to Wales only.

Press Office
Wales Office
Gwydyr House
London SW1A 2NP
0207 270 0569

Northern Ireland (Stormont House Agreement) Bill

“Legislation will be taken forward giving effect to the Stormont House Agreement in Northern Ireland.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Ensure wherever you live in the United Kingdom, that you have a government that is on your side and representing your interests.
- Establish the Historical Investigations Unit, and an Oral History Archive. An additional body in the Bill, the Independent Commission for Information Retrieval would be established by an international agreement between the UK and Irish Governments.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Providing for full and independent investigations into unsolved Troubles-related deaths.
- Enabling victims and survivors to seek and privately receive information about the Troubles-related deaths of next-of-kin.
- Allowing individuals from throughout the UK and Ireland to share experiences and narratives related to the Troubles.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Historical Investigations Unit

- The Bill would create a new independent body, the Historical Investigations Unit (HIU), responsible for taking forward outstanding investigations into unsolved Troubles-related deaths, whether involving criminal activity or allegations of police misconduct. The HIU would also reinvestigate Troubles-related deaths identified by the 2013 report by Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary as needing investigation.
- The Bill would put in place a dedicated family support staff to provide the next of kin with support and expert advice throughout the process.
- The Bill would commit the UK Government to full disclosure of relevant

material to the HIU for the purpose of its investigations.

- The Bill would provide for equivalent measures to those that currently apply to existing bodies so as to prevent any damaging onward disclosure of information by the HIU, in order to ensure that no individuals are put at risk and that the Government's duty to keep people safe and secure is upheld.

Independent Commission for Information Retrieval

- The Bill would enable a new independent cross-border body, the Independent Commission for Information Retrieval (ICIR), which would be established by an international agreement between the UK and Irish Governments.
- The Bill would enable victims and survivors to seek and privately receive, through the ICIR, information about the Troubles-related deaths of next of kin.
- The Bill would ensure that information provided to the ICIR would not be admissible in court proceedings.

Oral History Archive

- The Bill would create a new independent Oral History Archive as a central place for individuals from throughout the UK and Ireland to share experiences and narratives related to the Troubles.
- The Bill would contain provision for the production of a factual historical timeline and statistical analysis of the Troubles, led by academics.

Related documents:

The Stormont House Agreement of 23 December 2014 (and Financial Annex):
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-stormont-house-agreement>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- The Northern Ireland Act 1998
- The Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Orders 2010 and 2012

- The Police (Northern Ireland) Acts 1998, 2000 and 2003

Devolution:

The Bill would extend to the UK. The legislation would apply primarily in Northern Ireland and be primarily operative in Northern Ireland, but some provisions – such as inadmissibility of information provided to the ICIR, and provisions relating to the HIU’s investigation of historic deaths – would apply across the UK. We will engage with the Devolved Administration as needed on these issues. In addition, a Legislative Consent Motion would be required in respect of areas of devolved competence.

Press Office
Northern Ireland Office
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ
020 7210 6446

27 May 2015

Devolved Administrations

“My Government will continue to work in co-operation with the devolved administrations on the basis of mutual respect.”

We are a one nation Government, bringing together the different parts of our United Kingdom. The Prime Minister has already said that he believes in governing with respect, and that he will stay true to his word by implementing as fast as he can the devolution that all parties agreed for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Ministers will work constructively with their colleagues in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to achieve this.

This Government recognises that the United Kingdom has changed, and that we need a union for the 21st century. Relationships need to change to reflect this.

During this Parliament, the Government will:

- Fulfill the promises made in the last Parliament by bringing forward legislation that will devolve substantial further powers to the Scottish and Welsh Governments, and will take forward the historic agreement reached with Northern Ireland’s political leaders at Stormont House in December last year.
- Work with the devolved administrations to agree a revised Memorandum of Understanding, which will govern relations between the UK Government and the devolved administrations.
- Work with the Scottish Government to determine a new financial settlement for Scotland, which reflects the unprecedented new powers the Scottish Government will have to raise its own taxes.
- Ensure that the recovery is embedded in all parts of the UK, by collaborating with colleagues in the devolved administrations

Press Office
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS
020 7276 2234

English Votes for English Laws

“My Government will bring forward changes to the Standing Orders of the House of Commons. These changes will create fairer procedures to ensure that decisions affecting England, or England and Wales, can be taken only with the consent of the majority of Members of Parliament representing constituencies in those parts of our United Kingdom.”

The Government will ensure that wherever you live in the United Kingdom, you have a government that is on your side and representing your interests.

We will maintain the Westminster Parliament as the UK and England’s law-making body. But we want Parliament to work in a way that ensures decisions affecting England, or England and Wales, can only be taken with the consent of the majority of MPs representing constituencies in England, or in England and Wales.

We will end the manifest unfairness whereby Scotland is able to decide its own laws in devolved areas, only for Scottish MPs also to be able to have the potentially decisive say on similar matters that affect only England and Wales.

We will maintain the integrity of the UK Parliament by ensuring that MPs from all parts of the UK continue to deliberate and vote together, including to set overall spending levels.

Press Office
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS
020 7276 0400

European Union Referendum Bill

“My Government will renegotiate the United Kingdom’s relationship with the European Union and pursue reform of the European Union for the benefit of all Member States. Alongside this, early legislation will be introduced to provide for an in-out referendum on membership of the European Union before the end of 2017.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Give the British people a voice and a real choice on Europe.
- Enable a referendum to allow the electorate to have an in-out vote on the UK’s membership of the European Union (EU) before the end of 2017

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- To allow the electorate to have an in-out vote on the UK’s membership of the European Union (EU) before the end of 2017.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- That it would enable a referendum to allow the electorate to have an in-out vote on the UK’s membership of the European Union (EU) before the end of 2017.
- That it will make clear that the franchise for the Referendum will be based on the General Election franchise, plus members of the House of Lords and Commonwealth citizens in Gibraltar. British, Irish and Commonwealth citizens over 18 who are resident in the UK will therefore be eligible to vote as well as UK nationals resident overseas for less than 15 years.

Related documents:

Prime Minister’s Immigration speech of 21 May 2015:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-speech-on-immigration>

Prime Minister’s Immigration speech of 25 March 2013:

<http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/david-camerons-immigration-speech/>

Prime Minister's Bloomberg Speech of 23 January 2013:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/eu-speech-at-bloomberg>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- The Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000

Devolution:

Foreign and constitutional policy are reserved matters (UK wide).

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office
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Extremism Bill

“Measures will also be brought forward to promote social cohesion and protect people by tackling extremism”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Unite our country and keep you and your family safe by tackling all forms of extremism.
- Combat groups and individuals who reject our values and promote messages of hate.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- To strengthen government and law enforcement powers to stop extremists promoting views and behaviour that undermine British values.
- To protect the public from the serious harm extremists intend to cause to individuals, communities and the values we live by.
- To address the gap in government and law enforcement’s powers to deal with extremism that falls below the thresholds in counter-terrorism legislation.

The main elements of the Bill are:

As part of a comprehensive new strategy to defeat all forms of extremism, we will legislate to strengthen our powers in a number of areas:

- **Banning Orders:** a new power for the Home Secretary to ban extremist groups.
- **Extremism Disruption Orders:** a new power for law enforcement to stop individuals engaging in extremist behaviour.
- **Closure Orders:** a new power for law enforcement and local authorities to close down premises used to support extremism.

We will also be taking forward other commitments to combat extremism:

- **Broadcasting:** strengthening Ofcom's roles so that tough measures can be taken against channels that broadcast extremist content.
- **Employment checks:** enabling employers to check whether an individual is an extremist and bar them from working with children.

Related documents:

Counter-extremism strategy – to be published shortly

Home Secretary's speech 'A stronger Britain built on our values':

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/a-stronger-britain-built-on-our-values>

Existing legislation in this area is:

Civil powers to disrupt terrorist or criminal activity similar to Banning Orders, Extremism Disruption Orders and Closure Orders include those in:

- Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011
- Terrorism Act 2000

Ofcom's current powers are set out in a number of measures, including:

- Communications Act 2003

Devolution:

The Bill will cover both devolved and reserved matters.

Press Office
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Investigatory Powers Bill

“New legislation will modernise the law on communications data.”

The purpose of this legislation is to:

- Provide the police and intelligence agencies with the tools to keep you and your family safe.
- Address ongoing capability gaps that are severely degrading the ability of law enforcement and intelligence agencies ability to combat terrorism and other serious crime.
- Maintain the ability of our intelligence agencies and law enforcement to target the online communications of terrorists, paedophiles and other serious criminals.
- Modernise our law in these areas and ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Provide for appropriate oversight and safeguard arrangements.

The main benefits of these clauses would be:

- Better equipping law enforcement and intelligence agencies to meet their key operational requirements, and addressing the gap in these agencies’ ability to build intelligence and evidence where subjects of interest, suspects and vulnerable people have communicated online.
- Maintain the ability of our intelligence agencies to target the online communications of terrorists, and other relevant capabilities.
- Provide for appropriate oversight arrangements and safeguards.
- This will respond to issues raised in the independent review by the Independent Reviewer of Counter-Terrorism legislation, which is due to be published shortly.

The main elements of the clauses are:

- The legislation covers all investigatory powers including communications data, where the Government has long maintained that the gap in capabilities are putting lives at risk.

- The legislation will enable the continuation of the targeting of terrorist communications and other capabilities.

Related documents:

Intelligence and Security Committee Report on the Draft Communications Data Bill:

<http://isc.independent.gov.uk/committee-reports/special-reports>

Intelligence and Security Committee Privacy and Security Inquiry Report:

<http://isc.independent.gov.uk/news-archive>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015
- Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Act 2014
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001

Devolution:

National security and interception powers are a matter reserved to the UK Parliament.

Press Office
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Policing and Criminal Justice Bill

“New legislation will... improve the law on policing and criminal justice.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Carry on making every community safer.
- Continue the reform of policing and enhance protections for vulnerable people.
- Continue to reform the criminal justice system to protect the public better, build confidence and improve efficiency.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Putting a stop to people remaining on bail for months or even years with no independent oversight of the police’s investigation.
- Creating legislative consistency within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) to ensure that 17 year olds are treated as children under all its provisions.
- Reforming legislation in relation to the detention of people under sections 135 and 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 to ensure better outcomes for those experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Changing HMIC’s statutory remit and functions to strengthen its independence, extend its remit and allow it to comment on the efficiency and effectiveness of policing as a whole.
- Reforming the police disciplinary and complaints systems to ensure the public have confidence in their ability to hold the police to account and that police officers will uphold the highest standards of integrity.
- Extending regulations to former police officers to enable forces to conclude misconduct cases, notwithstanding an officer’s departure from the force.

- Making the Police Federation subject to the Freedom of Information Act and enshrining its core purpose in legislation to improve its transparency and accountability. This will help to ensure that the Federation acts in the interests of both its members and the public.
- Providing enhanced protections for children by, subject to consultation, introducing sanctions for professionals who fail to take action on child abuse where it is a professional responsibility to do so.
- Going further to address those who refuse to pay off confiscation orders.
- Continue to reform the criminal justice system to protect better the public, build confidence and improve efficiency.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Pre Charge Bail

- To create a presumption that suspects will be released without bail unless it is necessary.
- The Bill would initially limit pre-charge bail to 28 days, with an extension of up to three months, authorised by a senior police officer.
- In exceptional circumstances, the police will have to apply to the courts for an extension beyond three months, to be approved by a magistrate.
- This will introduce judicial oversight of the pre-charge bail process for the first time, increasing accountability and scrutiny in a way that is manageable for the courts.

PACE Treatment of 17 Year Olds

- The Bill would ensure 17 years olds who are detained in police custody are treated as children for all purposes under PACE.
- In particular, the amendments to the provisions of PACE concerning 17 year olds include:
 - Ensuring an appropriate adult is present for drug sample taking;

- Ensuring appropriate consent is granted by both the 17 year old and parent/ legal guardian for a range of interventions, including intimate searches; and
- The ability to impose conditional bail to ensure the welfare and interests of the 17 year old.

Mental Health and Policing

- The Bill would take forward the policing powers elements of the Review of the use of sections 135 and 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983, including:
 - Prohibiting the use of police cells as places of safety for those under 18 years of age and further reducing their use in the case of adults;
 - Reducing the current 72 hour maximum period of detention; and
 - Extending the power to detain under section 136 to any place other than a private residence.

HMIC Powers

- The Bill would include changes to HMIC's powers that will strengthen its independence and extend its remit to better allow it to comment on the efficiency and effectiveness of policing as a whole.
- The powers will:
 - Extend HMIC's remit to contractors and to Police and Crime Commissioner staff who are supporting the police and delivering policing functions;
 - Give HMIC powers to acquire information from third parties;
 - Require PCCs to copy their responses to HMIC reports to HMIC;
 - Give powers to the Chief Inspector to commission inspections that have not been included in HMIC's published programme; and
 - Enable the Chief Inspector to appoint Assistant Inspectors of Constabulary.

Police Integrity

- The reforms would ensure police corruption and misconduct is brought to light and that officers are held to account for their behaviour in a manner that is fair and transparent for the public.
- Changes to the Police disciplinary system will:

- Enable appeal hearings to be held nationally, (as opposed to locally by Local Policing Bodies) with a lay member introduced in place of the current retired police officer;
 - Ensure that the IPCC investigate all cases involving chief officers;
 - Allow the IPCC to present its own cases to disciplinary hearing panels; and
 - Extend the power to make conduct and disciplinary regulations to include former police officers so that misconduct cases can be taken to a conclusion, notwithstanding an officer's departure from the force.
- Changes to the Police complaints system will include:
 - A stronger role for Police and Crime Commissioners;
 - Measures to strengthen protections for police whistleblowers; and
 - Changes to the powers of the IPCC.

Police Federation Reform

- Amending primary legislation to apply the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act to the Police Federation as first announced by the Home Secretary in May 2014.
- Enshrining the Police Federation's Core Purpose (which reflects the need for it to act in the public interest) in legislation, as requested by the Police Federation as a key element of the *Normington Reforms*.

Child Protection

- Subject to the outcome of a public consultation, introduce improved protection for children, either through amending current duties, introducing a criminal offence of 'wilful neglect' or introducing a mandatory reporting scheme.
- Close a legal loophole so that live-streaming of child sexual abuse online can be punished in the same way as recorded images – meaning offenders will face up to 14 years in prison.

Criminal Justice Reform

- The Bill will allow us to deliver a range of criminal justice reforms that will aim to better protect the public build confidence and improve efficiency.

- We will be considering what changes might be needed over the coming weeks and will bring forward more detailed proposals in due course.

Related documents:

Pre-Charge Bail: Summary of Consultation Responses and Proposals for Legislation – March 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418226/150323_Pre-Charge_Bail_-_Responses__Proposals.pdf

Improving police integrity: reforming the police complaints and disciplinary systems – March 2015

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/385896/45363_Cm_8976_Accessible.pdf

Review of the Police Disciplinary System by Major-General Chip Chapman – December 2014

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/385911/An_Independent_Review_of_the_Police_Disciplinary_System_-_Report_-_Final....pdf

Review of the Operation of Sections 135 and 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 – December 2014

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/389202/S135_and_S136_of_the_Mental_Health_Act_-_full_outcome.pdf

Existing legislation in this area is:

- The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984
- The Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015
- Police and Crime Act 2009

- Police Act 1996
- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011
- Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014
- The Children Act 2004; 1989.
- The Children and Young Person's Act 1933
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Mental Health Act 1983

Devolution:

This Bill is expected to apply to England and Wales only.

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Psychoactive Substances Bill

“New legislation will... ban the new generation of psychoactive drugs.”

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Protect hard-working citizens from the risks posted by untested, unknown and potential harmful drugs.
- Create a blanket ban which would prohibit and disrupt the production, distribution, sale and supply of new psychoactive substances (NPS) in the UK.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Protecting UK citizens from the risks posed by untested, unknown and potentially harmful NPS.
- Complementing the existing UK drug legislative framework in the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- Providing a proportionate but robust response to the availability of NPS and the problems they cause.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- The Bill would make it an offence to produce, supply, offer to supply, possess with intent to supply, import or export psychoactive substances; that is, any substance intended for human consumption that is capable of producing a psychoactive effect. The maximum sentence would be seven years' imprisonment.
- Substances, such as alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, food and medical products, would be excluded from the scope of the offence, as would controlled drugs, which would continue to be regulated by the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- As recommended last year by the NPS Expert Panel, the Bill would focus on the supply of NPS and so would not include a personal possession offence. Specific substances will continue to be controlled under the existing Misuse of

Drugs Act legislation (including possession) where they can be identified and their harms can be adequately assessed by the ACMD.

- This legislation is supported by the Devolved Administrations and the Scottish government and the National Assembly for Wales have published their own reports calling for a blanket ban
- The Bill would include provision for civil sanctions – prohibition notices and prohibition orders (breach of the latter would be a criminal offence) – to enable the police and local authorities to adopt a proportionate response to the supply of NPS in appropriate cases.
- The Bill would also provide powers to seize and destroy NPS and powers to search persons, premises and vehicles, as well as to enter premises by warrant if necessary.

Related documents:

- New Psychoactive Substances Review: Report of the Expert Panel, September 2014:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/368583/NPSexpertReviewPanelReport.pdf
- Government response to new Psychoactive Substances Review Expert Panel report, October 2014:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/response-to-expert-panel-report-on-the-new-psychoactive-substances-review>
- New Psychoactive Substances in England: A review of the evidence, Home Office, October 2014:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/368587/NPSevidenceReview.pdf
- New Psychoactive Substances Expert Review Group: review of the current legal framework available to govern the sale and supply of New Psychoactive Substances, Scottish Government, February 2015:
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0047/00472094.pdf>
- Inquiry into New Psychoactive Substances, Health and Social Care Committee, March 2015:
<http://www.assembly.wales/laid%20documents/cr-ld10147%20-%20report%20by%20the%20health%20and%20social%20care%20committee%20on%20the%20inquiry%20into%20new%20psychoactive%20substances/cr-ld10147-e.pdf>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.

Devolution:

- The Bill would extend to the whole of the UK.

Press Office
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Proposals for a British Bill of Rights

'My Government will bring forward proposals for a British Bill of Rights'

The Government will bring forward proposals for a Bill of Rights to replace the Human Rights Act.

This would reform and modernise our human rights legal framework and restore common sense to the application of human rights laws. It would also protect existing rights, which are an essential part of a modern, democratic society, and better protect against abuse of the system and misuse of human rights laws.

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Supply

“Estimates for the public services will be laid before you.”

The Crown's (Government's) demand for supplies is made in the Speech from the Throne at the opening of a new session of Parliament when the Sovereign, addressing the Members of the House of Commons, informs them of the upcoming request for money. Thus it appears in every Queen's speech as it relates to a fundamental principle: Parliament agreeing to provide the resources, capital and cash to Government for its day-to-day business.

The Supply process is essentially a Parliamentary one, where the Government of the day seeks authority from Parliament to carry on governmental business:

- Accordingly, by Her Majesty's Command, Estimates are laid before the House of Commons, stating the specific amounts required for carrying on the Government's business;
- Although by Command, they are not presented to both House of Parliaments but to the House of Commons only;
- They are printed by Order of the House and numbered as House of Commons papers, not as Command papers;
- The Supply Estimates are presented by a Treasury minister, normally these days in the name of the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, at the date of formal presentation;
- They cover expenditure up to and including 31 March 2016; and
- They are subsequently given legal effect by a Supply and Appropriation (Main Estimates) Act in July.

Press Office
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Iraq

“The United Kingdom... will offer further support to the Iraqi Government’s programme for political reform and national reconciliation.”

The Government strongly supports the Iraqi government led by Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and his efforts to build a more stable and democratic Iraq.

Prime Minister al-Abadi has assembled an inclusive government, that includes Shia, Sunni, Kurds and others. He has committed to reforms including de-centralising power, reforming and restructuring the security forces, and improving relations with Iraq’s neighbours.

The new Iraqi government now needs to deliver change and build trust to reconcile Iraq’s different communities and to unite the country against the threat it faces from ISIL.

The Government will continue to support Prime Minister Al-Abadi and the Iraqi government in these efforts.

Media Office
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Terrorism in the Middle East

“My Ministers will remain at the forefront of the NATO alliance and of international efforts to degrade and ultimately defeat terrorism in the Middle East.”

ISIL and Al-Qaeda affiliated groups in the region pose a clear threat to our national security, and to that of our international partners and the region itself. There have been ISIL inspired terror attacks in Europe and potential plots have also been foiled by authorities.

ISIL falsely uses the name of Islam to commit barbaric atrocities against Muslims and non-Muslims including the heinous murder of two British hostages.

The UK is part of a Global Coalition of over 60 countries including Iraq, Arab nations, European partners and the US, united to defeat ISIL. But ISIL cannot just be defeated by military action; the underlying causes must also be addressed. The Coalition has agreed to work together to tackle ISIL across the following key areas:

- Degrading ISIL’s finances
- Reducing the influx of fighters
- Supporting activists to challenge the poisonous ideology; and
- Providing humanitarian assistance to those affected by ISIL’s brutality and chaos.

The UK is the 2nd biggest contributor to coalition airstrikes against ISIL (after the United States). There are nearly 800 UK personnel supporting the coalition operations in the wider region and we are training Iraqi security forces as well as planning to participate in US-led efforts to train the moderate Syrian opposition. The UK is also co-lead, along with the US and UAE, of the Coalition Working Group for Strategic Communications, responsible for countering ISIL’s messaging.

Defeating the extremists abroad involves using all the resources at our disposal – which is why UK Aid is providing humanitarian assistance to help alleviate the suffering of displaced people in Iraq and Syria. Since 2011, we have pledged £800 million in aid to Syria and the region in response to the humanitarian crisis and we are also delivering £39.5m of aid to support people across Iraq who have fled from ISIL.

Media Office
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27 May 2015

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Ukraine/Russia

“My Government will maintain pressure on Russia to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, and will insist on the full implementation of the Minsk agreements.”

The Government is working closely with our partners in the European Union (EU) and the United States to ensure that Russia faces consequences for its illegal annexation of Crimea and destabilisation of eastern Ukraine. The EU has implemented tough economic sanctions, in order to increase pressure on Russia to fulfil its commitments under the Minsk agreements, and to use its influence on the separatists they support.

The Government is clear that there can be no military solution to the crisis in Ukraine, only a diplomatic one. The Government has given full support to the ‘Normandy’ diplomatic process which has brought about an agreed package of measures (the Minsk agreements) to ensure, amongst other aspects that:

- There is a monitored ceasefire;
- Russian troops, heavy weaponry and equipment are withdrawn;
- Ukraine regains full control of its international border with Russia;
- There is safe distribution of humanitarian assistance;
- There are local elections in the separatist-held areas under Ukrainian law;
- Through constitutional reform a special status is agreed for the separatist held areas.

The Government is clear that the current EU economic sanctions on Russia over its actions in eastern Ukraine should remain until there is full implementation of the Minsk agreements.

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Syria

“The United Kingdom will continue to seek a political settlement in Syria.”

Ending the conflict in Syria and countering ISIL and other extremist groups is strongly in our national interest. It poses a significant threat to the UK, regional and international peace and security.

The UK's top three priorities remain to:

- Protect the UK's national security by tackling the threat from ISIL and other extremist groups.
- Support efforts to find a political solution to the conflict;
- Do all we can to alleviate humanitarian suffering;

To achieve this:

- We have been at the forefront of providing the Syrian moderate opposition with practical and political support; and we are contributing to the US-led efforts to train and equip the moderate opposition fighting ISIL in Syria
- We are supporting UN Special Envoy de Mistura's efforts to kick-start a political dialogue. UK senior officials met with de Mistura in mid-May;
- We have given £800 million in humanitarian aid, making the UK the second largest bilateral donor after the US;
- We have eliminated almost 200 tonnes of chemical weapons that Assad was using against his people;
- We continue to explore options with our partners in the UN Security Council and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to eliminate chemical weapons attacks altogether;
- We have worked to secure two UN Security Council Resolutions to ensure that humanitarian assistance can be delivered to people who urgently need it;
- We have committed £55m this year to support civilian governance in areas under opposition control to allow the opposition to have real impact and to bolster regional stability;

- We are providing emergency sanctuary for displaced Syrians, taking almost 3,000 Syrian refugees into the UK and providing help every day to refugees in Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt;

We will continue applying sanctions pressure to the regime until it reassesses its position, ends the violence and engages in meaningful negotiations with the moderate opposition.

Media Office
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Paris Conference

“My Government will seek effective global collaboration to sustain economic recovery and to combat climate change, including at the climate change conference in Paris later this year.”

The Government is seeking to address climate change through ambitious action at home and at the international level. We are hoping to agree an ambitious global deal on international climate change in Paris this year to take effect from 2020. A global deal is the only way we can deliver the scale of action required. The most cost-effective and competitive way to achieve this is an international, legally binding, rules based agreement covering every country. We are negotiating this under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), covering over 190 countries.

A deal is strongly in the UK's interest.

- A global climate agreement is the only way to deliver the global response necessary.
- The UK is a world leader in green technology and innovation, and a global commitment on climate change will open up new opportunities for our low-carbon industries
- In addition to the science and sustainability arguments, there is a compelling case to avert direct threats to the UK such as severe weather events from floods to heatwaves that can wreak economic and social damage; and indirect threats through global changes such as rising costs and regional instability.
- Global impacts also underpin the need to support developing countries to improve economic stability and growth, and move to a low carbon, climate resilient growth path.
- A global climate agreement is vital to deliver the global response needed to mobilise the necessary finance to invest in adaptation and mitigation across the world.
- It's not just governments who want this deal. There is widespread support from business, NGOs and the wider public both in the UK here and internationally.

There are a number of negotiating sessions and events in the lead up to Paris, including the UNFCCC Intersessional in Bonn in June, which will be an important opportunity to discuss elements of the deal such as countries' intended contributions and rules regarding transparency and accountability.

The UK has taken decisive domestic action through the Climate Change Act and has already reduced its emissions by 30% as part of its commitment to an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050 from 1990 levels. This target is in line with the global objective to keep temperature increase below 2 degrees.

The UK has set targets in legislation, 5 year carbon budgets and review mechanisms, which is providing a leading model for climate change policies both domestically and at the international level.

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Strategic Defence and Security Review

“My Government will undertake a full Strategic Defence and Security Review, and do whatever is necessary to ensure that our courageous armed forces can keep Britain safe.”

This country faces a complex and challenging international and domestic security environment. We must ensure that we are able to protect our people and promote our interests. That means having the resilience and flexibility to respond to threats and opportunities. That is why we committed to undertaking a Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) every five years and work is now underway on the 2015 Review.

The 2015 National Security Strategy (NSS) and SDSR will:

- Be driven by our national security and foreign policy objectives, and the complex risks we face in a rapidly changing world;
- Ensure Britain remains a leader on the world stage and that we have the networks necessary to promote our interests, protect our people and values and to tackle threats;
- Maintain our world-leading Armed Forces; intelligence agencies; police; and diplomatic and development capabilities;

The review will build on the enormous progress that has been made. Since 2010, the Government has: established the National Security Council, to ensure proper strategic decision-making at the top of government; balanced the defence budget, addressing the £38 billion funding shortfall from the previous administration in 2010 and we plan to invest at least £160 billion in new military equipment over the next decade; boosted exports to many emerging markets, opened new diplomatic posts and led the world in promoting women’s rights and tackling sexual violence in conflict; launched a new cyber programme; and met the 0.7% target for spending on international development.

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27 May 2015

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Armed Forces Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Continue in force the legislation governing the Armed Forces, and it would make provision for other Defence matters.
- There is an Armed Forces Bill every five years. This requirement dates from the Bill of Rights 1688, which says that the keeping of an Army in time of peace shall be an offence “unless it be with the consent of Parliament”. The Armed Forces Act 2006 transformed the legislation governing the Armed Forces by introducing a single system of Service law that applies to all Service personnel. The 2006 Act provides a comprehensive system of discipline, covering such matters as offences, the powers of the Service Police, the jurisdiction and powers of commanding officers and of Service courts, in particular the Court Martial. It is the basis of the Service Justice System and it applies to all Service personnel wherever in the world they are operating. This Armed Forces Bill would renew the Armed Forces Act 2006, as did the Armed Forces Act 2011.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- To provide the legal basis for recruitment and discipline of our Armed Forces and is therefore essential.
- Maintain the effectiveness of the Service Justice System so that it continues to serve the needs of the Armed Forces.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- To continue in force the Armed Forces Act 2006 that otherwise will expire in November 2016.
- The simplification of some complex processes around the way Service personnel are charged for offences.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- The Armed Forces Act 2011

- The Armed Forces Act 2006

Devolution:

- The Bill's substantive provisions would apply to the whole of the UK and will provide for its extent outside the UK to any of the Channel Islands, to the Isle of Man and to any British Overseas Territories by Order in Council.

Press Office
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London SW1A 2HB
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Bank of England Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- This Bill would build on the changes made in the Financial Services Act 2012, and further strengthen the governance and accountability of the Bank of England, to ensure it remains at the forefront of international best practice.
- The Bill includes measures which would work towards Governor Carney's vision of aligning monetary policy, macro prudential policy and micro prudential regulation.
- The Bill would help to fully implement recommendations of the Warsh review, and would ensure that the Bank is well positioned to fulfil its vital role of overseeing monetary policy and financial stability.
- This Bill would formalise changes to the Bank's top team, by legislating to put the new Deputy Governor, Minouche Shafik, on the Court and the FPC.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Ensuring the Bank is well positioned to fulfil its vital role of overseeing monetary policy and financial stability.
- Ensuring that the UK's regulatory framework remain at the forefront of internationally agreed best practice standards.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- To be announced by the Government in due course.

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Financial Services Act 2012
- The Bank of England Act 1998

- The Bank of England Act 1946

Devolution:

The Bill's provisions would apply to the whole of the UK.

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Charities (Protection and Social Investment) Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Protect charities from abuse, strengthen the powers of the Charity Commission for England and Wales, and enable charities to more easily undertake social investment (investing their funds in a way that furthers their charitable purpose as well as providing a financial return).

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Protecting charities from abuse by people who present a known risk.
- Making it easier for the Charity Commission to take robust action against individuals and charities in cases of abuse.
- Supporting public trust and confidence in the effective regulation of charities.
- Making it easier for charities to invest their funds to generate a financial return and a positive social outcome.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Protection of Charities

- The Bill would extend the criteria for automatic disqualification from charity trusteeship, and would extend disqualification to senior management positions to better protect charities from the risk of abuse.
- The Bill would strengthen the powers of the Charity Commission, enabling it to:
 - Direct that a charity be closed down after an inquiry;
 - Issue official warnings to charities;
 - Disqualify a person who is unfit to serve as a charity trustee in certain circumstances;
 - Address some gaps and weaknesses in the Charity Commission's existing powers.

Social Investment

- The Bill would give charities a new specific and simple power to make social investments (pursuing both a financial and social return), along with clear duties when doing so.
- The social investment provisions were recommended by the Law Commission, to make it easier for charities to undertake social investment.

Related documents:

Government's response to the Joint Committee on the Draft Protection of Charities Bill, March 2015:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-response-to-the-joint-committee-on-the-draft-protection-of-charities-bill>

Joint Committee on the Draft Protection of Charities Bill – “Report on the Draft Protection of Charities Bill”, February 2015:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/draft-protection-of-charities-bill/publications1/>

Law Commission: Social Investment by Charities (September 2014):

http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/publications/social_investment_charities.htm

Consultation: “Extending Charity Commission’s powers to tackle abuse in charities”, December 2013:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/extending-charity-commissions-powers-to-tackle-abuse-in-charities>

National Audit Office: “The regulatory effectiveness of the Charity Commission”, December 2013:

<http://www.nao.org.uk/report/regulatory-effectiveness-charity-commission/>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Charities Act 2011: this was a consolidation of the Recreational Charities Act 1958, Charities Act 1993, and most of the Charities Act 2006.

Devolution:

The draft bill would extend to England and Wales. Charity law and regulation is a devolved matter in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

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27 May 2015

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Victims of Crime

“Measures will be brought forward to increase the rights of victims of crime”

The purpose of the legislation is to:

- Support victims so that the most vulnerable in our society get the support they deserve.
- Build on the existing Victims’ Code to guarantee greater protections for victims and witnesses in the criminal justice system, including that victims of crime have the right to make a Victim Personal Statement and read it out in court at sentencing and at the Parole Board.

The main benefits of the legislation would be:

- Enshrining the key entitlements for victims and witnesses in primary legislation.
- Giving victims a voice in the criminal justice system and the opportunity to explain how a crime has affected them.

The main elements of the legislation are:

- Putting the key entitlements of the Victims Code in primary legislation;
- Right to make a Victim Personal Statement and read it out in court at sentencing and at the Parole Board;

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

Devolution:

Criminal justice is a devolved matter in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

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27 May 2015

Votes for Life Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Scrap the current 15 year time limit on the voting rights of British citizens living overseas for UK parliamentary and European parliamentary elections, including provisions relating to the registration of overseas electors.

The main benefits of the Bill would be to:

- End the disenfranchisement after an arbitrary 15 years of British citizens living abroad, enabling them to continue voting in UK Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections.
- Make it easier for overseas electors to cast their votes in time to be counted.
- Encourage larger numbers of British citizens living abroad to register to vote in UK elections.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Franchise

- The Bill would enable British citizens who are resident overseas to continue to vote in UK elections after 15 years since they were last resident and registered in the UK.

Electoral Registration

- The Bill would provide for the secure and accessible registration of overseas electors.

Electoral Administration

- The Bill would contain provisions to make it easier for overseas electors to vote in time to be counted.

Related documents:

Cross-Party Group on Overseas Voters Report: Making Votes Count – Enhancing engagement in the electoral process by British expatriates, March 2014:
<http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Overseas-Voters-Report.pdf>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013
- Representation of the People Regulations 2001
- Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000
- Representation of the People Act 1989
- Representation of the People Act 1985
- Representation of the People Act 1983

Devolution:

The franchise and electoral registration for UK Parliamentary and European Parliamentary elections are a reserved matter (UK wide).

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70 Whitehall
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020 7276 3811

European Union (Finance) Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Give UK approval to the financing aspect of the seven year EU Budget deal, secured by the Prime Minister in 2013, which saw the first ever real-term cuts in spending.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Bringing into force the European Union legislation known as Own Resources Decision (ORD) which will make operative the financing arrangements for the seven year EU Budget deal covering 2014-2020, as agreed in 2013.
- Preserving the UK's rebate.
- Preventing new EU-wide taxes and new types of Member State contributions to finance EU spending.

The main elements of the Bill are:

- The Bill would approve the unanimous decision of the European Council on the system by which Member States finance the annual EU Budget over the seven year period covering 2014-2020.

Related documents:

Explanatory Memorandum on the ORD (17 February 2014):

<http://europeanmemoranda.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/files/2014/03/5466-14.pdf>

Council Decision on the system of own resources of the EU (26 May 2014):

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014D0335&qid=1432207654786&from=EN>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- European Communities (Finance) Act 2008

Devolution:

The Bill's provisions extend to the whole of the UK.

Press Office
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1 Horse Guards Road
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020 7270 5238

Buses Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- The Bill would provide the option for combined authority areas with directly-elected Mayors to be responsible for the running of their local bus services.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Providing the option to franchise bus services to areas willing to strengthen their governance with a directly-elected Mayor
- Supporting a thriving local bus market with the passenger at its centre
- Allowing cities to promote an integrated transport system, supporting the growth and development of their areas

The main elements of the Bill are:

- A provision of bus franchising powers, further details will be published in due course.

Related documents:

Greater Manchester devolution deal:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/369858/Greater_Manchester_Agreement_i.pdf

Chancellor's 'building a Northern Powerhouse' speech:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chancellor-on-building-a-northern-powerhouse>

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Local Transport Act 2008
- Transport Act 2000
- Transport Act 1985

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33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 4DR
020 7944 3066

Draft Public Service Ombudsman Bill

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Reform and modernise the Public Service Ombudsman sector providing a more effective and accessible final tier of complaints redress within the public sector.
- Absorb the functions of the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Health Ombudsman, the Local Government Ombudsman and potentially The Housing Ombudsman.
- The Government published a consultation on the proposal to create a single Public Service Ombudsman (alongside the Gordon Report) on 25th March 2015. This closes on 16th June. Responses to this consultation will inform the policy development process and plans for this future legislation.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- Creating an overarching Public Service Ombudsman organisation which would include the functions of the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, the Local Government Ombudsman and potentially the Housing Ombudsman.
- A simplified, improved and more accessible final tier of redress for customers of public services who have complained and who do not feel satisfied by how their complaint has been handled.
- The opportunity to improve public services by identifying where problems are occurring and informing the creation and development of effective responses.

The main elements of the Bill are:

Accountability and Reporting

- The Bill would ensure a robust process for accountability and reporting. The new Ombudsman will be independent of Government and directly accountable to Parliament

Relevant Powers

- The Bill would establish the relevant powers for a modern ombudsman organisation

Related documents:

A Public Service Ombudsman consultation of 25 March 2015:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417111/Ombudsman_Service_Consultation.pdf

Better to Serve the Public: Proposals to restructure, reform, renew and reinvigorate public services ombudsmen of 25 March 2015:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/416656/Robert_Gordon_Review.pdf

Existing legislation in this area is:

- Parliamentary Commissioners Act 1967
- Health Service Commissioner Act 1993
- Local Government Act 1974
- Amendment to the 1967 Local Government Act 1996

Devolution:

England, and the matters reserved by UK Government (e.g. HMRC)

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