



## Queen's Speech 2017 - Briefing

Today (June 21<sup>st</sup>) at the State Opening of Parliament the Government outlined its legislative agenda for the next year with the Queen's Speech.

Below is a summary of the measures announced that will impact upon the private rented sector and landlords' businesses.

### Draft Tenants' Fees Bill

Tackling unfair fees on tenants will make the private rental market more affordable and competitive. The draft Bill will bring forward proposals to:

- ban landlords and agents from requiring tenants to make any payments as a condition of their tenancy with the exception of the rent, a capped refundable security deposit, a capped refundable holding deposit and tenant default fees;
- cap holding deposits at no more than one week's rent and security deposits at no more than one month's rent;
- introduce measures to enforce the ban with provision for tenants to be able to recover unlawfully charged fees.

The ban would apply to England only.

An eight-week consultation on banning letting fees paid by tenants closed on 2 June. Responses will be used to inform the draft Bill, and the Government will respond fully in due course.

**Important note:** *As it is being introduced as a draft bill, there will be extra time to scrutinise the detail and for us to lobby for tweaks and changes.*

### Immigration Bill

With the repeal of the European Communities Act, it will be necessary to establish new powers concerning the immigration status of EEA nationals. The Bill will allow the Government to control the number of people coming here from Europe while still allowing us to attract the brightest and the best. The Bill will:

- allow for the repeal of EU law on immigration, primarily free movement, that will otherwise be saved and converted into UK law by the Repeal Bill;
- make the migration of EU nationals and their family members subject to relevant UK law once the UK has left the EU.

**The Bill** could involve tweaks to the Right to Rent scheme.

## Smart Meter Bill

In order to help deliver more transparent energy bills and allow households to monitor their use effectively, the Bill will:

- extend, by five years, powers to make changes to smart meter regulations, and make sure the rollout is delivered effectively;
- introduce a Special Administration Regime to ensure the continuing operation of the national smart meter service if the provider becomes insolvent;
- deliver the manifesto commitment to ensure that “smart meters will be offered to every household and business by the end of 2020, giving people control over their energy bills that they have not had before”.

## Courts Bill

The Bill will reform the courts system in England and Wales to ensure it is more efficient and accessible, and in doing so utilise more modern technology. The Bill will:

- end direct cross examination of domestic violence victims by their alleged perpetrators in the family courts and allow more victims to participate in trials without having to meet their alleged assailant face-to-face;
- introduce digital services which will allow businesses to pursue their cases quickly, enabling them to recover debts more easily;
- provide a better working environment for judges, allowing more leadership positions in the judiciary to be offered on a fixed term basis, and enabling judges to be deployed more flexibly.

## Non-legislative Proposals

These have been put forward as aims but have not been detailed as part of any particular Bill yet:

- “We will consult and look to take action to promote transparency and fairness for leaseholders. We will look at the sale of leasehold houses and onerous ground rents, working with property developers, the Competition and Markets Authority and others as outlined in the Housing White Paper.”
- “In the housing market we will look at ways we can streamline the home buying process so it is cheaper, faster and less stressful for people when they make the biggest purchase of their life.”
- “We will consult and look to take action to promote transparency and fairness for leaseholders. We will look at the sale of leasehold houses and onerous ground rents, working with property developers, the Competition and Markets Authority and others as outlined in the Housing White Paper.”

[The full Queen’s Speech Briefing notes can be read here.](#)