

News story: New law introduced to protect vulnerable people in care

The Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill was introduced to the House of Lords on Tuesday 3 July and seeks to replace the current system known as 'Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards' (DoLs).

DoLs is an assessment currently carried out on people who do not have the mental capacity to make their own decisions about their care, for example because they are living with dementia. It was criticised by a 2017 Law Commission review for being too complex and bureaucratic.

The government has now developed a new system, known as 'Liberty Protection Safeguards', which will become law through the bill.

The reforms seek to:

- introduce a simpler process that involves families more and gives swifter access to assessments
- be less burdensome on people, carers, families and local authorities
- allow the NHS, rather than local authorities, to make decisions about their patients, allowing a more efficient and clearly accountable process
- consider restrictions of people's liberties as part of their overall care package
- get rid of repeat assessments and authorisations when someone moves between a care home, hospital and ambulance as part of their treatment

The reforms will also save local authorities an estimated £200 million or more a year.

DoLs and the new system are both intended as a safeguard to ensure people are only deprived of their liberty when it is in their best interest, for example, to keep them safe.

An example of a deprivation of liberty would be the use of locks or key pads which stop a person from going out or into different areas of the building.

Minister for Care Caroline Dinenage said:

Treating people with respect and dignity, no matter their disability or condition, is the touchstone of a civilised society. I want to ensure that the system works for everyone and ensures that individuals' fundamental rights are protected while reassuring families their loved ones are getting good care.

We know local authorities are under pressure which is why these reforms are so important: to reduce the burden on councils so they can focus their resources where they are needed on the frontline.

Law Commissioner Nicholas Paines QC said:

In our report we were clear that the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards needed to be replaced as a matter of pressing urgency.

This new legislation, based broadly on our recommendations, will go a long way towards addressing the flaws of the current system and better protect the most vulnerable in our society.

News story: Evaluating new medical technologies: apply for business funding

The [Office for Life Sciences](#) has up to £1.5 million to invest in business projects that evaluate innovative medical devices, diagnostics and regulated digital technology in real-world [NHS](#) settings.

Life sciences opportunities

The life sciences sector plays an important role in the UK economy with a turnover of £63.5 billion in 2016. It also has a critical role in providing new medicines and treatments that will improve patients' lives.

More than 95% of companies in the sector are micro, small and medium-sized businesses, which often find it difficult to gain the real-world evidence they need to have their innovative technologies adopted.

This competition aims to help businesses gather that evidence.

Projects must address NHS priorities

Funding is for:

- smaller projects that develop plans for evidence-gathering in the NHS
- larger projects that collect clinical evidence on the performance and impact of a medicine or device in the NHS. Medical and diagnostic devices and digital health technologies must have a CE mark but must not have been marketed for more than 5 years

Projects should be able to show evidence of relevant discussions with organisations such as the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) and the NHS.

Projects should aim to address [NHS priorities](#) including to:

- reduce cancellations or unnecessary appointments
- reduce the burden on A&E services
- improve patient safety and avoid patient harm
- speed up diagnosis
- enable earlier diagnosis of cancer
- support management of long-term conditions, such as diabetes, chronic pain, cardiovascular disease, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Competition information

- the competition opens on 2 July 2018, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 22 August 2018
- projects must be led by an SME working alone or with other businesses or research organisations
- we expect projects to range in size up to £250,000 and to last up to 12 months
- only the lead partner can claim a grant
- businesses could attract up to 50% of their project costs

[Press release: Government Announces Plans to Reform Process of Changing Legal Gender](#)

- consultation will look to make process of obtaining new birth certificate less intrusive and bureaucratic for transgender people
- government aims to gather evidence to further advance equality for non-binary and intersex people
- plans will not water down Equality Act protections for single-sex services or for trans people

The government has launched a [public consultation on the Gender Recognition Act 2004](#), on how to make it easier for transgender people to change their legal gender on their birth certificate.

The Prime Minister announced the government's plan to consult on changes to the Gender Recognition Act in 2017.

The government's LGBT survey – the largest national survey of its kind, with over 108,000 participants – showed there is considerable misunderstanding about the requirements of applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate, and many trans people find it overly bureaucratic and expensive.

The 16-week consultation, which affects England and Wales, will review the process of acquiring a Gender Recognition Certificate – which is given to people who are legally recognised as being of their new gender – and aim to reduce the time and cost for people applying.

The consultation will look at many aspects of the process of obtaining legal recognition, including the requirements for the transgender person to:

- provide two medical reports, one showing a diagnosis of ‘gender dysphoria’ and the other outlining details of treatment received
- obtain the consent of their spouse if they are married
- demonstrate that they have lived in their acquired gender for at least 2 years
- pay £140

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Last year I committed to carrying out a consultation on the Gender Recognition Act and I’m pleased to be able to launch that today.

What was very clear from our survey is that transgender people across the UK find the process of legally changing their gender overly bureaucratic and invasive.

I want to see a process that is more streamlined and de-medicalised – because being trans should never be treated as an illness.

Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt said:

The discrimination and bigotry that the trans community currently faces is unacceptable in today’s society – we need a culture change.

In response to our national LGBT survey trans people have told us that the current system to legally change their gender isn’t working and they find the process bureaucratic, costly and intrusive.

We want to help people to thrive and to go about their daily life, living in the gender they choose without intrusion or fear of humiliation.

This consultation is a chance for us to change the current system for the better and I look forward to hearing everyone’s views.

The government has been clear that this consultation will not be making any changes to the Equality Act 2010 and the protections within it. The Act states that individuals must not be discriminated against because they are trans, but that single-sex services such as domestic abuse refuges can

provide services in a different way, or exclude a transgender person from the service, if this is proportionate and justified.

The government has not yet taken any decisions and responses to the consultation will be considered very carefully before making any.

Government figures show the number of people who have successfully obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate (4,910) since the legislation came into effect is far fewer than the estimated size of the trans population in the UK.

In recent years, we have made progress in tackling the barriers that transgender people face within the UK. We have:

- introduced a £3m project to help tackle transphobic bullying in schools
- put more money into NHS Gender Identity Services
- conducted one of the largest national surveys of LGBT people in the world, receiving over 14,000 responses from trans and non-binary people

Cara English, Policy Engagement Officer at trans charity Gendered Intelligence, said:

Gendered Intelligence welcomes the government's plans to make it less difficult to change legal gender. Meaningful reforms to the Gender Recognition Act are desperately needed if we're going to make the process easier, less bureaucratic and exclusionary for trans and non-binary people.

It's encouraging to see the government take the needs of LGBTQI people seriously, recognising that the GRA needs to be reformed to make it more transparent for those who need to access it. This consultation is all about highlighting the lived experiences and needs of people disenfranchised from the current GRA and giving value to their voices.

Notes to editors

- the Equality Act allows providers to offer single-sex services that exclude trans people so long as it is proportionate to do so and it achieves a legitimate aim. An example of a single-sex service might be a domestic violence refuge for women. The government is aware of many refuge services that are fully trans inclusive, and allow trans women entry, but is also equally aware of services that may, in some circumstances, choose to exclude trans women and instead refer them on to a different service – this is lawful provided it is adequately justified
- the legal recognition process is separate from the pathway that trans people follow to obtain medical treatment that they may wish to have, such as hormones or surgery
- the government will consider the results of the consultation carefully before making any decision on how to reform the GRA. We are not necessarily proposing self-declaration of gender

- we are examining what safeguards could be needed as part of any new legal gender recognition system, and will work closely with the Ministry of Justice to understand the issues specific to prisoners
 - we are not proposing to lower the minimum age limit for legal gender recognition below the current age of 18
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Press release: International Trade Secretary meets US Commerce Secretary

The International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox MP, met US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross in London on Monday (2 July). They had a constructive conversation ahead of the next meeting of the UK-US trade and investment working group later this summer.

They discussed the importance of long-term, stable, reciprocal economic investment and how this underpins broader stability.

They also discussed areas where trade between the 2 countries could be strengthened ahead of the UK's exit from the EU. The International Trade Secretary reiterated the need for a global response to issues like production and demand, and highlighted the importance of UK exports to US businesses and security.

The International Trade Secretary and US Commerce Secretary discussed the recent US decision to impose tariffs and Dr Fox expressed a need for a swift resolution to securing product exemptions for UK businesses affected by the recent US tariffs.

Media enquiries

Speech: Local Government Association Annual Conference 2018

Introduction

Thanks, James [Councillor Jamieson], I'm delighted to be here at my first LGA Conference.

When I was appointed to this role, I said that it was a great honour to be representing you all and leading on local government.

And I meant it.

Because my passion for local government isn't just professional. It's deeply personal.

I grew up with local government.

And I'm reminded of this every day by a photo hanging in my parliamentary office of my great grand father standing on the back of a cart in rural Cornwall.

How my dad's life chances, from growing up in near poverty, were transformed by a Grammar School Education... and the career opportunity that local government gave him.

How that helped transform his outlook...

... from starting off working in the town clerk's office of the then Restormel borough council to ultimately becoming a chief executive of a London borough...

... and, for a period, Controller at the Audit Commission.

The insight into his work underlined to me the power of local government to be an incredible force for good – not as a distant, faceless bureaucracy, but, from the biggest unitary to the smallest parish council, as the heartbeat of the communities it serves.

As the bedrock of our democracy, on which our people can build better lives.

So I could not be more proud and pleased to be working alongside you.

You live and breathe the issues affecting your local areas.

And you've been harnessing this knowledge more effectively than ever to lead and deliver over the course of another busy and challenging year.

I'm hugely grateful for all your efforts.

In saying that, I'm under no illusions about that the challenges that you – and we as a country – face. A difficult financial environment.

Big changes in demographics, lifestyles and technology.

Growing pressures on services.

There are no easy answers to these issues.

But I will listen and respond to what you're telling me.

And work with you to really understand the difficulties you face.

We won't always agree and I will provide challenge, when needed, to champion high standards and quality services.

But you can be confident that I will always stand up for you and for local government's interests.

Funding

I know that money has been extremely tight. And that you've gone the extra mile to deliver efficiencies and help reduce our country's debts.

And that significant financial pressures remain.

We have listened and responded.

This year's local government finance settlement provided a boost in funding and extra money for adult social care.

We've also responded to calls for more control over the money raised through the extension of business rates retention.

Local authorities estimate they will receive around £2.4 billion in business rates growth in 2018 to 2019 – a significant sum on top of the settlement.

And I plan to shortly publish a prospectus for a further round of business rates retention pilots in 2019 to 2020, to help us understand how best to transition to greater retention from 2020 to 2021.

This will be published alongside our consultation on the approach to next year's annual settlement.

But you have told me that we need to do more, particularly when it comes to adult and children's services.

I know that the social care system is under significant pressure and we are committed to ensuring it is sustainable for the future. Health and social care are inextricably linked and any reforms must be aligned.

Which is why – as the Health and Social Care Secretary has announced – we will publish a Social Care Green Paper in the autumn.

This will include proposals to reform social care, better integrate services and put social care on a long-term, sustainable footing.

I also know that you, more than most, will appreciate the complexities and the need to get this right.

That's why I'm keen to work with you on this, to draw on your frontline insight and intelligence – as seen, for example, in the LGA's recent publication on [what drives spend on children's services](#).

With that in mind, we're also keen to work with you on a whole new approach to distributing funding through the [review of relative needs and resources](#).

Everyone agrees that the current formula needs fixing. And I want to see a robust, straightforward approach, where the link between local circumstances

and resources allocated is clear.

I know that the final outcome won't necessarily please everyone. But our overriding priority must be to make the best use of resources available.

2020 will be a big year for local government.

It will bring together the outcomes of the Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review. We are also aiming to increase business rates retention to 75% around this time.

I look forward to working closely with you as we prepare for these changes.

Changes that present a valuable opportunity to consider what local government in the 21st century can do and can be and the resources it needs to deliver.

Modernisation

This will help inform an important part of my discussion with colleagues across Whitehall – as will the excellent work you're doing not just to achieve value for money, but to modernise and rethink the way you deliver services.

Rochford District council, for example, has become one of the top councils for recycling by sharing a waste service with 3 other councils – a contract that has freed it up to remodel the service around behaviour change and that demonstrates the rewards to be reaped from greater collaboration on waste services.

And in Leeds, staff have are taking the lead on delivering social care services via a staff mutual. These services helped secure a good rating and also saved the council money.

The smarter use of technology is also driving improvements and helping develop more efficient, targeted and responsive services. This has the potential to be genuinely transformative.

So I'm delighted that my colleague Rishi [Sunak], the Minister for Local Government, will be launching the Digital Declaration at this conference tomorrow, setting out how central and local government can learn from best practice in this area and build the public services of tomorrow.

I know that some of you have also been looking at reorganising the way you operate by for example, combining, in the interests of your communities where there's a good deal of local support and it involves credible geographies.

I want to support this work, although I have no intention of forcing reorganisation on local government where it isn't wanted or needed.

There is so much impressive work going on out there and so much talent and expertise in the sector.

And I want to do all I can to help you celebrate and spread this; to increase

transparency and share best practice.

And we want to hear from you about how we can best do this, so that councils can not only make their funding go further, but truly transform services and engage those who use them

Onward devolution

This last point is crucial.

The days of people passively accepting what's offered are long gone.

In our digital age, the ability to feed back, interact with and shape services is the new norm and government – central and local – needs to reflect that.

It provides the opportunity to harness community groups, the voluntary sector, and, increasingly, those mobilising online and on social media, and use their hyper-local knowledge to redesign services.

People want to have a say over what happens in their communities.

Which is why we'll be publishing the civil society strategy this summer; setting out our vision for how government can work positively with groups on the ground.

And why we created the city region mayors, who have got off to such a successful start.

We've been clear that devolution deals should, wherever possible, include this kind of "onward" devolution of service delivery, with local communities deciding what outcomes matter most and finding local solutions that suit local circumstances.

I'm pleased to see that some of you are already stepping up to do this and shifting power from the state to the citizen.

This is true localism in action and a much-needed renewal of our democracy, giving people, particularly from disengaged groups, a real sense of ownership over the places where they live.

What might be described as an "ultra localist" agenda is something that helps create stronger communities.

Housing

It supports a stronger sense of belonging and identity to the place that you live in and is something I will be giving greater thought to in the time ahead.

This sense of ownership also very much depends on all parts of our community having a decent, affordable, secure home.

On this count, we have the challenge of a generation on our hands.

Successive governments, of all stripes, quite simply failed to build enough homes.

And the consequences are plain to see: ordinary families, young people starting out in life and many others struggling to secure that most basic of human needs – a place to call their own – and being denied the opportunities and security that come with it.

Which is why fixing our broken housing market is one of this government's top domestic priorities.

Councils, of course, have a big role to play in this.

And thanks to your efforts, we've made significant progress, with planning permissions up and 217,000 homes delivered in 2016 to 2017– the highest level in all but one of the last 30 years.

But there's further to go.

Which is why we're supporting local authorities to do more to deliver new homes – with a focus on affordability and building them where they are most needed.

It's why we've responded to your calls for extra financial flexibility and last week invited councils to bid for £1 billion of extra borrowing – paving the way for a new generation of council housing.

It's why we're investing £9 billion in a wide range of affordable housing and giving councils and housing associations more certainty over their rental income until 2025.

And why we're reforming planning and working with you to combat homelessness and rough sleeping.

We need to speed up the delivery of new homes and this is not only planning permissions. Today I am announcing a new approach to delivery of the £9 billion [Affordable Homes Programme](#).

Homes England will enter into longer term Strategic Partnerships with housing associations to deliver affordable homes.

These Partnerships will allow housing associations to have a single conversation with Homes England, thereby delivering more homes more quickly.

I am launching the first 8 Strategic Partnerships today – one of these is a consortium including Sandwell.

We are investing £590 million of the Affordable Homes Programme in this approach to deliver over 14,000 new affordable homes, including for social rent.

These deals will work across the country and I know you will work closely with the housing associations in these areas to deliver the affordable homes that your residents want and need.

In addition, we will shortly be publishing our Social Housing Green Paper – an important part of our wider response to the disaster at Grenfell Tower.

A year on, the shocking events of 14 June 2017 that triggered this work are still hard to comprehend.

And I want to thank everyone who supported those affected, helped with recovery efforts and who have been working with us to keep people safe.

Remediation work has started on more than two-thirds of buildings in the social housing sector and we announced a package of measures last week to speed up the work that councils are carrying out with the owners of high rise blocks in the private sector to make these safe.

And we're going further – by publishing [guidance](#) today on applying for the £400 million of funding announced by the Prime Minister for the removal and replacement of unsafe ACM cladding on social sector buildings.

This work with communities has been crucial in so many ways, not least in helping rebuild public trust, with local government at the forefront.

And your role – in ensuring that all groups in our society feel valued and can succeed – could not be more important as we leave the European Union.

Brexit and local growth

Brexit will, undoubtedly, generate different opportunities and challenges for different areas.

And I want to thank the LGA for its valuable work in this area; in identifying the issues at stake and also in recognising the opportunities that will be available.

I met council leaders earlier today to discuss how we can work together on this issue and I want to hear from more of you over the coming weeks and months.

There's clearly more to do on this issue and today I can announce that I am setting up a delivery board with local government that will support the implementation of changes linked to Brexit within the sector.

Regardless of our political differences, we all have a duty to ensure that every community can benefit as we build a modern, outward-looking Britain after Brexit.

In this context, it's even more essential that we renew our focus on local growth and higher productivity through not just the devolution deals already underway, but the other growth opportunities – housing deals, local industrial strategies and the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) review –

that are open to local areas.

These opportunities, of course, include our significant investment in the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.

And I couldn't leave the great city of Birmingham without saying how pleased I am to be Ministerial Champion for the Midlands Engine.

I look forward to working with Sir John Peace and the other partners across the region to ensure that it can really thrive.

These efforts – to invest in skills and infrastructure – will stand us in good stead as we prepare for Brexit, yes, but also in our ultimate goal of creating, quite simply, great places to live and work.

Communities

This is what everything that we're doing – on local growth, on housing, on quality public services – comes down to – building the strong, vibrant, well-integrated communities that we all want to see, with local government leading the way.

We're supporting these communities to flourish – to ensure that people of all backgrounds can take advantage of the opportunities that our country offers – through our bold new [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#).

Everyone needs to play their part in this endeavour. And strong local leadership is critical to making sure this message gets through and to driving this agenda.

Which is why we're trialling a new localised approach to tackling integration challenges in 5 areas – Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest.

And why we plan to host a Communities Conference in September; to inspire policymakers and showcase the incredible impact that communities can have.

From my previous roles, I know just how important this work is to creating a strong sense of civic pride and identity and places that people are proud to call home.

And – as we saw following last year's terror attacks in London Bridge, Manchester and Finsbury Park and also, of course, the Grenfell Tower fire – how there's nothing more powerful than a community coming together in the darkest of times.

I want to pay tribute to the way that local authorities worked with their residents and other partners in the aftermath of such loss and suffering.

Conclusion

This has, without doubt, been a challenging year, but I am full of admiration

with how you've responded.

And I'm keen to celebrate this work and to see you continue to innovate, aim high and really show what world-class local government looks like.

This will be vital to help us seize the opportunities and meet the challenges that lie ahead – on building the homes our county needs, on strengthening our communities, on powering growth and ensuring that, after Brexit, every part of our country can prosper.

In doing so, I want you to know that I'm on your side.

In doing so, I want you to know that I believe in local government and what you do. That I want to see a renewal and renaissance in local government.

And that I'm here for the same reason as you – to make a difference and deliver for communities who deserve no less.

Thank you.