



The Institute of Certified Bookkeepers

The King's Speech 2024

The King's Speech 2024

Contents

Introduction.....	2
The Bills	2
For Bookkeepers	6
The Equality (Race and Disability) Bill	6
The Employment Rights Bill.....	7
Don't Forget	7

Introduction

The General Election on 04 July 2024 may have given us a new UK Government, however, it is the State Opening of Parliament that marks the start of the new session. From the Throne in the House of Lords, His Majesty reads the speech which has been written for Him by the UK Government. As He leaves, the Parliamentary session starts and work begins.

A [press release](#) on 14 July 2024 indicated the focus of the contents of the Speech, indicating that the UK Government will put '*economic growth at the heart of its legislative agenda*'. A similar [press release](#) on 17 July 2024 mentioned '*empowering local communities*' (devolution within England). The Speech is [documented](#) on Gov.UK.

This does affect the payroll and reward profession and we cover the contents in two sections:

1. '*The Bills*' – all the UK Government Bills that, when the Parliamentary process is completed, will become Acts of Parliament
2. '*For Bookkeepers*' – the ones that impact us

The Bills

Note that not all Bills apply UK-wide. This is important given that bookkeeping and payroll DOES apply UK-wide.

Title	Aim
Arbitration Bill	To implement the recommendations made in a 2022 Law Commission review of Arbitration Law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Armed Forces Commissioner Bill	To establish a statutory and independent Armed Forces Commissioner. This will apply UK-wide
Audit Reform and Corporate Governance Bill	To strengthen audit and corporate governance of large companies giving

	greater transparency around their finances. This will apply UK-wide
Bank Resolution (Recapitalisation) Bill	To ensure that, where failing banking institutions require intervention, certain costs of managing their failure do not fall to taxpayers
Better Buses Bill	To allow local leaders to have responsibility for their local bus services in England. Even though the Bill will say that it will extend to Wales, it will only apply in England
Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill	To establish a new Border Security Command and delivering enhanced counter terror powers to tackle organised immigration crime. This applies UK-wide
Budget Responsibility Bill	To ensure that all significant tax and spending changes are subject to an independent assessment by the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR). This applies UK-wide
Children's Wellbeing Bill	To raise standards in education and promote children's wellbeing – in England. This will introduce Breakfast Clubs (a Manifesto promise) and require councils to keep registers of children not educated full-time in school. Whilst the extend of this Bill will be to England and Wales, it will only apply in England
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and International Committee of the Red Cross (Status) Bill	Neither the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) or the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are formally recognised as international organisations even though they operate in the UK. This Bill will change their status and apply UK-wide
Conversion Practices Bill	This will ban conversion practices that aim to change someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. The Bill will apply in England and Wales
Crime and Policing Bill	To strengthen community policing where they will be given new powers to tackle antisocial behaviour and make assaulting shopworkers a crime. Justice is a devolved issue, so this will apply in England and Wales only
Crown Estate Bill	The Crown Estate is a collection of buildings, shoreline, seabed, forestry, agriculture and common land, a business that belongs to the Monarch. Amongst other things, the Bill will grant The Crown Estate the power to borrow and widen its investment powers. The Bill will only extend to England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

	Crown Estate Scotland was created as a separate business in 2016
Cyber Security and Resilience Bill	To establish new rules to protect critical infrastructure that may be subject to attack by cyber criminals and malign actors. This will apply UK-wide
Digital Information and Smart Data Bill	To permit the use of digital ID to buy age-restricted products plus pre-employment checks. This will apply UK-wide
Employment Rights Bill	A ' <i>new deal</i> ' for working people to ban exploitative practices and enhance employment rights – in Great Britain. This will be in line with Labour's ' <i>Make Work Pay</i> ' document published ahead of the General Election
English Devolution Bill	To give new powers to metro mayors and combined authorities
Equality (Race and Disability) Bill	This will amend the Equality Act in Great Britain and extend the right for ethnic minority workers and disabled people to make equal pay claims. Plus, for employers with over 250 employees, this will amend Gender Pay Gap Reporting
Football Governance Bill	To establish an independent football regulator to ensure greater sustainability in the game and strengthen protections for fans. This will apply in England and Wales
Great British Energy Bill	Establishing Great British Energy, a publicly owned clean power company headquartered in Scotland, which will help accelerate investment in renewable energy such as offshore wind. This will apply UK-wide with collaboration between Great Britain and Northern Ireland
High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Bill	Considering the scrapping of the HS2 rail link, this will bring in powers to build new rail infrastructure in northern England, although it will apply in Great Britain (even though the north of England is not in Scotland or Wales!)
Hillsborough Law	As a result of the experiences of the Hillsborough families (and the recent Infected Blood Inquiry report), this Bill will place a legal duty of candour on public servants and authorities. The extent to which this applies has not been determined
Holocaust Memorial Bill	This Bill will enable the UK Government to deliver on the longstanding commitment to build the planned Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre located next to the Houses of Parliament. It applies to England and

	Wales but will only apply in England (as this is where the Houses of Parliament are)
House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill	To remove the right of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords. Hereditary peers are all male and of the 850 hereditary peers, 90 are elected to the House of Lords. This will apply UK-wide
Leasehold and Commonhold Reform Bill	Leasehold and commonhold reform, curbing ground rent for existing leaseholders and banning ' <i>forfeiture</i> '. This is where a leaseholders is threatened with losing their home because of small unpaid debts. This will apply in England and Wales
Lords Spiritual (Women) Act 2015 (Extension) Bill	This Bill builds on the 2015 legislation and extends the right for female bishops to sit in the House of Lords, supporting efforts to increase the number of female bishops. It will apply UK-wide
Mental Health Bill	Reforming the Mental Health Act to ensure mental health is given the same attention and focus as physical health. This will also amend the rules when sectioning people and address the care concerns for people with learning difficulties. This will apply in England and Wales
National Wealth Fund Bill	A new fund to invest £7.3bn over five years in infrastructure and green industry. This applies UK-wide
Northern Ireland Legacy Legislation	This will repeal and replace the Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Act 2023. Whilst it will apply UK-wide it will mostly apply in Northern Ireland
Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill	This will bring the 8 train operators into public ownership when their contract expires. It will apply in Great Britain, though services in Scotland and Wales are already nationalised
Pension Schemes Bill	This will introduce new rules around private-sector pension scheme investment in Great Britain
Planning and Infrastructure Bill	To accelerate the delivery of high quality infrastructure and housing and changing the rules on the compulsory purchase of land
Product Safety and Metrology Bill	This will review and reform the UK's product safety and metrology framework, recognising that most things have derived from membership of the European Union
Rail Reform Bill	To improve the railways by reforming rail franchising and apply in Great Britain
Railways Bill	To establish the new Great British Railways who will oversee tracks and trains

Renters' Rights Bill	To end no fault evictions and reforming grounds for possession / building safety rules for social tenants. This is known as Awaab's Law after Awaab Ishak died from mould exposure in 2020. The extent of the Bill will be England and Wales but it will only apply in England
Skills England Bill	This will reform Skills England which will assume functions from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). It has the aim of boosting and regionalising training. Whilst it says that there will be a reform of the Apprenticeship Levy, this is only about the way in which funds can be allocated. As such, although the Bill will say that it extends to England and Wales but it will only apply in England
Sustainable Aviation Fuel (Revenue Support Mechanism) Bill	To support Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) production, providing revenue certainty to encourage investment. This is UK-wide
Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill	To improve the safety and security of public venues and help keep the British public safe from terrorism. This is sometimes referred to as Martyn's Law in reference to Martyn Hett who was killed together with 21 others in the 2017 Manchester Arena terrorist attack. It will apply UK-wide
Tobacco and Vapes Bill	To progressively increase the age at which people can buy cigarettes and impose limits on the sale and marketing of vapes. This is a policy continuation of the last (Conservative) UK Government. Whilst it will apply UK-wide, it will be applied differently in each of the UK nations
Victims, Courts and Public Protection Bill	To introduce new rules that will require offenders to attend sentencing hearings plus take away the parental rights of child sex offenders. This will apply in England and Wales only
Water (Special Measures) Bill	To make water company bosses liable for breaking the law and strengthening the powers of the water regulator (Ofwat) and will apply in England and Wales

For Bookkeepers

Operationally, there are two Bills that impact us:

The Equality (Race and Disability) Bill

For large employers (250+ employees), this Bill will introduce mandatory ethnicity and disability pay reporting. We need to look at the Great British legislation for the following:

- **What are the definitions of ethnicity – white British, black British, African etc? If payroll produces these pay reports, we will need to hold these definitions**
- **What are the definitions of disability?**

This Bill has the potential to change data gathering and input if payroll systems are to help employers with reporting.

The Employment Rights Bill

This promises to be bring very extensive reforms:

- **Banning '*exploitative*' zero-hour contracts and we need to look for this definition**
- **Ending the '*Fire and Rehire*' and / or '*Fire and Replace*' practices – and replacing the Code of Practice that has only just come into force**
- **Making parental leave, sick pay and protection from unfair dismissal a day 1 right, recognising that employers can still operate probationary periods**
- **Removing the Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) requirement that the worker must have earnings at or above the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL)**
- **Making flexible working the default from day-one for all workers**
- **Strengthening protections for new mothers**
- **Establishing a new Single Enforcement Body / Fair Work Agency to strengthen enforcement of workplace rights**
- **Updating trade union legislation**

The major issue here is that the Bill will extend to Great Britain only, as employment law is devolved to Northern Ireland. The potential of having an SSP system that works one way in Great Britain and another in Northern Ireland does not excite ICB and this view will be expressed in any consultation that may result.

All these issues have been addressed on the monthly Wages Wednesday presentations and will, no doubt, continue to be a large part until this Bill receives Royal Assent.

Don't Forget

It is not only UK Government Bills that payroll must be actively watching. It is also:

- **Private Member's Bills (from the House of Commons or Lords)**
- **Bills from Scotland**
- **Bills from Wales, and**
- **Bills from Northern Ireland**