

COINAGE (MEASUREMENT) ACT 2011

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. These explanatory notes relate to the Coinage (Measurement) Act 2011 which received Royal Assent on 3 November 2011. They have been prepared by the Treasury in order to assist the reader in understanding the Act. They do not form part of the Act and have not been endorsed by Parliament.
2. The Notes need to be read in conjunction with the Act. They are not, and are not meant to be, a comprehensive description of the Act. So where a section or part of a section does not seem to require any explanation or comment, none is given.

SUMMARY

3. The Act amends the Coinage Act 1971 in order to enable the Royal Mint to strike coins with a standard weight of one kilogram or more.

BACKGROUND

4. When the United Kingdom bid to host the Olympic Games in London in 2010, an undertaking was given to the International Olympic Committee that if the bid was successful the United Kingdom would strike commemorative coins. After London was awarded the Games, the Royal Mint agreed with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games to strike commemorative coins with a standard weight of one kilogram or more.
5. The Coinage Act 1971 governs the striking of coins by the Royal Mint. The 1971 Act contains various standards in respect of a coin's weight, fineness, composition and dimensions that coins struck by the Royal Mint must comply with. The 1971 Act also makes provision for permitted variations from those standards.
6. Under section 1(6) of the 1971 Act, the variation from the standard weight of any coin (other than a gold coin of a denomination mentioned in Schedule 1 to the 1971 Act) must be measured as the average of a sample of coins which cumulatively weigh not more than one kilogram. It is not possible to measure the variation from the standard weight in the case of the proposed Olympic coins in this way because the weight of each coin is likely to be equal to or greater than the one kilogram aggregate limit in section 1(6) for a sample.
7. The effect of the amendments made by the Act is that the 1971 Act will provide that

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the variation from the standard weight of any coin shall be measured in accordance with provisions made by Royal proclamation as provided for in section 3 of the 1971 Act.

TERRITORIAL EXTENT

8. The Act extends to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Section 1: Amendment of Coinage Act 1971

9. The effect of the changes made by section 1 to sections 1(6) and 3(1)(cd) of the 1971 Act is that the variation from the standard weight of *any* coin struck by the Royal Mint (not just gold coins of a denomination mentioned in Schedule 1 to the 1971 Act) shall be measured in accordance with provision made by proclamation. Under section 3 of the 1971 Act, Her Majesty has the power, exercisable by proclamation, to determine various attributes of coins struck by the Royal Mint, including permitted variations from standard weights. This allows, for example, a weight of sample in excess of one kilogram to be specified in the proclamation relating to the one kilogram coins.

COMMENCEMENT

10. The Act will come into force at the end of the period of 2 months beginning with the day on which it is passed.

The following table sets out the dates and Hansard references for each stage of this Act's passage through Parliament.

Stage	Date	Hansard reference
House of Commons		
Introduction	30 June 2010	Vol. 512 Col 867
Second Reading	4 February 2011	Vol. 522 Cols 1216-1228
Committee	16 March 2011	Public Bill Committee
Report and Third Reading	1 April 2011	Vol. 526 Cols 648-654
House of Lords		

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Introduction	4 April 2011	Vol. 726 Col 1528
Second Reading	15 July 2011	Vol. 729 Cols 983-990
Committee	11 October 2011	Vol. 730 Col 1528
Third Reading	24 October 2011	Vol. 731 Col 544
Royal Assent – 3 November 2011		House of Lords Hansard Vol. 731 Col 1339 House of Commons Hansard Vol. 534 Col 1121

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