



Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022

2022 CHAPTER 35

PART 2

COURTS, TRIBUNALS AND CORONERS

CHAPTER 1

CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

Written procedures for dealing with summary offences

3 Automatic online conviction and penalty for certain summary offences

After section 16F of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 insert—

“Automatic online conviction and penalty for certain summary offences

16G The automatic online conviction option

- (1) In this Act a reference to a person being offered the automatic online conviction option in respect of an offence is a reference to the person being given an electronic notification which explains that if the person intends to plead guilty the person may agree—
 - (a) to be convicted of the offence under section 16H, and
 - (b) to be penalised for the offence under section 16I.
- (2) In this Act a reference to a person accepting the automatic online conviction option in respect of an offence is a reference to the person giving an electronic notification which indicates that the person—
 - (a) pleads guilty to the offence,
 - (b) agrees to be convicted of the offence under section 16H, and

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- (c) agrees to be penalised for the offence under section 16I.
- (3) A notification purporting to be given by a person (or the person’s legal representative) is to be treated for the purposes of subsection (2) as a notification given by that person.
- (4) In this section “electronic notification” means a written notification given—
 - (a) by electronic means,
 - (b) under such arrangements as are put in place by the Lord Chancellor for the purposes of this section and sections 16H to 16L, and
 - (c) in accordance with such provision as may be made by Criminal Procedure Rules.

16H Conviction

- (1) Subsection (2) applies to a person accused of an offence if—
 - (a) the qualifying conditions are met, and
 - (b) the person is offered, and accepts, the automatic online conviction option in respect of the offence.
- (2) The accused is convicted of the offence by virtue of accepting the automatic online conviction option.
- (3) For the purposes of this section the qualifying conditions are met if—
 - (a) regulations made by the Lord Chancellor specify the offence as one for which the automatic online conviction option may be offered;
 - (b) the accused had attained the age of 18 years when charged, or is not an individual;
 - (c) the required documents have been served on the accused; and
 - (d) service of all of the required documents was effected in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules.
- (4) An offence may not be specified in regulations under subsection (3)(a) unless it is a summary offence that is not punishable with imprisonment.
- (5) Regulations under subsection (3)(a) are to be made by statutory instrument; and a statutory instrument containing such regulations (whether alone or with other provision) may not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.
- (6) In this section, “required documents” means—
 - (a) a written charge,
 - (b) a single justice procedure notice that complies with subsection (2D) of section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, and
 - (c) such other documents as may be prescribed by Criminal Procedure Rules as described in subsection (3B) of that section.

16I Penalties and other liabilities

- (1) This section applies if a person is convicted of an offence under section 16H.
- (2) The offender is liable to a fine of the amount specified for the offence.

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- (3) The offender’s driving record is to be endorsed with the specified number of penalty points, and any other specified particulars, if the offence is specified as one to which such a penalty applies.
- (4) The offender is liable to pay compensation if the offence is specified as one in respect of which such a payment is to be made.
- (5) The amount of the compensation payable—
 - (a) is to be determined by the relevant prosecutor who instituted proceedings for the offence;
 - (b) must not exceed the maximum amount specified for the offence.
- (6) The offender is liable to pay prosecution costs.
- (7) The amount of the prosecution costs payable is to be determined by the relevant prosecutor who instituted proceedings for the offence.
- (8) The offender is liable to pay a surcharge of the amount specified for the offence.
- (9) In this section and section 16J—
 - “driving record” and “penalty points” have the same meanings as in the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988;
 - “relevant prosecutor” has the same meaning as in section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003;
 - “specified” means specified in regulations made by the Lord Chancellor.

16J Regulations about penalties etc under section 16I

- (1) Regulations under section 16I(2) may specify fines of different amounts—
 - (a) for different offences;
 - (b) for different circumstances in which a particular offence is committed.
- (2) Regulations under section 16I(3) may not specify an offence unless it is an offence that would or could result in the endorsement of the offender’s driving record with penalty points on conviction in a magistrates’ court.
- (3) Regulations under section 16I(5)(b) may specify different maximum amounts of compensation—
 - (a) for different offences;
 - (b) for different circumstances in which a particular offence is committed.
- (4) Regulations under section 16I(8) may specify different amounts of surcharge—
 - (a) for different offences;
 - (b) for different circumstances in which a particular offence is committed.
- (5) The power to make regulations under section 16I(8) includes power to specify the amount of the surcharge for a particular offence as a proportion of the amount of the fine specified for that offence.
- (6) Regulations under section 16I are to be made by statutory instrument; and a statutory instrument containing such regulations (whether alone or with other provision) may not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, each House of Parliament.

16K Timing and status of conviction and penalty

- (1) The time when a conviction under section 16H takes effect is to be determined in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules.
- (2) A conviction under section 16H is to be treated as a conviction by the specified magistrates' court.
- (3) A fine to which a person is liable under section 16I is to be treated as if it had been imposed by the specified magistrates' court on conviction.
- (4) An endorsement of a person's driving record under section 16I is to be treated as if the specified magistrates' court had ordered the endorsement under section 44 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.
- (5) Compensation which a person is liable to pay under section 16I is to be treated as if the specified magistrates' court had ordered it to be paid under Chapter 2 of Part 7 of the Sentencing Code.
- (6) Prosecution costs which a person is liable to pay under section 16I are to be treated as if the specified magistrates' court had ordered them to be paid under section 18 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985.
- (7) A surcharge which a person is liable to pay under section 16I is to be treated as if the specified magistrates' court had ordered it to be paid under section 42 of the Sentencing Code.
- (8) In this section, "specified magistrates' court" means the magistrates' court specified in the notice of conviction and penalty (see section 16L(2)(b)).

16L Notice of conviction and penalty

- (1) The Lord Chancellor must secure that a person who is convicted of an offence under section 16H is given a notice of conviction and penalty.
- (2) A notice of conviction and penalty is an electronic notification which—
 - (a) sets out each penalty imposed on the offender under section 16I;
 - (b) specifies a magistrates' court for the purposes of section 16K;
 - (c) requires the offender to pay the sums that the offender is liable to pay under section 16I—
 - (i) within the relevant 28-day period, and
 - (ii) in the manner specified in the notice.
- (3) The relevant 28-day period is the period of 28 days beginning with the day on which the person's conviction took effect.
- (4) In this section—
 - "electronic notification" has the meaning given by section 16G(4);
 - "penalty" means—
 - (a) a fine,
 - (b) penalty points,
 - (c) compensation,
 - (d) prosecution costs, or

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- (e) a surcharge;
“penalty points” has the same meaning as in the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988.

16M Powers to set aside a conviction or replace a penalty etc

- (1) A magistrates’ court may set aside a conviction under section 16H if it appears to the court that the conviction is unjust.
- (2) Subsection (1) does not affect the validity of a written charge or a single justice procedure notice.
- (3) A magistrates’ court carrying out functions under subsection (1) may be composed of a single justice.
- (4) But if a magistrates’ court composed of a single justice is minded to refuse to set aside a conviction—
 - (a) the decision must instead be referred to a magistrates’ court that is not so composed; and
 - (b) the parties must be given the opportunity to attend at, and make representations to, the magistrates’ court making that decision.
- (5) A magistrates’ court—
 - (a) may set aside any penalty imposed on a person under section 16I if it appears to the court that the amount of that penalty is unjust; and
 - (b) if it does so, may impose any sentence that it could have imposed for that offence if the person had pleaded guilty before it at the earliest opportunity.
- (6) The reference in subsection (5)(a) to the amount of a penalty is to be read, in relation to penalty points, as a reference to the number of penalty points imposed.
- (7) A magistrates’ court may exercise a power conferred by this section—
 - (a) on an application by the person convicted,
 - (b) on an application by the relevant prosecutor who initiated the proceedings, or
 - (c) of its own motion.
- (8) In this section—
 - “penalty” and “penalty points” have the meanings given by section 16L(4);
 - “relevant prosecutor” has the same meaning as in section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.”

4 Guilty plea in writing: extension to proceedings following police charge

- (1) Section 12 of the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980 (non-appearance of accused following indication of guilty plea) is amended as follows.
- (2) In subsection (1)(a), omit the words from “, not” to “instrument”.
- (3) After subsection (2) insert—

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“(2A) This section shall also apply where—

- (a) a person has been charged with a summary offence under Part 4 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984;
- (b) the accused had attained the age of 16 when charged; and
- (c) the designated officer for the court is notified by or on behalf of the prosecutor that the documents mentioned in subsection (3) below have been served upon the accused in accordance with rules of court.”

(4) In subsection (3), after “(1)(b)” insert “and (2A)(c)”.

(5) In subsection (5)—

- (a) in paragraph (b), for “with the summons” substitute “as described in subsection (1)(b) or (2A)(c)”;
- (b) in the words after paragraph (b), omit the words from “, subject” to “below,”.

(6) After subsection (5) insert—

“(5A) Where subsection (5)(a) and (b) applies, the court also has power to discharge the accused from any duty to surrender to the custody of the court.

(5B) The function of the court under subsection (5A) may be discharged by a single justice.

(5C) The court’s powers under subsection (5) are subject to subsections (5D) to (8).

(5D) The court may not in the absence of the accused—

- (a) impose a sentence of imprisonment or detention in a young offender institution,
- (b) make a detention and training order, or
- (c) make an order under paragraph 13(1)(a) or (b) of Schedule 16 to the Sentencing Code that a suspended sentence is to take effect.

(5E) The court may not in the absence of the accused impose any disqualification, except on resumption of the hearing after an adjournment under section 10(3).

(5F) Where a trial is adjourned with a view to its resumption for the purposes of subsection (5E), the notice required by section 10(2) must include notice of the reason for the adjournment.”

(7) In subsection (7), in paragraphs (a) and (aa), for “with the summons” substitute “as described in subsection (1)(b) or (2A)(c)”.

(8) Omit subsections (12) and (13).

5 Extension of single justice procedure to corporations

In section 16A of the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980 (trial by single justice on the papers), in subsection (1)(b), after “charged” insert “, or is not an individual”.

Offences triable either way: determining the mode of trial

6 Written procedure for indicating plea and determining mode of trial: adults

(1) The Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980 is amended as follows.

(2) After section 17 insert—

“17ZA Option to indicate plea in writing

- (1) Subsection (3) has effect where a person is charged with an offence triable either way and—
 - (a) has attained the age of 18 years when charged, or
 - (b) attains the age of 18 years after being charged without first having—
 - (i) appeared in court to answer the charge, or
 - (ii) given, or failed to give, a written indication of plea within the meaning given by section 24ZA(11).
- (2) But Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision about circumstances in which subsection (3) does not have effect.
- (3) A magistrates’ court must, in writing—
 - (a) provide the accused with the information referred to in subsection (4), and
 - (b) ask the accused—
 - (i) whether the accused wishes to give a written indication of plea, and
 - (ii) if the accused wishes to do so, whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) the accused would plead guilty or not guilty.
- (4) The information is—
 - (a) a statement of the charge against the accused;
 - (b) an explanation, including such details as may be prescribed by Criminal Procedure Rules, of—
 - (i) why the accused is being asked the questions set out in subsection (3)(b), and
 - (ii) the consequences of giving or failing to give a written indication of plea;
 - (c) an explanation of the way in which, and the period of time within which, the accused may give a written indication of plea;
 - (d) any other information that—
 - (i) Criminal Procedure Rules require to be provided, or
 - (ii) Criminal Procedure Rules allow to be provided and the court decides to provide.
- (5) If the accused gives a written indication of a guilty plea, the court is to proceed in accordance with section 17ZB.
- (6) If the accused gives a written indication of a not guilty plea, the court is to proceed in accordance with section 17ZC or (if neither subsection (3) nor subsection (5) of that section has effect) section 18(1A).
- (7) If the accused fails to give a written indication of plea, the court is to proceed by way of a hearing for the purposes of section 17A.
- (8) The following shall not for any purpose be taken to constitute the taking of a plea—

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- (a) asking the accused under this section whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) the accused would plead guilty or not guilty; or
 - (b) giving a written indication of plea.
- (9) If in respect of the offence the court receives a notice under section 51B or 51C of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (which relate to serious or complex fraud cases and to certain cases involving children respectively), the preceding provisions of this section do not apply, and the court must proceed in relation to the offence in accordance with section 51 or, as the case may be, section 51A of that Act.
- (10) Subsection (11) applies if—
- (a) the accused gives a written indication of plea, and
 - (b) at any time before—
 - (i) the taking of a plea in the summary trial,
 - (ii) the hearing under section 18(1A), or
 - (iii) the sending of the accused to the Crown Court for trial,
 the court receives an indication from the accused that the accused wishes to withdraw the written indication of plea.
- (11) If this subsection applies—
- (a) the designated officer for the court must inform the prosecutor of the withdrawal,
 - (b) the court is to cease to proceed in accordance with any of sections 17ZB, 17ZC and 18(1A) and (4A), and
 - (c) the court is to proceed by way of a hearing for the purposes of section 17A.
- (12) The reference in subsection (1) to a person charged with an offence is a reference to—
- (a) a person in respect of whom a summons or warrant has been issued under section 1,
 - (b) a person who has been charged with an offence under Part 4 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, or
 - (c) a person against whom a written charge and requisition have been issued under section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.
- (13) In this section and sections 17ZB to 18—
- (a) “written indication of plea” means a written indication given—
 - (i) by a person who has been provided with the information and asked the questions required by subsection (3), and
 - (ii) in accordance with the explanation provided under subsection (4)(c),
 of whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) that person would plead guilty or not guilty;
 - (b) “written indication of a guilty plea” and “written indication of a not guilty plea” are to be read accordingly;
 - (c) references to a person’s failing to give a written indication of plea are to a person’s—
 - (i) having been provided with the information and asked the questions required by subsection (3), and

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- (ii) not having given a written indication of plea within the period indicated under subsection (4)(c).

17ZB Proceedings following written indication of guilty plea

- (1) This section has effect (subject to section 17ZA(11)) in relation to a case where a person has given a written indication of a guilty plea (see section 17ZA(13)).
- (2) But Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision about circumstances in which subsections (3) to (8) do not have effect.
- (3) A magistrates' court may consider whether the condition set out in subsection (4) is met.
- (4) The condition is that the court can, on the material before it (without any hearing or representations), be satisfied that it is highly likely that, were the accused to plead guilty at a summary trial of the offence in question and be convicted, the court would commit the accused to the Crown Court for sentence under Chapter 2 of Part 2 of the Sentencing Code.
- (5) If the court decides that that condition is met, the court may, in writing—
 - (a) provide the accused with the information referred to in subsection (6), and
 - (b) ask the accused whether the accused objects to being sent to the Crown Court for trial for the offence.
- (6) The information is—
 - (a) an explanation, including such details as may be prescribed by Criminal Procedure Rules, of—
 - (i) why the accused is being asked the question set out in subsection (5)(b), and
 - (ii) the consequences of objecting or failing to object to being sent to the Crown Court for trial;
 - (b) an explanation of the way in which, and the period of time within which, the accused may object to being so sent;
 - (c) any other information that—
 - (i) Criminal Procedure Rules require to be provided, or
 - (ii) Criminal Procedure Rules allow to be provided and the court decides to provide.
- (7) If the court exercises the power in subsection (5) it must also, in writing—
 - (a) inform the prosecutor that the court has—
 - (i) decided that the condition set out in subsection (4) is met, and
 - (ii) exercised the power in subsection (5) in relation to the accused;
 - (b) explain the way in which, and the period of time within which, the prosecutor may object to the accused's being sent to the Crown Court for trial for the offence; and
 - (c) ask the prosecutor whether the prosecutor objects to the accused's being sent to the Crown Court for trial for the offence.
- (8) If—

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- (a) the court has exercised the power in subsection (5),
- (b) subsection (7) has been complied with,
- (c) the accused has not objected, in accordance with the explanation provided under subsection (6)(b), to being sent to the Crown Court for trial for the offence, and
- (d) the prosecutor has not objected, in accordance with the explanation provided under subsection (7)(b), to the accused's being sent to the Crown Court for trial for the offence,

the court is to proceed in relation to the offence in accordance with section 51 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

- (9) If subsection (8) does not apply, the court is to proceed to try the offence summarily under section 9.
- (10) If, at a summary trial held in accordance with subsection (9), the accused pleads not guilty—
 - (a) the trial and the plea are void, and
 - (b) the court is to proceed as if the hearing were for the purposes of section 17A and the accused had indicated that the accused would (if the offence were to proceed to trial) plead not guilty.

17ZC Option to decline summary trial, or for mode of trial to be decided on papers, following written indication of not guilty plea

- (1) Subsection (3) or (5) has effect (subject to section 17ZA(11)) in relation to a case where a person has given a written indication of a not guilty plea (see section 17ZA(13)).
- (2) But Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision about circumstances in which neither subsection (3) nor subsection (5) has effect.
- (3) If the offence in question is not a scheduled offence (as defined in section 22(1)), a magistrates' court must, in writing—
 - (a) provide the accused with the information referred to in subsection (4), and
 - (b) ask the accused—
 - (i) whether the accused wishes to give a written indication of non-consent to summary trial, and
 - (ii) if the accused does not wish to give that indication, whether the accused wishes to make an election for written allocation proceedings.
- (4) The information is—
 - (a) an explanation, including such details as may be prescribed by Criminal Procedure Rules, of—
 - (i) why the accused is being asked the questions set out in subsection (3)(b), and
 - (ii) the consequences of doing or failing to do the things referred to in subsection (3)(b);
 - (b) an explanation of the way in which, and the period of time within which, the accused may give a written indication of non-consent to summary trial or make an election for written allocation proceedings;

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- (c) any other information that—
 - (i) Criminal Procedure Rules require to be provided, or
 - (ii) Criminal Procedure Rules allow to be provided and the court decides to provide.
- (5) If the offence in question is a scheduled offence (as defined in section 22(1)), a magistrates’ court must, in writing—
 - (a) provide the accused with the information referred to in subsection (6), and
 - (b) ask the accused—
 - (i) whether the accused wishes to make an election for written allocation proceedings and give a written indication of non-consent to summary trial, and
 - (ii) if the accused does not wish to make that election and give that indication, whether the accused wishes to make an election for written allocation proceedings.
- (6) The information is—
 - (a) an explanation, including such details as may be prescribed by Criminal Procedure Rules, of—
 - (i) why the accused is being asked the questions set out in subsection (5)(b), and
 - (ii) the consequences of doing or failing to do the things described in subsection (5)(b)(i) or (ii);
 - (b) an explanation of the way in which, and the period of time within which, the person may do the things described in subsection (5)(b)(i) or (ii);
 - (c) any other information that—
 - (i) Criminal Procedure Rules require to be provided, or
 - (ii) Criminal Procedure Rules allow to be provided and the court decides to provide.
- (7) If, where subsection (3) has been complied with, the accused gives a written indication of non-consent to summary trial, the court is to proceed in relation to the offence in accordance with section 51 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- (8) Otherwise, where subsection (3) or (5) has been complied with, the court is to proceed in accordance with section 18(1A) or (4A).
- (9) In this section and sections 18 and 22—
 - (a) “election for written allocation proceedings” means an election in writing made—
 - (i) by a person who has been provided with the information and asked the questions required by subsection (3) or (5), and
 - (ii) in accordance with the explanation provided under subsection (4)(b) or (6)(b),for the court to decide where the person’s trial should take place by written proceedings without the person (or the person’s legal representative) being present;

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- (b) “written indication of non-consent to summary trial” means a written indication given—
- (i) by a person who has been provided with the information and asked the questions required by subsection (3) or (5), and
 - (ii) in accordance with the explanation provided under subsection (4)(b) or (6)(b),
- that the person would not (if the offence were to proceed to trial and, in the case of a scheduled offence (as defined in section 22(1)), if trial in the Crown Court were available) consent to be tried in a magistrates’ court for the offence;
- (c) references to a person’s failing to make an election for written allocation proceedings, or failing to give a written indication of non-consent to summary trial, are to a person’s—
- (i) having been provided with the information and asked the questions required by subsection (3) or (5), and
 - (ii) not having, within the period indicated under subsection (4)(b) or (6)(b), made an election for written allocation proceedings or (as the case may be) given a written indication of non-consent to summary trial.”
- (3) In section 22A (low-value shoplifting to be summary offence subject to right to elect Crown Court trial)—
- (a) in subsection (1), at the end insert “, subject to subsections (1D) and (2)”;
 - (b) after subsection (1) insert—
- “(1A) Where a person accused of low-value shoplifting is aged 18 or over (and has not appeared before the court to answer the charge before attaining that age), a magistrates’ court must, in writing—
- (a) provide the accused with the information referred to in subsection (1B), and
 - (b) ask the accused whether the accused wishes to—
 - (i) elect to be tried by the Crown Court for the offence, or
 - (ii) confirm that the accused does not so elect.
- (1B) The information is—
- (a) a statement of the charge against the accused;
 - (b) an explanation, including such details as may be prescribed by Criminal Procedure Rules, of—
 - (i) why the accused is being asked the question set out in subsection (1A)(b), and
 - (ii) the consequences of electing to be tried by the Crown Court or confirming to the contrary;
 - (c) an explanation of the way in which, and the period of time within which, the accused would have to make that election or give that confirmation;
 - (d) any other information that—
 - (i) Criminal Procedure Rules require to be provided, or
 - (ii) Criminal Procedure Rules allow to be provided and the court decides to provide.

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- (1C) Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision about circumstances in which subsection (1A) does not apply.
 - (1D) If, having been provided with the information and asked the question required by subsection (1A), the accused elects, in accordance with the explanation provided under subsection (1B)(c), to be tried by the Crown Court for the offence, the court must proceed in relation to the offence in accordance with section 51 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (and subsection (2) does not apply).
 - (1E) If, having been provided with the information and asked the question required by subsection (1A), the accused confirms, in accordance with the explanation provided under subsection (1B)(c), that the accused does not elect to be tried by the Crown Court for the offence, subsection (2) does not apply.”;
- (c) in subsection (2)—
- (i) for “But” substitute “Subject to subsections (1D) and (1E),”;
 - (ii) omit paragraph (a).

7 Initial option for adult accused to reject summary trial at hearing

In the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980, after section 17B insert—

“17BA Option to decline summary trial without allocation hearing following indication of not guilty plea in court

- (1) This section has effect in the circumstances set out in sections 17A(7) (indication of not guilty plea by accused at hearing), 17B(2)(d) (indication of not guilty plea by accused’s representative at hearing) and 22(2B) (scheduled offence found at hearing to be triable either way after indication of not guilty plea).
- (2) If the accused is present, the court must explain to the accused that—
 - (a) the accused may choose to give an indication that the accused would not (if the offence were to proceed to trial) consent to be tried summarily for the offence;
 - (b) if the accused chooses to give such an indication, the accused will be sent to the Crown Court for trial without having the opportunity to make representations as to the suitable mode of trial under section 19(2) or to obtain an indication of sentence under section 20(3);
 - (c) if the accused chooses not to give such an indication, the court will proceed in accordance with section 18(1);and must then ask the accused whether the accused wishes to indicate that the accused would not (if the offence were to proceed to trial) consent to be tried summarily for the offence.
- (3) If the accused is not present, the court must ask the accused’s legal representative whether the accused would wish to indicate that the accused would not (if the offence were to proceed to trial) consent to be tried summarily for the offence.

- (4) If the accused, or the accused’s legal representative, gives an in-court indication of non-consent to summary trial, the court is to proceed in relation to the offence in accordance with section 51 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- (5) If the accused, or the accused’s legal representative, does not give an in-court indication of non-consent to summary trial, the court is to proceed in accordance with section 18(1).
- (6) In this section and section 18, “in-court indication of non-consent to summary trial” means an indication given by a person or a person’s legal representative, in response to the question asked under subsection (2) or (3), that the person would not (if the offence were to proceed to trial) consent to be tried in a magistrates’ court for the offence of which the person is accused.”

8 Written procedure for indicating plea and determining mode of trial: children

In the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980, after section 24 insert—

“24ZA Option for child or young person to indicate plea in writing where allocation decision otherwise required

- (1) Subsection (3) has effect where—
 - (a) a person under the age of 18 years is charged with an offence other than one falling within section 51A(12) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (“the 1998 Act”),
 - (b) the person has not since attained the age of 18 years, and
 - (c) a magistrates’ court would, but for this section and sections 24A and 24B, have to determine under section 51A of the 1998 Act—
 - (i) whether to send the accused to the Crown Court for trial, or
 - (ii) any matter the effect of which would be to determine whether the accused is sent to the Crown Court for trial.
- (2) But Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision about circumstances in which subsection (3) does not have effect.
- (3) A magistrates’ court must, in writing—
 - (a) provide the accused with the information referred to in subsection (4), and
 - (b) ask the accused—
 - (i) whether the accused chooses to give a written indication of plea, and
 - (ii) if the accused chooses to do so, whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) the accused would plead guilty or not guilty.
- (4) The information is—
 - (a) a statement of the charge against the accused;
 - (b) an explanation, including such details as may be prescribed by Criminal Procedure Rules, of—
 - (i) why the accused is being asked the questions set out in subsection (3)(b), and

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- (ii) the consequences of giving or failing to give a written indication of plea;
 - (c) an explanation of the way in which, and the period of time within which, the accused may give a written indication of plea;
 - (d) any other information that—
 - (i) Criminal Procedure Rules require to be provided, or
 - (ii) Criminal Procedure Rules allow to be provided and the court decides to provide.
- (5) If the accused gives a written indication of a guilty plea, the court is not to make the relevant determination but is to proceed to try the offence summarily under section 9.
- (6) If, at a summary trial held in accordance with subsection (5), the accused pleads not guilty—
 - (a) the trial and the plea are void, and
 - (b) the court is to proceed as if the hearing were for the purposes of section 24A and the accused had indicated that the accused would (if the offence were to proceed to trial) plead not guilty.
- (7) If the accused gives a written indication of a not guilty plea, the court is to—
 - (a) give the prosecutor and the accused an opportunity to make representations in writing about the matters referred to in subsection (1)(c)(i) or (ii), and
 - (b) proceed to make the relevant determination.
- (8) If the accused fails to give a written indication of plea, the court is to proceed by way of a hearing for the purposes of section 24A.
- (9) The following shall not for any purpose be taken to constitute the taking of a plea—
 - (a) asking the accused under this section whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) the accused would plead guilty or not guilty;
 - (b) a written indication of plea under this section.
- (10) In subsection (1), the reference to a person charged with an offence is a reference to—
 - (a) a person in respect of whom a summons or warrant has been issued under section 1,
 - (b) a person who has been charged with an offence under Part 4 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, or
 - (c) a person against whom a written charge and requisition have been issued under section 29 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003.
- (11) In this section and sections 24ZB, 24A and 24BA—
 - (a) “written indication of plea” means a written indication given—
 - (i) by a person who has been provided with the information and asked the questions required by subsection (3),
 - (ii) in accordance with the explanation provided under subsection (4)(c),of whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) that person would plead guilty or not guilty;

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- (b) “written indication of a guilty plea” and “written indication of a not guilty plea” are to be read accordingly;
 - (c) references to a person’s failing to give a written indication of plea are to a person’s—
 - (i) having been provided with the information and asked the questions required by subsection (3), and
 - (ii) not having given a written indication of plea within the period indicated under subsection (4)(c).
- (12) In this section and section 24ZB, “relevant determination” means the determination referred to in subsection (1)(c).

24ZB Written indication of plea: accused turning 18 or withdrawing indication

- (1) This section has effect where a magistrates’ court has complied with section 24ZA(3).
- (2) If the accused attains the age of 18 years before giving, or failing to give, a written indication of plea (see section 24ZA(11)), section 24ZA ceases to have effect (and the court is to proceed in accordance with section 17ZA or 17A).

The court may not exercise its powers under section 29 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 so as to produce a different result.

- (3) Subsection (4) applies if the accused attains the age of 18 years—
 - (a) after giving a written indication of plea, but
 - (b) before the taking of a plea in the summary trial or, as the case may be, the making of the relevant determination (see section 24ZA(12)).
- (4) The court must consider whether to exercise its powers under section 29 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963; but subject to any exercise of those powers—
 - (a) section 24ZA(5) or (7) ceases to apply, and
 - (b) the court is to proceed as if the written indication of plea had been given under (and within the meaning of) section 17ZA.
- (5) Subsection (6) applies if the accused attains the age of 18 years—
 - (a) having failed to give a written indication of plea, but
 - (b) before the hearing for the purposes of section 24A.
- (6) Section 24ZA(8) ceases to apply, and the court is to proceed as if the accused had failed to give a written indication of plea within the meaning of section 17ZA.

The court may not exercise its powers under section 29 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 so as to produce a different result.

- (7) Subsection (8) applies if—
 - (a) the accused gives a written indication of plea,
 - (b) at any time before—
 - (i) the taking of a plea in the summary trial,
 - (ii) the hearing for the purposes of section 24A(2), or
 - (iii) the sending of the accused to the Crown Court for trial,

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- the court receives an indication given by the accused that the accused wishes to withdraw the written indication of plea, and
- (c) the written indication of plea is not at that time being treated by virtue of subsection (4) as having been given under section 17ZA.

(8) If this subsection applies—

- (a) the designated officer for the court must inform the prosecutor of the withdrawal;
- (b) the court is to cease to proceed in accordance with section 24ZA(5) or (7); and
- (c) the court is to proceed by way of—
- (i) a hearing for the purposes of section 24A(2), or
 - (ii) if the accused attains the age of 18 before any hearing for the purposes of section 24A(2) (and subject to the court's powers under section 29 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963), a hearing for the purposes of section 17A (which is to apply as if the accused's written indication of plea had been given and withdrawn as described in subsection (1A)(b) of that section)."

9 Powers to proceed if accused absent from allocation hearing

(1) The Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is amended as follows.

(2) In section 17B (power to proceed with indication of plea hearing in absence of disorderly but represented accused)—

- (a) for the heading substitute "Power to proceed if accused does not appear to give indication as to plea";
- (b) for subsection (1) substitute—

“(1A) This section has effect where—

- (a) a hearing is held for the purposes of section 17A,
- (b) the accused does not appear at the hearing,
- (c) any of the conditions in subsections (1B) to (1E) is met, and
- (d) the court is satisfied that it is not contrary to the interests of justice to proceed in the absence of the accused.

(1B) This condition is that a legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing and signifies the accused's consent to the court's proceeding in the accused's absence.

(1C) This condition is that—

- (a) a legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing, and
- (b) the court does not consider that there is an acceptable reason for the accused's failure to attend.

(1D) This condition is that—

- (a) it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such manner as may be prescribed, that notice of the hearing was served on the accused within what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before its date, and

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- (b) the court does not consider that there is an acceptable reason for the accused's failure to attend.

(1E) This condition is that—

- (a) the accused has appeared on a previous occasion to answer the charge, and
- (b) the court does not consider that there is an acceptable reason for the accused's failure to attend.

(1F) This section also has effect where—

- (a) a hearing is held for the purposes of section 17A,
 - (b) the accused appears at the hearing,
 - (c) the court considers that by reason of the accused's disorderly conduct before the court it is not practicable for the hearing to be conducted in the accused's presence, and
 - (d) the court is satisfied that it is not contrary to the interests of justice to proceed in the absence of the accused.”;
- (c) in subsection (2), for the words before paragraph (a) substitute “If a legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing—”;
 - (d) after subsection (4) insert—

“(5) If no legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing—

- (a) the court is to proceed in accordance with section 18(1), and
- (b) the accused is to be taken for the purposes of section 20 to have indicated that the accused would (if the offence were to proceed to trial) plead not guilty.”

(3) In section 18 (procedure for determining mode of trial), omit subsection (3).

(4) In section 23 (power to proceed with allocation hearing in absence of represented accused)—

- (a) for the heading substitute “Power to proceed if accused absent from allocation hearing”;
- (b) for subsection (1) substitute—

“(1A) This section has effect where—

- (a) a hearing is held in accordance with section 18(1) or (1A),
- (b) the accused does not appear at the hearing,
- (c) any of the conditions in subsections (1B) to (1E) is met, and
- (d) the court is satisfied that it is not contrary to the interests of justice to proceed in the absence of the accused.

(1B) This condition is that a legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing and signifies the accused's consent to the court's proceeding in the accused's absence.

(1C) This condition is that—

- (a) a legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing, and
- (b) the court does not consider that there is an acceptable reason for the accused's failure to attend.

(1D) This condition is that—

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- (a) it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such manner as may be prescribed, that notice of the hearing was served on the accused within what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before its date, and
- (b) the court does not consider that there is an acceptable reason for the accused's failure to attend.

(1E) This condition is that—

- (a) the accused has appeared on a previous occasion to answer the charge, and
- (b) the court does not consider that there is an acceptable reason for the accused's failure to attend.

(1F) This section also has effect where—

- (a) a hearing is held in accordance with section 18(1) or (1A),
- (b) the accused appears at the hearing,
- (c) the court considers that by reason of the accused's disorderly conduct before the court it is not practicable for the hearing to be conducted in the accused's presence, and
- (d) the court is satisfied that it is not contrary to the interests of justice to proceed in the absence of the accused.

(1G) This section also has effect where a magistrates' court determines that section 17B(5) applies and proceeds straight away to a hearing in accordance with section 18(1).";

- (c) in subsection (4), in the words before paragraph (a), after "If" insert "a legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing and";
- (d) after subsection (4) insert—

"(4A) If no legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing, and the court decides under section 19 above that the offence appears to it more suitable for summary trial, then section 20 above shall not apply, and the court shall proceed to the summary trial of the information.

(4B) In a case within subsection (4A)—

- (a) the accused may, at any time before the taking of a plea in the summary trial, apply to the court for the question of the mode of trial to be reopened;
- (b) the court may, if it considers it in the interests of justice to do so (having regard, in particular, to the reason given by the accused for not appearing at the earlier hearing), accede to the application and arrange a hearing under paragraph (c);
- (c) if a hearing takes place under this paragraph and the accused appears at it, the court is not to proceed to summary trial by virtue of subsection (4A), but is to proceed in accordance with subsections (2) to (9) of section 20 above."

(5) After section 24B insert—

“24BA Power to proceed if child or young person absent from plea and allocation hearing

- (1) This section has effect where—
 - (a) a hearing is held for the purposes of section 24A(2),
 - (b) the accused does not appear at the hearing,
 - (c) the accused has failed to give a written indication of plea (see section 24ZA(11)),
 - (d) either—
 - (i) it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such manner as may be prescribed, that notice of the hearing was served on the accused within what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before its date, or
 - (ii) the accused has appeared on a previous occasion to answer the charge,
 - (e) the court does not consider that there is an acceptable reason for the accused’s failure to attend, and
 - (f) the court is satisfied that it is not contrary to the interests of justice to proceed in the absence of the accused.
- (2) Section 24A ceases to apply.
- (3) If no legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing, the court is to proceed to make the relevant determination (within the meaning given by section 24A(2)) as if the accused had appeared at the hearing and indicated that the accused would plead not guilty.
- (4) If a legal representative of the accused is present at the hearing, the court is to proceed in accordance with subsection (2) of section 24B (and subsections (3) and (4) of that section are to apply accordingly).”

*Transfer of cases between courts***10 Sending cases to Crown Court for trial**

- (1) Section 51 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (sending of adult defendants to Crown Court for trial) is amended as set out in subsections (2) to (5).
- (2) For subsection (1) substitute—
 - “(1) Subsections (2A) and (2B) apply where—
 - (a) a magistrates’ court (“the court”) determines that any of the conditions set out in subsection (2) is met in relation to an offence with which a person has been charged, and
 - (b) the accused is an adult.”
- (3) In subsection (2)(b)—
 - (a) for the words from “section” to “25(2D)” substitute “any provision of Part 1”;
 - (b) for “subsection (1) above” substitute “this section”.
- (4) After subsection (2) insert—

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- “(2A) If the determination referred to in subsection (1)(a) is made while the accused is present before the court, the court must—
- (a) explain that the court is required to send the accused to the Crown Court for trial for the offence; and
 - (b) so send the accused.
- (2B) Otherwise, the court must serve on the accused one or more documents which—
- (a) state the charge against the accused;
 - (b) explain that the court is required to send the accused to the Crown Court for trial for the offence; and
 - (c) set out any other information—
 - (i) that is required by Criminal Procedure Rules, or
 - (ii) that is authorised by Criminal Procedure Rules and which the court decides to include.
- (2C) As soon as practicable after serving the documents required by subsection (2B), the court must send the accused to the Crown Court for trial for the offence (which need not be done in open court).
- (2D) Subsections (2A) to (2C) have effect subject to any provision in Criminal Procedure Rules of the sort described in subsection (2E) or (3A).
- (2E) Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision—
- (a) about circumstances in which the requirement under subsection (2A) or (2B) does not apply; and
 - (b) about the sending of the accused to the Crown Court under this section in those circumstances.”

(5) For subsections (3) to (12) substitute—

“(3A) Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision about situations where—

 - (a) a condition in subsection (2) is met in relation to an alleged offence, and
 - (b) any other alleged offence is, or appears to be, related (in such a way as is specified in the Rules) to the alleged offence referred to in paragraph (a).

(3B) The provision that may be made as described in subsection (3A) includes provision—

 - (a) for a person to be sent to the Crown Court for trial for the other alleged offence—
 - (i) whether or not a condition in subsection (2) is met in relation to it;
 - (ii) whether or not it is alleged to have been committed by the same person as the offence referred to in paragraph (a) of that subsection;
 - (iii) even if it is a summary offence;
 - (b) applying any other provision made by or under an Act about the sending of a person to the Crown Court for trial;
 - (c) disapplying any other provision made by or under an Act about how a magistrates’ court is to deal with the other alleged offence.”

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(6) Section 51A of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (sending of children or young persons to Crown Court for trial) is amended as set out in subsections (7) to (10).

(7) Before subsection (1) insert—

“(A1) Subsections (3A) and (3B) apply where—

- (a) a magistrates’ court (“the court”) determines that any of the conditions set out in subsection (3) is met in relation to an offence with which a person has been charged, and
- (b) the accused is a child or young person.”

(8) Omit subsection (2).

(9) After subsection (3) insert—

“(3A) If the determination referred to in subsection (A1)(a) is made while the accused is present before the court, the court must—

- (a) explain that the court is required to send the accused to the Crown Court for trial for the offence; and
- (b) so send the accused.

(3B) Otherwise, the court must serve on the accused one or more documents which—

- (a) state the charge against the accused;
- (b) explain that the court is required to send the accused to the Crown Court for trial for the offence; and
- (c) set out any other information—
 - (i) that is required by Criminal Procedure Rules, or
 - (ii) that is authorised by Criminal Procedure Rules and which the court decides to include.

(3C) As soon as practicable after serving the documents required by subsection (3B), the court must send the accused to the Crown Court for trial for the offence (which need not be done in open court).

(3D) Subsections (3A) to (3C) have effect subject to any provision in Criminal Procedure Rules of the sort described in subsection (3E) or (4A).

(3E) Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision—

- (a) about circumstances in which the requirement under subsection (3A) or (3B) does not apply; and
- (b) about the sending of the accused to the Crown Court under this section in those circumstances.”

(10) For subsections (4) to (10) substitute—

“(4A) Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision about situations where—

- (a) a condition in subsection (3) is met in relation to an alleged offence, and
- (b) any other alleged offence is, or appears to be, related (in such a way as is specified in the Rules) to the alleged offence referred to in paragraph (a).

- (4B) The provision that may be made as described in subsection (4A) includes provision—
- (a) for a person to be sent to the Crown Court for trial for the other alleged offence—
 - (i) whether or not a condition in subsection (3) is met in relation to it;
 - (ii) whether or not it is alleged to have been committed by the same person as the offence referred to in paragraph (a) of that subsection;
 - (iii) even if it is a summary offence;
 - (b) applying any other provision made by or under an Act about the sending of a person to the Crown Court for trial;
 - (c) disapplying any other provision made by or under an Act about how a magistrates’ court is to deal with the other alleged offence.”
- (11) In section 52 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (provision supplementary to sections 51 and 51A), after subsection (2) insert—
- “(2A) If the court sends a person for trial under section 51 or 51A other than in open court—
- (a) it must do so on bail, and
 - (b) that bail is to be—
 - (i) unconditional, if the accused is not already on bail, or is on unconditional bail, in respect of the charge in question, or
 - (ii) if the accused is already on bail subject to conditions in respect of the charge in question, subject to the same conditions.”

11 Powers of Crown Court to remit cases to the magistrates’ court

- (1) After section 46 of the Senior Courts Act 1981 insert—

“46ZA Remitting proceedings to magistrates’ courts for trial

- (1) In a case where a person has been sent by a magistrates’ court to the Crown Court for trial for an offence, the Crown Court may send the person back to a magistrates’ court for trial.
- (2) The Crown Court may not exercise the power in subsection (1)—
 - (a) in respect of a person who has attained the age of 18, or is not an individual, if the offence in question is triable only on indictment;
 - (b) in respect of a person who has not attained the age of 18, if the offence in question falls within section 51A(12) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- (3) In the case of an offence that is triable either way, the Crown Court may not exercise the power in subsection (1)—
 - (a) unless the person appears in court or consents to the power being exercised in the person’s absence, and
 - (b) in the case of a person who has attained the age of 18, or is not an individual, unless the person consents to the power being exercised.

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- (4) If a person under the age of 18 appears before the Crown Court having been sent to it as mentioned in subsection (1), the Crown Court—
- (a) must consider whether to send the person back to a magistrates' court under subsection (1), and
 - (b) if it decides not to send the person back, must give reasons for not doing so.
- (5) In deciding whether to exercise the power in subsection (1), the Crown Court must—
- (a) take into account any other offence before the Crown Court that appears to the court to be related to that offence (whether the same, or a different, person is accused or has been convicted of the other offence), and
 - (b) have regard to any allocation guidelines (or revised allocation guidelines) issued as definitive guidelines under section 122 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.
- (6) Where the Crown Court exercises the power in subsection (1) it may, subject to section 25 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (restrictions on granting bail), give such directions as appear to be necessary—
- (a) with respect to the custody of the accused, or
 - (b) for the accused's release on bail,
- until the accused can appear or be brought before the magistrates' court.
- (7) There is no right of appeal against an order under subsection (1).”
- (2) In section 25 of the Sentencing Code (remission of offenders aged under 18 to youth court for sentence), after subsection (2) insert—
- “(2A) If—
- (a) the convicting court is a magistrates' court, and
 - (b) that court commits the offender to the Crown Court for sentence,
- the Crown Court may remit the offender to a youth court acting for the place where the convicting court sat.”
- (3) After section 25 of the Sentencing Code insert—

“25A Power to remit adult offenders to magistrates' courts for sentence

- (1) This section applies where a person aged 18 or over, or a person who is not an individual—
- (a) has been convicted of an offence by a magistrates' court and committed to the Crown Court for sentence, or
 - (b) has been convicted of an offence (other than an offence triable only on indictment) by the Crown Court following a plea of guilty.
- (2) The Crown Court may remit the offender to a magistrates' court for sentence.
- (3) In deciding whether to exercise the power in subsection (2), the Crown Court must—
- (a) take into account any other offence before the Crown Court that appears to the court to be related to that offence (whether the same,

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or a different, person is accused or has been convicted of the other offence), and

- (b) have regard to any allocation guidelines (or revised allocation guidelines) issued as definitive guidelines under section 122 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

(4) There is no right of appeal against an order under subsection (2).”

12 Powers of youth court to transfer cases if accused turns 18

(1) Section 47 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (powers of youth courts) is amended as follows.

(2) Before subsection (1) insert—

“(A1) This section applies where a person who appears or is brought before a youth court charged with an offence attains the age of 18 before the start of the trial of the person for the offence.”

(3) For subsection (1) substitute—

“(1) In the case of a summary offence or an offence triable either way, the youth court may, at any time before the start of the trial, remit the person for trial to a magistrates’ court (other than a youth court).

(1A) In the case of an indictable offence, the youth court may, at any time before the start of the trial, send the person for trial to the Crown Court.

(1B) In subsections (A1) to (1A), “the start of the trial” is to be read in accordance with section 22(11B)(a) and (b) of the 1985 Act.

(1C) If the youth court is proposing to exercise the power under subsection (1) to remit a person to a magistrates’ court for trial for an offence triable either way, the youth court—

- (a) must give the person the opportunity of electing to be tried by the Crown Court for the offence, and
- (b) if the person elects to be so tried, must exercise the power under subsection (1A) to send the person for trial to the Crown Court.

(1D) A remission or sending under subsection (1) or (1A) does not have to be done in open court in the presence of the accused; but if it is not the youth court must first serve on the person one or more documents which—

- (a) state the charge against the accused;
- (b) explain that the court proposes to remit the accused for trial to a magistrates’ court (other than a youth court) or (as the case may be) to send the accused for trial to the Crown Court; and
- (c) set out any other information—
 - (i) that is required by Criminal Procedure Rules, or
 - (ii) that is authorised by Criminal Procedure Rules and which the court decides to include.

(1E) Criminal Procedure Rules may make provision about situations where—

- (a) a person is sent for trial under subsection (1A) in relation to an alleged offence, and

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- (b) any other alleged offence is, or appears to be, related (in such a way as is specified in the Rules) to the alleged offence referred to in paragraph (a).
- (1F) The provision that may be made as described in subsection (1E) includes provision—
- (a) for a person to be sent to the Crown Court for trial for the other alleged offence—
 - (i) whether or not this section applies in relation to it;
 - (ii) whether or not it is alleged to have been committed by the same person as the offence referred to in paragraph (a) of that subsection;
 - (iii) even if it is a summary offence;
 - (b) applying any other provision made by or under an Act about the sending of a person to the Crown Court for trial;
 - (c) disapplying any other provision made by or under an Act about how a magistrates’ court is to deal with the other alleged offence.”
- (4) In subsection (2)—
- (a) in the words before paragraph (a), for “under subsection (1)” substitute “or sent under subsection (1) or (1A)”;
 - (b) in paragraph (a), for “of remission” substitute “for the remission or sending”;
 - (c) in paragraph (b), for “remitting” substitute “youth”.
- (5) In subsection (3)—
- (a) for “remitting” substitute “youth”;
 - (b) after “remitted” insert “or sent”.
- (6) In subsection (4)—
- (a) the words from “all” to the end become paragraph (a);
 - (b) in that paragraph, for “remitting” substitute “youth”;
 - (c) at the end of that paragraph insert “; and
 - (b) the person remitted or sent had attained the age of 18 before the start of those proceedings.”
- (7) After subsection (4) insert—
- “(4A) For the purposes of this section a person is to be taken to be the age which that person appears to the court to be after considering any available evidence.”

Sentencing powers of magistrates’ courts

13 Maximum term of imprisonment on summary conviction for either-way offence

- (1) In section 224 of the Sentencing Code (general limit on magistrates’ court’s power to impose custodial sentence)—
- (a) in subsection (1), for the words after paragraph (b) substitute “for a term exceeding the applicable limit in respect of any one offence”;
 - (b) after subsection (1) insert—

“(1A) The applicable limit is—

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- (a) 6 months in the case of a summary offence, or
 - (b) 12 months in the case of an offence triable either way.”;
 - (c) in subsection (2), for the words from “more than” to the end substitute “a term exceeding the applicable limit”.
- (2) In Part 8 of Schedule 23 to the Sentencing Act 2020 (powers to amend the Sentencing Code in relation to custodial sentences), before paragraph 15 insert—

“General limit on magistrates’ court’s power to impose custodial sentence

- 14A (1) The Secretary of State may by regulations amend section 224(1A)(b) (general limit on custodial sentence for either-way offence in magistrates’ court)—
- (a) if for the time being it refers to 12 months, to substitute a reference to 6 months for the reference to 12 months, or
 - (b) if for the time being it refers to 6 months, to substitute a reference to 12 months for the reference to 6 months.
- (2) An amendment under sub-paragraph (1) has effect only in relation to an offence for which a person is convicted on or after the day on which the amendment comes into force.
- (3) Regulations under sub-paragraph (1) are subject to the negative resolution procedure.””
- (3) In Schedule 1 to the Interpretation Act 1978, after the entry requiring the definitions relating to offences to be construed without regard to section 22 of the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980 insert—
- “In relation to a term of imprisonment in respect of an offence triable either way under the law of England and Wales, “general limit in a magistrates’ court” means the limit laid down in respect of the offence by section 224(1) of the Sentencing Code (as it has effect from time to time).”
- (4) In section 32(1) of the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980 (maximum penalty on summary conviction for certain either-way offences), for “12 months” substitute “the general limit in a magistrates’ court”.
- (5) In section 282(3) of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (maximum custodial term on summary conviction for certain either-way offences)—
- (a) omit “maximum”;
 - (b) for “12 months” substitute “a term not exceeding the general limit in a magistrates’ court”.
- (6) Subsection (7) applies to relevant legislation—
- (a) which provides for a maximum term of imprisonment of 12 months on summary conviction for an offence triable either way, and
 - (b) in relation to which section 282(3) of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 does not apply.
- (7) Relevant legislation to which this subsection applies is to be read as providing for a term of imprisonment not exceeding the general limit in a magistrates’ court (in place of the term referred to in subsection (6)(a)).

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

- (8) Subsection (9) applies to relevant primary legislation that confers a power (in whatever terms) to make subordinate legislation providing for a maximum term of imprisonment, on summary conviction for an offence triable either way, of—
- (a) 6 months, in the case of an enactment contained in an Act passed on or before 20 November 2003, or
 - (b) 12 months, the case of any other relevant primary legislation.
- (9) Relevant primary legislation to which this subsection applies is to be read as conferring a power to provide for a term of imprisonment not exceeding the general limit in a magistrates' court (in place of the term referred to in subsection (8)(a) or (b)).
- (10) The Secretary of State may by regulations—
- (a) amend relevant legislation in relation to which section 282(3) of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 applies, to spell out the effect of that provision (as amended by subsection (5));
 - (b) amend relevant legislation to which subsection (7) applies, to spell out the effect of that subsection;
 - (c) amend relevant primary legislation to which subsection (9) applies, to spell out the effect of that subsection;
 - (d) amend relevant legislation in consequence of an amendment under any of the preceding paragraphs.
- (11) In this section—
- “relevant legislation” means an enactment contained in—
- (a) an Act passed before or in the same Session as this Act,
 - (b) an Act or Measure of Senedd Cymru enacted before the passing of this Act,
 - (c) subordinate legislation made before the passing of this Act, or
 - (d) retained direct EU legislation, not falling within the preceding paragraphs, made before the passing of this Act;
- “relevant primary legislation” means an enactment falling within paragraph (a) or (b) of the definition of “relevant legislation”;
- “subordinate legislation” means subordinate legislation within the meaning of the Interpretation Act 1978 (see section 21(1) of that Act) or any equivalent instrument made or to be made under an Act or Measure of Senedd Cymru.

Miscellaneous and consequential provision

14 Involvement of parent or guardian in proceedings conducted in writing

- (1) Section 34A of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (attendance at court of parent or guardian) is amended as follows.
- (2) In the heading, after “court” insert “or other involvement”.
- (3) After subsection (1) insert—

“(1A) Where a child or young person (C) is charged with an offence, the court—

 - (a) may in any case; and
 - (b) must in a case where C is under the age of sixteen years,

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

exercise the functions conferred by subsections (1B) and (1C) (insofar as they are applicable to the proceedings) unless and to the extent that the court is satisfied that it would be unreasonable to do so, having regard to the circumstances of the case.

(1B) Where any stage of the proceedings is conducted in writing, the court may or (as the case may be) must—

- (a) ascertain whether a person who is a parent or guardian of C is aware that the written proceedings are taking place, and
- (b) if it appears to the court that no parent or guardian is aware of that, provide information about the written proceedings to at least one such person.

(1C) Where C gives a written indication of plea under section 24ZA of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, the court may or (as the case may be) must—

- (a) ascertain whether a person who is a parent or guardian of C is aware that the written indication of plea has been given, and
- (b) if it appears to the court that no parent or guardian is aware of that, bring the written indication of plea to the attention of at least one such person.”

(4) In subsection (2), for “the reference in subsection (1)” substitute “a reference in any of subsections (1) to (1C)”.

15 Removal of certain requirements for hearings about procedural matters

(1) In section 2 of the Criminal Procedure (Attendance of Witnesses) Act 1965 (issue of witness summons on application to Crown Court), in subsection (8)(d), at the end insert “(if the application is determined at a hearing)”.

(2) In section 8C of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 (restrictions on reporting of certain pre-trial hearings in the magistrates' court), in subsections (4)(a) and (5)(a), for “hearing” substitute “considering”.

(3) In section 11 of the Criminal Justice Act 1987 (restrictions on reporting of certain preparatory hearings in the Crown Court), in subsections (7) and (8), for “hearing” substitute “considering”.

(4) In the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996—

- (a) in section 37 (restrictions on reporting of certain preparatory hearings in the Crown Court), in subsections (6) and (7), for “hearing” substitute “considering”;
- (b) in section 41 (restrictions on reporting of certain pre-trial hearings in the Crown Court), in subsections (4) and (5), for “hearing” substitute “considering (in the case of proceedings in England and Wales) or hearing (in the case of proceedings in Northern Ireland)”.

(5) In the Crime and Disorder Act 1998—

- (a) in section 52A (restrictions on reporting of certain initial proceedings in the magistrates' court), in subsections (3) and (4), for “hearing” substitute “considering”;

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).

- (b) in paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 (restrictions on reporting of applications for dismissal of charge in the Crown Court), in sub-paragraph (3), for “hearing” substitute “considering”.
- (6) In section 47 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (restrictions on reporting of certain matters to do with witnesses), in subsections (4) and (5), for “hearing” substitute “considering (in the case of proceedings in England and Wales) or hearing (in the case of other proceedings)”.
- (7) In section 71 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (restrictions on reporting of prosecution appeals), in subsections (5)(a) and (6)(a), for “hearing” substitute “considering”.

16 Documents to be served in accordance with Criminal Procedure Rules

[Schedule 1](#) amends various provisions to do with the service or delivery of documents so as to allow the same methods to be adopted as for service under Criminal Procedure Rules.

17 Power to make consequential or supplementary provision

- (1) The Lord Chancellor may, by regulations, make consequential or supplementary provision in relation to any provision of this Chapter.
- (2) The regulations may, in particular, amend, repeal or revoke—
 - (a) any provision of an Act passed before this Act or in the same Session, or
 - (b) any provision contained in subordinate legislation within the meaning of the Interpretation Act 1978 (whenever the legislation was made or the Act under which it was made was passed).
- (3) Regulations under this section that amend or repeal any provision of an Act are subject to affirmative resolution procedure (see section 49(3)).
- (4) Any other regulations under this section are subject to negative resolution procedure (see section 49(4)).

18 Consequential and related amendments

[Schedule 2](#) contains amendments that are consequential on, or related to, the preceding provisions of this Chapter.