



The Queen's Speech October 2019

INTRODUCTION

The Queen laid out the Government's legislative programme for the new parliamentary session on Monday 14 October. She announced a number of things of potential interest to the speech and language therapy profession. These include three Bills:

- Health Service Safety Investigations Bill
- Medicines and Medical Devices Bill
- Serious Violence Bill

Other reforms announced which may be relevant to speech and language therapy include:

- Implementing the NHS Long Term Plan
- Adult social care reform
- Mental health reforms

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

A summary of relevant information from the Government's background briefing is included below.

BILLS

Health Service Safety Investigations Bill: "Legislation will be taken forward to ... establish an independent body to investigate serious healthcare incidents."

- The purpose of the Bill is to establish the world's first independent body to investigate patient safety concerns and share recommendations to prevent incidents occurring.
- The Bill's provisions would extend and apply in the main to England and Wales, with exception to one clause on data protection which also extends and applies to the whole of the UK.

Medicines and Medical Devices Bill

- The main elements of the bill include:
 - Enabling Government to increase the range of professions able to prescribe low-risk medicines to make the most effective use of the NHS workforce, as well as developing more innovative ways of dispensing medicines.
 - Powers to remove bureaucracy for the lowest risk clinical trials, with the aim of encouraging the rapid introduction of new medicines.
- The Bill's provisions would extend and apply to the whole of the UK. Human and veterinary medicines are reserved in the case of Scotland and Wales, but are devolved to Northern Ireland.

Serious Violence Bill: “A new duty will be placed on public sector bodies, ensuring they work together to address serious violence.”

- The purpose of the Bill is to:
 - Create a new duty on a range of specified agencies across different sectors, such as local government, education, social services, youth offending, and health and probation, to work collaboratively, share data and information, and put in place plans to prevent serious violence.
 - Amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships, which include local police, fire and probation services, as well as local authorities and wider public services.
- The Government has stated that the main benefits of the Bill would be:
 - Identifying solutions to tackle the root causes of violent crime through a multi-agency approach by placing an emphasis on intervention with young people and acknowledging that law enforcement alone cannot tackle violence.
 - Complementing the Government’s investment in Violence Reduction Units in the areas most affected by serious violence by ensuring that agencies work effectively together.
- The Bill's provisions would extend and apply to England and Wales.

OTHER REFORMS

Implementing the NHS Long Term Plan: “New laws will be taken forward to help implement the National Health Service’s Long Term Plan in England”

- In September 2019 the NHS published a set of recommendations for legislation changes to enable the NHS to realise the ambitions set out in the NHS Long Term Plan.
- The Government is considering the NHS’s recommendations thoroughly and will bring forward detailed proposals shortly.
- In due course they will publish draft legislation.

Adult social care: “My Government will bring forward proposals to reform adult social care in England to ensure dignity in old age.”

- The Government will consult on a 2% precept that will enable councils to access a further £500 million for adult social care.
- The Government will bring forward substantive proposals to fix the crisis in social care. This will include setting out legislative requirements.

Mental health reform: “My Ministers will continue work to reform the Mental Health Act to improve respect for, and care of, those receiving treatment.”

- In 2017, the Government commissioned the independent review of the Mental Health Act.
- By the end of this year the Government will publish a White Paper, setting out their response. This will pave the way for reform to the Mental Health Act, and tackle issues addressed by the review.
- The process of detention, care and treatment while detained will be reformed, including by providing patients with the ability to challenge detention.

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

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839035/Queen_s_Speech_background_briefing.pdf