



Competition Act 1998

1998 CHAPTER 41

PART I

COMPETITION

CHAPTER III

INVESTIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT

Investigations

[^{F1}25 Power of OFT to investigate

- (1) In any of the following cases, the OFT may conduct an investigation.
- (2) The first case is where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that there is an agreement which—
 - (a) may affect trade within the United Kingdom; and
 - (b) has as its object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the United Kingdom.
- (3) The second case is where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that there is an agreement which—
 - (a) may affect trade between Member States; and
 - (b) has as its object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the Community.
- (4) The third case is where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the Chapter II prohibition has been infringed.
- (5) The fourth case is where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that the prohibition in Article 82 has been infringed.

Status: Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

Changes to legislation: Competition Act 1998, Chapter III is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 29 August 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

- (6) The fifth case is where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that, at some time in the past, there was an agreement which at that time—
- (a) may have affected trade within the United Kingdom; and
 - (b) had as its object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the United Kingdom.
- (7) The sixth case is where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that, at some time in the past, there was an agreement which at that time—
- (a) may have affected trade between Member States; and
 - (b) had as its object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the Community.
- (8) Subsection (2) does not permit an investigation to be conducted in relation to an agreement if the OFT—
- (a) considers that the agreement is exempt from the Chapter I prohibition as a result of a block exemption or a parallel exemption; and
 - (b) does not have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the circumstances may be such that it could exercise its power to cancel the exemption.
- (9) Subsection (3) does not permit an investigation to be conducted if the OFT—
- (a) considers that the agreement is an agreement to which the prohibition in Article 81(1) is inapplicable by virtue of a regulation of the Commission (“the relevant regulation”); and
 - (b) does not have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the conditions set out in Article 29(2) of the EC Competition Regulation for the withdrawal of the benefit of the relevant regulation may be satisfied in respect of that agreement.
- (10) Subsection (6) does not permit an investigation to be conducted in relation to any agreement if the OFT considers that, at the time in question, the agreement was exempt from the Chapter I prohibition as a result of a block exemption or a parallel exemption.
- (11) Subsection (7) does not permit an investigation to be conducted in relation to any agreement if the OFT considers that, at the time in question, the agreement was an agreement to which the prohibition in Article 81(1) was inapplicable by virtue of a regulation of the Commission.
- (12) It is immaterial for the purposes of subsection (6) or (7) whether the agreement in question remains in existence.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 25 substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 10](#)

26 Powers when conducting investigations.

- (1) For the purposes of an investigation [^{F2}under section 25], the [^{F3}OFT] may require any person to produce to [^{F3}it] a specified document, or to provide [^{F3}it] with specified information, which [^{F3}it] considers relates to any matter relevant to the investigation.
- (2) The power conferred by subsection (1) is to be exercised by a notice in writing.

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- (3) A notice under subsection (2) must indicate—
 - (a) the subject matter and purpose of the investigation; and
 - (b) the nature of the offences created by sections 42 to 44.
- (4) In subsection (1) “specified” means—
 - (a) specified, or described, in the notice; or
 - (b) falling within a category which is specified, or described, in the notice.
- (5) The [F⁴OFT] may also specify in the notice—
 - (a) the time and place at which any document is to be produced or any information is to be provided;
 - (b) the manner and form in which it is to be produced or provided.
- (6) The power under this section to require a person to produce a document includes power—
 - (a) if the document is produced—
 - (i) to take copies of it or extracts from it;
 - (ii) to require him, or any person who is a present or past officer of his, or is or was at any time employed by him, to provide an explanation of the document;
 - (b) if the document is not produced, to require him to state, to the best of his knowledge and belief, where it is.

Textual Amendments

- F2** Words in s. 26(1) cease to have effect (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 11** (with reg. 6(2))
- F3** Words in s. 26(1) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(20)(a)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), Sch.)
- F4** Word in s. 26(5) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(20)(b)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), Sch.)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Ss. 26-30 applied by 1986 c. 46, s. 9C(2) (as inserted (20.6.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), **ss. 204(2)**, 279; [S.I. 2003/1397](#), art. 2(1), Sch.)
- C2** Ss. 26-30 applied by [S.I. 2002/3150 \(N.I. 4\)](#), art. 13C(2) (as inserted (19.12.2005) by [The Company Directors Disqualification \(Amendment\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/1454\)](#), arts. 1(3), **3**; [S.R. 2005/514](#), art. 2)

27 [F⁵Power to enter business premises without a warrant]

- (1) Any officer of the [F⁶OFT] who is authorised in writing by the [F⁶OFT] to do so (“an investigating officer”) may enter [F⁷any business premises] in connection with an investigation [F⁸under section 25].
- (2) No investigating officer is to enter any premises in the exercise of his powers under this section unless he has given to the occupier of the premises a written notice which—
 - (a) gives at least two working days’ notice of the intended entry;
 - (b) indicates the subject matter and purpose of the investigation; and
 - (c) indicates the nature of the offences created by sections 42 to 44.

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- (3) Subsection (2) does not apply—
- (a) if the [F6OFT] has a reasonable suspicion that the premises are, or have been, occupied by—
 - (i) a party to an agreement which [F9it] is investigating [F10section 25]; or
 - (ii) an undertaking the conduct of which [F9it] is investigating under [F11section 25]; or
 - (b) if the investigating officer has taken all such steps as are reasonably practicable to give notice but has not been able to do so.
- (4) In a case falling within subsection (3), the power of entry conferred by subsection (1) is to be exercised by the investigating officer on production of—
- (a) evidence of his authorisation; and
 - (b) a document containing the information referred to in subsection (2)(b) and (c).
- (5) An investigating officer entering any premises under this section may—
- (a) take with him such equipment as appears to him to be necessary;
 - (b) require any person on the premises—
 - (i) to produce any document which he considers relates to any matter relevant to the investigation; and
 - (ii) if the document is produced, to provide an explanation of it;
 - (c) require any person to state, to the best of his knowledge and belief, where any such document is to be found;
 - (d) take copies of, or extracts from, any document which is produced;
 - (e) require any information which is [F12stored in any electronic form] and is accessible from the premises and which the investigating officer considers relates to any matter relevant to the investigation, to be produced in a form—
 - (i) in which it can be taken away, and
 - (ii) in which it is visible and legible [F13or from which it can readily be produced in a visible and legible form].
 - [F14(f) take any steps which appear to be necessary for the purpose of preserving or preventing interference with any document which he considers relates to any matter relevant to the investigation.]
- [F15(6) In this section “business premises” means premises (or any part of premises) not used as a dwelling.]

Textual Amendments

- F5** Words in s. 27 sidenote substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 12(6)**
- F6** Word in s. 27 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(21)(a)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), Sch.)
- F7** Words in s. 27(1) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 12(2)(a)**
- F8** Words in s. 27(1) cease to have effect (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 12(2)(b)** (with reg. 6(2))
- F9** Word in s. 27(3) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(21)(b)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), Sch.)
- F10** Words in s. 27(3)(a)(i) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 12(3)(a)**

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- F11** Words in s. 27(3)(a)(ii) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 12(3)(b)**
- F12** Words in s. 27(5)(e) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 \(c. 16\)](#), s. 138(2), **Sch. 2 para. 21(a)**; S.I. 2003/708, art. 2(k)
- F13** Words in s. 27(5)(e) inserted (1.4.2003) by [Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 \(c. 16\)](#), s. 138(2), **Sch. 2 para. 21(b)**; S.I. 2003/708, art. 2(k)
- F14** S. 27(5)(f) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 12(4)**
- F15** S. 27(6) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 12(5)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Ss. 26-30 applied by 1986 c. 46, s. 9C(2) (as inserted (20.6.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), **ss. 204(2), 279**; S.I. 2003/1397, art. 2(1), Sch.)
- C2** Ss. 26-30 applied by S.I. 2002/3150 (N.I. 4), art. 13C(2) (as inserted (19.12.2005) by [The Company Directors Disqualification \(Amendment\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/1454\)](#), arts. 1(3), **3**; S.R. 2005/514, art. 2)

28 [^{F16}**Power to enter business premises under a warrant**].

- (1) On an application made by the [^{F17}OFT] to the court in accordance with rules of court, a judge may issue a warrant if he is satisfied that—
- (a) there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that there are on [^{F18}any business premises] documents—
- (i) the production of which has been required under section 26 or 27; and
- (ii) which have not been produced as required;
- (b) there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that—
- (i) there are on [^{F19}any business premises] documents which the [^{F17}OFT] has power under section 26 to require to be produced; and
- (ii) if the documents were required to be produced, they would not be produced but would be concealed, removed, tampered with or destroyed; or
- (c) an investigating officer has attempted to enter premises in the exercise of his powers under section 27 but has been unable to do so and that there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that there are on the premises documents the production of which could have been required under that section.
- (2) A warrant under this section shall authorise a named officer of the [^{F20}OFT], and any other of [^{F21}the OFT's officers whom the OFT] has authorised in writing to accompany the named officer—
- (a) to enter the premises specified in the warrant, using such force as is reasonably necessary for the purpose;
- (b) to search the premises and take copies of, or extracts from, any document appearing to be of a kind in respect of which the application under subsection (1) was granted (“the relevant kind”);
- (c) to take possession of any documents appearing to be of the relevant kind if—
- (i) such action appears to be necessary for preserving the documents or preventing interference with them; or
- (ii) it is not reasonably practicable to take copies of the documents on the premises;

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- (d) to take any other steps which appear to be necessary for the purpose mentioned in paragraph (c)(i);
 - (e) to require any person to provide an explanation of any document appearing to be of the relevant kind or to state, to the best of his knowledge and belief, where it may be found;
 - (f) to require any information which is [^{F22}stored in any electronic form] and is accessible from the premises and which the named officer considers relates to any matter relevant to the investigation, to be produced in a form—
 - (i) in which it can be taken away, and
 - (ii) in which it is visible and legible [^{F23}or from which it can readily be produced in a visible and legible form].
- (3) If, in the case of a warrant under subsection (1)(b), the judge is satisfied that it is reasonable to suspect that there are also on the premises other documents relating to the investigation concerned, the warrant shall also authorise action mentioned in subsection (2) to be taken in relation to any such document.
- [^{F24}(3A) A warrant under this section may authorise persons specified in the warrant to accompany the named officer who is executing it.]
- (4) Any person entering premises by virtue of a warrant under this section may take with him such equipment as appears to him to be necessary.
 - (5) On leaving any premises which he has entered by virtue of a warrant under this section, the named officer must, if the premises are unoccupied or the occupier is temporarily absent, leave them as effectively secured as he found them.
 - (6) A warrant under this section continues in force until the end of the period of one month beginning with the day on which it is issued.
 - (7) Any document of which possession is taken under subsection (2)(c) may be retained for a period of three months.
- [^{F25}(8) In this section “business premises” has the same meaning as in section 27.]

Textual Amendments

- F16** Words in s. 28 sidenote substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 13\(4\)](#)
- F17** Word in s. 28(1) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, [Sch. 25 para. 38\(22\)\(a\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, [Sch.](#) (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), [Sch.](#))
- F18** Words in s. 28(1)(a) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 13\(2\)\(a\)](#)
- F19** Words in s. 28(1)(b)(i) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 13\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- F20** Word in s. 28(2) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, [Sch. 25 para. 38\(22\)\(b\)\(i\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, [Sch.](#) (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), [Sch.](#))
- F21** Words in s. 28(2) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, [Sch. 25 para. 38\(22\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, [Sch.](#) (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), [Sch.](#))
- F22** Words in s. 28(2)(f) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 \(c. 16\)](#), s. 138(2), [Sch. 2 para. 21\(a\)](#); [S.I. 2003/708](#), art. 2(k)
- F23** Words in s. 28(2)(f) inserted (1.4.2003) by [Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 \(c. 16\)](#), s. 138(2), [Sch. 2 para. 21\(b\)](#); [S.I. 2003/708](#), art. 2(k)

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F24 S. 28(3A) inserted (20.6.2003) by Enterprise Act 2002 (c. 40), **ss. 203(2)**, 279; S.I. 2003/1397, art. 2(1), Sch.

F25 S. 28(8) inserted (1.5.2004) by The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments (Amendment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/1261), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 13(3)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 Ss. 26-30 applied by 1986 c. 46, s. 9C(2) (as inserted (20.6.2003) by Enterprise Act 2002 (c. 40), **ss. 204(2)**, 279; S.I. 2003/1397, art. 2(1), Sch.)

C2 Ss. 26-30 applied by S.I. 2002/3150 (N.I. 4), art. 13C(2) (as inserted (19.12.2005) by The Company Directors Disqualification (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/1454), arts. 1(3), 3; S.R. 2005/514, art. 2)

C3 S. 28(2): powers of seizure extended (*prosp.*) by 2001 c. 16, **ss. 50, 52-54, 68, 138(2)**, **Sch. 1 Pt. 1 para. 67**

C4 S. 28(2) powers of seizure extended (1.6.2004) by Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (c. 16), **ss. 50, 138(2)**, **Sch. 1 para. 67** (with **ss. 52-54, 68**); S.I. 2004/1376, art. 2(b)

C5 S. 28(2)(f) modified (*prosp.*) by 2001 c. 16, **ss. 63(2)(h)**, 138(2)

C6 S. 28(2)(f) modified (1.4.2003) by Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (c. 16), **ss. 63**, 138(2); S.I. 2003/708, art. 2(a)

C7 S. 28(7) applied (1.4.2003) by Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 (c. 16), **ss. 57(1)(n)**, 138(2) (with s. 57(4)); S.I. 2003/708, art. 2(a)

[^{F26}28A Power to enter domestic premises under a warrant

- (1) On an application made by the OFT to the court in accordance with rules of court, a judge may issue a warrant if he is satisfied that—
 - (a) there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that there are on any domestic premises documents—
 - (i) the production of which has been required under section 26; and
 - (ii) which have not been produced as required; or
 - (b) there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that—
 - (i) there are on any domestic premises documents which the OFT has power under section 26 to require to be produced; and
 - (ii) if the documents were required to be produced, they would not be produced but would be concealed, removed, tampered with or destroyed.
- (2) A warrant under this section shall authorise a named officer of the OFT, and any other of its officers whom the OFT has authorised in writing to accompany the named officer—
 - (a) to enter the premises specified in the warrant, using such force as is reasonably necessary for the purpose;
 - (b) to search the premises and take copies of, or extracts from, any document appearing to be of a kind in respect of which the application under subsection (1) was granted (“the relevant kind”);
 - (c) to take possession of any documents appearing to be of the relevant kind if—
 - (i) such action appears to be necessary for preserving the documents or preventing interference with them; or
 - (ii) it is not reasonably practicable to take copies of the documents on the premises;

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- (d) to take any other steps which appear to be necessary for the purpose mentioned in paragraph (c)(i);
 - (e) to require any person to provide an explanation of any document appearing to be of the relevant kind or to state, to the best of his knowledge and belief, where it may be found;
 - (f) to require any information which is stored in any electronic form and is accessible from the premises and which the named officer considers relates to any matter relevant to the investigation, to be produced in a form—
 - (i) in which it can be taken away, and
 - (ii) in which it is visible and legible or from which it can readily be produced in a visible and legible form.
- (3) If, in the case of a warrant under subsection (1)(b), the judge is satisfied that it is reasonable to suspect that there are also on the premises other documents relating to the investigation concerned, the warrant shall also authorise action mentioned in subsection (2) to be taken in relation to any such document.
- (4) A warrant under this section may authorise persons specified in the warrant to accompany the named officer who is executing it.
- (5) Any person entering premises by virtue of a warrant under this section may take with him such equipment as appears to him to be necessary.
- (6) On leaving any premises which he has entered by virtue of a warrant under this section, the named officer must, if the premises are unoccupied or the occupier is temporarily absent, leave them as effectively secured as he found them.
- (7) A warrant under this section continues in force until the end of the period of one month beginning with the day on which it is issued.
- (8) Any document of which possession is taken under subsection (2)(c) may be retained for a period of three months.
- (9) In this section, “domestic premises” means premises (or any part of premises) that are used as a dwelling and are—
- (a) premises also used in connection with the affairs of an undertaking or association of undertakings; or
 - (b) premises where documents relating to the affairs of an undertaking or association of undertakings are kept.]

Textual Amendments

F26 S. 28A inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 14](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C2 Ss. 26-30 applied by S.I. 2002/3150 (N.I. 4), art. 13C(2) (as inserted (19.12.2005) by [The Company Directors Disqualification \(Amendment\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/1454\)](#), arts. 1(3), [3](#); [S.R. 2005/514](#), art. 2)

29 Entry of premises under warrant: supplementary.

- (1) A warrant issued under section 28 ^{F27} or 28A] must indicate—

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- (a) the subject matter and purpose of the investigation;
 - (b) the nature of the offences created by sections 42 to 44.
- (2) The powers conferred by section 28 [^{F28}or 28A] are to be exercised on production of a warrant issued under that section.
- (3) If there is no one at the premises when the named officer proposes to execute such a warrant he must, before executing it—
 - (a) take such steps as are reasonable in all the circumstances to inform the occupier of the intended entry; and
 - (b) if the occupier is informed, afford him or his legal or other representative a reasonable opportunity to be present when the warrant is executed.
- (4) If the named officer is unable to inform the occupier of the intended entry he must, when executing the warrant, leave a copy of it in a prominent place on the premises.
- (5) In this section—
 - “named officer” means the officer named in the warrant; and
 - “occupier”, in relation to any premises, means a person whom the named officer reasonably believes is the occupier of those premises.

Textual Amendments

- F27** Words in s. 29(1) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 15(2)**
- F28** Words in s. 29(2) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 15(3)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Ss. 26-30 applied by 1986 c. 46, s. 9C(2) (as inserted (20.6.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), **ss. 204(2)**, 279; S.I. 2003/1397, art. 2(1), Sch.)
- C2** Ss. 26-30 applied by S.I. 2002/3150 (N.I. 4), art. 13C(2) (as inserted (19.12.2005) by [The Company Directors Disqualification \(Amendment\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/1454\)](#), arts. 1(3), 3; S.R. 2005/514, art. 2)

30 Privileged communications.

- (1) A person shall not be required, under any provision of this Part, to produce or disclose a privileged communication.
- (2) “Privileged communication” means a communication—
 - (a) between a professional legal adviser and his client, or
 - (b) made in connection with, or in contemplation of, legal proceedings and for the purposes of those proceedings,which in proceedings in the High Court would be protected from disclosure on grounds of legal professional privilege.
- (3) In the application of this section to Scotland—
 - (a) references to the High Court are to be read as references to the Court of Session; and
 - (b) the reference to legal professional privilege is to be read as a reference to confidentiality of communications.

Status: Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

Changes to legislation: Competition Act 1998, Chapter III is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 29 August 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Ss. 26-30 applied by 1986 c. 46, s. 9C(2) (as inserted (20.6.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), **ss. 204(2), 279**; S.I. 2003/1397, art. 2(1), Sch.)
- C2** Ss. 26-30 applied by S.I. 2002/3150 (N.I. 4), art. 13C(2) (as inserted (19.12.2005) by [The Company Directors Disqualification \(Amendment\) \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2005 \(S.I. 2005/1454\)](#), arts. 1(3), **3**; S.R. 2005/514, art. 2)
- C8** S. 30 applied (prosp.) by [Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 \(c. 46\)](#), s. 9C(2) (as inserted (prosp.) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), **ss. 204(2), 279**)

[^{F29}30A Use of statements in prosecution

A statement made by a person in response to a requirement imposed by virtue of any of sections 26 [^{F30}to 28A] may not be used in evidence against him on a prosecution for an offence under section 188 of the Enterprise Act 2002 unless, in the proceedings—

- (a) in giving evidence, he makes a statement inconsistent with it, and
- (b) evidence relating to it is adduced, or a question relating to it is asked, by him or on his behalf.]

Textual Amendments

- F29** S. 30A inserted (20.6.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), **ss. 198, 279**; S.I. 2003/1397, art. 2(1), Sch.
- F30** Words in s. 30A substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 16**

[^{F31}31 Decisions following an investigation.

- (1) If as a result of an investigation the OFT proposes to make a decision, the OFT must—
 - (a) give written notice to the person (or persons) likely to be affected by the proposed decision; and
 - (b) give that person (or those persons) an opportunity to make representations.]

[^{F31}(2) For the purposes of this section and sections 31A and 31B “decision” means a decision of the OFT—

- (a) that the Chapter I prohibition has been infringed;
- (b) that the Chapter II prohibition has been infringed;
- (c) that the prohibition in Article 81(1) has been infringed; or
- (d) that the prohibition in Article 82 has been infringed.]

Textual Amendments

- F31** S. 31 substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 17**

[^{F32}31A Commitments

- (1) Subsection (2) applies in a case where the OFT has begun an investigation under section 25 but has not made a decision (within the meaning given by section 31(2)).

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- (2) For the purposes of addressing the competition concerns it has identified, the OFT may accept from such person (or persons) concerned as it considers appropriate commitments to take such action (or refrain from taking such action) as it considers appropriate.
- (3) At any time when commitments are in force the OFT may accept from the person (or persons) who gave the commitments—
 - (a) a variation of them if it is satisfied that the commitments as varied will address its current competition concerns;
 - (b) commitments in substitution for them if it is satisfied that the new commitments will address its current competition concerns.
- (4) Commitments under this section—
 - (a) shall come into force when accepted; and
 - (b) may be released by the OFT where—
 - (i) it is requested to do so by the person (or persons) who gave the commitments; or
 - (ii) it has reasonable grounds for believing that the competition concerns referred to in subsection (2) or (3) no longer arise.
- (5) The provisions of Schedule 6A to this Act shall have effect with respect to procedural requirements for the acceptance, variation and release of commitments under this section.]

Textual Amendments

F32 Ss. 31A-31E inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 18](#)

[^{F32}31B Effect of commitments under section 31A

- (1) Subsection (2) applies if the OFT has accepted commitments under section 31A (and has not released them).
- (2) In such a case, the OFT shall not—
 - (a) continue the investigation,
 - (b) make a decision (within the meaning of section 31(2)), or
 - (c) give a direction under section 35,in relation to the agreement or conduct which was the subject of the investigation (but this subsection is subject to subsections (3) and (4)).
- (3) Nothing in subsection (2) prevents the OFT from taking any action in relation to competition concerns which are not addressed by commitments accepted by it.
- (4) Subsection (2) also does not prevent the OFT from continuing the investigation, making a decision, or giving a direction where—
 - (a) it has reasonable grounds for believing that there has been a material change of circumstances since the commitments were accepted;
 - (b) it has reasonable grounds for suspecting that a person has failed to adhere to one or more of the terms of the commitments; or

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- (c) it has reasonable grounds for suspecting that information which led it to accept the commitments was incomplete, false or misleading in a material particular.
- (5) If, pursuant to subsection (4), the OFT makes a decision or gives a direction the commitments are to be treated as released from the date of that decision or direction.]

Textual Amendments

F32 Ss. 31A-31E inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 18**

[^{F32}31C Review of commitments

- (1) Where the OFT is reviewing or has reviewed the effectiveness of commitments accepted under section 31A it must, if requested to do so by the Secretary of State, prepare a report of its findings.
- (2) The OFT must—
- (a) give any report prepared by it under subsection (1) to the Secretary of State; and
 - (b) publish the report.]

Textual Amendments

F32 Ss. 31A-31E inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 18**

[^{F32}31D Guidance

- (1) The OFT must prepare and publish guidance as to the circumstances in which it may be appropriate to accept commitments under section 31A.
- (2) The OFT may at any time alter the guidance.
- (3) If the guidance is altered, the OFT must publish it as altered.
- (4) No guidance is to be published under this section without the approval of the Secretary of State.
- (5) The OFT may, after consulting the Secretary of State, choose how it publishes its guidance.
- (6) If the OFT is preparing or altering guidance under this section it must consult such persons as it considers appropriate.
- (7) If the proposed guidance or alteration relates to a matter in respect of which a regulator exercises concurrent jurisdiction, those consulted must include that regulator.
- (8) When exercising its discretion to accept commitments under section 31A, the OFT must have regard to the guidance for the time being in force under this section.]

Status: Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

Changes to legislation: Competition Act 1998, Chapter III is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 29 August 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

Textual Amendments

F32 Ss. 31A-31E inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 18](#)

[^{F32}31E Enforcement of commitments

- (1) If a person from whom the OFT has accepted commitments fails without reasonable excuse to adhere to the commitments (and has not been released from them), the OFT may apply to the court for an order—
 - (a) requiring the defaulter to make good his default within a time specified in the order; or
 - (b) if the commitments relate to anything to be done in the management or administration of an undertaking, requiring the undertaking or any of its officers to do it.
- (2) An order of the court under subsection (1) may provide for all the costs of, or incidental to, the application for the order to be borne by—
 - (a) the person in default; or
 - (b) any officer of an undertaking who is responsible for the default.
- (3) In the application of subsection (2) to Scotland, the reference to “costs” is to be read as a reference to “expenses”.]

Textual Amendments

F32 Ss. 31A-31E inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 18](#)

Enforcement

32 Directions in relation to agreements.

- (1) If the [^{F33}OFT] has made a decision that an agreement infringes the Chapter I prohibition [^{F34}or that it infringes the prohibition in Article 81(1)], [^{F33}it] may give to such person or persons as [^{F33}it] considers appropriate such directions as [^{F33}it] considers appropriate to bring the infringement to an end.
- (2) [^{F35}Subsection (1) applies whether the [^{F36}OFT’s] decision is made on [^{F36}its] own initiative or on an application made to [^{F36}it] under this Part.]
- (3) A direction under this section may, in particular, include provision—
 - (a) requiring the parties to the agreement to modify the agreement; or
 - (b) requiring them to terminate the agreement.
- (4) A direction under this section must be given in writing.

Status: Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

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Textual Amendments

- F33** Words in s. 32(1) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38\(24\)](#) (a); [S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch.](#) (with [art. 3](#)) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3\(2\), Sch.](#))
- F34** Words in s. 32(1) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\), reg. 1\(a\), Sch. 1 para. 19\(2\)](#)
- F35** S. 32(2) ceased to have effect (1.5.2004) by virtue of [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\), reg. 1\(a\), Sch. 1 para. 19\(3\)](#) (with [reg. 6\(2\)](#))
- F36** Words in s. 32(2) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38\(24\)](#) (b); [S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch.](#) (with [art. 3](#)) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3\(2\), Sch.](#))

33 Directions in relation to conduct.

- (1) If the [^{F37}OFT] has made a decision that conduct infringes the Chapter II prohibition [^{F38}or that it infringes the prohibition in Article 82], [^{F37}it] may give to such person or persons as [^{F37}it] considers appropriate such directions as [^{F37}it] considers appropriate to bring the infringement to an end.
- (2) [^{F39}Subsection (1) applies whether the [^{F40}OFT's] decision is made on [^{F40}its] own initiative or on an application made to [^{F40}it] under this Part.]
- (3) A direction under this section may, in particular, include provision—
 - (a) requiring the person concerned to modify the conduct in question; or
 - (b) requiring him to cease that conduct.
- (4) A direction under this section must be given in writing.

Textual Amendments

- F37** Words in s. 33(1) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38\(25\)](#) (a); [S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch.](#) (with [art. 3](#)) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3\(2\), Sch.](#))
- F38** Words in s. 33(1) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\), reg. 1\(a\), Sch. 1 para. 20\(2\)](#)
- F39** S. 33(2) ceased to have effect (1.5.2004) by virtue of [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\), reg. 1\(a\), Sch. 1 para. 20\(3\)](#) (with [reg. 6\(2\)](#))
- F40** Words in s. 33(2) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38\(25\)](#) (b); [S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch.](#) (with [art. 3](#)) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3\(2\), Sch.](#))

34 Enforcement of directions.

- (1) If a person fails, without reasonable excuse, to comply with a direction under section 32 or 33, the [^{F41}OFT] may apply to the court for an order—
 - (a) requiring the defaulter to make good his default within a time specified in the order; or
 - (b) if the direction related to anything to be done in the management or administration of an undertaking, requiring the undertaking or any of its officers to do it.
- (2) An order of the court under subsection (1) may provide for all of the costs of, or incidental to, the application for the order to be borne by—
 - (a) the person in default; or

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- (b) any officer of an undertaking who is responsible for the default.
- (3) In the application of subsection (2) to Scotland, the reference to “costs” is to be read as a reference to “expenses”.

Textual Amendments

F41 Word in s. 34 substituted (1.4.2003) by Enterprise Act 2002 (c. 40), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38(26); S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3(2), Sch.)

35 Interim measures.

- ^{F42}(1) Subject to subsections (8) and (9), this section applies if the OFT has begun an investigation under section 25 and not completed it (but only applies so long as the OFT has power under section 25 to conduct that investigation).]
- (2) If the ^{F43}OFT] considers that it is necessary for ^{F43}it] to act under this section as a matter of urgency for the purpose—
 - (a) of preventing serious, irreparable damage to a particular person or category of person, or
 - (b) of protecting the public interest,^{F43}it] may give such directions as ^{F43}it] considers appropriate for that purpose.
- (3) Before giving a direction under this section, the ^{F43}OFT] must—
 - (a) give written notice to the person (or persons) to whom ^{F43}it] proposes to give the direction; and
 - (b) give that person (or each of them) an opportunity to make representations.
- (4) A notice under subsection (3) must indicate the nature of the direction which the ^{F43}OFT] is proposing to give and ^{F43}its] reasons for wishing to give it.
- ^{F44}(5) A direction given under this section may if the circumstances permit be replaced by—
 - (a) a direction under section 32 or (as appropriate) section 33, or
 - (b) commitments accepted under section 31A,but, subject to that, has effect while this section applies.]
- (6) In the ^{F45}cases mentioned in section 25(2), (3), (6) and (7)], sections 32(3) and 34 also apply to directions given under this section.
- (7) In the ^{F46}cases mentioned in section 25(4) and (5)], sections 33(3) and 34 also apply to directions given under this section.
- ^{F47}(8) In the case of an investigation conducted by virtue of section 25(2) or (6), this section does not apply if a person has produced evidence to the OFT in connection with the investigation that satisfies it on the balance of probabilities that, in the event of it reaching the basic infringement conclusion, it would also reach the conclusion that the suspected agreement is exempt from the Chapter I prohibition as a result of section 9(1); and in this subsection “the basic infringement conclusion” is the conclusion that there is an agreement which—
 - (a) may affect trade within the United Kingdom, and
 - (b) has as its object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the United Kingdom.

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- (9) In the case of an investigation conducted by virtue of section 25(3) or (7), this section does not apply if a person has produced evidence to the OFT in connection with the investigation that satisfies it on the balance of probabilities that, in the event of it reaching the basic infringement conclusion, it would also reach the conclusion that the suspected agreement is an agreement to which the prohibition in Article 81(1) is inapplicable because the agreement satisfies the conditions in Article 81(3); and in this subsection “the basic infringement conclusion” is the conclusion that there is an agreement which—
- (a) may affect trade between Member States, and
 - (b) has as its object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the Community.]

Textual Amendments

- F42** S. 35(1) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 21(2)**
- F43** Words in s. 35 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(27)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, **Sch.** (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), **Sch.**)
- F44** S. 35(5) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 21(3)**
- F45** Words in s. 35(6) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 21(4)**
- F46** Words in s. 35(7) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 21(5)**
- F47** S. 35(8)(9) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 21(6)**

36 [^{F48}Penalties].

- (1) On making a decision that an agreement has infringed the Chapter I prohibition [^{F49}or that it has infringed the prohibition in Article 81(1)], the [^{F50}OFT] may require an undertaking which is a party to the agreement to pay [^{F51}the OFT] a penalty in respect of the infringement.
- (2) On making a decision that conduct has infringed the Chapter II prohibition [^{F52}or that it has infringed the prohibition in Article 82], the [^{F50}OFT] may require the undertaking concerned to pay [^{F51}the OFT] a penalty in respect of the infringement.
- (3) The [^{F50}OFT] may impose a penalty on an undertaking under subsection (1) or (2) only if [^{F53}the OFT] is satisfied that the infringement has been committed intentionally or negligently by the undertaking.
- (4) Subsection (1) is subject to section 39 and does not apply [^{F54}in relation to a decision that an agreement has infringed the Chapter I prohibition] if the [^{F50}OFT] is satisfied that the undertaking acted on the reasonable assumption that that section gave it immunity in respect of the agreement.
- (5) Subsection (2) is subject to section 40 and does not apply [^{F55}in relation to a decision that conduct has infringed the Chapter II prohibition] if the [^{F50}OFT] is satisfied that the undertaking acted on the reasonable assumption that that section gave it immunity in respect of the conduct.

Status: Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

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- (6) Notice of a penalty under this section must—
 - (a) be in writing; and
 - (b) specify the date before which the penalty is required to be paid.
- (7) The date specified must not be earlier than the end of the period within which an appeal against the notice may be brought under section 46.
- (8) No penalty fixed by the [F50OFT] under this section may exceed 10% of the turnover of the undertaking (determined in accordance with such provisions as may be specified in an order made by the Secretary of State).
- (9) Any sums received by the [F50OFT] under this section are to be paid into the Consolidated Fund.

Textual Amendments

- F48** Word in s. 36 sidenote substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 22\(6\)](#)
- F49** Words in s. 36(1) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 22\(2\)](#)
- F50** Word in s. 36 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, [Sch. 25 para. 38\(28\)\(a\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, [Sch.](#) (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), [Sch.](#))
- F51** Words in s. 36(1)(2) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, [Sch. 25 para. 38\(28\)\(b\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, [Sch.](#) (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), [Sch.](#))
- F52** Words in s. 36(2) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 22\(3\)](#)
- F53** Words in s. 36(3) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, [Sch. 25 para. 38\(28\)\(c\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, [Sch.](#) (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), [Sch.](#))
- F54** Words in s. 36(4) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 22\(4\)](#)
- F55** Words in s. 36(5) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 22\(5\)](#)

37 Recovery of penalties.

- (1) If the specified date in a penalty notice has passed and—
 - (a) the period during which an appeal against the imposition, or amount, of the penalty may be made has expired without an appeal having been made, or
 - (b) such an appeal has been made and determined,the [F56OFT] may recover from the undertaking, as a civil debt due to [F56the OFT], any amount payable under the penalty notice which remains outstanding.
- (2) In this section—
 - “penalty notice” means a notice given under section 36; and
 - “specified date” means the date specified in the penalty notice.

Status: Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

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Textual Amendments

F56 Words in s. 37 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38\(29\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch.](#) (with [art. 3](#)) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3\(2\), Sch.](#))

38 The appropriate level of a penalty.

(1) The ^{F57}OFT] must prepare and publish guidance as to the appropriate amount of any penalty under this Part.

^{F58}(1A) The guidance must include provision about the circumstances in which, in determining a penalty under this Part, the OFT may take into account effects in another Member State of the agreement or conduct concerned.]

(2) The ^{F57}OFT] may at any time alter the guidance.

(3) If the guidance is altered, the ^{F57}OFT] must publish it as altered.

(4) No guidance is to be published under this section without the approval of the Secretary of State.

(5) The ^{F57}OFT] may, after consulting the Secretary of State, choose how ^{F57}it] publishes ^{F57}its] guidance.

(6) If the ^{F57}OFT] is preparing or altering guidance under this section ^{F57}it] must consult such persons as ^{F57}it] considers appropriate.

(7) If the proposed guidance or alteration relates to a matter in respect of which a regulator exercises concurrent jurisdiction, those consulted must include that regulator.

(8) When setting the amount of a penalty under this Part, the ^{F57}OFT] must have regard to the guidance for the time being in force under this section.

(9) If a penalty or a fine has been imposed by the Commission, or by a court or other body in another Member State, in respect of an agreement or conduct, the ^{F57}OFT], an appeal tribunal or the appropriate court must take that penalty or fine into account when setting the amount of a penalty under this Part in relation to that agreement or conduct.

(10) In subsection (9) “the appropriate court” means—

- (a) in relation to England and Wales, the Court of Appeal;
- (b) in relation to Scotland, the Court of Session;
- (c) in relation to Northern Ireland, the Court of Appeal in Northern Ireland;
- (d) the House of Lords.

Textual Amendments

F57 Words in s. 38 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38\(30\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch.](#) (with [art. 3](#)) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3\(2\), Sch.](#))

F58 S. 38(1A) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\), reg. 1\(a\), Sch. 1 para. 23\(2\)](#)

Status: Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

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Commencement Information

- II** S. 38 wholly in force; s. 38 not in force at Royal Assent see s. 76(3); s. 38(1)-(7) in force at 11.1.1999 by S.I. 1998/3166, art. 2, Sch.; s. 38(8)-(10) in force at 1.3.2000 by S.I. 2000/344, art. 2, Sch.

39 [F59] Limited immunity in relation to the Chapter I prohibition].

- (1) In this section “small agreement” means an agreement—
 - (a) which falls within a category prescribed for the purposes of this section; but
 - (b) is not a price fixing agreement.
- (2) The criteria by reference to which a category of agreement is prescribed may, in particular, include—
 - (a) the combined turnover of the parties to the agreement (determined in accordance with prescribed provisions);
 - (b) the share of the market affected by the agreement (determined in that way).
- (3) A party to a small agreement is immune from the effect of section 36(1) [F60 so far as that provision relates to decisions about infringement of the Chapter I prohibition]; but the [F61OFT] may withdraw that immunity under subsection (4).
- (4) If the [F61OFT] has investigated a small agreement, [F61it] may make a decision withdrawing the immunity given by subsection (3) if, as a result of [F61its] investigation, [F61it] considers that the agreement is likely to infringe the Chapter I prohibition.
- (5) The [F61OFT] must give each of the parties in respect of which immunity is withdrawn written notice of [F61its] decision to withdraw the immunity.
- (6) A decision under subsection (4) takes effect on such date (“the withdrawal date”) as may be specified in the decision.
- (7) The withdrawal date must be a date after the date on which the decision is made.
- (8) In determining the withdrawal date, the [F61OFT] must have regard to the amount of time which the parties are likely to require in order to secure that there is no further infringement of the Chapter I prohibition with respect to the agreement.
- (9) In subsection (1) “price fixing agreement” means an agreement which has as its object or effect, or one of its objects or effects, restricting the freedom of a party to the agreement to determine the price to be charged (otherwise than as between that party and another party to the agreement) for the product, service or other matter to which the agreement relates.

Textual Amendments

- F59** Words in s. 39 sidenote substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 24\(3\)](#)
- F60** Words in s. 39(3) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 24\(2\)](#)
- F61** Words in s. 39 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, [Sch. 25 para. 38\(31\)](#); [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), Sch.)

Status: Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

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40 Limited immunity in relation to the Chapter II prohibition.

- (1) In this section “conduct of minor significance” means conduct which falls within a category prescribed for the purposes of this section.
- (2) The criteria by reference to which a category is prescribed may, in particular, include—
 - (a) the turnover of the person whose conduct it is (determined in accordance with prescribed provisions);
 - (b) the share of the market affected by the conduct (determined in that way).
- (3) A person is immune from the effect of section 36(2)^{F62}, so far as that provision relates to decisions about infringement of the Chapter II prohibition,] if ^{F63}its] conduct is conduct of minor significance; but the ^{F64}OFT] may withdraw that immunity under subsection (4).
- (4) If the ^{F64}OFT] has investigated conduct of minor significance, ^{F65}it] may make a decision withdrawing the immunity given by subsection (3) if, as a result of ^{F65}its] investigation, ^{F65}it] considers that the conduct is likely to infringe the Chapter II prohibition.
- (5) The ^{F64}OFT] must give the person, or persons, whose immunity has been withdrawn written notice of ^{F63}its] decision to withdraw the immunity.
- (6) A decision under subsection (4) takes effect on such date (“the withdrawal date”) as may be specified in the decision.
- (7) The withdrawal date must be a date after the date on which the decision is made.
- (8) In determining the withdrawal date, the ^{F64}OFT] must have regard to the amount of time which the person or persons affected are likely to require in order to secure that there is no further infringement of the Chapter II prohibition.

Textual Amendments

- F62** Words in s. 40(3) inserted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 25(2)**
- F63** Word in s. 40(5) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(32)(c)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, **Sch.** (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), **Sch.**)
- F64** Word in s. 40 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(32)(a)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, **Sch.** (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), **Sch.**)
- F65** Words in s. 40(4) substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(32)(b)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, **Sch.** (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), **Sch.**)

41 Agreements notified to the Commission.

- ^{F66}(1) This section applies if a party to an agreement which may infringe the Chapter I prohibition has notified the agreement to the Commission for a decision as to whether an exemption will be granted under Article 85 with respect to the agreement.
- (2) A penalty may not be required to be paid under this Part in respect of any infringement of the Chapter I prohibition after notification but before the Commission determines the matter.

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- (3) If the Commission withdraws the benefit of provisional immunity from penalties with respect to the agreement, subsection (2) ceases to apply as from the date on which that benefit is withdrawn.
- (4) The fact that an agreement has been notified to the Commission does not prevent the [F67OFT] from investigating it under this Part.
- (5) In this section “provisional immunity from penalties” has such meaning as may be prescribed.]

Textual Amendments

- F66** S. 41 ceased to have effect (1.5.2004) by virtue of [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004](#) (S.I. 2004/1261), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 26** (with reg. 6(2))
- F67** Word in s. 41 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002](#) (c. 40), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(33)**; S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, **Sch.** (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3(2), Sch.)

Offences

42 Offences.

- (1) A person is guilty of an offence if he fails to comply with a requirement imposed on him under section 26, 27[F68, 28 or 28A].
- (2) If a person is charged with an offence under subsection (1) in respect of a requirement to produce a document, it is a defence for him to prove—
 - (a) that the document was not in his possession or under his control; and
 - (b) that it was not reasonably practicable for him to comply with the requirement.
- (3) If a person is charged with an offence under subsection (1) in respect of a requirement—
 - (a) to provide information,
 - (b) to provide an explanation of a document, or
 - (c) to state where a document is to be found,it is a defence for him to prove that he had a reasonable excuse for failing to comply with the requirement.
- (4) Failure to comply with a requirement imposed under section 26 or 27 is not an offence if the person imposing the requirement has failed to act in accordance with that section.
- (5) A person is guilty of an offence if he intentionally obstructs an officer acting in the exercise of his powers under section 27.
- (6) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) or (5) is liable—
 - (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine.
- (7) A person who intentionally obstructs an officer in the exercise of his powers under a warrant issued under [F69section 28 or 28A] is guilty of an offence and liable—
 - (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.

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Textual Amendments

- F68** Words in s. 42(1) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 27\(2\)](#)
- F69** Words in s. 42(7) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 27\(3\)](#)

43 Destroying or falsifying documents.

- (1) A person is guilty of an offence if, having been required to produce a document under section 26, 27^[F70], 28 or 28A]—
- (a) he intentionally or recklessly destroys or otherwise disposes of it, falsifies it or conceals it, or
 - (b) he causes or permits its destruction, disposal, falsification or concealment.
- (2) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.

Textual Amendments

- F70** Words in s. 43(1) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), [Sch. 1 para. 28\(2\)](#)

44 False or misleading information.

- (1) If information is provided by a person to the [F71]OFT] in connection with any function of the [F71]OFT] under this Part, that person is guilty of an offence if—
- (a) the information is false or misleading in a material particular, and
 - (b) he knows that it is or is reckless as to whether it is.
- (2) A person who—
- (a) provides any information to another person, knowing the information to be false or misleading in a material particular, or
 - (b) recklessly provides any information to another person which is false or misleading in a material particular,
- knowing that the information is to be used for the purpose of providing information to the [F71]OFT] in connection with any of [F71]its] functions under this Part, is guilty of an offence.
- (3) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years or to a fine or to both.

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Textual Amendments

F71 Words in s. 44 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(34)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), Sch.)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C9 S. 44 applied (18.6.2001) by [2000 c. 8](#), s. 399; [S.I. 2001/1820](#), art. 2, Sch.

Status:

Point in time view as at 19/12/2005.

Changes to legislation:

Competition Act 1998, Chapter III is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 29 August 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.