

Queen's Speech 2022

May 2022

On Tuesday 10 May, a new session of Parliament will begin with the State Opening of Parliament and Queen's Speech. The speech will set out the government's priorities and legislative agenda for the session, listing the bills it intends to pass over the coming year and giving details of forthcoming state visits.

What happens at the Queen's Speech?

The speech is written by the government and read out by the Queen in the House of Lords, in a ceremony that is [steeped in pageantry](#) and [historical detail](#). MPs are summoned to the Lords chamber by a Lords official, Black Rod, who has the [door to the Commons slammed in her face](#) in a symbolic demonstration of the Commons' independence; the door is only opened after she knocks upon it three times with an ebony staff. Once members of both Houses are gathered in the chamber, the Lord Chancellor presents the speech to the Queen in a silk bag; the speech is then read out and usually lasts around ten minutes, after which the Queen departs. Documents relating to the speech are published after the Queen finishes speaking.

In recent years [aspects of the ceremony have been pared back](#), and Buckingham Palace has not yet confirmed whether the Queen will attend this year's ceremony. The Queen has been present at every speech since her coronation apart from in 1959 and 1963, when she was pregnant; on both occasions the Lord Chancellor read the speech on her behalf. This year, plans have reportedly been drawn up to [allow the Prince of Wales to attend](#) in her place.

How is the Queen's Speech debated?

After the ceremony, the speech is debated in both the Commons and the Lords as a "Humble Address" in response to the Queen, usually over five to six days of themed debate. In both Houses, an entirely [symbolic first reading](#) is first given to the Outlawries Bill (in the Commons) and the Select Vestries Bill (in the Lords) before the debates can begin, symbolising the Houses' right to consider business not set out in the Queen's Speech.

In the Commons, MPs meet at 2.30 pm to begin the first day of general debate. The motion on the Address is moved and seconded by two backbenchers from the governing party, who traditionally open with light-hearted speeches, followed by speeches from the leader of the opposition, the Prime Minister, and the leader of the third-largest party, then other MPs. Topics for the subsequent days of debate are decided by the government, with notice given by the Speaker before the first day's debate begins.

In the Lords, the first day of the debate is shorter: beginning at 3.30 pm, there are speeches from the mover and seconder, then the opposition leader traditionally moves the motion to adjourn. Advance notice is given of the topics for the Lords' themed debates, which will cover:

- **levelling up, communities and transport** on 11 May (Baroness Vere of Norbiton/Lord Greenhalgh)
- **home affairs, justice, culture, media and the constitution** on 12 May (Baroness Williams of Trafford/Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay)
- **economy, energy and the environment** on 16 May (Baroness Penn/Lord Callanan)
- **education, welfare, health and public services** on 17 May (Baroness Stedman-Scott/Baroness Barran)
- **foreign affairs, defence and trade** on 18 May (Lord Grimstone/Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon)

The motion on the Queen's Speech is agreed in the Lords without amendment, but in the Commons the debate concludes with a [vote on the government motion](#), which can be amended. Up to four amendments may be selected by the Speaker, which may be debated in the last two days of the Address.

What happens to other Parliamentary business during the debate?

On the day of the speech, urgent questions and applications for emergency debates are not permitted, but from the next day most public business resumes. Government statements and urgent questions can be taken, and debates on other matters can be scheduled, though the debate on the Address is generally prioritised.

The rota for daily oral questions to departmental ministers, including Prime Minister's Questions, begins on the first Monday after the speech.

Westminster Hall debates are suspended until the debate on the Address has concluded, but daily adjournment debates take place as normal (including on the day of the speech itself). The new session also means a fresh allocation of days set aside for opposition day debates (20) and backbench business debates (35).

In the Lords, Private Notice Questions may be taken from the second day of debate, and oral questions resume from the Monday after the Queen's Speech.

Select committee business resumes from 10 May, and arrangements are made at the start of the session for the [election of a new chair](#) for the Backbench Business Committee.

What about legislation?

The government typically introduces some bills featured in the Queen's Speech the next day. The government decides on when to re-introduce any bills which have been carried over from the previous session. Further government bills not mentioned in the speech can also be introduced throughout the session.

In both the Commons and the Lords, there are ballots for Private Member's Bills. In the Lords, the [ballot takes place](#) the day after the Queen's Speech, whereas in the Commons, it usually takes place on the second Thursday after the speech. Ten Minute Rule Bills cannot be tabled until after the ballot has taken place.

The [House of Commons Library](#) has compiled a list of bills that have been carried over from the previous session, bills that were previously announced but have not been introduced, and the policy areas of bills reported and speculated to be introduced in the new session. They are:

Bills carried over from 2021-22 session

- [Animal Welfare \(Kept Animals\) Bill](#)
A Bill to make provision about the welfare of certain kept animals that are in, imported into, or exported from Great Britain.
- [Higher Education \(Freedom of Speech\) Bill](#)
A Bill to make provision in relation to freedom of speech and academic freedom in higher education institutions and in students' unions; and for connected purposes.
- [Online Safety Bill](#)
A Bill to make provision for and in connection with the regulation by OFCOM of certain internet services; for and in connection with communications offences; and for connected purposes.
- [Product Security and Telecommunications Infrastructure Bill](#)
A Bill to make provision about the security of internet-connectable products and products capable of connecting to such products; to make provision about electronic communications infrastructure; and for connected purposes.

Bills announced in the 2021 Queen's Speech but not introduced

- Animals Abroad Bill
- Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions Bill
- Counter-State Threats Bill
- Legacy Bill
- Planning Bill
- Procurement Bill
- Renters' Reform Bill
- Victims Bill

Policy areas of bills expected to be introduced in the 2022 Queen's Speech

- Access to cash
- Audit reform
- Bill of Rights
- Channel 4 ownership
- Consolidation of immigration legislation
- Conversion therapy
- Counter-terrorism strategy: 'Protect duty'
- Digital markets reform
- Economic Crime Bill
- Financial Services Bill
- Gene Editing Regulation
- Home education and school funding
- Insolvency reform
- Leasehold and commonhold reform
- Levelling up
- Lifelong Loan Entitlement
- Local government
- Modern slavery
- National minimum wage for ferry crews
- Parole Board reform
- Prison and probation scrutiny bodies legislation
- Reform of the Mental Health Act
- Review of retained EU law
- Social Housing Regulation Bill
- Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation

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