# England's new mental health bill advances, promising a patient-centred reform



A significant reform of mental health law in England has moved closer to becoming law following key stages passed in Parliament. The Mental Health Bill, designed to update the framework originally set out in the Mental Health Act 1983, has successfully passed report stage and third reading in the House of Commons and is now progressing through the House of Lords.

The Bill aims to fundamentally shift the way mental health patients are treated, putting greater emphasis on patient choice and rights. It enshrines the principle that detention and compulsory treatment should only be employed when strictly necessary, with enhanced provisions for more frequent reviews and easier access to appeals. Changes include limitations on the detention of autistic people and those with learning disabilities, reflecting a modern understanding of mental health needs and rights.

Health Minister Stephen Kinnock highlighted the transformation in societal attitudes and policy since the original Act and its 2007 update. Speaking during the Bill’s Commons third reading, he emphasised the Government’s broader 10-year mental health plan, which seeks to recruit over 8,500 additional mental health workers, expand NHS talking therapy appointments, increase crisis centre availability, and provide specialist mental health professionals for every school in England. He described the Bill as a “step closer” to delivering reforms that ensure patient needs and choices are central to all decisions concerning care and treatment.

The Bill builds on years of work, including independent reviews launched under former Prime Minister Theresa May, and reflects extensive consultation with patients and professionals. However, it has faced opposition in the Commons on several points. Conservative and Liberal Democrat MPs proposed amendments to strengthen public safety assessments, impose parental responsibility requirements for nominated persons of patients under 16, and mandate dedicated liaison services for carers in hospitals. All these were rejected by substantial majorities, with the Government arguing that the Bill already balances patient rights and safety effectively.

Following its House of Commons progress, the Bill is undergoing further refinement in the House of Lords. Prior stages in the Lords have seen close scrutiny of the Bill’s key measures, including tightening detention criteria, providing more frequent reviews, limiting detention lengths for people with autism or learning disabilities, and removing police stations and prisons from being designated ‘places of safety.’ Notably, an amendment to reduce the timeframe for tribunal applications when patients transfer from guardianship to hospital under the Act was agreed to without a vote, signalling cross-party consensus on improving patient protections.

The Bill's passage reflects a broader commitment within Parliament to overhaul outdated mental health legislation, with a view to fostering a more humane, responsive, and patient-centred system. While some argue that further safeguards around public safety and family roles are needed, the Government maintains that current provisions suitably balance patient autonomy and safety concerns. Pending final approval by both Houses, the Bill is poised to become law, marking a transformative chapter for mental health care in England.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/landmark-mental-health-bill-one-step-closer-to-becoming-law/a1220859924.html), [[4]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/march/mental-health-bill-report-stage/), [[2]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/april/mental-health-bill-third-reading/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/landmark-mental-health-bill-one-step-closer-to-becoming-law/a1220859924.html), [[3]](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10260/), [[4]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/march/mental-health-bill-report-stage/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/landmark-mental-health-bill-one-step-closer-to-becoming-law/a1220859924.html)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/landmark-mental-health-bill-one-step-closer-to-becoming-law/a1220859924.html)
* Paragraph 5 – [[4]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/march/mental-health-bill-report-stage/), [[6]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/january/lords-considers-mental-health-bill-at-committee-stage/), [[5]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2024/november/mental-health-bill-considered-by-lords/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[2]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/april/mental-health-bill-third-reading/), [[4]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/march/mental-health-bill-report-stage/), [[6]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/january/lords-considers-mental-health-bill-at-committee-stage/)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/landmark-mental-health-bill-one-step-closer-to-becoming-law/a1220859924.html), [[3]](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10260/), [[7]](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/may/mental-health-bill-call-for-evidence/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/uk/landmark-mental-health-bill-one-step-closer-to-becoming-law/a1220859924.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/april/mental-health-bill-third-reading/> - On 24 April 2025, members of the House of Lords conducted the third reading of the Mental Health Bill, focusing on refining the legislation to ensure its effectiveness. The bill aims to amend the Mental Health Act 1983 by tightening detention criteria, providing more frequent reviews, limiting detention periods for individuals with autism or learning disabilities, and removing prisons and police stations as 'places of safety'. An amendment was agreed to without a vote, reducing the period within which an application to the tribunal may be made when a patient is transferred from guardianship to a hospital under the Act. This amendment reflects the Lords' commitment to enhancing the bill's provisions for the benefit of mental health patients. ([parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/april/mental-health-bill-third-reading/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10260/> - The House of Commons Library briefing provides an overview of the Mental Health Bill [HL] 2024-25, a government bill introduced in the House of Lords on 6 November 2024. The bill seeks to amend the Mental Health Act 1983, aiming to modernise mental health legislation by implementing recommendations from the 2018 independent review. Proposed changes include ensuring that detention and compulsory treatment are only undertaken when necessary, providing for more frequent reviews and appeals, limiting the length of time that people with autism or a learning disability can be detained, and removing police stations and prisons from the list of 'places of safety'. The bill was introduced in the House of Commons on 24 April 2025 and is scheduled for its second reading on 19 May 2025. ([commonslibrary.parliament.uk](https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10260/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/march/mental-health-bill-report-stage/> - On 3 April 2025, members of the House of Lords concluded further checks and changes to the Mental Health Bill at the report stage. The bill seeks to amend the Mental Health Act 1983, with proposed changes including tightening the detention criteria, providing for more frequent reviews, limiting the period that people with autism or a learning disability can be detained, and removing prisons and police stations as 'places of safety' in the Act. The report stage allowed members to closely scrutinise elements of the bill and make necessary amendments to ensure its effectiveness. ([parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/march/mental-health-bill-report-stage/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2024/november/mental-health-bill-considered-by-lords/> - On 25 November 2024, members of the House of Lords discussed the main objectives of the Mental Health Bill at its second reading. The bill aims to amend the Mental Health Act 1983, with proposed changes including tightening the detention criteria and providing for more frequent reviews, limiting the period that people with autism or a learning disability can be detained, and removing prisons and police stations as 'places of safety' in the Act. The debate focused on these key areas, with members highlighting specific concerns and areas where they believe amendments are needed. ([parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2024/november/mental-health-bill-considered-by-lords/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/january/lords-considers-mental-health-bill-at-committee-stage/> - On 24 February 2025, members of the House of Lords concluded their line-by-line scrutiny of the Mental Health Bill during the committee stage. The bill seeks to amend the Mental Health Act 1983, with proposed changes including tightening the detention criteria, providing for more frequent reviews, limiting the period that people with autism or a learning disability can be detained, and removing prisons and police stations as 'places of safety' in the Act. The committee stage allowed members to examine each clause of the bill in detail, considering proposed amendments to ensure the legislation's effectiveness. ([parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/january/lords-considers-mental-health-bill-at-committee-stage/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/may/mental-health-bill-call-for-evidence/> - On 20 May 2025, the House of Commons Public Bill Committee issued a call for evidence regarding the Mental Health Bill, which was currently passing through Parliament. The committee invited individuals with relevant expertise and experience to submit their views in writing. The bill aims to amend the Mental Health Act 1983, with proposed changes including ensuring that detention and compulsory treatment are only undertaken when necessary, providing for more frequent reviews and appeals, limiting the length of time that people with autism or a learning disability can be detained, and removing police stations and prisons from the list of 'places of safety' in the Act. The committee's call for evidence was part of its detailed examination of the bill. ([parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2025/may/mental-health-bill-call-for-evidence/?utm_source=openai))