



The King's Speech in November 2023, introduced the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill which was then shortly introduced to the House of Commons. This generated a lot of questions from our clients about how the law will apply for leaseholders and landlords alike as we progress through 2024. We have previously reported on [the most significant proposals in the bill](#).

When will the bill become law? When will the proposals become enacted and when will the act have application to our clients freehold and leasehold interests? Below is a whistle stop summary of the progression of a bill to an act.

### First reading

After its initial conception, a bill is introduced into the House of Commons where it has its first reading:

- This is the first stage of a bill's passage through the House of Commons – it is usually a formality; it takes place without debate at this stage, the bill is published as a House of Commons paper for the first time.

### Second reading

The next stage is the second reading, this is the first opportunity for MPs to debate the general principles and themes of the bill.

- The Government minister, spokesperson or MP responsible for the bill opens the second reading debate.
- The official opposition spokesperson responds with their views on the bill and debate continues with

other opposition parties and backbench MPs giving their opinions.

- At the end of the debate, the Commons decides whether the bill should be given its second reading by voting, meaning it can proceed to the next stage.
- It is possible for a bill to have a second reading with no debate – as long as MPs agree to its progress.

Once the second reading is complete the bill proceeds to committee stage – where each clause (and any amendments) to the bill can then be debated in detail.

## Committee stage

- This is a line-by-line examination of the bill and a detailed examination of the bill takes place.
- Only members of the committee can vote on amendments to the bill during committee stage.
- Amendments proposed by MPs to the bill will be considered each day as the committee discusses the bill.

Once this is concluded, the bill returns to the House of Commons for its report stage, where the amended bill can be debated and further amendments proposed.

## Report stage and third reading

The report stage is a chance for the whole house to discuss and amend the bill.

If the bill started in the Commons it goes to the House of Lords for its first reading and the same process is followed and bill is read three times. If, however the bill started in the Lords, then it is sent to the House of Commons to undertake the same process. Each house considers the other's amendments to the bill. Both the House of Commons and House of Lords must agree on the exact wording of the bill. Once the final version of the bill has been agreed, it can receive Royal Assent and become an Act of Parliament and become a law.

## Royal Assent

Royal Assent is the Monarch's agreement to make the bill into an act and is merely a formality.

- Once the bill has reached this stage, no amendments are made.
- The bill then is enacted either immediately or by a governing order which brings it into force.

## Where in this process is the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill?

The second reading at the House of Commons took place on 11 December 2023. We have not yet been advised the date for the bill to enter committee stage.

This means that the current legislation governing leasehold law is still applicable for the immediate future; it is not until the bill is formally enacted, having achieved Royal Assent, that the proposals contained within the bill which have survived the readings and amendments will become law. It may therefore be some months yet before we see the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act. We will continue to keep you updated as the bill progresses through Parliament.

## How we can help

If you would like further advice or information on anything contained in this article, contact our [leasehold enfranchisement team](#).



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