



National Security Act 2023

2023 CHAPTER 32

PART 1

ESPIONAGE, SABOTAGE AND PERSONS ACTING FOR FOREIGN POWERS

Obtaining benefits from a foreign intelligence service

17 Obtaining etc material benefits from a foreign intelligence service

- (1) A person commits an offence if—
 - (a) the person—
 - (i) obtains, accepts or retains a material benefit which is not an excluded benefit, or
 - (ii) obtains or accepts the provision of such a benefit to another person,
 - (b) the benefit is or was provided by or on behalf of a foreign intelligence service, and
 - (c) the person knows, or having regard to other matters known to them ought reasonably to know, that the benefit is or was provided by or on behalf of a foreign intelligence service.
- (2) A person commits an offence if—
 - (a) the person agrees to accept—
 - (i) a material benefit which is not an excluded benefit, or
 - (ii) the provision of such a benefit to another person,
 - (b) the benefit is to be provided by or on behalf of a foreign intelligence service, and
 - (c) the person knows, or having regard to other matters known to them ought reasonably to know, that the benefit is to be provided by or on behalf of a foreign intelligence service.
- (3) Material benefits may include financial benefits, anything which has the potential to result in a financial benefit, and information.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the National Security Act 2023, Section 17. (See end of Document for details)

- (4) A material benefit is an excluded benefit if—
- (a) it is provided as reasonable consideration for the provision of goods or services, and
 - (b) the provision of those goods or services does not constitute an offence.
- (5) A benefit may be provided by or on behalf of a foreign intelligence service directly or indirectly (for example, it may be provided indirectly through one or more companies).
- (6) Subsections (1) and (2) apply to conduct outside the United Kingdom, but apply to conduct taking place wholly outside the United Kingdom only if—
- (a) the material benefit is or was, or is to be, provided in or from the United Kingdom, or
 - (b) in any case, the person engaging in the conduct—
 - (i) is a UK person, or
 - (ii) acts for or on behalf of, or holds office under, the Crown, or is in Crown employment (whether or not they engage in the conduct in that capacity).
- (7) In proceedings for an offence under subsection (1) by virtue of retaining a benefit, it is a defence to show that the person had a reasonable excuse for retaining the benefit.
- (8) In proceedings for an offence under subsection (1) or (2) it is a defence to show that the person engaged in the conduct in question—
- (a) in compliance with a legal obligation under the law of the United Kingdom which is not a legal obligation under private law,
 - (b) in the case of a person having functions of a public nature under the law of the United Kingdom, for the purposes of those functions, or
 - (c) in accordance with an agreement or arrangement to which—
 - (i) the United Kingdom was a party, or
 - (ii) any person acting for or on behalf of, or holding office under, the Crown was (in that capacity) a party.
- (9) A person is taken to have shown a matter mentioned in subsection (7) or (8) if—
- (a) sufficient evidence of the matter is adduced to raise an issue with respect to it, and
 - (b) the contrary is not proved beyond reasonable doubt.
- (10) A person who commits an offence under subsection (1) is liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years or a fine (or both).
- (11) A person who commits an offence under subsection (2) is liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years or a fine (or both).
- (12) The following terms have the same meaning as in section 3—
- “Crown employment”;
 - “financial benefit”;
 - “foreign intelligence service”;
 - the “law of the United Kingdom”;
 - “UK person”.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the National Security Act 2023, Section 17. (See end of Document for details)

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Commencement Information

- I1** S. 17 not in force at Royal Assent, see **s. 100(1)**
- I2** S. 17 in force at 20.12.2023 by **S.I. 2023/1272, reg. 2(a)**

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the National Security Act 2023, Section 17.