

Government defeated in Lords

After receiving an unopposed second reading in the Lords, the Mental Health Amending Bill has now moved through Committee and has reached Report stage in the Lords.

The Committee considered a list of 73 amendments which included the addition of principles, the definition of mental disorder and the conditions for compulsion.

In the only vote so far, the Government was defeated by 225 votes to 119 on the first amendment to ensure a set of guiding principles protecting patients' rights is put on the face of the Bill.

Baroness Barker, the Liberal Democrat Health Spokesperson who tabled the amendment said: "*This amendment ensures that clinicians have greater freedom than they would under the Government's proposals to exercise their professional judgement about the ability of people who are mentally ill to understand and comply with treatment which will be for their benefit.*"

"If people who are subject to mental health services are involved in decisions about their treatment their compliance with treatment regimes will be greater and safety for all will be increased."

Lord Melvyn Bragg described the amendment as of "*crucial importance*".

Further defeats for the Government are expected as the Bill moves through its various stages in the Lords and Commons. Around 50 Labour MPs have already signalled their intention to oppose the Bill when it returns to the Commons in March.

To see the full list of tabled amendments and to read the text of the debates, [click here](#).

What happens next with the Bill?

The Bill is now moving towards Report Stage in the Lords. This will provide an opportunity for Members who were not on the Standing Committee to move amendments to the Bill.

The delay between Committee and Report Stage allows time for the Government to give further thought to some of the points raised during the committee stage.

They may, for example, choose to bring forward their own amendments in place of amendments which were rejected or withdrawn in the Committee.

Following Report Stage, the Bill will go through the following stages (with approximate times):

- **Third reading, Lords: February**
- **Amended Bill published in Lords: March**
- **Second reading in Commons: March**
- **Committee stage in Commons: April**
- **Report stage/third reading in Commons: April/May**
- **Reconciliation of texts between houses: May**
- **Royal Assent**

...unless of course it fails to proceed at some stage.

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