



Juries Act 1974

1974 CHAPTER 23

[^{F1}20A Offence: research by jurors

- (1) It is an offence for a member of a jury that tries an issue in a case before a court to research the case during the trial period, subject to the exceptions in subsections (6) and (7).
- (2) A person researches a case if (and only if) the person—
 - (a) intentionally seeks information, and
 - (b) when doing so, knows or ought reasonably to know that the information is or may be relevant to the case.
- (3) The ways in which a person may seek information include—
 - (a) asking a question,
 - (b) searching an electronic database, including by means of the internet,
 - (c) visiting or inspecting a place or object,
 - (d) conducting an experiment, and
 - (e) asking another person to seek the information.
- (4) Information relevant to the case includes information about—
 - (a) a person involved in events relevant to the case,
 - (b) the judge dealing with the issue,
 - (c) any other person involved in the trial, whether as a lawyer, a witness or otherwise,
 - (d) the law relating to the case,
 - (e) the law of evidence, and
 - (f) court procedure.
- (5) “The trial period”, in relation to a member of a jury that tries an issue, is the period—
 - (a) beginning when the person is sworn to try the issue, and
 - (b) ending when the judge discharges the jury or, if earlier, when the judge discharges the person.

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Juries Act 1974, Section 20A. (See end of Document for details)

- (6) It is not an offence under this section for a person to seek information if the person needs the information for a reason which is not connected with the case.
- (7) It is not an offence under this section for a person—
- (a) to attend proceedings before the court on the issue;
 - (b) to seek information from the judge dealing with the issue;
 - (c) to do anything which the judge dealing with the issue directs or authorises the person to do;
 - (d) to seek information from another member of the jury, unless the person knows or ought reasonably to know that the other member of the jury contravened this section in the process of obtaining the information;
 - (e) to do anything else which is reasonably necessary in order for the jury to try the issue.
- (8) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable, on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or a fine (or both).
- (9) Proceedings for an offence under this section may only be instituted by or with the consent of the Attorney General.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 20A inserted (13.4.2015) by [Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 \(c. 2\)](#), **ss. 71(3)**, 95(1); S.I. 2015/778, art. 3, Sch. 1 para. 56 (with Sch. 2 para. 3(a))

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