

HER MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH TO BOTH HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT

THURSDAY 19 DECEMBER

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

My Government's priority is to deliver the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union on 31 January [**European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Bill**]. My Ministers will bring forward legislation to ensure the United Kingdom's exit on that date and to make the most of the opportunities that this brings for all the people of the United Kingdom [**Agriculture Bill, Fisheries Bill, Trade Bill, Financial Services Bill, Private International Law (Implementation of Agreements) Bill**].

Thereafter, my Ministers will seek a future relationship with the European Union based on a free trade agreement that benefits the whole of the United Kingdom. They will also begin trade negotiations with other leading global economies.

The integrity and prosperity of the United Kingdom is of the utmost importance to my Government. My Ministers will work urgently to facilitate talks to restore devolved Government in Northern Ireland.

My Government will embark on an ambitious programme of domestic reform that delivers on the people's priorities. For the first time, the National Health Service's multi-year funding settlement, agreed earlier this year, will be enshrined in law [**NHS Funding Bill, NHS Long Term Plan Bill**].

Steps will be taken to grow and support the National Health Service's workforce and a new visa will ensure qualified doctors, nurses and health professionals have fast-track entry to the United Kingdom. Hospital car parking charges will be removed for those in greatest need.

My Ministers will seek cross-party consensus on proposals for long term reform of social care. They will ensure that the social care system provides everyone with the dignity and security they deserve and that no one who needs care has to sell their home to pay for it. My ministers will continue work to reform the Mental Health Act.

A modern, fair, points-based immigration system will welcome skilled workers from across the world to contribute to the United Kingdom's economy, communities and public services [**Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill**].

My Government will bring forward measures to support working families, raising the National Insurance threshold and increasing the National Living Wage. To ensure every child has access to a high-quality education my Ministers will increase levels of funding per pupil in every school.

Measures will be brought forward to encourage flexible working, to introduce the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers and to help people save for later life [**Employment Bill, Pension Schemes Bill**]. New measures will be brought forward to protect tenants and to improve building safety [**Renters' Reform Bill, Fire Safety Bill, Building Safety Bill**]. My Government will take steps to support home ownership, including by making homes available at a discount for local first-time buyers. My Ministers will develop legislation to improve internet safety for all [**Online Harms Bill**].

My Government is committed to a fair justice system that keeps people safe. My ministers will establish a Royal Commission to review and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice process. New sentencing laws will ensure the most serious violent offenders, including terrorists, serve longer in custody [**Counter Terrorism (Sentencing and Release) Bill, Sentencing Bill**]. New laws will require schools, police, councils and health authorities to work together to prevent serious crime [**Serious Violence Bill**]. My Government will ensure those charged with knife possession face swift justice and that the courts work better for all those who engage with them, including victims of domestic abuse [**Domestic Abuse Bill, Divorce,**

Dissolution and Separation Bill]. Legislation will be brought forward to support victims of crime and their families [**Prisoners (Disclosure of Information About Victims) Bill]**. Measures will be developed to tackle hostile activity conducted by foreign states.

My Ministers will bring forward measures to ensure that every part of the United Kingdom can prosper. My Government will invest in the country's public services and infrastructure whilst keeping borrowing and debt under control; maintaining the sustainability of the public finances through a responsible fiscal strategy. My Government will prioritise investment in infrastructure and world-leading science research and skills, in order to unleash productivity and improve daily life for communities across the country. It will give communities more control over how investment is spent so that they can decide what is best for them.

To support business, my government will increase tax credits for research and development, establish a National Skills Fund, and bring forward changes to business rates. New laws will accelerate the delivery of gigabit capable broadband [**Telecommunications Infrastructure (Leasehold Property) Bill, Telecommunications (Connectivity) Bill]**. To ensure people can depend on the transport network, measures will be developed to provide for minimum levels of service during transport strikes.

My Government will continue to take steps to meet the world-leading target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It will continue to lead the way in tackling global climate change, hosting the COP26 Summit in 2020. To protect and improve the environment for future generations, a bill will enshrine in law environmental principles and legally-binding targets, including for air quality. It will also ban the export of polluting plastic waste to countries Outside the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and establish a new, world-leading independent regulator in statute [**Environment Bill]**.

A Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission will be established. Work will be taken forward to repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act.

My Ministers will continue to invest in our gallant Armed Forces. My Government will honour the Armed Forces Covenant, which will be further incorporated into law, and the NATO commitment to spend at least two per cent of national income on defence. It will bring forward proposals to tackle vexatious daims that undermine our Armed Forces and will continue to seek better ways of dealing with legacy issues that provide better outcomes for victims and survivors [**Armed Forces (Legal Protections) Bill**].

My Government will work to promote and expand the United Kingdom's influence in the world. An Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review will be undertaken to reassess the nation's place in the world, covering all aspects of international policy from defence to diplomacy and development. My Ministers will promote the United Kingdom's interests, including freedom of speech, human rights and the rule of law. My Government will work closely with international partners to help solve the most complex international security issues and promote peace and security globally. It will stand firm against those who threaten the values of the United Kingdom, including by developing a sanctions regime to directly address human rights abuse, and working to ensure that all girls have access to twelve years of quality education.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Estimates for the public services will be laid before you.

MY LORDS AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Other measures will be laid before you.

I pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.