



The Law Society

## How a Bill becomes an Act of Parliament

A bill is a proposal for a piece of legislation. If passed by the House of Commons and House of Lords it becomes an act and is placed on the 'statute book'.

Some bills start their passage in the Commons, others in the Lords. Either way, they must all go through the same stages to become law:

- **First Reading** - when the bill's title is read out in parliament and an order made to print copies
- **Second Reading** - the major debate on the general principles of the bill
- **Committee** - where the bill is examined clause by clause, and where amendments can be tabled
- **Report** - allows for further amendments to be made on the bill
- **Third Reading** - provides a final opportunity to comment on the amended bill

Once the bill has passed through both houses, a short stage known as 'consideration' takes place. This allows any final changes to be agreed. Once a final text is agreed, the bill then receives Royal Assent at which point it becomes an Act of Parliament.