



2022 CHAPTER 19

PART 1

Sexual offences

CHAPTER 1

Criminal conduct

Voyeurism: additional offences

1.—(1) The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 is amended in accordance with subsections (2) and (3).

(2) After Article 71 (voyeurism) insert—

“Voyeurism: additional offences (genitals and buttocks)

71A.—(1) A person (A) commits an offence if—

- (a) A operates equipment beneath the clothing of another person (B),
- (b) A does so with the intention of enabling A or another person (C) to observe—
 - (i) B’s genitals or buttocks (whether exposed or covered with underwear), or
 - (ii) the underwear covering B’s genitals or buttocks, in circumstances where the genitals, buttocks or underwear would not otherwise be visible, and
- (c) either condition 1 or condition 2 is met.

(2) Condition 1 is that—

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- (a) A operates the equipment with the intention of enabling the observation for the purpose of—
 - (i) obtaining sexual gratification (whether for A or C), or
 - (ii) humiliating, alarming or distressing B, and
- (b) A does so—
 - (i) without B’s consent, and
 - (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents.
- (3) Condition 2 is that—
 - (a) A operates the equipment with the intention of enabling the observation—
 - (i) without B’s consent, and
 - (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents,
 - (b) in so operating the equipment, A is reckless as to whether B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed, and
 - (c) B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed.
- (4) A person (A) commits an offence if—
 - (a) A records an image beneath the clothing of another person (B),
 - (b) the image is of—
 - (i) B’s genitals or buttocks (whether exposed or covered with underwear), or
 - (ii) the underwear covering B’s genitals or buttocks,in circumstances where the genitals, buttocks or underwear would not otherwise be visible, and
 - (c) either condition 3 or condition 4 is met.
- (5) Condition 3 is that—
 - (a) A records the image with the intention that A or another person (C) will look at it for the purpose of—
 - (i) obtaining sexual gratification (whether for A or C), or
 - (ii) humiliating, alarming or distressing B, and
 - (b) A does so—
 - (i) without B’s consent, and
 - (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents.
- (6) Condition 4 is that—
 - (a) A records the image with the intention that A or another person will look at it,
 - (b) A does so—

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- (i) without B's consent, and
 - (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents,
 - (c) in so recording the image, A is reckless as to whether B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed, and
 - (d) B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed.
- (7) Paragraph (8) applies where—
- (a) B consents to the operation of equipment, or the recording of an image, for a particular purpose, and
 - (b) A operates the equipment, or records the image, for a different or additional purpose.
- (8) Where this paragraph applies, then for the purposes of paragraph (3)(a) or paragraph (6)(b) (as the case may be)—
- (a) B is to be taken as having not consented to the operation of the equipment or the recording of the image, and
 - (b) A is to be taken as having had a reasonable belief as to B's consent only if A had a reasonable belief that B consented to the operation of the equipment, or the recording of the image, for the other purpose.
- (9) A person guilty of an offence under this Article is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.

Voyeurism: additional offences (breasts)

- 71B.**—(1) A person (A) commits an offence if—
- (a) A operates equipment beneath or above the clothing of another person (B),
 - (b) A does so with the intention of enabling A or another person (C) to observe—
 - (i) B's breasts (whether exposed or covered with underwear), or
 - (ii) the underwear covering B's breasts,
 in circumstances where the breasts or underwear would not otherwise be visible, and
 - (c) either condition 1 or condition 2 is met.
- (2) Condition 1 is that—
- (a) A operates the equipment with the intention of enabling the observation for the purpose of—

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- (i) obtaining sexual gratification (whether for A or C), or
 - (ii) humiliating, alarming or distressing B, and
- (b) A does so—
 - (i) without B’s consent, and
 - (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents.
- (3) Condition 2 is that—
 - (a) A operates the equipment with the intention of enabling the observation—
 - (i) without B’s consent, and
 - (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents,
 - (b) in so operating the equipment, A is reckless as to whether B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed, and
 - (c) B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed.
- (4) A person (A) commits an offence if—
 - (a) A records an image beneath or above the clothing of another person (B),
 - (b) the image is of—
 - (i) B’s breasts (whether exposed or covered with underwear), or
 - (ii) the underwear covering B’s breasts,in circumstances where the breasts or underwear would not otherwise be visible, and
 - (c) either condition 3 or condition 4 is met.
- (5) Condition 3 is that—
 - (a) A records the image with the intention that A or another person (C) will look at it for the purpose of—
 - (i) obtaining sexual gratification (whether for A or C), or
 - (ii) humiliating, alarming or distressing B, and
 - (b) A does so—
 - (i) without B’s consent, and
 - (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents.
- (6) Condition 4 is that—
 - (a) A records the image with the intention that A or another person will look at it,
 - (b) A does so—
 - (i) without B’s consent, and

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents,
 - (c) in so recording the image, A is reckless as to whether B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed, and
 - (d) B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed.
- (7) Paragraph (8) applies where—
- (a) B consents to the operation of equipment, or the recording of an image, for a particular purpose, and
 - (b) A operates the equipment, or records the image, for a different or additional purpose.
- (8) Where this paragraph applies, then for the purposes of paragraph (3)(a) or paragraph (6)(b) (as the case may be)—
- (a) B is to be taken as having not consented to the operation of the equipment or the recording of the image, and
 - (b) A is to be taken as having had a reasonable belief as to B’s consent only if A had a reasonable belief that B consented to the operation of the equipment, or the recording of the image, for the other purpose.
- (9) A person guilty of an offence under this Article is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.”.

(3) In Article 72 (voyeurism: interpretation), after paragraph (1) insert—

“(1A) For the purposes of Articles 71, 71A and 71B operating equipment includes (in the case of equipment that is capable of activation) enabling or securing its activation by another person without that person’s knowledge.”.

Commencement Information

- I1** S. 1 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)
- I2** S. 1 in operation at 27.11.2023 by [S.R. 2023/188](#), [art. 3\(a\)](#)

Sending etc an unwanted sexual image

2. After Article 72 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 insert—

“Sending etc an unwanted sexual image

72A.—(1) A person (A) commits an offence if—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) A intentionally sends or gives to another person (B) a sexual image,
 - (b) A does so—
 - (i) without B’s consent, and
 - (ii) without reasonably believing that B consents, and
 - (c) either condition 1 or condition 2 is met.
- (2) Condition 1 is that A intends that B will look at the image and that doing so will cause humiliation, alarm or distress to B.
- (3) Condition 2 is that—
- (a) A’s purpose in sending or giving the image is to obtain sexual gratification, and
 - (b) A is reckless as to whether B is humiliated, alarmed or distressed.
- (4) For the purposes of this Article, a sexual image is a photograph or film of—
- (a) any person engaging in a sexual activity, or
 - (b) any person’s genitals.
- (5) In paragraph (4)—
- “photograph” includes the negative as well as the positive version;
 - “film” means a moving image.
- (6) References to a photograph or film also include—
- (a) an image, whether made by computer graphics or in any other way, which appears to be a photograph or film,
 - (b) a copy of a photograph, film or image within sub-paragraph (a), and
 - (c) data stored by any means which is capable of conversion into a photograph, film or image within sub-paragraph (a).
- (7) References to sending or giving such a photograph or film to another person include, in particular—
- (a) sending it to another person by any means, electronically or otherwise,
 - (b) showing it to another person, and
 - (c) placing it for a particular person to find.
- (8) A person guilty of an offence under this Article is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.”.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

Commencement Information

- I3** S. 2 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)
I4 S. 2 in operation at 27.11.2023 by [S.R. 2023/188](#), [art. 3\(a\)](#)

Amendments consequential on sections 1 and 2

3. Schedule 1 contains amendments consequential on the insertions made by sections 1(2) and 2.

Commencement Information

- I5** S. 3 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)
I6 S. 3 in operation at 27.11.2023 by [S.R. 2023/188](#), [art. 3\(a\)](#)

Sexual grooming: pretending to be a child

4.—(1) After Article 22A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 insert—

“Communicating with a person with a view to grooming a particular child

22B.—(1) A person aged 18 or over (A) commits an offence if—

- (a) A communicates with another person (B),
- (b) at the time of the communication, A intentionally presents himself or herself to B, to a group of persons that includes B or to the public at large as being under 18,
- (c) A’s intention in communicating with B is to establish or participate in an exchange of communications with a particular person whom A has in mind (C) with a view to subsequently committing a relevant offence against C, and
- (d) C is under 16 and A does not reasonably believe that C is 16 or over.

(2) B and C may be the same person.

(3) If—

- (a) A communicates with a group of persons, and
- (b) the group contains a person to whom A intentionally presents himself or herself as being under 18,

A is to be regarded as communicating with that person.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

Communicating with a group with a view to grooming a particular child

22C. A person aged 18 or over (A) commits an offence if—

- (a) A communicates with a group of persons,
- (b) at the time of the communication, A intentionally presents himself or herself to the group or to the public at large as being under 18,
- (c) A's intention in communicating with the group is to establish or participate in an exchange of communications with a particular person whom A has in mind (B) with a view to subsequently committing a relevant offence against B, and
- (d) B is under 16 and A does not reasonably believe that B is 16 or over.

Communicating with a person with a view to grooming any child

22D.—(1) A person aged 18 or over (A) commits an offence if—

- (a) A communicates with another person (B),
- (b) at the time of the communication, A intentionally presents himself or herself to B, to a group of persons that includes B or to the public at large as being under 18, and
- (c) A's intention in communicating with B is to establish or participate in an exchange of communications with a person or persons aged under 16 with a view to subsequently committing a relevant offence against such a person; but without having a particular person in mind at the time of the communication.

(2) If—

- (a) A communicates with a group of persons, and
- (b) the group contains a person to whom A intentionally presents himself or herself as being under 18,

A is to be regarded as communicating with that person.

Communicating with a group with a view to grooming any child

22E. A person aged 18 or over (A) commits an offence if—

- (a) A communicates with a group of persons,
- (b) at the time of the communication, A intentionally presents himself or herself to the group or to the public at large as being under 18, and
- (c) A's intention in communicating with the group is to establish or participate in an exchange of communications with a person or persons aged under 16 with a view to subsequently committing a relevant offence against such a person; but without having a particular person in mind at the time of the communication.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

Communication with a view to grooming: interpretation

22F. For the purposes of Articles 22B to 22E—

- (a) A presents himself or herself to a person (or persons) as being under 18 if a reasonable person would consider that, in all the circumstances, A presents himself or herself to that person (or those persons) as being under 18;
- (b) “relevant offence” means—
 - (i) an offence under this Order,
 - (ii) an offence under section 2 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 (human trafficking) committed with a view to exploitation that consists of or includes behaviour within section 3(3) of that Act (sexual exploitation), or
 - (iii) anything done outside Northern Ireland which is not an offence under sub-paragraph (i) or (ii) but would be an offence within sub-paragraph (i) or (ii) if done in Northern Ireland.

Communication with a view to grooming: sentencing

22G. A person guilty of an offence under any of Articles 22B to 22E is liable—

- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or both;
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.”.

(2) In Schedule 3 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (sexual offences for purposes of notification requirements), after paragraph 92IA (as inserted by Schedule 2) insert—

“**92IB.** An offence under Article 22B of that Order (communicating with a person with a view to grooming a particular child).

92IC. An offence under Article 22C of that Order (communicating with a group with a view to grooming a particular child).

92ID. An offence under Article 22D of that Order (communicating with a person with a view to grooming any child).

92IE. An offence under Article 22E of that Order (communicating with a group with a view to grooming any child).”.

(3) In Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (specified sexual offences), in paragraph 14A, after the entry relating to Article 22A of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 insert—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

“Article 22B (communicating with a person with a view to grooming a particular child),

Article 22C (communicating with a group with a view to grooming a particular child),

Article 22D (communicating with a person with a view to grooming any child),

Article 22E (communicating with a group with a view to grooming any child),”.

Commencement Information

I7 S. 4 not in operation at Royal Assent, see **s. 30(2)**

I8 S. 4 in operation at 27.11.2023 by **S.R. 2023/188, art. 3(a)**

Abuse of position of trust: relevant positions

5.—(1) The Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 is amended as follows.

(2) In Article 2 (interpretation), after paragraph (4) insert—

“(4A) “The Department” means the Department of Justice.”.

(3) In Article 28 (positions of trust), in paragraph (1)(b), for “an order made by the Secretary of State” substitute “regulations made by the Department”.

(4) After Article 29 insert—

“Positions of trust: further categories

29A.—(1) For the purposes of Articles 23 to 26, a person (A) is in a position of trust in relation to another person (B) if—

(a) A coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs B, on a regular basis, in a sport or a religion, and

(b) A knows that A coaches, teaches, trains, supervises or instructs B, on a regular basis, in that sport or religion.

(2) In paragraph (1)—

“sport” includes—

(a) any game in which physical skill is the predominant factor,

(b) any form of physical recreation which is also engaged in for purposes of competition or display,

“religion” includes—

(a) a religion which involves belief in more than one god,

(b) a religion which does not involve belief in a god.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

(3) Paragraph (1) does not apply where A is in a position of trust in relation to B by virtue of circumstances within Article 28.

(4) The Department may by regulations amend paragraphs (1) and (2) so as to add or remove an activity in which a person may be coached, taught, trained, supervised or instructed.”.

(5) In Article 80—

(a) the heading becomes “Orders and regulations”,

(b) after paragraph (3) insert—

“(4) Regulations under Article 28(1)(b) or 29A(4) may not be made unless a draft of them has been laid before and approved by a resolution of the Assembly.

(5) Regulations under this Order may include any incidental, supplementary, consequential, transitory, transitional or saving provision which the Department considers necessary or expedient.”.

(6) The Department of Justice must annually review Article 29A(1) and (2) of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 so as to inform the Department on whether the power in Article 29A(4) of that Order should be exercised.

Commencement Information

I9 S. 5 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I10 S. 5 in operation at 27.11.2023 by [S.R. 2023/188](#), [art. 3\(a\)](#)

Private sexual images: threatening to disclose

6.—(1) The Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 is amended as follows.

(2) In section 51 (disclosing private sexual photographs and films with intent to cause distress)—

(a) for subsection (1) substitute—

“(1) A person commits an offence if—

(a) the person discloses, or threatens to disclose, a private sexual photograph or film in which another individual (“the relevant individual”) appears,

(b) by so doing, the person intends to cause distress to that individual, and

(c) the disclosure is, or would be, made without the consent of that individual.”,

(b) in subsection (2)—

(i) after “disclose” insert “, or threaten to disclose,”,

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- (ii) for “the individual mentioned in subsection (1)(a) and (b)” substitute “the relevant individual”,
 - (c) in subsection (4), after “disclosure” insert “, or threat to disclose,”,
 - (d) in subsection (5), in each place, for “the individual mentioned in subsection (1)(a) and (b)” substitute “the relevant individual”,
 - (e) after subsection (7) insert—
 - “(7A) Where a person is charged with an offence under this section of threatening to disclose a private sexual photograph or film, it is not necessary for the prosecution to prove—
 - (a) that the photograph or film referred to in the threat exists, or
 - (b) if it does exist, that it is in fact a private sexual photograph or film.”,
 - (f) for subsection (8) substitute—
 - “(8) A person charged with an offence under this section is not to be taken to have intended to cause distress by disclosing, or threatening to disclose, a photograph or film merely because that was a natural and probable consequence of the disclosure or threat.”.
- (3) In section 53 (meaning of “private” and “sexual”), in subsection (5), for “the person mentioned in section 51(1)(a) and (b)” substitute “the relevant individual (within the meaning of section 51)”.
- (4) In Schedule 4 (private sexual photographs etc: providers of information society services)—
- (a) in paragraph 3(1), after “sub-paragraph (2)” insert “, (2A)”,
 - (b) in paragraph 3(2), after “if” insert “, in the case of information which consists of or includes a private sexual photograph or film,”,
 - (c) after paragraph 3(2) insert—
 - “(2A) This sub-paragraph is satisfied if, in the case of information which consists of or includes a threat to disclose a private sexual photograph or film, the service provider had no actual knowledge when the information was provided—
 - (a) that it consisted of or included a threat to disclose a private sexual photograph or film in which another individual appears,
 - (b) that the threat was made with the intention of causing distress to that individual, or
 - (c) that the disclosure would be made without the consent of that individual.”,
 - (d) in paragraph 4(2), for “section 51” substitute “section 52”,
 - (e) for paragraph 4(3) substitute—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

“(3) “Information society service” means any service normally provided—

- (a) for remuneration,
- (b) at a distance (namely, the service is provided without the parties being simultaneously present),
- (c) by electronic means (namely, the service is—
 - (i) sent initially and received at its destination by means of electronic equipment for the processing (including digital compression) and storage of data, and
 - (ii) entirely transmitted, conveyed and received by wire, radio, optical means or other electromagnetic means), and
- (d) at the individual request of a recipient of services (namely, the service is provided through the transmission of data on individual request).”.

Commencement Information

I11 S. 6 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I12 S. 6 in operation at 27.11.2023 by [S.R. 2023/188](#), [art. 3\(a\)](#)

Miscellaneous amendments as to sexual offences

7. In Schedule 2—

- (a) Part 1 contains provision which—
 - (i) amends references in the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 to certain forms of child sexual abuse, and
 - (ii) extends offences that relate to the recording of indecent images to the streaming or other transmission of such images;
- (b) Part 2 makes minor amendments relating to the offence of engaging in sexual communication with a child; and
- (c) Part 3 makes a minor amendment relating to the offence of paying (whether by money or otherwise) for the sexual services of a person.

Commencement Information

I13 S. 7 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I14 S. 7 in operation at 27.11.2023 by [S.R. 2023/188](#), [art. 3\(a\)](#)

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

CHAPTER 2

Anonymity and privacy

Anonymity of victims

Extended anonymity of victims

8.—(1) Section 1 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 (anonymity of victims of certain offences) is amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (1), for “shall during that person’s lifetime be included” substitute “shall—

- “(a) during that person’s lifetime, or
- (b) during the period of 25 years beginning with the date of that person’s death,

be included”.

(3) In subsection (2), for “shall during the complainant’s lifetime be included” substitute “shall—

- “(a) during the complainant’s lifetime, or
- (b) during the period of 25 years beginning with the date of the complainant’s death,

be included”.

Commencement Information

I15 S. 8 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I16 S. 8 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

Disapplication of anonymity of victim after death

9.—(1) The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 is amended as follows.

(2) In section 1(3)(b) (anonymity of victims of certain offences), at the end insert “and

- “(c) has effect subject to any order made under section 3A.”.

(3) After section 3 insert—

“3A Disapplication of section 1 after victim’s death

(1) Subsection (2) applies where matters relating to a person (“A”) are prohibited from publication by virtue of section 1(1) or (2).

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

(2) An interested party may after A's death apply to a magistrates' court for an order—

- (a) disapplying, or
- (b) modifying the application of,

section 1(1) or (2) in relation to A.

(3) For the avoidance of doubt, the modifications that may be made under subsection (2)(b) include increasing or decreasing the period mentioned in section 1(1)(b) or (2)(b) (the period during which publication is prohibited).

(4) In this section, "interested party" means—

- (a) a person who was a family member of A at the time of A's death;
- (b) a personal representative of A;
- (c) a person interested in publishing matters relating to A which are prohibited from publication by virtue of section 1(1) or (2).

(5) On an application under subsection (2), the court must make an order under that subsection if the court is satisfied that it would be—

- (a) in the interests of justice, or
- (b) otherwise in the public interest,

to make such an order.

(6) An order made under subsection (2) may be varied or revoked by order of a magistrates' court on the application of an interested party where the court is satisfied that it would be—

- (a) in the interests of justice, or
- (b) otherwise in the public interest,

to make such a variation or revocation.

(7) An order made under this section does not affect the operation of section 1 at any time before the order was made.

(8) In this section, "a family member of A" means—

- (a) a person who at the time of A's death was—
 - (i) married to A;
 - (ii) in a civil partnership with A;
 - (iii) living with A as if a spouse;
- (b) a relative of A.

(9) For the purposes of this section—

- (a) "relative" means parent, child, grandparent, great-grandparent, grandchild, great-grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, great-uncle, aunt, great-aunt, nephew, great-nephew, niece or great-niece;

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(b) a relationship of the half-blood or by affinity is to be treated as a relationship of the whole blood;

(c) the stepchild of a person is to be treated as that person's child.

(10) In this section, "a person interested in publishing matters" means a person who—

(a) wishes the matters to be included in a publication, and

(b) in relation to the publication, is a person mentioned in section 5(1) (persons by whom an offence relating to publishing may be committed).

(11) In subsections (1) and (4)(c), a reference to matters being prohibited from publication includes matters being partially prohibited from publication following the making of an order under this section modifying the application of section 1(1) or (2) in relation to A.

3B Rules of Court

(1) Rules of Court may make such provision relating to orders under section 3A as appears to the authority making them to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of that section.

(2) Rules of Court may, in particular, make provision—

(a) for notice of applications to be given to such persons as may be prescribed by the rules;

(b) for applications to be heard in private;

(c) as to the matters to be taken into consideration by a court in determining whether it is in the interests of justice, or the public interest, to make, vary or revoke an order under section 3A.

(3) Nothing in subsections (1) and (2) is to be taken to affect the generality of any enactment conferring power to make Rules of Court; and no particular provision of those subsections prejudices any general provision of them."

Commencement Information

I17 S. 9 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I18 S. 9 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

Increase in penalty for breach of anonymity

10.—(1) Section 5 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 (offences) is amended as follows.

(2) In subsection (1) omit the words from "and liable" to "standard scale".

(3) After subsection (1) insert—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

“(1A) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, or to both.”.

Commencement Information

I19 S. 10 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I20 S. 10 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

Special rules for providers of information society services

11.—(1) In section 5 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 (offences), at the end insert—

“(9) The Schedule contains special rules relating to providers of information society services.”.

(2) After section 8 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 insert—

“SCHEDULE

Section 5(9).

OFFENCE OF BREACH OF ANONYMITY:
PROVIDERS OF INFORMATION SOCIETY SERVICES

Exceptions for mere conduits

(1) A service provider does not commit an offence under section 5 by providing access to a communication network or by transmitting, in a communication network, information provided by a recipient of the service, if the service provider does not—

- (a) initiate the transmission,
- (b) select the recipient of the transmission, or
- (c) select or modify the information contained in the transmission.

(2) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)—

- (a) providing access to a communication network, and
- (b) transmitting information in a communication network,

include the automatic, intermediate and transient storage of the information transmitted so far as the storage is solely for the purpose of carrying out the transmission in the network.

(3) Sub-paragraph (2) does not apply if the information is stored for longer than is reasonably necessary for the transmission.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

Exception for caching

- (1) A service provider does not commit an offence under section 5 by storing information provided by a recipient of the service for transmission in a communication network if the first and second conditions are met.
- (2) The first condition is that the storage of the information—
 - (a) is automatic, intermediate and temporary, and
 - (b) is solely for the purpose of making more efficient the onward transmission of the information to other recipients of the service at their request.
- (3) The second condition is that the service provider—
 - (a) does not modify the information,
 - (b) complies with any conditions attached to having access to the information, and
 - (c) if sub-paragraph (4) applies, promptly removes the information or disables access to it.
- (4) This sub-paragraph applies if the service provider obtains actual knowledge that—
 - (a) the information at the initial source of the transmission has been removed from the network,
 - (b) access to it has been disabled, or
 - (c) a court or administrative authority has ordered the removal from the network of, or the disablement of access to, the information.

Exception for hosting

- (1) A service provider does not commit an offence under section 5 by storing information provided by a recipient of the service if—
 - (a) the service provider had no actual knowledge when the information was provided that its provision constituted an offence under section 5, or
 - (b) on obtaining actual knowledge that the information constituted such an offence, the service provider promptly removed the information or disabled access to it.
- (2) Sub-paragraph (1) does not apply if the recipient of the service is acting under the authority or control of the service provider.

Interpretation

4. In this Schedule—

“information society service” means any service normally provided—

 - (a) for remuneration,

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (b) at a distance (namely, the service is provided without the parties being simultaneously present),
- (c) by electronic means (namely, the service is—
 - (i) sent initially and received at its destination by means of electronic equipment for the processing (including digital compression) and storage of data, and
 - (ii) entirely transmitted, conveyed and received by wire, radio, optical means or other electromagnetic means), and
- (d) at the individual request of a recipient of services (namely, the service is provided through the transmission of data on individual request);

“recipient”, in relation to a service, means a person who, for professional ends or otherwise, uses an information society service, in particular for the purposes of seeking information or making it accessible;

“service provider” means a person providing an information society service.”.

Commencement Information

I21 S. 11 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I22 S. 11 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

Anonymity of suspects

Restriction on reports as to suspects of sexual offences

12.—(1) Subsection (2) applies where—

- (a) an allegation that a particular person has committed a sexual offence has been made to the police, or
- (b) the police have taken any step to investigate whether a particular person has committed a sexual offence (but an allegation within paragraph (a) has not been made in respect of the offence),

and references in this section and sections 14 and 16 to “the suspect” are to the person mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b).

(2) No matter relating to the suspect is to be included in any publication if it is likely to lead members of the public to identify the suspect as a person who is alleged to have, or is suspected of having, committed the offence.

(3) Subsection (2) does not apply after the earliest time (if any) when any of the following events occurs—

- (a) a summons or warrant is issued under Article 20 of the Magistrates’ Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 against the suspect in respect of the offence;

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (b) the suspect is charged with the offence after being taken into custody without a warrant;
 - (c) an indictment charging the suspect with the offence is presented under section 2(2)(c) or (e) of the Grand Jury (Abolition) Act (Northern Ireland) 1969;
 - (d) a magistrates' court commits the suspect to the Crown Court for trial on a new charge alleging the offence.
- (4) If none of those events occurs, then subsection (2) does not apply after the end of 25 years beginning with the date of the suspect's death.
- (5) The matters relating to a suspect in relation to which the restriction imposed by subsection (2) applies (if their inclusion in any publication is likely to have the result mentioned in that subsection) include in particular—
- (a) the suspect's name;
 - (b) the suspect's address;
 - (c) the identity of any school or other educational establishment attended by the suspect;
 - (d) the identity of any place of work;
 - (e) any still or moving picture of the suspect.
- (6) For the avoidance of doubt, for the purposes of subsection (1) it does not matter whether the allegation is made, or the step is taken, before or after this section comes into operation.

Commencement Information

I23 S. 12 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I24 S. 12 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

Meaning of sexual offence in section 12

13.—(1) In section 12, “sexual offence” means any of the following offences against the law of Northern Ireland—

- (a) an offence under section 61 or 62 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861 (buggery, attempt to commit buggery, assault with intent to commit buggery or indecent assault on a male);
- (b) an offence under section 2 of the Attempted Rape, etc., Act (Northern Ireland) 1960 (assault with intent to commit rape);
- (c) an offence under section 3 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000 (abuse of position of trust);
- (d) an offence under Article 19 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (buggery);

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (e) an offence under any provision of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008;
- (f) an offence under section 63 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 (possession of extreme pornographic images);
- (g) an offence under section 69 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 (possession of a paedophile manual);
- (h) any attempt to commit any of the offences mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (g);
- (i) any conspiracy to commit any of those offences;
- (j) any incitement of another to commit any of those offences;
- (k) aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring the commission of any of those offences;
- (l) an offence under Part 2 of the Serious Crime Act 2007 (encouraging or assisting crime) in relation to any of those offences;
- (m) an offence (not falling within any other paragraph of this subsection) specified in Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

(2) The Department of Justice may by regulations amend this section so as to alter the meaning of “sexual offence” for the purposes of section 12.

(3) Regulations under subsection (2) may not be made unless a draft of the regulations has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.

Commencement Information

I25 S. 13 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I26 S. 13 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

Power to disapply reporting restriction

14.—(1) Subsection (2) applies where matters relating to a suspect are prohibited from publication by virtue of section 12(2).

(2) A relevant person may apply to a magistrates’ court for an order—

- (a) disapplying, or
- (b) modifying the application of,

section 12(2) in relation to the suspect.

(3) The modifications that may be made under subsection (2)(b) include increasing or decreasing the period mentioned in section 12(4), but do not include the disapplication or modification of section 12(3).

(4) In this section, “relevant person” means—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) during the suspect's lifetime—
 - (i) the suspect;
 - (ii) the Chief Constable;
- (b) after the suspect's death—
 - (i) a person who was a family member of the suspect at the time of the suspect's death;
 - (ii) a personal representative of the suspect;
 - (iii) a person interested in publishing matters relating to the suspect which are prohibited from publication by virtue of section 12(2).

(5) On an application under subsection (2) the court must make an order under that subsection if it is satisfied that it would be—

- (a) in the interests of justice, or
- (b) otherwise in the public interest,

to make such an order.

(6) An order made under subsection (2) may be varied or revoked by order of a magistrates' court on the application of a relevant person where the court is satisfied that it would be—

- (a) in the interests of justice, or
- (b) otherwise in the public interest,

to make such a variation or revocation.

(7) An order made under this section does not affect the operation of section 12(2) at any time before the order is made.

(8) In this section, "a family member of the suspect" means—

- (a) a person who at the time of the suspect's death was—
 - (i) married to the suspect;
 - (ii) in a civil partnership with the suspect;
 - (iii) living with the suspect as if a spouse;
- (b) a relative of the suspect.

(9) For the purposes of this section—

- (a) "relative" means parent, child, grandparent, great-grandparent, grandchild, great-grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, great-uncle, aunt, great-aunt, nephew, great-nephew, niece or great-niece;
- (b) a relationship of the half-blood or by affinity is to be treated as a relationship of the whole blood;
- (c) the stepchild of a person is to be treated as that person's child.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

(10) In this section, “a person interested in publishing matters” means a person who—

- (a) wishes the matters to be included in a publication, and
- (b) in relation to the publication, is a person mentioned in section 16(1) (persons by whom an offence relating to publishing may be committed).

(11) In subsections (1) and (4)(b)(iii), a reference to matters being prohibited from publication includes matters being partially prohibited from publication following the making of an order under this section modifying the application of section 12(2) in relation to the suspect.

Commencement Information

I27 S. 14 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I28 S. 14 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142, art. 3](#)

Magistrates’ courts rules

15.—(1) Magistrates’ courts rules may make such provision relating to orders under section 14 as appears to the authority making them to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of that section.

- (2) Magistrates’ courts rules may, in particular, make provision—
- (a) for notice of applications to be given to such persons as may be prescribed by the rules;
 - (b) for applications to be heard in private;
 - (c) as to the matters to be taken into consideration by a court in determining whether it is in the interests of justice, or the public interest, to make, vary or revoke an order under section 14.

(3) Nothing in subsections (1) and (2) is to be taken to affect the generality of any statutory provision conferring power to make magistrates’ courts rules; and no particular provision of those subsections prejudices any general provision of them.

Commencement Information

I29 S. 15 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I30 S. 15 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142, art. 3](#)

Offence relating to reporting

16.—(1) If any matter is included in a publication in contravention of section 12(2), the following persons are guilty of an offence—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) where the publication is a newspaper or periodical, any proprietor, any editor and any publisher of the newspaper or periodical;
 - (b) where the publication is a relevant programme—
 - (i) any body corporate or Scottish partnership engaged in providing the programme service in which the programme is included, and
 - (ii) any person having functions in relation to the programme corresponding to those of an editor of a newspaper;
 - (c) in the case of any other publication, any person publishing it.
- (2) Where a person is charged with an offence under this section in respect of the inclusion of any matter in a publication, it is a defence, subject to subsection (3), to prove any of the following—
- (a) that the suspect included matter of that description in a publication;
 - (b) that the publication in which the matter appeared was one in respect of which the suspect had given written consent to the appearance of matter of that description;
 - (c) that at the time of the alleged offence under this section the person was not aware, and neither suspected nor had reason to suspect, that the publication included the matter in question;
 - (d) that at the time of the alleged offence under this section the person was not aware, and neither suspected nor had reason to suspect—
 - (i) that the allegation mentioned in section 12(1)(a) had been made to the police, or
 - (ii) that any step mentioned in section 12(1)(b) had been taken by the police.
- (3) Written consent is not a defence under subsection (2)(b) if it is proved that—
- (a) any person interfered unreasonably with the peace or comfort of the suspect, with intent to obtain it, or
 - (b) the suspect was under the age of 16 at the time when it was given.
- (4) If a person charged with an offence under this section relies on a defence in subsection (2)(c) or (d), and evidence is adduced that is sufficient to raise an issue with respect to that defence, the court must assume that the defence is satisfied unless the contrary is proved beyond reasonable doubt.
- (5) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, or to both.
- (6) Proceedings in respect of an offence under this section may be brought only by, or with the consent of, the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

(7) Where an offence under this section is committed by a body corporate and is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or to be attributable to any neglect on the part of—

- (a) any director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate, or
- (b) a person who was purporting to act in any such capacity,

that person (as well as the body corporate) commits the offence and is liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

(8) In relation to a body corporate whose affairs are managed by its members “director”, in subsection (7), means a member of the body corporate.

(9) Section 20(2) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 (offences committed by a body corporate) does not apply to offences under this section.

(10) Where an offence under this section is committed by a Scottish partnership and is proved to have been committed with the consent or connivance of a partner, that partner (as well as the partnership) is guilty of the offence and is liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.

(11) Schedule 3 contains special rules relating to providers of information society services.

Commencement Information

- I31** S. 16 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)
- I32** S. 16 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

Interpretation of sections 12 to 16

17.—(1) In this section and sections 12 to 16—

- “picture” includes a likeness however produced;
- “publication” has the same meaning as in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992 (see section 6(1) of that Act);
- “relevant programme” means a programme included in a programme service within the meaning of the Broadcasting Act 1990;
- “statutory provision” has the meaning given by section 1(f) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954;
- “suspect” is to be read in accordance with section 12(1).

(2) Nothing in section 12, 14 or 16 or Schedule 3 affects any prohibition or restriction imposed by virtue of any other statutory provision upon a publication or upon matter included in a relevant programme.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

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Commencement Information

I33 S. 17 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I34 S. 17 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

Consequential amendment

18. In section 44(4)(a) of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (restrictions on reporting alleged offences involving persons under 18), after “committed” insert “except a person in relation to whom section 12(2) of the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 applies in connection with the offence”.

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Commencement Information

I35 S. 18 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I36 S. 18 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

*Exclusion from proceedings***Serious sexual offences: exclusion of public from court**

19.—(1) The Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 is amended as follows.

(2) Before Article 28 (but after the heading “Protection of complainants in proceedings for sexual offences”) insert—

“Serious sexual offences: exclusion of public from court

Exclusion of public from trial

27A.—(1) Where a person is to be tried on indictment for a serious sexual offence, the court must give an exclusion direction before the beginning of the trial (but this is subject to paragraph (4)).

(2) An “exclusion direction” is a direction providing for the exclusion from the court, during the time the direction has effect, of all persons with the exception of—

- (a) members and officers of the court;
- (b) persons directly involved in the proceedings and, where the complainant is not such a person, the complainant;
- (c) any relative or friend of the complainant nominated by the complainant and specified in the direction;

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (d) any relative or friend of the accused nominated by the accused and specified in the direction;
- (e) bona fide representatives of news gathering or reporting organisations;
- (f) any other person specified in the direction as a person excepted from the exclusion.

(3) Paragraph (1) applies whether or not the trial relates to other offences as well as a serious sexual offence.

(4) Paragraph (1) does not apply if the time at which the exclusion direction would fall to be given (in the absence of this paragraph) is not within the lifetime of the complainant.

(5) Where an exclusion direction is given under this Article, the direction has effect from the beginning of the trial and continues to have effect until, in respect of each serious sexual offence to which the trial relates, the proceedings have been either—

- (a) determined (by acquittal, conviction or otherwise), or
- (b) abandoned,

in relation to the accused or (if there is more than one) in relation to each of the accused; but this is subject to paragraph (6).

(6) The exclusion direction does not have effect during any time when a verdict is being delivered in the proceedings, and “verdict” here includes any finding which constitutes the determination of the proceedings in relation to an accused and an offence.

(7) In this Article and Articles 27B to 27D—

“complainant” means any person who is the complainant (within the meaning of Article 2(2)) in respect of a serious sexual offence to which the trial relates;

“effect”, in relation to a direction, means binding effect;

“persons directly involved in the proceedings” includes—

- (a) the accused;
- (b) legal representatives acting in the proceedings;
- (c) any witness while giving evidence in the proceedings;
- (d) any person acting in the capacity of an interpreter or other person appointed to assist a witness or an accused; and
- (e) members of the jury;

“serious sexual offence” means an offence against the law of Northern Ireland mentioned in section 2(3) of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1992.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

Nomination etc of persons to be excepted from exclusion

27B.—(1) Only one person may be nominated by the complainant under Article 27A(2)(c), and only one person may be nominated by the accused under Article 27A(2)(d), but—

- (a) if more than one person is a complainant, a nomination may be made by each of the complainants, and
- (b) if more than one person is an accused in relation to the proceedings, a nomination may be made by each of the accused.

(2) Paragraph (1) has effect subject to Article 27C(1) (replacement nominated persons).

(3) The court may refuse to specify under Article 27A(2)(c) or (d) a person who has been nominated under that provision, but only where it appears to the court to be in the interests of justice to do so.

(4) Crown Court rules may make provision about nominations under Article 27A(2)(c) and (d), including provision—

- (a) for notice of intended nominations to be given to such persons as may be prescribed by the rules;
- (b) for a nomination to be withdrawn or substituted before a person is specified under Article 27A(2)(c) or (d).

(5) The court may specify a person under Article 27A(2)(f) only where it appears to the court to be in the interests of justice to do so.

(6) The court may exercise its power of refusal under paragraph (3), or specify a person under Article 27A(2)(f), either—

- (a) on an application made by a party to the proceedings or the complainant, or
- (b) of its own motion.

Variation of exclusion directions given under Article 27A

27C.—(1) Where a person has been specified under Article 27A(2)(c) or (d) in an exclusion direction, the court may vary the exclusion direction by revoking the specification of that person, and if it does so—

- (a) the person who nominated that person may nominate under Article 27A(2)(c) or (d) (as the case may be) one other person instead,
- (b) Article 27B(3) applies accordingly, and
- (c) where the person nominated by virtue of this paragraph is specified under Article 27A(2)(c) or (d), this paragraph applies in relation to that person.

(2) The court may vary an exclusion direction given under Article 27A so as to—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) specify under paragraph (2)(f) of that Article a person not already specified in the direction, or
 - (b) revoke any specification of a person made under paragraph (2)(f) of that Article.
- (3) The court may vary an exclusion direction under paragraph (1) or (2) only where it appears to the court to be in the interests of justice to do so, and may do so either—
- (a) on an application made by a party to the proceedings or the complainant, if there has been a material change of circumstances since the relevant time, or
 - (b) of its own motion.
- (4) In paragraph (3) “the relevant time” means—
- (a) the time when the exclusion direction was given, or
 - (b) if a previous application was made for a variation under this Article, the time when the application (or last application) was made.

Exclusion directions under Article 27A: general

27D.—(1) The court must state in open court its reasons for—

- (a) specifying a person under Article 27A(2)(f),
 - (b) refusing under Article 27B(3) to specify a person,
 - (c) refusing an application made under Article 27B(6),
 - (d) varying an exclusion direction under Article 27C(1) or (2), or
 - (e) refusing an application made under Article 27C(3).
- (2) Where a statement is made by the court in proceedings from which persons are excluded by an exclusion direction, the fact that it is so made does not prevent the statement from being regarded as made “in open court”.
- (3) Any proceedings from which persons are excluded by an exclusion direction shall nevertheless be taken to be held in public for the purposes of any privilege or exemption from liability available in respect of fair, accurate and contemporaneous reports of legal proceedings held in public.
- (4) An exclusion direction has effect subject to—
- (a) Article 21 of the Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (court to be cleared while child is giving evidence in certain cases);
 - (b) any power of the court to hear proceedings in private;
 - (c) any power of the court to exclude a witness until that witness’s evidence is required;
 - (d) any other power of the court to exclude a person from the court.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (5) Crown Court rules may make provision—
- (a) for uncontested applications under Article 27B(6) or 27C(3) to be determined by the court without a hearing;
 - (b) for preventing the renewal of an unsuccessful application under either of those provisions except where there has been a material change of circumstances;
 - (c) for expert evidence to be given in connection with such an application;
 - (d) for the manner in which confidential or sensitive information is to be treated in connection with such an application and in particular as to its being disclosed to, or withheld from, a party to the proceedings or the complainant.

Exclusion of public from appeal hearing

27E.—(1) Paragraph (2) applies where a hearing is to be held by the Court of Appeal of any one or more of the following—

- (a) an application for leave to appeal against a conviction or sentence (or both) in respect of a serious sexual offence;
- (b) an appeal against a conviction or sentence (or both) in respect of a serious sexual offence;
- (c) an application for leave to refer a sentence in respect of a serious sexual offence to the Court of Appeal under section 36 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (reviews of sentencing);
- (d) a reference under that section of a sentence in respect of a serious sexual offence;
- (e) an application for leave to appeal under section 12 or 13A of the Criminal Appeal (Northern Ireland) Act 1980 (appeals against findings of not guilty on ground of insanity and unfitness to be tried) in respect of a serious sexual offence;
- (f) an appeal under either of those sections in respect of a serious sexual offence.

(2) The court must give an exclusion direction before the beginning of the hearing (but this is subject to paragraph (4)).

(3) Paragraph (2) applies whether or not the hearing relates to other offences as well as a serious sexual offence.

(4) Paragraph (2) does not apply if the time at which the exclusion direction would fall to be given (in the absence of this paragraph) is not within the lifetime of the complainant.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

(5) Where an exclusion direction is given under this Article in relation to a hearing, the direction—

- (a) has effect from the beginning of the hearing, and
- (b) subject to paragraph (7), continues to have effect until, in respect of each relevant application or appeal to which the hearing relates, either—
 - (i) a decision has been made on the application or appeal, or
 - (ii) the application or appeal has been abandoned.

(6) In paragraph (5) a “relevant application or appeal” means any application, appeal or reference mentioned in paragraph (1).

(7) The exclusion direction does not have effect during any time when any of the following decisions is being pronounced by the court—

- (a) a decision to grant or refuse leave to appeal;
- (b) a decision on an appeal;
- (c) a decision to grant or refuse leave to make a reference under section 36 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988;
- (d) a decision on such a reference.

(8) In this Article—

“complainant” has the meaning given by Article 27A(7), reading the reference in Article 27A(7) to the trial as a reference to the hearing;

“effect” has the same meaning as in Article 27A (see Article 27A(7));

“exclusion direction” is to be read in accordance with Article 27F(1);

“sentence” has the same meaning as in Part 1 of the Criminal Appeal (Northern Ireland) Act 1980;

“serious sexual offence” has the same meaning as in Article 27A (see Article 27A(7)).

(9) A reference in this Article to a hearing is not to be taken to include any proceedings on an application for leave to appeal, or on an application for leave to refer a sentence, that are of a kind which (ignoring this Article) are not held in open court.

Exclusion from appeal hearings: further provision

27F.—(1) Subject to paragraph (5), in Article 27E and this Article “exclusion direction” has the meaning given by Article 27A(2).

(2) The following provisions apply in relation to exclusion directions given under Article 27E as they apply in relation to exclusion directions given under Article 27A—

- (a) Article 27B(1) to (3), (5) and (6);

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

(b) Article 27C; and

(c) Article 27D(1) to (4).

(3) As well as being subject as mentioned in Article 27D(4), an exclusion direction given under Article 27E has effect subject to section 24 of the Criminal Appeal (Northern Ireland) Act 1980 (right of accused to be present at hearing of appeal and limitations on that right).

(4) Rules made under section 55 of the Judicature (Northern Ireland) Act 1978 may make provision about any matter mentioned in paragraph (4) of Article 27B or paragraph (5) of Article 27D (reading the references in those paragraphs to Article 27A(2)(c) and (d), Article 27B(6) and Article 27C(3) as references to those provisions as applied by this Article).

(5) In their application by virtue of this Article, Article 27A(2) and the provisions mentioned in paragraph (2)(a) to (c) are to be read as if—

(a) in the definition of “the complainant” in Article 27A(7), the reference to the trial were a reference to the hearing, and

(b) in the definition of “persons directly involved in the proceedings” in Article 27A(7), sub-paragraph (e) were omitted.

Sexual offences: restriction on certain evidence and questions”.

Commencement Information

I37 S. 19 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)

I38 S. 19 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#) (with [arts. 4, 5](#))

CHAPTER 3

Guidance on this part

Guidance about this Part

20.—(1) The Department of Justice must issue guidance about—

(a) the effect of this Part, and

(b) such associated matters as the Department considers appropriate as to criminal law or procedure.

(2) A person exercising public functions to whom guidance issued under this section relates must have regard to it in the exercise of those functions.

(3) Guidance under this section must include such information in suitable form for use in training for staff or personnel working within the criminal justice sector as the Department of Justice considers appropriate.

(4) The Department of Justice must—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) keep any guidance issued under this section under review, and
 - (b) revise any guidance issued under this section if the Department considers revision to be necessary in light of review.
- (5) A review of guidance under this section must take account of such views on the operation of this Part obtained by the Department of Justice from bodies or agencies having functions within the criminal justice sector as the Department considers appropriate.
- (6) The Department of Justice must publish any guidance issued or revised under this section.
- (7) Nothing in this section permits the Department of Justice to issue guidance to a court or tribunal.

Commencement Information

- I39** S. 20 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)
- I40** S. 20 in operation at 28.9.2023 by [S.R. 2023/142](#), [art. 3](#)

PART 2

Trafficking and exploitation

Support for victims of trafficking etc

21.—(1) The Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 is amended as follows.

- (2) In section 17 (interpretation of the Part)—
- (a) before subsection (1) insert—
 - “(A1) For the purposes of this Part, there is a conclusive determination that a person is, or is not, a victim of—
 - (a) slavery or servitude, or
 - (b) forced or compulsory labour,

when, on completion of an identification process corresponding to one required by Article 10 of the Trafficking Convention, a competent authority concludes that the person is, or is not, such a victim.”;
 - (b) after subsection (1) insert—
 - “(1A) A reference in this Part to—
 - (a) slavery or servitude, or
 - (b) forced or compulsory labour,

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

is to be construed in accordance with Article 4 of the Human Rights Convention.”.

(3) In section 18 (assistance and support pending determination by competent authority)—

- (a) for “victim of trafficking in human beings” wherever occurring substitute “qualifying victim”;
- (b) in subsection (4), after “days” insert “, or such longer period as the Department thinks necessary,”;
- (c) in subsection (9), after “further period” insert “of up to 12 months, or longer than 12 months,”;
- (d) after subsection (10) insert—
 - “(11) In this section, “qualifying victim” means—
 - (a) a victim of trafficking in human beings, or
 - (b) a victim of—
 - (i) slavery or servitude, or
 - (ii) forced or compulsory labour.”.

Commencement Information

I41 S. 21 in operation at 28.4.2022, see [s. 30\(1\)\(a\)](#)

Defence for slavery and trafficking victims

22. In section 22 (defence for slavery and trafficking victims in relation to certain offences) of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015—

- (a) in subsection (9)(a)(i), after “of a” insert “Class A,”;
- (b) in subsection (9)(a)(ii), after “of a” insert “Class A or”.

Commencement Information

I42 S. 22 in operation at 28.4.2022, see [s. 30\(1\)\(a\)](#)

Strategies on slavery and trafficking offences

23. In section 12 (strategy on offences under sections 1 and 2) of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, in subsection (1), for “in every year” substitute “every 3 years”.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

Commencement Information

I43 S. 23 in operation at 28.4.2022, see [s. 30\(1\)\(a\)](#)

Protective measures for victims of slavery or trafficking

24.—(1) The Department of Justice may by regulations make provision—

- (a) enabling or requiring steps to be taken or measures to be imposed for protecting a person who is, or who appears to be at risk of becoming, a relevant victim,
- (b) for the purpose of or in connection with such steps or measures for protecting a person who is, or who appears to be at risk of becoming, a relevant victim.

(2) A reference in this section to a relevant victim is to be construed in the same way as a reference to a qualifying victim in section 18 of the Human Trafficking and Exploitation (Criminal Justice and Support for Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

(3) Steps or measures which may be provided for in regulations under this section include (but are not limited to) notices or orders.

(4) A draft of regulations under this section must be laid before the Assembly no later than the end of the period of 2 years beginning with the day on which this section comes into operation.

(5) Regulations under this section may not be made unless a draft of them has been laid before and approved by a resolution of the Assembly.

Commencement Information

I44 S. 24 in operation at 28.4.2022, see [s. 30\(1\)\(a\)](#)

PART 3

Protection from harm

CHAPTER 1

Prevention orders

Qualifying offences for sexual offences prevention orders

25.—(1) In Schedule 5 to the Sexual Offences Act 2003, after paragraph 163 insert—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

“**163A.** An offence under Article 68 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (abduction of children in care, etc.).”

(2) Section 130(3) (as read with (4)(a)) of that Act (so far as relating to section 106 of that Act) applies to the amendment made by this section.

.....

Commencement Information

I45 S. 25 in operation at 28.4.2022, see [s. 30\(1\)\(a\)](#)

Time limit for making violent offences prevention orders

26.—(1) In section 57 of the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2015, after subsection (5) insert—

“(6) Article 78(1) of the Magistrates’ Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 does not apply to a complaint under this section.”

(2) The amendment made by this section applies to a complaint made after the coming into operation of this section even if the cause of complaint arose more than 6 months before the making of the complaint.

.....

Commencement Information

I46 S. 26 in operation at 28.4.2022, see [s. 30\(1\)\(a\)](#)

CHAPTER 2

Causing or risking serious harm

Consent to harm for sexual gratification is no defence

27.—(1) For the purpose of determining whether a person (A) who inflicts serious harm on another person (B) is guilty of a relevant offence, it is not a defence that B consented to the infliction of the serious harm for the purpose of obtaining sexual gratification.

(2) The reference in subsection (1) to obtaining sexual gratification is to obtaining it for any person (whether for A, B or some other person).

(3) In this section—

“the 1861 Act” is the Offences Against the Person Act 1861,

“relevant offence” means any of these—

(a) an offence under section 18 of the 1861 Act,

(b) an offence under section 20 of the 1861 Act,

(c) an offence (but not common assault) under section 47 of the 1861 Act,

“serious harm” means any of these—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) wounding within the meaning of section 18 of the 1861 Act,
- (b) grievous bodily harm within the meaning of section 18 of the 1861 Act,
- (c) actual bodily harm within the meaning of section 47 of the 1861 Act.

(4) However, this section does not apply in the case of an offence under section 20 or 47 of the 1861 Act where—

- (a) the serious harm consists of, or is a result of, the infection of B with a sexually transmitted infection in the course of sexual activity, and
- (b) B consented to the sexual activity in the knowledge or belief that A had the sexually transmitted infection.

(5) Nothing in this section affects the operation of any rule of law, or any statutory provision (as defined by section 1(f) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954), relating to other circumstances in which a person's consent to the infliction of serious harm may, or may not, be a defence to a relevant offence.

Commencement Information

I47 S. 27 in operation at 28.4.2022, see **s. 30(1)(a)**

Offence of non-fatal strangulation or asphyxiation

28.—(1) A person (A) commits an offence if the first and the second conditions are met.

- (2) The first condition is that A intentionally—
 - (a) applies pressure on or to the throat or neck of another person (B), or
 - (b) does something to B, of any other sort, amounting to battery of B.
- (3) The second condition is that A—
 - (a) intends A's act to affect B's ability to breathe or the flow of blood to B's brain, or
 - (b) is reckless as to whether A's act would affect B's ability to breathe or the flow of blood to B's brain.

(4) An offence under this section is committed irrespective of whether in fact A's act affects B's ability to breathe or the flow of blood to B's brain.

(5) An offence under this section can be constituted by virtue of A's act irrespective of how A's act is done (for example, by use of a hand or another part of A's body or by A making use in any way of an object of any kind).

(6) It is a defence to an offence under this section for A to show that B consented to A's act, but the defence is not available if—

- (a) B suffers serious harm as a result of A's act, and
- (b) A—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

- (i) intended A's act to cause B to suffer serious harm, or
- (ii) was reckless as to whether A's act would cause B to suffer serious harm.

(7) No question as to B's consent to A's act may be considered for the purpose of this section unless the question is relevant in relation to the defence in this section.

(8) The matter of B's consent on which the defence in this section may be based is to be taken to be shown by A if—

- (a) evidence adduced is enough to raise an issue with respect to the matter, and
- (b) the contrary with respect to the matter is not proved beyond reasonable doubt.

(9) If—

- (a) an act is done in a country or territory outside the United Kingdom,
- (b) an offence under this section would be constituted by virtue of the act if done in Northern Ireland, and
- (c) the person who does the act is a United Kingdom national or is habitually resident in Northern Ireland,

the person commits an offence under this section as if the act is done in Northern Ireland.

(10) A person who commits an offence under this section is liable—

- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum (or both),
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 14 years or a fine (or both).

(11) In this section—

“the 1861 Act” is the Offences Against the Person Act 1861,

“serious harm” means any of these—

- (a) wounding within the meaning of section 18 of the 1861 Act,
- (b) grievous bodily harm within the meaning of section 18 of the 1861 Act,
- (c) actual bodily harm within the meaning of section 47 of the 1861 Act,

“United Kingdom national” means an individual who is—

- (a) a British citizen, a British overseas territories citizen, a British National (Overseas) or a British Overseas citizen,
- (b) a person who under the British Nationality Act 1981 is a British subject, or
- (c) a British protected person within the meaning of the British Nationality Act 1981.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

(12) Schedule 4 contains consequential amendments in connection with this section.

Commencement Information

- I48** S. 28 not in operation at Royal Assent, see [s. 30\(2\)](#)
I49 S. 28 in operation at 26.6.2023 by [S.R. 2023/87](#), [art. 2\(a\)](#)

PART 4

Final provisions

Ancillary regulations

29.—(1) The Department of Justice may by regulations make such supplementary, incidental, consequential, transitional, transitory or saving provision as the Department considers appropriate for the purposes of, in connection with or for giving full effect to the provisions of this Act.

- (2) Regulations under subsection (1)—
- (a) except where they amend any text of primary legislation, are subject to negative resolution,
 - (b) if they amend any text of primary legislation, may not be made unless a draft of them has been laid before and approved by a resolution of the Assembly.
- (3) Primary legislation as referred to in subsection (2) is—
- (a) any Northern Ireland legislation, or
 - (b) any Act of Parliament.

Commencement Information

- I50** S. 29 in operation at 28.4.2022, see [s. 30\(1\)\(b\)](#)

Commencement

30.—(1) The following provisions come into operation on the day after the day on which this Act receives Royal Assent—

- (a) sections 21 to 27,
- (b) this Part.

(2) The other provisions of this Act come into operation on such day or days as the Department of Justice may by order appoint.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022. (See end of Document for details)

(3) An order under this section may contain such transitional, transitory or saving provision as the Department of Justice considers appropriate.

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Commencement Information

I51 S. 30 in operation at 28.4.2022, see **s. 30(1)(b)**

Short title

31. This Act may be cited as the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.

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Commencement Information

I52 S. 31 in operation at 28.4.2022, see **s. 30(1)(b)**

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Justice (Sexual Offences and Trafficking Victims) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022.