



## Analysis of the King's Speech 2024 for members

This analysis of the King's Speech has been developed to help you understand how the changes that the new Government wants to make could affect the theatre sector and to help you engage with your local representatives.

SOLT & UK Theatre welcome the Government's new legislative programme, set out in the [King's Speech](#) on 17 July, and will be engaging with them as they roll it out. We want to work in partnership with Government to champion our world-class theatre sector and deliver the conditions it needs to thrive.

You can read more about our priorities for Government in our [briefing for MPs](#).

### Economic growth

*What's in?*

The King's Speech included the Employment Rights Bill, which relates to [Make Work Pay](#), originally called a New Deal for Working People, but revised shortly before the election. SOLT & UK Theatre have been engaging with politicians regarding these proposals, to ensure that any potential changes

- do not have unintended consequences for the theatre sector that are problematic in some way such as the use of fixed term and/or zero hours contracts,
- undermine the collective agreements in the theatre sector,
- consider the interactions between creative industries, for example, where a policy area will not directly affect the theatre industry but might affect other creative industries and therefore the theatre workforce.

We will be publishing a more detailed members' briefing on this shortly.

The King's Speech included 14 other Bills covering a range of issues designed to promote economic growth. Some may have indirect benefits and/or implications for members, such as the Better Buses Bill and Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

SOLT & UK Theatre will work to ensure that the opportunity to create the conditions for theatre to thrive is reflected in passage of these pieces of legislation, such as linking local transport and cultural infrastructure. We know, for example, that extending free school travel in London would significantly help schools attend a matinee performance.



### *What's not?*

When in Opposition, the Government committed to developing an industrial strategy to drive economic growth. In the Labour Party's manifesto, they noted that the creative industries have a strong role to play in kick starting the economy. We will work with the Government to ensure they utilise the power of theatre to generate local growth across hospitality and other local businesses. Theatre is crucial to the resilience and vibrancy of local economies. Our research shows that for every £1 spent on a theatre ticket £1.40 is spent in the local area, for example.

The Government could do more with the theatre sector to kick start the economy by investing in theatre buildings. A recent survey of our members shows that without significant investment, 40% of theatre buildings are at risk of closure, but if investment was accessed, over half would employ more people and almost two thirds would increase their community outreach work.

We also believe that economic growth can be achieved through sustainable public investment in the arts. A more strategic approach, considering both arts council and local authority funding would deliver more effective results for taxpayers, which we want to collaborate with the Government and other key stakeholders to deliver.

### *What you can do*

Speak to your local representatives about our priorities for Government:

- Reflect the particular employment relations and collective agreements in the theatre sector in the forthcoming consultation on the Employment Rights Bill.
- Ensure the power of theatre is reflected in the forthcoming industrial strategy and work with SOLT & UK Theatre on its development.
- To unleash theatre's full potential,
  - sustainably invest in theatre buildings and
  - collaborate with us and other stakeholders to strategically review public investment in the arts.

## **Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill**

Sometimes referred to as Martyn's Law, this legislation aims to improve the safety and security of public venues and help keep the British public safe from terrorism. This is not new; the previous Government was also planning to legislate in this way before the election was called. You can find out more about the proposals [here](#).



SOLT & UK Theatre have already worked with our members to ensure you understand and can implement any changes to policy, practice, and/or procedure. You can watch our Member Forum: Martyn's Law Workshop [here](#).

We chair the Theatre Operator Security Communication Advisory (TOSCA) Groups (London & Regional) and have been collaborating with partners to continue to be vigilant of risk and manage it effectively. We will use these forums and relationships to ensure effective readiness for this new legislation. We will also re-engage with you on this issue to ensure you are prepared.

#### *What you can do*

- Look out for member communications on this issue.
- If you are engaging with your local representatives, urge them to make sure Government is continuing to consult with all affected sectors, including theatre, in the passage of this legislation and development of associated guidance to ensure affected venues are well prepared.

## **Children, creative education, and skills**

#### *What's in?*

7 bills, three are relevant to the theatre sector:

- Skills England Bill  
This legislation will establish Skills England, a new body designed to bring together businesses, providers, unions, Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and national government to ensure deliver a highly trained workforce and reform the apprenticeship levy. SOLT & UK Theatre welcome this as an opportunity to address some of the skills challenges in our sector. We will work to ensure that technical education and skills policy must be linked up across government so that the creative industries are embedded and can support the industrial strategy, supporting the delivery of the Government's first mission of kick starting the economy.
- Draft (Equality) Race and Disability Bill  
This will enshrine in law the full right to equal pay for ethnic minorities and disabled people and to introduce mandatory ethnicity and disability pay reporting. If the same criteria apply as gender pay reporting, this would only be relevant to organisations that employ over 250 people. We are currently assessing the details to establish the potential impact on members. We will come back to you on this issue once we have conducted our initial analysis.



- Children's Wellbeing Bill

The aim of this legislation is to put children and their wellbeing at the centre of the education and children's social care systems and raise school standards to ensure the school system is fair for every child. SOLT & UKT will make the case that access to performing arts can support children's wellbeing.

### *What's not?*

The theatre sector can also support the Government to achieve its mission of breaking down the barriers to opportunity by expanding children's access to culture and the arts.

Our [Theatre for Every Child](#) campaign calls for every child to visit the theatre at least once before they leave school. SOLT & UK Theatre believe this would be an achievable but ambitious first step to increase access to the arts, while we collaborate on more detailed, medium-term work to develop a creative curriculum.

### *What you can do*

Speak to your local representatives about our priorities for Government:

- Work with the theatre sector on the reform of the apprenticeship levy to ensure our needs are reflected
- Realise the Government's ambition of expanding children's access to culture and the arts by ensuring every child has the opportunity to visit the theatre at least once before they leave school. Evidence the work of the sector in this area by speaking about/showing your or other local children's engagement schemes, if applicable.
- Ensure access to culture is reflected in plans to improve children's wellbeing.

## **Find out more and work with us:**

Visit our website: [2024 General Election - SOLT](#) [2024 General Election - UK Theatre](#)

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Get in touch: [PublicAffairs@soltukt.co.uk](mailto:PublicAffairs@soltukt.co.uk)