



The Queen's Speech June 2017

INTRODUCTION

The Queen laid out the Government's legislative programme for the new parliamentary session on Wednesday, 21 June. She announced a number of things of potential interest to the speech and language therapy profession. These include the:

- Courts Bill
- Mental health reform
- Social care
- Draft Patient Safety Bill
- Schools and technical education

Going forward, the RCSLT Policy and Public Affairs Team will keep a watching brief on these areas and seek to influence them where appropriate.

Relevant extracts from the Government's background briefing are included below.

COURTS BILL

"Legislation will also be introduced to modernise the courts system"

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Reform courts and tribunal system to improve access to justice, making better use of technology and modernising working practices.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- To reform our world class courts system so that it provides straightforward and efficient access to justice for people, and provides targeted support and care for those who need it.

Territorial extent and application

- The Bill would apply in full to England and Wales and in part to Northern Ireland and Scotland.

MENTAL HEALTH REFORM

"My Government will reform mental health legislation and ensure that mental health is prioritised in the National Health Service in England."

Reform of legislation

- The Mental Health Act 1983 sets out the legal framework in England and Wales for the treatment and detention of people with mental ill health, including when such action may be compulsory. The Act has not been fully updated for 34 years, although the Mental Health Act 2007 made changes.
- We have already acted when we have seen problems with the use of the existing legislation. This year the police powers of detention under the Act were amended, and the Government has worked to reduce by 80% the numbers of people being detained in police cells in England since 2011/12 because of their mental ill health.

- The Government will now begin to consider what further reform of mental health legislation is necessary, including changes in how the Act is implemented on the ground.
- As we work towards a new Mental Health Act, we will review the mental health legislative landscape and publish recommendations on where new policy could provide greater rights for those experiencing mental health problems so they can live lives free from discrimination.
- Our considerations will include:
 - looking at why rates of detention are increasing and taking the necessary action to improve service responses;
 - examining the disproportionate number of those from certain ethnic backgrounds, in particular black people, who are detained under the Act;
 - reviewing the use of Community Treatment Orders, to see if they remain fit for purpose in helping people leaving hospital to receive better care and support in the community;
 - considering how the rights of family members to get information about the mental health and treatment of their loved ones can be improved;
 - ensuring that those with mental ill health are treated fairly, protected from discrimination, and employers fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

Making mental health a priority in the NHS

- It was this Government that gave parity of esteem to the treatment of mental health in the National Health Service. The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health sets out our ambitious programme for further system reform.
- The Government has backed this with a significant increase in funding: since 2010, spending on mental health has increased to a record £11.4 billion in 2016/17, with a further investment of £1 billion every year by 2020/21.
- The Government will continue to invest in new and better services across the whole spectrum of mental health conditions. In particular, making further improvements in early intervention, investing in community services and expanding access to 24/7 crisis care support both in the community and in A&E.
- The Government will publish a Green Paper on Children and Young People's Mental Health focused on helping our youngest and most vulnerable members of society receive the best start in life. This will make sure best practice is being used consistently and will help to accelerate improvements across all services so that children and young people get the right mix of prevention and specialist support.

SOCIAL CARE

“My Ministers will work to improve social care and will bring forward proposals for consultation.”

- We will work to address the challenges of social care for our ageing population, bringing forward proposals for consultation to build widespread support.
- The ageing population presents one of our nation's most profound challenges. It raises critical questions as to how as a society we enable all adults to live well into later life and how we deliver sustainable public services that support them to do so.
- The Government has already invested an additional £2 billion to put social care on a more stable footing and alleviate short-term pressures across the health and care system. However, further reform is required to ensure that the system is prepared to meet the challenges of the increasing numbers of over 75s.
- To address these questions, the Government will work with partners at all levels, including those who use services and who work to provide care, to bring forward proposals for public consultation. The Government will consult on options to encourage a wider debate.

- The consultation will set out options to improve the social care system and to put it on a more secure financial footing, supporting people, families and communities to prepare for old age, and address issues related to the quality of care and variation in practice.

DRAFT PATIENT SAFETY BILL

The purpose of the Bill is to:

- Improve how the NHS investigates and learns from mistakes by establishing an independent Health Service Safety Investigation Body.
- Encourage staff and other participants to share information freely with the Health Service Safety Investigation Body by prohibiting the disclosure of information held in connection with its safety investigations, creating a 'safe space' for staff.

The main benefits of the Bill would be:

- To further improve patient safety in the NHS and instil greater public confidence in the provision of healthcare services in England, by ensuring serious incidents can be investigated by an independent and impartial body, without the need for expensive, lawyer-led inquiries where that is unnecessary.
- To embed a culture of learning and safety improvement across the NHS, so that when things go wrong, lessons are shared throughout the system.
- To deliver on the manifesto pledge to "legislate for an independent healthcare safety investigations body in the NHS" (p.69).

SCHOOLS AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

"My Government will continue to work to ensure that every child has the opportunity to attend a good school and that all schools are fairly funded. My Ministers will work to ensure people have the skills they need for the high-skilled, high-wage jobs of the future, including through a major reform of technical education."

- We want every child to go to a good or outstanding school. We will look at all options and work with Parliament to bring forward proposals that can command a majority.
- We want to make sure all children, regardless of where they live or their background, can get a world-class education that unlocks talent and creates opportunity. We want to make Britain the world's Great Meritocracy: a country where everyone has a fair chance to go as far as their talent and their hard work will allow, where advantage is based on merit not privilege.
- Delivering enough school places is one of the Government's top priorities. We have already committed £5.8 billion for local authorities up to 2020 to deliver new school places, on top of our investment in the free schools programme.
- We will continue to encourage more people, schools and institutions with something to offer to come forward and help deliver more good school places.
- To continue the growth of good or outstanding school places, we have made available to academies and maintained schools a £140 million Strategic School Improvement Fund.
- We will continue to convert failing maintained schools into academies so that they can benefit from the support of a strong sponsor, and we are focused on building capacity across the system to enable this, including through growing new multi academy trusts.

More information on The Queen's Speech, and the Government's legislative programme, is available via:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/620838/Queens_speech_2017_background_notes.pdf