



# Armed Forces Act 2006

## 2006 CHAPTER 52

### PART 9

#### SENTENCING: PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES

### CHAPTER 2

#### PRINCIPLES AND PROCEDURES APPLYING TO SERVICE COURTS ONLY

#### *General*

#### **256 Pre-sentence reports**

- (1) Subject to subsection (2), a court must obtain and consider a pre-sentence report before—
  - (a) forming any such opinion as is mentioned in—
    - section 242(1) or 243(2) (service detention);
    - section 260(2) or 261(2) (custodial sentence); or
    - section 265(1) (dismissal or dismissal with disgrace);
  - (b) forming any such opinion as is mentioned in section 270(1) or (2)(b) (community punishment) or any opinion as to the suitability for the offender of the particular requirement or requirements to be included in a community punishment; or
  - (c) forming the required opinion for the purposes of [<sup>F1</sup>section 219(1), [<sup>F2</sup>219A(1)], 221(1) or [<sup>F3</sup>221A(1)]] (sentences for dangerous offenders).]
- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply if, in the circumstances of the case, the court is of the opinion that it is unnecessary to obtain a pre-sentence report.
- (3) Where the offender is aged under 18, the court must not form the opinion mentioned in subsection (2) unless—

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**Changes to legislation:** *Armed Forces Act 2006, Section 256 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 18 June 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) View outstanding changes*

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- (a) there exists a previous pre-sentence report obtained in respect of the offender; and
  - (b) the court has had regard to the information contained in that report, or, if there is more than one such report, the most recent report.
- (4) No sentence is invalidated by a failure of a court to obtain and consider a pre-sentence report before doing any of the things mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subsection (1).
- (5) However, any court on appeal against a custodial sentence in respect of a service offence, a sentence of dismissal or dismissal with disgrace, a sentence of service detention or a community punishment—
- (a) must (subject to subsection (6)) obtain a pre-sentence report if none was obtained by the court below; and
  - (b) must consider any such report obtained by it or by that court.
- (6) Subsection (5)(a) does not apply if the court is of the opinion—
- (a) that the court below was justified in forming an opinion that it was unnecessary to obtain a pre-sentence report; or
  - (b) that, although the court below was not justified in forming that opinion, in the circumstances of the case at the time it is before the court it is unnecessary to obtain a pre-sentence report.
- (7) Where the offender is aged under 18, the court must not form the opinion mentioned in subsection (6) unless—
- (a) there exists a previous pre-sentence report obtained in respect of the offender; and
  - (b) the court has had regard to the information contained in that report or, if there is more than one such report, the most recent report.
- (8) Subsections (5) to (7) do not apply to the Summary Appeal Court on an appeal to it.
- (9) Subsections (1) to (4) do apply to the Summary Appeal Court in relation to a sentence of service detention, but as if the opinions referred to in subsection (1)(a) were any such opinion as is mentioned in section 242(4) or 243(3).
- [<sup>F4</sup>(10) The reference in subsection (1)(a) to a court forming any such opinion as is mentioned in section 260(2) or 261(2) includes a court forming such an opinion for the purposes of section 218A(4).]

#### **Textual Amendments**

- F1** Words in s. 256(1)(c) substituted (31.10.2009) by [Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 \(c. 4\)](#), s. 153(7), [Sch. 25 para. 20](#); S.I. 2009/1028, art. 2(b)
- F2** Word in s. 256(1)(c) substituted (3.12.2012) by [Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 \(c. 10\)](#), s. 151(1), [Sch. 22 para. 33\(2\)\(a\)](#); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(t)
- F3** Word in s. 256(1)(c) substituted (3.12.2012) by [Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 \(c. 10\)](#), s. 151(1), [Sch. 22 para. 33\(2\)\(b\)](#); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(t)
- F4** S. 256(10) inserted (3.12.2012) by [Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 \(c. 10\)](#), s. 151(1), [Sch. 22 para. 33\(3\)](#); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(t)

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#### **Commencement Information**

- I1** S. 256 in force at 28.3.2009 for specified purposes by [S.I. 2009/812](#), **art. 3(a)(b)** (with transitional provisions in [S.I. 2009/1059](#))
- I2** S. 256 in force at 31.10.2009 in so far as not already in force by [S.I. 2009/1167](#), **art. 4**

**Changes to legislation:**

Armed Forces Act 2006, Section 256 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 18 June 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.

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**Changes and effects yet to be applied to :**

- s. 256(1)(c) word inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(13\)](#)
- specified provision(s) transitional provisions for effects of commencing SI 2009/812 by [S.I. 2009/1059 Order](#)

**Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:**

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- Pt. 12A applied (with modifications) by S.I. 2009/1059, art. 106A (as inserted) by [S.I. 2024/619 reg. 44\(2\)](#)
- Pt. 12A inserted by [2016 c. 21 s. 7](#)
- Pt. 16B inserted by [2023 c. 48 s. 1](#)
- s. 50(2)(ca) inserted by [2011 c. 18 Sch. 4 para. 3\(3\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Sch. 4 para. 3(3) repealed (8.3.2015) without ever being in force by 2014 c. 12, Sch. 11 para. 82(2); S.I. 2015/373, art. 2(g)(ii))
- s. 209(8) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(3\)](#)
- s. 213(3A) words inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(6\)](#)
- s. 218A(6A) inserted by Sch. 26 para. 12(1)(db) (as inserted) by [S.I. 2020/1520 reg. 6\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 218A(6A) words omitted by virtue of 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 12(1)(dc) (as inserted) by [S.I. 2020/1520 reg. 6\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 219A(1)(d)(i) omitted by virtue of 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 14(a)(i) (as substituted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 219A(1)(d)(iii) omitted by virtue of 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 14(a)(i) (as substituted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 219A(1)(da) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(7\)](#)
- s. 219A(1)(da)(i) omitted by virtue of 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 14(a)(ii) (as substituted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 219A(2A) inserted by 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 14(bb) (as inserted) by [S.I. 2020/1520 reg. 6\(3\)](#)
- s. 219ZA inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 8 para. 2](#)
- s. 219ZA(1)(e) words omitted by virtue of 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 13A(a) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 219ZA(4)-(6) omitted by virtue of 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 13A(b) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 219ZA(7) words omitted by virtue of 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 13A(c) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 223(1A) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(8\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 224A(1)(d)(iii) and word inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(9\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#)
- s. 224A(1)(d)(iii) words substituted by 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 15(a)(iii) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 224A(1A) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 8 para. 8\(4\)](#)
- s. 224A(3A) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(9\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 224B inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 8 para. 9](#)
- s. 225(1A) inserted by 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 15A (as inserted) by [S.I. 2020/1520 reg. 6\(4\)](#)
- s. 226(1A) inserted by 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 15B (as inserted) by [S.I. 2020/1520 reg. 6\(4\)](#)
- s. 227(3)(a)(b) substituted for words by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(10\)](#)

- s. 238(6)(a) word omitted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(11\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 238(6)(b) word substituted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(11\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 238(6)(aa) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(11\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 239(3A)(3B) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 8 para. 3](#)
- s. 239(3A) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch 26 para. 18\(a\)\(i\)](#) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 239(3A) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch 26 para. 18\(a\)\(ii\)](#) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 239(3B) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch 26 para. 18\(b\)](#) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 260(1)(ca) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(14\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#)
- s. 260(1)(ca) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 19\(a\)\(iia\)](#) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(e\)\(i\)](#)
- s. 260(4B)(a) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 19\(b\)\(ii\)](#) (as substituted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(e\)\(ii\)](#)
- s. 260(4B)(za) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(14\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 260(4B)(za) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 19\(b\)\(i\)](#) (as substituted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(e\)\(ii\)](#)
- s. 261(1)(ba) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(15\)](#)
- s. 261(1)(ba) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 20\(c\)](#) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(f\)](#)
- s. 261A(3)(a) words in s. 261A(3) renumbered as s. 261A(3)(a) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 8 para. 4\(a\)](#)
- s. 261A(3)(b)(c) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 8 para. 4\(b\)](#)
- s. 261A(3)(b) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 20A\(a\)](#) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(g\)](#)
- s. 261A(3)(c)(i) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 20A\(b\)](#) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(g\)](#)
- s. 262A(2A) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(16\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 262A(2A)(b) omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 21\(a\)](#) (as substituted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(h\)](#)
- s. 262A(3A) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(16\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 262A(3A) omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 21\(b\)](#) (as substituted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(h\)](#)
- s. 262A(4) words inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(16\)\(c\)\(i\)](#)
- s. 262A(4) words inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 41\(16\)\(c\)\(ii\)](#)
- s. 262A(4) words omitted by virtue of [2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 21\(c\)](#) (as substituted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(h\)](#)
- s. 270A270B inserted by [2008 c. 4 Sch. 25 para. 27](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Sch. 25 para. 26(3)(4) repealed (2.4.2012) by [2011 c. 18, Sch. 3 para. 20\(3\)](#), Sch. 5; S.I. 2012/669, art. 4(d)(f) (with art. 13))
- s. 270B(6)(aa) inserted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 9\(2\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Sch. 17 para. 9 repealed (2.4.2012) without ever being in force by [2011 c. 18, Sch. 5; S.I. 2012/669, art. 4\(f\)](#))
- s. 270B(10) word repealed by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 23 Pt. 5](#)
- s. 270B(10)(a) words inserted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 9\(3\)\(a\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Sch. 17 para. 9 repealed (2.4.2012) without ever being in force by [2011 c. 18, Sch. 5; S.I. 2012/669, art. 4\(f\)](#))
- s. 270B(10)(b) words substituted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 9\(3\)\(b\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Sch. 17 para. 9 repealed (2.4.2012) without ever being in force by [2011 c. 18, Sch. 5; S.I. 2012/669, art. 4\(f\)](#))
- s. 270B(10)(c)-(e) inserted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 9\(3\)\(c\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Sch. 17 para. 9 repealed (2.4.2012) without ever being in force by [2011 c. 18, Sch. 5; S.I. 2012/669, art. 4\(f\)](#))
- s. 304B inserted by [2016 c. 21 s. 8](#)
- s. 304C inserted by [2016 c. 21 s. 9](#)
- s. 304C(5A) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 8 para. 5](#)

- s. 304C(5A) words omitted by virtue of 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 24A(a) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(i\)](#)
- s. 304C(5A) words substituted by 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 24A(b) (as inserted) by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 43\(7\)\(i\)](#)
- s. 304F-304H inserted by [2016 c. 21 s. 12](#)
- s. 377(8) inserted by 2020 c. 17, Sch. 26 para. 26 (as inserted) by [S.I. 2020/1520 reg. 6\(5\)](#)
- Sch. 7 para. 9(A1) inserted by [2020 c. 9 Sch. 2 para. 123\(8\)\(a\)](#) (This pre-consolidation amendment comes into force immediately before the consolidation date on 1.12.2020 (see 2020 c. 9, ss. 3, 5(2)(3) and 2020 c. 17, ss. 2, 416) to facilitate the sentencing consolidation and then is repealed immediately afterwards on 1.12.2020 by the Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), Sch. 28; S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2)