



Magistrates' Courts Act 1980

1980 CHAPTER 43

PART I

CRIMINAL JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURE

Jurisdiction to issue process and deal with charges

1 Issue of summons to accused or warrant for his arrest.

- (1) Upon an information being laid before a justice of the peace for an area to which this section applies that any person has, or is suspected of having, committed an offence, the justice may, in any of the events mentioned in subsection (2) below, but subject to subsections (3) to (5) below,—
 - (a) issue a summons directed to that person requiring him to appear before a magistrates' court for the area to answer to the information, or
 - (b) issue a warrant to arrest that person and bring him before a magistrates' court for the area or such magistrates' court as is provided in subsection (5) below.
- (2) A justice of the peace for an area to which this section applies may issue a summons or warrant under this section—
 - (a) if the offence was committed or is suspected to have been committed within the area, or
 - (b) if it appears to the justice necessary or expedient, with a view to the better administration of justice, that the person charged should be tried jointly with, or in the same place as, some other person who is charged with an offence, and who is in custody, or is being or is to be proceeded against, within the area, or
 - (c) if the person charged resides or is, or is believed to reside or be, within the area, or
 - (d) if under any enactment a magistrates' court for the area has jurisdiction to try the offence, or
 - (e) if the offence was committed outside England and Wales and, where it is an offence exclusively punishable on summary conviction, if a magistrates court

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for the area would have jurisdiction to try the offence if the offender were before it.

- (3) No warrant shall be issued under this section unless the information is in writing and substantiated on oath.
- (4) No warrant shall be issued under this section for the arrest of any person who has attained the age of 17 unless—
 - (a) the offence to which the warrant relates is an indictable offence or is punishable with imprisonment, or
 - (b) the person's address is not sufficiently established for a summons to be served on him.
- (5) Where the offence charged is not an indictable offence—
 - (a) no summons shall be issued by virtue only of paragraph (c) of subsection (2) above, and
 - (b) any warrant issued by virtue only of that paragraph shall require the person charged to be brought before a magistrates' court having jurisdiction to try the offence.
- (6) Where the offence charged is an indictable offence, a warrant under this section may be issued at any time notwithstanding that a summons has previously been issued.
- (7) A justice of the peace may issue a summons or warrant under this section upon an information being laid before him notwithstanding any enactment requiring the information to be laid before two or more justices.
- (8) The areas to which this section applies are any county, any London commission area and the City of London.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 1(2) modified by Road Traffic Act 1974 (c. 50, SIF 107:1), s. 5(8) (as inserted by Transport Act 1982 (c. 49, SIF 107:1), s. 74(1), Sch. 5 para. 18(8))
- C2** S. 1(2) modified by Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (c. 27, SIF 107:1), ss. 111(8), 143, 144, 145(5), Sch. 12 para. 10(3)

2 Jurisdiction to deal with charges.

- (1) A magistrates' court for a county, a London commission area or the City of London shall have jurisdiction to try all summary offences committed within the county, the London commission area or the City (as the case may be).
- (2) Where a person charged with a summary offence appears or is brought before a magistrates' court in answer to a summons issued under paragraph (b) of section 1(2) above, or under a warrant issued under that paragraph, the court shall have jurisdiction to try the offence.
- (3) A magistrates' court for a county, a London commission area or the City of London shall have jurisdiction as examining justices over any offence committed by a person who appears or is brought before the court, whether or not the offence was committed within the county, the London commission area or the City (as the case may be).

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- (4) Subject to sections 18 to 22 below and any other enactment (wherever contained) relating to the mode of trial of offences triable either way, a magistrates' court shall have jurisdiction to try summarily an offence triable either way in any case in which under subsection (3) above it would have jurisdiction as examining justices.
- (5) A magistrates' court shall, in the exercise of its powers under section 24 below, have jurisdiction to try summarily an indictable offence in any case in which under subsection (3) above it would have jurisdiction as examining justices.
- (6) A magistrates' court for any area by which a person is tried for an offence shall have jurisdiction to try him for any summary offence for which he could be tried by a magistrates' court for any other area.
- (7) Nothing in this section shall affect any jurisdiction over offences conferred on a magistrates' court by any enactment not contained in this Act.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C3** S. 2(1) modified by [Road Traffic Act 1974 \(c. 50, SIF 107:1\)](#), **s. 5(8)** (as inserted by [Transport Act 1982 \(c. 49, SIF 107:1\)](#), s. 74(1), Sch. 5 para. 18(8))
- C4** S. 2(1) modified by [Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 \(c. 27, SIF 107:1\)](#), ss. 111(8), 143, 144, 145(5), **Sch. 12 para. 10(3)**

3 Offences committed on boundaries, etc.

- (1) Where an offence has been committed on the boundary between two or more areas to which this section applies, or within 500 yards of such a boundary, or in any harbour, river, arm of the sea or other water lying between two or more such areas, the offence may be treated for the purposes of the preceding provisions of this Act as having been committed in any of those areas.
- (2) An offence begun in one area to which this section applies and completed in another may be treated for the purposes of the preceding provisions of this Act as having been wholly committed in either.
- (3) Where an offence has been committed on any person, or on or in respect of any property, in or on a vehicle or vessel engaged on any journey or voyage through two or more areas to which this section applies, the offence may be treated for the purposes of the preceding provisions of this Act as having been committed in any of those areas; and where the side or any part of a road or any water along which the vehicle or vessel passed in the course of the journey or voyage forms the boundary between two or more areas to which this section applies, the offence may be treated for the purposes of the preceding provisions of this Act as having been committed in any of those areas.
- (4) The areas to which this section applies are any county, any London commission area and the City of London.

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VALID FROM 01/04/1996

[^{F1}3A Offences committed on ships and abroad.

Sections 280, 281 and 282 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 (offences on ships and abroad by British citizens and others) apply in relation to other offences under the law of England and Wales as they apply in relation to offences under that Act or instruments under that Act.]

Textual Amendments

F1 S. 3A inserted (1.1.1996) by 1995 c. 21, ss. 314(2), 316(2), **Sch. 13 para.55** (with s. 312(1))

[^{F2}3B Transfer of trials of summary offences.

- (1) Where a person is required to appear, or to be brought, before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with a summary offence, he or the prosecutor may apply to the court for the offence to be tried by a magistrates' court which is named in the application but which would not, apart from subsection (2) below, have jurisdiction to try the offence.
- (2) Where an application under this section is granted, the court named in it shall have jurisdiction to try the offence.
- (3) The Lord Chancellor may make regulations specifying—
 - (a) matters which a court must consider in deciding whether to grant or refuse an application under this section; and
 - (b) circumstances in which a court must grant or refuse such an application.
- (4) The power to make regulations under subsection (3) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment by resolution of either House of Parliament.]

Textual Amendments

F2 S. 3B inserted (*prosp.*) by 1999 c. 22, ss. 80(1), 108(1) (with **Sch. 14 para. 7(2)**)

Committal proceedings

4 General nature of committal proceedings.

- (1) The functions of examining justices may be discharged by a single justice.
- (2) Examining justices shall sit in open court except where any enactment contains an express provision to the contrary and except where it appears to them as respects the whole or any part of committal proceedings that the ends of justice would not be served by their sitting in open court.

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- (3) Subject to subsection (4) below and section 102 below, evidence given before examining justices shall be given in the presence of the accused, and the defence shall be at liberty to put questions to any witness at the inquiry.
- (4) Examining justices may allow evidence to be given before them in the absence of the accused if—
 - (a) they consider that by reason of his disorderly conduct before them it is not practicable for the evidence to be given in his presence, or
 - (b) he cannot be present for reasons of health but is represented by [^{F3}a legal representative]and has consented to the evidence being given in his absence.

Textual Amendments

- F3** Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(3)(a)**

5 Adjourning of inquiry.

- (1) A magistrates' court may, before beginning to inquire into an offence as examining justices, or at any time during the inquiry, adjourn the hearing, and if it does so shall remand the accused.
- (2) The court shall when adjourning fix the time and place at which the hearing is to be resumed; and the time fixed shall be that at which the accused is required to appear or be brought before the court in pursuance of the remand [^{F4}or would be required to be brought before the court but for section 128(3A) below].

Textual Amendments

- F4** Words added by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 59(1), **Sch. 9 para. 1(a)**

VALID FROM 18/06/2012

^{F5}5A Evidence which is admissible.

- ^{F6}(1) Evidence falling within subsection (2) below, and only that evidence, shall be admissible by a magistrates' court inquiring into an offence as examining justices.
- (2) Evidence falls within this subsection if it—
 - (a) is tendered by or on behalf of the prosecutor, and
 - (b) falls within subsection (3) below.
 - (3) The following evidence falls within this subsection—
 - (a) written statements complying with section 5B below;
 - (b) the documents or other exhibits (if any) referred to in such statements;
 - (c) depositions complying with section 5C below;
 - (d) the documents or other exhibits (if any) referred to in such depositions;
 - (e) statements complying with section 5D below;

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(f) documents falling within section 5E below.

(4) In this section “document” means anything in which information of any description is recorded.]]

Textual Amendments

- F5** Ss. 5A-5F inserted (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of the inserting Act) by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. I para.3** (with s. 78(1)); S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**
- F6** S. 5A repealed (prosp.) by Criminal Justice Act 2003 (c. 44), ss. 41, 332, 336, Sch. 3 para. 51(3), **Sch. 37 Pt. 4**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C5** S. 5A extended (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of 1996 c. 25) by 1972 c. 71, **s. 46(1A)(a)(1B)(a)** (as inserted by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. II para. 22(3)** (with s. 78(1); S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**)

[^{F5}5A Evidence which is admissible. **E+W**

- (1) Evidence falling within subsection (2) below, and only that evidence, shall be admissible by a magistrates' court inquiring into an offence as examining justices.
- (2) Evidence falls within this subsection if it—
- is tendered by or on behalf of the prosecutor, and
 - falls within subsection (3) below.
- (3) The following evidence falls within this subsection—
- written statements complying with section 5B below;
 - the documents or other exhibits (if any) referred to in such statements;
 - depositions complying with section 5C below;
 - the documents or other exhibits (if any) referred to in such depositions;
 - statements complying with section 5D below;
 - documents falling within section 5E below.
- (4) In this section “document” means anything in which information of any description is recorded.]

Textual Amendments

- F5** Ss. 5A-5F inserted (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of the inserting Act) by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. I para.3** (with s. 78(1)); S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C5** S. 5A extended (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of 1996 c. 25) by 1972 c. 71, **s. 46(1A)(a)(1B)(a)** (as inserted by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. II para. 22(3)** (with s. 78(1); S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**)

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VALID FROM 04/07/1996

F7 5B Written statements.

- (1) For the purposes of section 5A above a written statement complies with this section if—
 - (a) the conditions falling within subsection (2) below are met, and
 - (b) such of the conditions falling within subsection (3) below as apply are met.
- (2) The conditions falling within this subsection are that—
 - (a) the statement purports to be signed by the person who made it;
 - (b) the statement contains a declaration by that person to the effect that it is true to the best of his knowledge and belief and that he made the statement knowing that, if it were tendered in evidence, he would be liable to prosecution if he wilfully stated in it anything which he knew to be false or did not believe to be true;
 - (c) before the statement is tendered in evidence a copy of the statement is given, by or on behalf of the prosecutor, to each of the other parties to the proceedings.
- (3) The conditions falling within this subsection are that—
 - (a) if the statement is made by a person under 18 years old, it gives his age;
 - (b) if it is made by a person who cannot read it, it is read to him before he signs it and is accompanied by a declaration by the person who so read the statement to the effect that it was so read;
 - (c) if it refers to any other document as an exhibit, the copy given to any other party to the proceedings under subsection (2)(c) above is accompanied by a copy of that document or by such information as may be necessary to enable the party to whom it is given to inspect that document or a copy of it.
- (4) So much of any statement as is admitted in evidence by virtue of this section shall, unless the court commits the accused for trial by virtue of section 6(2) below or the court otherwise directs, be read aloud at the hearing; and where the court so directs an account shall be given orally of so much of any statement as is not read aloud.
- (5) Any document or other object referred to as an exhibit and identified in a statement admitted in evidence by virtue of this section shall be treated as if it had been produced as an exhibit and identified in court by the maker of the statement.
- (6) In this section “document” means anything in which information of any description is recorded.

Textual Amendments

- F7** Ss. 5A-5F inserted (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of the inserting Act) by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. I para.3**; S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C6** S. 5B extended (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of 1996 c. 25) by 1972 c. 71, s. 46(1A)(b) (as inserted by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. II para. 22(3)**) (with s. 78(1); S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**)

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S. 5B extended (with modifications) (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of 1996 c. 25) by 1972 c. 71, s. 46(1B)(b) (as inserted by 1996 c. 25, Sch. 1 Pt. II para. 22(3) (with s. 78(1)); S.I. 1997/683, art. 1(2)

C7 S. 5B modified (prosp.) by 1997 c. 39, ss. 9(1), 11(2) (with ss. 1(4), 11(3))

VALID FROM 04/07/1996

^{F8}5C **Depositions.**

- (1) For the purposes of section 5A above a deposition complies with this section if—
 - (a) a copy of it is sent to the prosecutor under section 97A(9) below,
 - (b) the condition falling within subsection (2) below is met, and
 - (c) the condition falling within subsection (3) below is met, in a case where it applies.
- (2) The condition falling within this subsection is that before the magistrates' court begins to inquire into the offence concerned as examining justices a copy of the deposition is given, by or on behalf of the prosecutor, to each of the other parties to the proceedings.
- (3) The condition falling within this subsection is that, if the deposition refers to any other document as an exhibit, the copy given to any other party to the proceedings under subsection (2) above is accompanied by a copy of that document or by such information as may be necessary to enable the party to whom it is given to inspect that document or a copy of it.
- (4) So much of any deposition as is admitted in evidence by virtue of this section shall, unless the court commits the accused for trial by virtue of section 6(2) below or the court otherwise directs, be read aloud at the hearing; and where the court so directs an account shall be given orally of so much of any deposition as is not read aloud.
- (5) Any document or other object referred to as an exhibit and identified in a deposition admitted in evidence by virtue of this section shall be treated as if it had been produced as an exhibit and identified in court by the person whose evidence is taken as the deposition.
- (6) In this section “document” means anything in which information of any description is recorded.

Textual Amendments

F8 Ss. 5A-5F inserted (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of the inserting Act) by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, Sch. 1 Pt. I para.3; S.I. 1997/683, art. 1(2)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C8 S. 5C modified (prosp.) by 1997 c. 39, ss. 9(1), 11(2) (with ss. 1(4), 11(3))

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VALID FROM 04/07/1996

F⁹5D Statements.

- (1) For the purposes of section 5A above a statement complies with this section if the conditions falling within subsections (2) to (4) below are met.
- (2) The condition falling within this subsection is that, before the committal proceedings begin, the prosecutor notifies the magistrates' court and each of the other parties to the proceedings that he believes—
 - (a) that the statement might by virtue of section 23 or 24 of the ^{M1}Criminal Justice Act 1988 (statements in certain documents) be admissible as evidence if the case came to trial, and
 - (b) that the statement would not be admissible as evidence otherwise than by virtue of section 23 or 24 of that Act if the case came to trial.
- (3) The condition falling within this subsection is that—
 - (a) the prosecutor's belief is based on information available to him at the time he makes the notification,
 - (b) he has reasonable grounds for his belief, and
 - (c) he gives the reasons for his belief when he makes the notification.
- (4) The condition falling within this subsection is that when the court or a party is notified as mentioned in subsection (2) above a copy of the statement is given, by or on behalf of the prosecutor, to the court or the party concerned.
- (5) So much of any statement as is in writing and is admitted in evidence by virtue of this section shall, unless the court commits the accused for trial by virtue of section 6(2) below or the court otherwise directs, be read aloud at the hearing; and where the court so directs an account shall be given orally of so much of any statement as is not read aloud.

Textual Amendments

F9 Ss. 5A-5F inserted (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of the inserting Act) by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. I para.3**; S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C9 S. 5D modified (prosp.) by 1997 c. 39, **ss. 9(1), 11(2)** (with **ss. 1(4), 11(3)**)

Marginal Citations

M1 1988 c. 33.

VALID FROM 04/07/1996

F¹⁰5E Other documents.

- (1) The following documents fall within this section—

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- (a) any document which by virtue of any enactment is evidence in proceedings before a magistrates' court inquiring into an offence as examining justices;
 - (b) any document which by virtue of any enactment is admissible, or may be used, or is to be admitted or received, in or as evidence in such proceedings;
 - (c) any document which by virtue of any enactment may be considered in such proceedings;
 - (d) any document whose production constitutes proof in such proceedings by virtue of any enactment;
 - (e) any document by the production of which evidence may be given in such proceedings by virtue of any enactment.
- (2) In subsection (1) above—
- (a) references to evidence include references to prima facie evidence;
 - (b) references to any enactment include references to any provision of this Act.
- (3) So much of any document as is admitted in evidence by virtue of this section shall, unless the court commits the accused for trial by virtue of section 6(2) below or the court otherwise directs, be read aloud at the hearing; and where the court so directs an account shall be given orally of so much of any document as is not read aloud.
- (4) In this section “document” means anything in which information of any description is recorded.

Textual Amendments

- F10** Ss. 5A-5F inserted (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of the inserting Act) by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. I para.3**; S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**

VALID FROM 04/07/1996

^{F11}5F Proof by production of copy.

- (1) Where a statement, deposition or document is admissible in evidence by virtue of section 5B, 5C, 5D or 5E above it may be proved by the production of—
 - (a) the statement, deposition or document, or
 - (b) a copy of it or the material part of it.
- (2) Subsection (1)(b) above applies whether or not the statement, deposition or document is still in existence.
- (3) It is immaterial for the purposes of this section how many removes there are between a copy and the original.
- (4) In this section “copy”, in relation to a statement, deposition or document, means anything onto which information recorded in the statement, deposition or document has been copied, by whatever means and whether directly or indirectly.

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Textual Amendments

F11 Ss. 5A-5F inserted (with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of the inserting Act) by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. I para.3**; S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**

6 Discharge or committal for trial.

(1) Subject to the provisions of this and any other Act relating to the summary trial of indictable offences, if a magistrates' court inquiring into an offence as examining justices is of opinion, on consideration of the evidence and of any statement of the accused, that there is sufficient evidence to put the accused on trial by jury for any indictable offence, the court shall commit him for trial; and, if it is not of that opinion, it shall, if he is in custody for no other cause than the offence under inquiry, discharge him.

(2) A magistrates' court inquiring into an offence as examining justices may, if satisfied that all the evidence before the court (whether for the prosecution or the defence) consists of written statements tendered to the court under section 102 below, with or without exhibits, commit the accused for trial for the offence without consideration of the contents of those statements, unless—

- (a) the accused or one of the accused [^{F12}has no [^{F13}legal representative]acting for him in the case (whether present in court or not)];
- (b) [^{F14}a legal representative]for the accused or one of the accused, as the case may be, has requested the court to consider a submission that the statements disclose insufficient evidence to put that accused on trial by jury for the offence;

and subsection (1) above shall not apply to a committal for trial under this subsection.

(3) Subject to section 4 of the ^{M2}Bail Act 1976 and section 41 below, the court may commit a person for trial—

- (a) in custody, that is to say, by committing him to custody there to be safely kept until delivered in due course of law, or
- (b) on bail in accordance with the ^{M3}Bail Act 1976, that is to say, by directing him to appear before the Crown Court for trial;

and where his release on bail is conditional on his providing one or more surety or sureties and, in accordance with section 8(3) of the ^{M4}Bail Act 1976, the court fixes the amount in which the surety is to be bound with a view to his entering into his recognizance subsequently in accordance with subsections (4) and (5) or (6) of that section the court shall in the meantime commit the accused to custody in accordance with paragraph (a) of this subsection.

(4) Where the court has committed a person to custody in accordance with paragraph (a) of subsection (3) above, then, if that person is in custody for no other cause, the court may, at any time before his first appearance before the Crown Court, grant him bail in accordance with the ^{M5}Bail Act 1976 subject to a duty to appear before the Crown Court for trial.

(5) Where a magistrates' court acting as examining justices commits any person for trial or determines to discharge him, the clerk of the court shall, on the day on which the committal proceedings are concluded or the next day, cause to be displayed in a part of the court house to which the public have access a notice—

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- (a) in either case giving that person's name, address, and age (if known);
- (b) in a case where the court so commits him, stating the charge or charges on which he is committed and the court to which he is committed;
- (c) in a case where the court determines to discharge him, describing the offence charged and stating that it has so determined;

but this subsection shall have effect subject to [^{F15}section 4 of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 1976 (anonymity of complainant in rape etc. cases)].

- (6) A notice displayed in pursuance of subsection (5) above shall not contain the name or address of any person under the age of 17 unless the justices in question have stated that in their opinion he would be mentioned in the notice apart from the preceding provisions of this subsection and should be mentioned in it for the purpose of avoiding injustice to him.

Textual Amendments

- F12** Words substituted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 61
- F13** Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), Sch. 18 para. 25(4)(a)
- F14** Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), Sch. 18 para. 25(3)(a)
- F15** Words substituted by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 123(6), 170(1), Sch. 8 para. 16, Sch. 15 para. 66

Marginal Citations

- M2** 1976 c. 63.
- M3** 1976 c. 63.
- M4** 1976 c. 63.
- M5** 1976 c. 63

7 Place of trial on indictment.

A magistrates' court committing a person for trial shall specify the place at which he is to be tried, and in selecting that place shall have regard to—

- (a) the convenience of the defence, the prosecution and the witnesses,
- (b) the expediting of the trial, and
- (c) any direction given by or on behalf of the Lord Chief Justice with the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor under section 4(5) of the ^{M6}Courts Act 1971.

Marginal Citations

- M6** 1971 c. 23.

8 Restrictions on reports of committal proceedings.

- (1) Except as provided by subsections (2), (3) and (8) below, it shall not be lawful to publish in Great Britain a written report, or to [^{F16}include in a relevant programme for reception]in Great Britain a report, of any committal proceedings in England and Wales containing any matter other than that permitted by subsection (4) below.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

(2) ^{F17}Subject to subsection (2A) below]a magistrates' court shall, on an application for the purpose made with reference to any committal proceedings by the accused or one of the accused, as the case may be, order that subsection (1) above shall not apply to reports of those proceedings.

^{F18}(2A) Where in the case of two or more accused one of them objects to the making of an order under subsection (2) above, the court shall make the order if, and only if, it is satisfied, after hearing the representations of the accused, that it is in the interests of justice to do so.

(2B) An order under subsection (2) above shall not apply to reports of proceedings under subsection (2A) above, but any decision of the court to make or not to make such an order may be contained in reports published ^{F19}or included in a relevant programme]before the time authorised by subsection (3) below.]

(3) It shall not be unlawful under this section to publish ^{F20}or include in a relevant programme]a report of committal proceedings containing any matter other than that permitted by subsection (4) below—

- (a) where the magistrates' court determines not to commit the accused, or determines to commit none of the accused, for trial, after it so determines;
- (b) where the court commits the accused or any of the accused for trial, after the conclusion of his trial or, as the case may be, the trial of the last to be tried;

and where at any time during the inquiry the court proceeds to try summarily the case of one or more of the accused under section 25(3) or (7) below, while committing the other accused or one or more of the other accused for trial, it shall not be unlawful under this section to publish ^{F20}or include in a relevant programme]as part of a report of the summary trial, after the court determines to proceed as aforesaid, a report of so much of the committal proceedings containing any such matter as takes place before the determination.

(4) The following matters may be contained in a report of committal proceedings published ^{F21}or included in a relevant programme]without an order under subsection (2) above before the time authorised by subsection (3) above, that is to say—

- (a) the identity of the court and the names of the examining justices;
- (b) the names, addresses and occupations of the parties and witnesses and the ages of the accused and witnesses;
- (c) the offence or offences, or a summary of them, with which the accused is or are charged;
- (d) the names of ^{F22}the legal representatives]engaged in the proceedings;
- (e) any decision of the court to commit the accused or any of the accused for trial, and any decision of the court on the disposal of the case of any accused not committed;
- (f) where the court commits the accused or any of the accused for trial, the charge or charges, or a summary of them, on which he is committed and the court to which he is committed;
- (g) where the committal proceedings are adjourned, the date and place to which they are adjourned;
- (h) any arrangements as to bail on committal or adjournment;
- (i) whether legal aid was granted to the accused or any of the accused.

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- (5) If a report is published [^{F23}or included in a relevant programme]in contravention of this section, the following persons, that is to say—
 - (a) in the case of a publication of a written report as part of a newspaper or periodical, any proprietor, editor or publisher of the newspaper or periodical;
 - (b) in the case of a publication of a written report otherwise than as part of a newspaper or periodical, the person who publishes it;
 - [^{F24}(c) in the case of the inclusion of a report in a relevant programme, any body corporate which provides the service in which the programme is included and any person having functions in relation to the programme corresponding to those of an editor of a newspaper.]
 shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding [^{F25}level 5 on the standard scale].
- (6) Proceedings for an offence under this section shall not, in England and Wales, be instituted otherwise than by or with the consent of the Attorney-General.
- (7) Subsection (1) above shall be in addition to, and not in derogation from, the provisions of any other enactment with respect to the publication of reports and proceedings of magistrates' and other courts.
- (8) For the purposes of this section committal proceedings shall, in relation to an information charging an indictable offence, be deemed to include any proceedings in the magistrates' court before the court proceeds to inquire into the information as examining justices; but where a magistrates' court which has begun to try an information summarily discontinues the summary trial in pursuance of section 25(2) or (6) below and proceeds to inquire into the information as examining justices, that circumstance shall not make it unlawful under this section for a report of any proceedings on the information which was published [^{F26}or included in a relevant programme]before the court determined to proceed as aforesaid to have been so published [^{F26}or included in a relevant programme].
- (9) ^{F27}
- (10) In this section—
 - ^{F28}
 - ^{F29}
 “publish”, in relation to a report, means publish the report, either by itself or as part of a newspaper or periodical, for distribution to the public.
 [^{F30}“relevant programme” means a programme included in a programme service (within the meaning of the Broadcasting Act 1990).]

Textual Amendments

- F16** Words substituted by virtue of Broadcasting Act 1990 (c.42, SIF 96), ss. 4(6), 87(6), 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(a)**
- F17** Words inserted by Criminal Justice (Amendment) Act 1981 (c. 27, SIF 82), s. 1(1)(4)
- F18** S. 8(2A)(2B) inserted by Criminal Justice (Amendment) Act 1981 (c. 27, SIF 82), s. 1(2)(4)
- F19** Words substituted by virtue of Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), ss. 4(6), 87(6), 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(b)** and Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 (c. 46, SIF 96), s. 57(1), **Sch. 5 para. 37(2)**
- F20** Words substituted by virtue of Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 (c. 46, SIF 96), s. 57(1), **Sch. 5 para. 37(2)** and by Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), ss. 4(6), 87(6), 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(c)**

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- F21** Words substituted by virtue of Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 (c. 46, SIF 96), s. 57(1), **Sch. 5 para. 37(2)** and by Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), ss. 4(6), 87(6), 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(b)**
- F22** Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(5)**
- F23** Words substituted by virtue of Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 (c. 46, SIF 96), s. 57(1), **Sch. 5 para. 37(2)** and Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), s. 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(b)**
- F24** S. 8(5)(c) substituted (for para. (c) and the para. (d) inserted by Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 (c. 46, SIF 96), s. 57(1), **Sch. 5 para. 37(4)**) by virtue of Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), s. 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(d)**
- F25** Words substituted by virtue of (E.W.) Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), **ss. 38, 46** and (S.) Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 (c. 21, SIF 39:1), **ss. 289F, 289G**
- F26** Words substituted by virtue of Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 (c. 46, SIF 96), s. 57(1), **Sch. 5 para. 37(2)** and Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), ss. 4(6), 87(6), 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(b)**
- F27** S. 8(9) repealed by Contempt of Court Act 1981 (c. 49, SIF 39:3), **s. 4(4)**
- F28** Definition of "broadcast" repealed by Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), ss. 4(6), 87(6), 203(1)(3), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(e), Sch. 21**
- F29** Definition of "cable programme" inserted by Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984 (c. 46, SIF 96), s. 57(1), **Sch. 5 para. 37(5)** and repealed by Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), ss. 4(6), 87(6), 203(1)(3), **Sch. 20 para. 29(1)(e), Sch. 21**
- F30** Definition of "relevant programme" inserted by Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), s. 203(1), **Sch. 20, para. 29(1)(e)**

VALID FROM 01/04/2005

[^{F31}Pre-trial hearings

Textual Amendments

- F31** Ss. 8A-8D and cross-heading inserted (1.4.2005) by Courts Act 2003 (c. 39), ss. 45, 110, **Sch. 3; S.I. 2005/910, art. 3(p)**

8A Power to make rulings at pre-trial hearing

- (1) For the purposes of this section a hearing is a pre-trial hearing if—
- (a) it relates to an information—
 - (i) which is to be tried summarily, and
 - (ii) to which the accused has pleaded not guilty, and
 - (b) it takes place before the start of the trial.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1)(b), the start of a summary trial occurs when the court begins—
- (a) to hear evidence from the prosecution at the trial, or
 - (b) to consider whether to exercise its power under section 37(3) of the Mental Health Act 1983 (power to make hospital order without convicting the accused).
- (3) At a pre-trial hearing, a magistrates' court may make a ruling as to any matter mentioned in subsection (4) if—
- (a) the condition in subsection (5) is met,

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- (b) the court has given the parties an opportunity to be heard, and
 - (c) it appears to the court that it is in the interests of justice to make the ruling.
- (4) The matters are—
- (a) any question as to the admissibility of evidence;
 - (b) any other question of law relating to the case.
- (5) The condition is that, if the accused is not legally represented, the court must—
- (a) ask whether he wishes to be granted a right to representation funded by the Legal Services Commission as part of the Criminal Defence Service, and
 - (b) if he does, decide whether or not to grant him that right.
- (6) A ruling may be made under this section—
- (a) on an application by a party to the case, or
 - (b) of the court's own motion.
- (7) For the purposes of this section and section 8B, references to the prosecutor are to any person acting as prosecutor, whether an individual or body.

8B Effect of rulings at pre-trial hearing

- (1) Subject to subsections (3) and (6), a ruling under section 8A has binding effect from the time it is made until the case against the accused or, if there is more than one, against each of them, is disposed of.
- (2) The case against an accused is disposed of if—
- (a) he is acquitted or convicted,
 - (b) the prosecutor decides not to proceed with the case against him, or
 - (c) the information is dismissed.
- (3) A magistrates' court may discharge or vary (or further vary) a ruling under section 8A if—
- (a) the condition in section 8A(5) is met,
 - (b) the court has given the parties an opportunity to be heard, and
 - (c) it appears to the court that it is in the interests of justice to do so.
- (4) The court may act under subsection (3)—
- (a) on an application by a party to the case, or
 - (b) of its own motion.
- (5) No application may be made under subsection (4)(a) unless there has been a material change of circumstances since the ruling was made or, if a previous application has been made, since the application (or last application) was made.
- (6) A ruling under section 8A is discharged in relation to an accused if—
- (a) the magistrates' court commits or sends him to the Crown Court for trial for the offence charged in the information, or
 - (b) a count charging him with the offence is included in an indictment by virtue of section 40 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

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8C Restrictions on reporting

- (1) Except as provided by this section no report of matters falling within subsection (2) may be published in England and Wales.
- (2) The following matters fall within this subsection—
 - (a) a ruling under section 8A;
 - (b) proceedings on an application for a ruling under section 8A;
 - (c) an order under section 8B that a ruling under section 8A be discharged, varied or further varied;
 - (d) proceedings on an application under section 8B for a ruling under section 8A to be discharged, varied or further varied.
- (3) A magistrates' court dealing with any matter falling within subsection (2) may order that subsection (1) does not apply, or does not apply to a specified extent, to a report of the matter.
- (4) Where there is only one accused and he objects to the making of an order under subsection (3)—
 - (a) the court may make the order if (and only if) satisfied after hearing the representations of the accused that it is in the interests of justice to do so, and
 - (b) if the order is made, it shall not apply to the extent that a report deals with any such objection or representations.
- (5) Where there are two or more accused and one or more of them objects to the making of an order under subsection (3)—
 - (a) the court may make the order if (and only if) satisfied after hearing the representations of each of the accused that it is in the interests of justice to do so, and
 - (b) if the order is made, it shall not apply to the extent that a report deals with any such objection or representations.
- (6) Subsection (1) does not apply to the publication of a report of matters after the case against the accused or, if more than one, against each of them, is disposed of.
- (7) Subsection (1) does not apply to a report which contains only one or more of the following matters—
 - (a) the identity of the court and the names of the justices;
 - (b) the names, ages, home addresses and occupations of the accused and witnesses;
 - (c) the offence or offences, or a summary of them, with which the accused or any of the accused are charged;
 - (d) the names of counsel and solicitors in the proceedings;
 - (e) where the proceedings are adjourned, the date and place to which they are adjourned;
 - (f) any arrangements as to bail;
 - (g) whether a right to representation funded by the Legal Services Commission as part of the Criminal Defence Service was granted to the accused or any of the accused.
- (8) The addresses that may be included in a report by virtue of subsection (7) are addresses—
 - (a) at any relevant time, and

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(b) at the time of their inclusion in the publication.

- (9) In subsection (8), “relevant time” means a time when events giving rise to the charges to which the proceedings relate are alleged to have occurred.
- (10) Nothing in this section affects any prohibition or restriction imposed by virtue of any other enactment on the publication of a report of any matter.
- (11) In this section and in section 8D—
- (a) references to publication of a report of matters falling within subsection (2) —
- (i) include references to inclusion of those matters in any speech, writing, relevant programme or other communication in whatever form which is addressed to the public at large or any section of the public (and for this purpose every relevant programme is to be taken to be so addressed), but
- (ii) do not include references to inclusion of those matters in a document prepared for use in particular legal proceedings;
- (b) “relevant programme” means a programme included in a programme service, within the meaning of the Broadcasting Act 1990.

8D Offences in connection with reporting

- (1) If a report is published in contravention of section 8C each of the following persons is guilty of an offence—
- (a) in the case of a publication of a report as part of a newspaper or periodical, any proprietor, editor or publisher of the newspaper or periodical;
- (b) in the case of the inclusion of a report in a relevant programme, any body corporate which is engaged in providing the service in which the programme is included and 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) If an offence under this section committed by a body corporate is proved—
- (a) to have been committed with the consent or connivance of, or
- (b) to be attributable to any neglect on the part of,
- an officer, the officer as well as the body corporate is guilty of the offence and liable to be proceeded against and punished accordingly.
- (3) In subsection (2), “officer” means a director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body, or a person purporting to act in any such capacity.
- (4) If the affairs of a body corporate are managed by its members, “director” in subsection (3) means a member of that body.
- (5) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to a fine of an amount not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.
- (6) Proceedings for an offence under this section may not be instituted otherwise than by or with the consent of the Attorney General.]

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Summary trial of information

9 Procedure on trial.

- (1) On the summary trial of an information, the court shall, if the accused appears, state to him the substance of the information and ask him whether he pleads guilty or not guilty.
- (2) The court, after hearing the evidence and the parties, shall convict the accused or dismiss the information.
- (3) If the accused pleads guilty, the court may convict him without hearing evidence.

10 Adjournment of trial.

- (1) A magistrates' court may at any time, whether before or after beginning to try an information, adjourn the trial, and may do so, notwithstanding anything in this Act, when composed of a single justice.
- (2) The court may when adjourning either fix the time and place at which the trial is to be resumed, or, unless it remands the accused, leave the time and place to be determined later by the court; but the trial shall not be resumed at that time and place unless the court is satisfied that the parties have had adequate notice thereof.
- (3) A magistrates' court may, for the purpose of enabling inquiries to be made or of determining the most suitable method of dealing with the case, exercise its power to adjourn after convicting the accused and before sentencing him or otherwise dealing with him; but, if it does so, the adjournment shall not be for more than 4 weeks at a time unless the court remands the accused in custody and, where it so remands him, the adjournment shall not be for more than 3 weeks at a time.
- (4) On adjourning the trial of an information the court may remand the accused and, where the accused has attained the age of 17, shall do so if the offence is triable either way and—
 - (a) on the occasion on which the accused first appeared, or was brought, before the court to answer to the information he was in custody or, having been released on bail, surrendered to the custody of the court; or
 - (b) the accused has been remanded at any time in the course of proceedings on the information;

and, where the court remands the accused, the time fixed for the resumption of the trial shall be that at which he is required to appear or be brought before the court in pursuance of the remand [^{F32}or would be required to be brought before the court but for section 128(3A) below].

Textual Amendments

F32 Words added by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 59(1), [Sch. 9 para. 1\(b\)](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C10 [S. 10](#) applied by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 41(1), 123(6), [Sch. 8 para. 16](#)

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11 Non-appearance of accused: general provisions.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, where at the time and place appointed for the trial or adjourned trial of an information the prosecutor appears but the accused does not, the court may proceed in his absence.
- (2) Where a summons has been issued, the court shall not begin to try the information in the absence of the accused unless either it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that the summons was served on the accused within what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before the trial or adjourned trial or the accused has appeared on a previous occasion to answer to the information.
- (3) A magistrates' court shall not in a person's absence sentence him to imprisonment or detention in a detention centre or make an order under section 23 of the ^{M7}Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973 that a suspended sentence passed on him shall take effect.
- (4) A magistrates' court shall not in a person's absence impose any disqualification on him, except on resumption of the hearing after an adjournment under section 10(3) above; and where a trial is adjourned in pursuance of this subsection the notice required by section 10(2) above shall include notice of the reason for the adjournment.

Marginal Citations

M7 1973 c. 62.

12 Non-appearance of accused: plea of guilty.

- (1) Subject to subsection (7) below, this section shall apply where a summons has been issued requiring a person to appear before a magistrates' court, other than a juvenile court, to answer to an information for a summary offence, not being an offence for which the accused is liable to be sentenced to be imprisoned for a term exceeding 3 months, and the clerk of the court is notified by or on behalf of the prosecutor that the following documents have been served upon the accused with the summons, that is to say—
 - (a) a notice containing such statement of the effect of this section as may be prescribed; and
 - (b) a concise statement in the prescribed form of such facts relating to the charge as will be placed before the court by or on behalf of the prosecutor if the accused pleads guilty without appearing before the court.
- (2) Subject to subsections (3) to (5) below, where the clerk of the court receives a notification in writing purporting to be given by the accused or by a ^{F33}legal representative]acting on his behalf that the accused desires to plead guilty without appearing before the court, the clerk of the court shall inform the prosecutor of the receipt of the notification and if at the time and place appointed for the trial or adjourned trial of the information the accused does not appear and it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that the notice and statement of facts referred to in subsection (1) above have been served upon the accused with the summons, then—
 - (a) subject to section 11(3) and (4) above, the court may proceed to hear and dispose of the case in the absence of the accused, whether or not the prosecutor

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- is also absent, in like manner as if both parties had appeared and the accused had pleaded guilty; or
- (b) if the court decides not to proceed as aforesaid, the court shall adjourn or further adjourn the trial for the purpose of dealing with the information as if the notification aforesaid had not been given.
- (3) If at any time before the hearing the clerk of the court receives an intimation in writing purporting to be given by or on behalf of the accused that he wishes to withdraw the notification aforesaid, the clerk of the court shall inform the prosecutor thereof and the court shall deal with the information as if this section had not been passed.
- (4) Before accepting the plea of guilty and convicting the accused in his absence under subsection (2) above, the court shall cause the notification and statement of facts aforesaid, including any submission received with the notification which the accused wishes to be brought to the attention of the court with a view to mitigation of sentence, to be read out before the court [^{F34}by the clerk of the court].
- (5) If the court proceeds under subsection (2) above to hear and dispose of the case in the absence of the accused, the court shall not permit any statement to be made by or on behalf of the prosecutor with respect to any facts relating to the offence charged other than the statement of facts aforesaid except on a resumption of the trial after an adjournment under section 10(3) above.
- (6) In relation to an adjournment by reason of the requirements of paragraph (b) of subsection (2) above or to an adjournment on the occasion of the accused's conviction in his absence under that subsection, the notice required by section 10(2) above shall include notice of the reason for the adjournment.
- (7) The Secretary of State may by order made by statutory instrument provide that this section shall not apply in relation to such offences (in addition to an offence for which the accused is liable to be sentenced to be imprisoned for a term exceeding 3 months) as may be specified in the order, and any order under this subsection—
- (a) may vary or revoke any previous order thereunder; and
- (b) shall not be made unless a draft thereof has been approved by resolution of each House of Parliament.
- (8) Any such notice or statement as is mentioned in subsection (1) above may be served in Scotland with a summons which is so served under the ^{M8}Summary Jurisdiction (Process) Act 1881.
- [^{F35}(9) Where the clerk of the court has received such a notification as is mentioned in subsection (2) above but the accused nevertheless appears before the court at the time and place appointed for the trial or adjourned trial the court may, if the accused consents, proceed under this section as if he were absent.]

Extent Information

E1 S. 12(8) extends to Scotland see s. 155(2)(a)

Textual Amendments

F33 Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(4)(a)**

F34 Words added by Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 (c. 23, SIF 39:1), s. 31(5), **Sch. 1 Pt. I para. 1(2)**

F35 S. 12(9) added by Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 (c. 23, SIF 39:1), s. 31(5), **Sch. 1 Pt. I para. 1(3)**

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Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

Marginal Citations

M8 1881 c. 24.

VALID FROM 04/09/1995

[^{F36}12A Application of section 12 where accused appears.

- (1) Where the clerk of the court has received such a notification as is mentioned in subsection (4) of section 12 above but the accused nevertheless appears before the court at the time and place appointed for the trial or adjourned trial, the court may, if he consents, proceed under subsection (5) of that section as if he were absent.
- (2) Where the clerk of the court has not received such a notification and the accused appears before the court at that time and place and informs the court that he desires to plead guilty, the court may, if he consents, proceed under section 12(5) above as if he were absent and the clerk had received such a notification.
- (3) For the purposes of subsections (1) and (2) above, subsections (6) to (11) of section 12 above shall apply with the modifications mentioned in subsection (4) or, as the case may be, subsection (5) below.
- (4) The modifications for the purposes of subsection (1) above are that—
 - (a) before accepting the plea of guilty and convicting the accused under subsection (5) of section 12 above, the court shall afford the accused an opportunity to make an oral submission with a view to mitigation of sentence; and
 - (b) where he makes such a submission, subsection (7)(d) of that section shall not apply.
- (5) The modifications for the purposes of subsection (2) above are that—
 - (a) subsection (6) of section 12 above shall apply as if any reference to the notification under subsection (4) of that section were a reference to the consent under subsection (2) above;
 - (b) subsection (7)(c) and (d) of that section shall not apply; and
 - (c) before accepting the plea of guilty and convicting the accused under subsection (5) of that section, the court shall afford the accused an opportunity to make an oral submission with a view to mitigation of sentence.]

Textual Amendments

F36 S. 12A inserted (4.9.1995) by 1994 c. 33, s. 45, Sch. 5 para.2; S.I. 1995/1957, art.4

13 Non-appearance of accused: issue of warrant.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, where the court, instead of proceeding in the absence of the accused, adjourns or further adjourns the trial, the court may, if the information has been substantiated on oath, issue a warrant for his arrest.

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- (2) Where a summons has been issued, the court shall not issue a warrant under this section unless either it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that the summons was served on the accused within what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before the trial or adjourned trial or the accused has appeared on a previous occasion to answer to the information.
- (3) A warrant for the arrest of any person who has attained the age of 17 shall not be issued under this section unless—
 - (a) the offence to which the warrant relates is punishable with imprisonment; or
 - (b) the court, having convicted the accused, proposes to impose a disqualification on him.
- (4) This section shall not apply to an adjournment by reason of the requirements of paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section 12 above or to an adjournment on the occasion of the accused's conviction in his absence under that subsection.
- (5) Where the court adjourns the trial—
 - (a) after having, either on that or on a previous occasion, received any evidence or convicted the accused without hearing evidence on his pleading guilty under section 9(3) above; or
 - (b) after having on a previous occasion convicted the accused without hearing evidence on his pleading guilty under section 12(2) above,the court shall not issue a warrant under this section unless it thinks it undesirable, by reason of the gravity of the offence, to continue the trial in the absence of the accused.

14 Proceedings invalid where accused did not know of them.

- (1) Where a summons has been issued under section 1 above and a magistrates' court has begun to try the information to which the summons relates, then, if—
 - (a) the accused, at any time during or after the trial, makes a statutory declaration that he did not know of the summons or the proceedings until a date specified in the declaration, being a date after the court has begun to try the information; and
 - (b) within 21 days of that date the declaration is served on the clerk to the justices, without prejudice to the validity of the information, the summons and all subsequent proceedings shall be void.
- (2) For the purposes of subsection (1) above a statutory declaration shall be deemed to be duly served on the clerk to the justices if it is delivered to him, or left at his office, or is sent in a registered letter or by the recorded delivery service addressed to him at his office.
- (3) If on the application of the accused it appears to a magistrates' court (which for this purpose may be composed of a single justice) that it was not reasonable to expect the accused to serve such a statutory declaration as is mentioned in subsection (1) above within the period allowed by that subsection, the court may accept service of such a declaration by the accused after that period has expired; and a statutory declaration accepted under this subsection shall be deemed to have been served as required by that subsection.
- (4) Where any proceedings have become void by virtue of subsection (1) above, the information shall not be tried again by any of the same justices.

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15 Non-appearance of prosecutor.

- (1) Where at the time and place appointed for the trial or adjourned trial of an information the accused appears or is brought before the court and the prosecutor does not appear, the court may dismiss the information or, if evidence has been received on a previous occasion, proceed in the absence of the prosecutor.
- (2) Where, instead of dismissing the information or proceeding in the absence of the prosecutor, the court adjourns the trial, it shall not remand the accused in custody unless he has been brought from custody or cannot be remanded on bail by reason of his failure to find sureties.

16 Non-appearance of both parties.

Subject to section 11(3) and (4) and to section 12 above, where at the time and place appointed for the trial or adjourned trial of an information neither the prosecutor nor the accused appears, the court may dismiss the information or, if evidence has been received on a previous occasion, proceed in their absence.

Offences triable on indictment or summarily

17 Certain offences triable either way.

- (1) The offences listed in Schedule 1 to this Act shall be triable either way.
- (2) Subsection (1) above is without prejudice to any other enactment by virtue of which any offence is triable either way.

VALID FROM 04/07/1996

[17A] ^{F37}Initial procedure: accused to indicate intention as to plea.

- (1) This section shall have effect where a person who has attained the age of 18 years appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with an offence triable either way.
- (2) Everything that the court is required to do under the following provisions of this section must be done with the accused present in court.
- (3) The court shall cause the charge to be written down, if this has not already been done, and to be read to the accused.
- (4) The court shall then explain to the accused in ordinary language that he may indicate whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) he would plead guilty or not guilty, and that if he indicates that he would plead guilty—
 - (a) the court must proceed as mentioned in subsection (6) below; and
 - (b) he may be committed for sentence to the Crown Court under section 38 below if the court is of such opinion as is mentioned in subsection (2) of that section.
- (5) The court shall then ask the accused whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) he would plead guilty or not guilty.

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- (6) If the accused indicates that he would plead guilty the court shall proceed as if—
- (a) the proceedings constituted from the beginning the summary trial of the information; and
 - (b) section 9(1) above was complied with and he pleaded guilty under it.
- (7) If the accused indicates that he would plead not guilty section 18(1) below shall apply.
- (8) If the accused in fact fails to indicate how he would plead, for the purposes of this section and section 18(1) below he shall be taken to indicate that he would plead not guilty.
- (9) Subject to subsection (6) above, 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) he would plead guilty or not guilty;
 - (b) an indication by the accused under this section of how he would plead.]

Textual Amendments

F37 Ss. 17A-17C inserted (4.7.1996 with application where a person appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on or after 1.10.1997) by 1996 c. 25, s. 49(2)(6) (with s. 78(1)); S.I. 1997/2199, art.2

VALID FROM 04/07/1996

^{F38}17B Intention as to plea: absence of accused.

- (1) This section shall have effect where—
- (a) a person who has attained the age of 18 years appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with an offence triable either way,
 - (b) the accused is represented by a legal representative,
 - (c) the court considers that by reason of the accused's disorderly conduct before the court it is not practicable for proceedings under section 17A above to be conducted in his presence, and
 - (d) the court considers that it should proceed in the absence of the accused.
- (2) In such a case—
- (a) the court shall cause the charge to be written down, if this has not already been done, and to be read to the representative;
 - (b) the court shall ask the representative whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) the accused would plead guilty or not guilty;
 - (c) if the representative indicates that the accused would plead guilty the court shall proceed as if the proceedings constituted from the beginning the summary trial of the information, and as if section 9(1) above was complied with and the accused pleaded guilty under it;
 - (d) if the representative indicates that the accused would plead not guilty section 18(1) below shall apply.

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- (3) If the representative in fact fails to indicate how the accused would plead, for the purposes of this section and section 18(1) below he shall be taken to indicate that the accused would plead not guilty.
- (4) Subject to subsection (2)(c) above, the following shall not for any purpose be taken to constitute the taking of a plea—
- (a) asking the representative under this section whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) the accused would plead guilty or not guilty;
 - (b) an indication by the representative under this section of how the accused would plead.

Textual Amendments

- F38** Ss. 17A-17C inserted (4.7.1996 with application where a person appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on or after 1.10.1997) by 1996 c. 25, s. 49(2)(6) (with s. 78(1)); S.I. 1997/2199, art.2

VALID FROM 04/07/1996

^{F39}17C Intention as to plea: adjournment.

A magistrates' court proceeding under section 17A or 17B above may adjourn the proceedings at any time, and on doing so on any occasion when the accused is present may remand the accused, and shall remand him if—

- (a) on the occasion on which he first appeared, or was brought, before the court to answer to the information he was in custody or, having been released on bail, surrendered to the custody of the court; or
- (b) he has been remanded at any time in the course of proceedings on the information;

and where the court remands the accused, the time fixed for the resumption of proceedings shall be that at which he is required to appear or be brought before the court in pursuance of the remand or would be required to be brought before the court but for section 128(3A) below.

Textual Amendments

- F39** Ss. 17A-17C inserted (4.7.1996 with application where a person appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on or after 1.10.1997) by 1996 c. 25, s. 49(2)(6) (with s. 78(1)); S.I. 1997/2199, art.2

VALID FROM 18/06/2012

^{F40}17D Maximum penalty under section 17A(6) or 17B(2)(c) for certain offences

- (1) If—
- (a) the offence is a scheduled offence (as defined in section 22(1) below);

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- (b) the court proceeds in relation to the offence in accordance with section 17A(6) or 17B(2)(c) above; and
 - (c) the court convicts the accused of the offence,
- the court shall consider whether, having regard to any representations made by him or by the prosecutor, the value involved (as defined in section 22(10) below) appears to the court to exceed the relevant sum (as specified for the purposes of section 22 below).
- (2) If it appears to the court clear that the value involved does not exceed the relevant sum, or it appears to the court for any reason not clear whether the value involved does or does not exceed the relevant sum—
- (a) subject to subsection (4) below, the court shall not have power to impose on the accused in respect of the offence a sentence in excess of the limits mentioned in section 33(1)(a) below; and
 - (b) sections 3 and 4 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 shall not apply as regards that offence.
- (3) Subsections (9) to (12) of section 22 below shall apply for the purposes of this section as they apply for the purposes of that section (reading the reference to subsection (1) in section 22(9) as a reference to subsection (1) of this section).
- (4) Subsection (2)(a) above does not apply to an offence under section 12A of the Theft Act 1968 (aggravated vehicle-taking).

Textual Amendments

F40 Ss. 17D, 17E inserted (prosp.) by [Criminal Justice Act 2003 \(c. 44\)](#), ss. 41, 336, [Sch. 3 para. 3](#)

VALID FROM 18/06/2012

17E Functions under sections 17A to 17D capable of exercise by single justice

- (1) The functions of a magistrates' court under sections 17A to 17D above may be discharged by a single justice.
- (2) Subsection (1) above shall not be taken as authorising—
- (a) the summary trial of an information (otherwise than in accordance with section 17A(6) or 17B(2)(c) above); or
 - (b) the imposition of a sentence,
- by a magistrates' court composed of fewer than two justices.]

Textual Amendments

F40 Ss. 17D, 17E inserted (prosp.) by [Criminal Justice Act 2003 \(c. 44\)](#), ss. 41, 336, [Sch. 3 para. 3](#)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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18 Initial procedure on information against adult for offence triable either way.

- (1) Sections 19 to 23 below shall have effect where a person who has attained the age of 17 appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with an offence triable either way.
- (2) Without prejudice to section 11(1) above, everything that the court is required to do under sections 19 to 22 below must be done before any evidence is called and, subject to subsection (3) below and section 23 below, with the accused present in court.
- (3) The court may proceed in the absence of the accused in accordance with such of the provisions of sections 19 to 22 below as are applicable in the circumstances if the court considers that by reason of his disorderly conduct before the court it is not practicable for the proceedings to be conducted in his presence; and the subsections (3) to (5) of section 23 below, so far as applicable, shall have effect in relation to proceedings conducted in the absence of the accused by virtue of this subsection (references in those subsections to the person representing the accused being for this purpose read as references to the person, if any, representing him).
- (4) A magistrates' court proceeding under sections 19 to 23 below may adjourn the proceedings at any time, and on doing so on any occasion when the accused is present may remand the accused, and shall remand him if—
 - (a) on the occasion on which he first appeared, or was brought, before the court to answer to the information he was in custody or, having been released on bail, surrendered to the custody of the court; or
 - (b) he has been remanded at any time in the course of proceedings on the information;
 and where the court remands the accused, the time fixed for the resumption of the proceedings shall be that at which he is required to appear or be brought before the court in pursuance of the remand [^{F41}or would be required to be brought before the court but for section 128(3A) below].
- (5) The functions of a magistrates' court under sections 19 to 23 below may be discharged by a single justice, but the foregoing provision shall not be taken to authorise the summary trial of an information by a magistrates' court composed of less than two justices.

Textual Amendments

F41 Words added by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 59(1), [Sch. 9 para. 1\(c\)](#)

19 Court to begin by considering which mode of trial appears more suitable.

- (1) The court shall consider whether, having regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (3) below and any representations made by the prosecutor or the accused, the offence appears to the court more suitable for summary trial or for trial on indictment.
- (2) Before so considering, the court—
 - (a) shall cause the charge to be written down, if this has not already been done, and read to the accused; and
 - (b) shall afford first the prosecutor and then the accused an opportunity to make representations as to which mode of trial would be more suitable.

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- (3) The matters to which the court is to have regard under subsection (1) above are the nature of the case; whether the circumstances make the offence one of serious character; whether the punishment which a magistrates' court would have power to inflict for it would be adequate; and any other circumstances which appear to the court to make it more suitable for the offence to be tried in one way rather than the other.
- (4) If the prosecution is being carried on by the Attorney General, the Solicitor General or the Director of Public Prosecutions and he applies for the offence to be tried on indictment, the preceding provisions of this section and sections 20 to 21 below shall not apply, and the court shall proceed to inquire into the information as examining justices.
- [^{F42}(5) The power of the Director of Public Prosecutions under subsection (4) above to apply for an offence to be tried on indictment shall not be exercised except with the consent of the Attorney General.]

Textual Amendments

F42 S. 19(5) added by [Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 \(c. 23, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 31(5), [Sch. 1 Pt. I para. 2](#)

20 Procedure where summary trial appears more suitable.

- (1) If, where the court has considered as required by section 19(1) above, it appears to the court that the offence is more suitable for summary trial, the following provisions of this section shall apply (unless excluded by section 23 below).
- (2) The court shall explain to the accused in ordinary language—
- that it appears to the court more suitable for him to be tried summarily for the offence, and that he can either consent to be so tried or, if he wishes, be tried by a jury; and
 - that if he is tried summarily and is convicted by the court, he may be committed for sentence to the Crown Court under section 38 below if the convicting court, on obtaining information about his character and antecedents, is of opinion that they are such that greater punishment should be inflicted than the convicting court has power to inflict for the offence.
- (3) After explaining to the accused as provided by subsection (2) above the court shall ask him whether he consents to be tried summarily or wishes to be tried by a jury, and—
- if he consents to be tried summarily, shall proceed to the summary trial of the information;
 - if he does not so consent, shall proceed to inquire into the information as examining justices.

VALID FROM 18/06/2012

[^{F43}20A Procedure where summary trial appears more suitable: supplementary

- (1) Where the case is dealt with in accordance with section 20(7) above, no court (whether a magistrates' court or not) may impose a custodial sentence for the offence unless such a sentence was indicated in the indication of sentence referred to in section 20 above.

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- (2) Subsection (1) above is subject to sections 3A(4), 4(8) and 5(3) of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000.
- (3) Except as provided in subsection (1) above—
- (a) an indication of sentence shall not be binding on any court (whether a magistrates' court or not); and
 - (b) no sentence may be challenged or be the subject of appeal in any court on the ground that it is not consistent with an indication of sentence.
- (4) Subject to section 20(7) above, the following shall not for any purpose be taken to constitute the taking of a plea—
- (a) asking the accused under section 20 above whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) he would plead guilty or not guilty; or
 - (b) an indication by the accused under that section of how he would plead.
- (5) Where the court gives an indication of sentence under section 20 above, it shall cause each such indication to be entered in the register.
- (6) In this section and in section 20 above, references to a custodial sentence are to a custodial sentence within the meaning of section 76 of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000, and references to a non-custodial sentence shall be construed accordingly.]

Textual Amendments

F43 Ss. 20, 20A substituted (prosp.) for s. 20 by [Criminal Justice Act 2003 \(c. 44\)](#), ss. 41, 336, [Sch. 3 para. 6](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C11 S. 20A(1) excluded (prosp.) by [2000 c. 6, s. 5\(3\)](#) (as substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 2003 \(c. 44\)](#), ss. 41, 336, [Sch. 3 Pt. 1 para. 26](#))

21 Procedure where trial on indictment appears more suitable.

If, where the court has considered as required by section 19(1) above, it appears to the court that the offence is more suitable for trial on indictment, the court shall tell the accused that the court has decided that it is more suitable for him to be tried for the offence by a jury, and shall proceed to inquire into the information as examining justices.

22 Certain offences triable either way to be tried summarily if value involved is small.

- (1) If the offence charged by the information is one of those mentioned in the first column of Schedule 2 to this Act (in this section referred to as “scheduled offences”) then, subject to subsection (7) below, the court shall, before proceeding in accordance with section 19 above, consider whether, having regard to any representations made by the prosecutor or the accused, the value involved (as defined in subsection (10) below) appears to the court to exceed the relevant sum.

For the purposes of this section the relevant sum is [^{F44}£2,000].

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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- (2) If, where subsection (1) above applies, it appears to the court clear that, for the offence charged, the value involved does not exceed the relevant sum, the court shall proceed as if the offence were triable only summarily, and sections 19 to 21 above shall not apply.
- (3) If, where subsection (1) above applies, it appears to the court clear that, for the offence charged, the value involved exceeds that relevant sum, the court shall thereupon proceed in accordance with section 19 above in the ordinary way without further regard to the provisions of this section.
- (4) If, where subsection (1) above applies, it appears to the court for any reason not clear whether, for the offence charged, the value involved does or does not exceed the relevant sum, the provisions of subsections (5) and (6) below shall apply.
- (5) The court shall cause the charge to be written down, if this has not already been done, and read to the accused, and shall explain to him in ordinary language—
 - (a) that he can, if he wishes, consent to be tried summarily for the offence and that if he consents to be so tried, he will definitely be tried in that way; and
 - (b) that if he is tried summarily and is convicted by the court, his liability to imprisonment or a fine will be limited as provided in section 33 below.
- (6) After explaining to the accused as provided by subsection (5) above the court shall ask him whether he consents to be tried summarily and—
 - (a) if he so consents, shall proceed in accordance with subsection (2) above as if that subsection applied;
 - (b) if he does not so consent, shall proceed in accordance with subsection (3) above as if that subsection applied.
- (7)^{F45}
- (8) Where a person is convicted by a magistrates' court of a scheduled offence, it shall not be open to him to appeal to the Crown Court against the conviction on the ground that the convicting court's decision as to the value involved was mistaken.
- (9) If, where subsection (1) above applies, the offence charged is one with which the accused is charged jointly with a person who has not attained the age of 17, the reference in that subsection to any representations made by the accused shall be read as including any representations made by the person under 17.
- (10) In this section "the value involved", in relation to any scheduled offence, means the value indicated in the second column of Schedule 2 to this Act, measured as indicated in the third column of that Schedule; and in that Schedule "the material time" means the time of the alleged offence.

[^{F46}(11) Where—

- (a) the accused is charged on the same occasion with two or more scheduled offences and it appears to the court that they constitute or form part of a series of two or more offences of the same or a similar character; or
- (b) the offence charged consists in incitement to commit two or more scheduled offences,

this section shall have effect as if any reference in it to the value involved were a reference to the aggregate of the values involved.]

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Textual Amendments

- F44** “£2,000” substituted for “£200” by virtue of S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1** and Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 38(1)(2), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**
- F45** S. 22(7) repealed by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 123(6), 170(2), Sch. 8 para. 16, **Sch. 16**
- F46** S. 22(11) inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 38(3)(4), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**

23 Power of court, with consent of legally represented accused, to proceed in his absence.

- (1) Where—
- (a) the accused is represented by [^{F47}a legal representative]who in his absence signifies to the court the accused’s consent to the proceedings for determining how he is to be tried for the offence being conducted in his absence; and
 - (b) the court is satisfied that there is good reason for proceeding in the absence of the accused,
- the following provisions of this section shall apply.
- (2) Subject to the following provisions of this section, the court may proceed in the absence of the accused in accordance with such of the provisions of sections 19 to 22 above as are applicable in the circumstances.
- (3) If, in a case where subsection (1) of section 22 above applies, it appears to the court as mentioned in subsection (4) of that section, subsections (5) and (6) of that section shall not apply and the court—
- (a) if the accused’s consent to be tried summarily has been or is signified by the person representing him, shall proceed in accordance with subsection (2) of that section as if that subsection applied; or
 - (b) if that consent has not been and is not so signified, shall proceed in accordance with subsection (3) of that section as if that subsection applied.
- (4) If, where the court has considered as required by section 19(1) above, it appears to the court that the offence is more suitable for summary trial then—
- (a) if the accused’s consent to be tried summarily has been or is signified by the person representing him, section 20 above shall not apply, and the court shall proceed to the summary trial of the information; or
 - (b) if that consent has not been and is not so signified, section 20 above shall not apply and the court shall proceed to inquire into the information as examining justices and may adjourn the hearing without remanding the accused.
- (5) If, where the court has considered as required by section 19(1) above, it appears to the court that the offence is more suitable for trial on indictment, section 21 above shall not apply, and the court shall proceed to inquire into the information as examining justices and may adjourn the hearing without remanding the accused.

Textual Amendments

- F47** Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(3)(a)**

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

24 Summary trial of information against child or young person for indictable offence.

- (1) Where a person under the age of 17 appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with an indictable offence other than homicide, he shall be tried summarily unless—
 - (a) he has attained the age of 14 and the offence is such as is mentioned in subsection (2) of section 53 of the ^{M9}Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (under which young persons convicted on indictment of certain grave crimes may be sentenced to be detained for long periods) and the court considers that if he is found guilty of the offence it ought to be possible to sentence him in pursuance of that subsection; or
 - (b) he is charged jointly with a person who has attained the age of 17 and the court considers it necessary in the interests of justice to commit them both for trial; and accordingly in a case falling within paragraph (a) or (b) of this subsection the court shall commit the accused for trial if either it is of opinion that there is sufficient evidence to put him on trial or it has power under section 6(2) above so to commit him without consideration of the evidence.
- (2) Where, in a case falling within subsection (1)(b) above, a magistrates' court commits a person under the age of 17 for trial for an offence with which he is charged jointly with a person who has attained that age, the court may also commit him for trial for any other indictable offence with which he is charged at the same time (whether jointly with the person who has attained that age or not) if that other offence arises out of circumstances which are the same as or connected with those giving rise to the first-mentioned offence.
- (3) If on trying a person summarily in pursuance of subsection (1) above the court finds him guilty, it may impose a fine of an amount not exceeding [^{F48}£400] or may exercise the same powers as it could have exercised if he had been found guilty of an offence for which, but for section [^{F49}1(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1982, it could have sentenced him to imprisonment for a term not exceeding—
 - (a) the maximum term of imprisonment for the offence on conviction on indictment; or
 - (b) six months,whichever is the less.]
- (4) In relation to a person under the age of 14 subsection (3) above shall have effect as if for the words “£200” there were substituted the words “[^{F50}£100]”; but this subsection shall cease to have effect on the coming into force of section 4 of the ^{M10}Children and Young Persons Act 1969 (which prohibits criminal proceedings against children).

Textual Amendments

F48 “£400” substituted for “£200” by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1**

F49 Words substituted by **Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1)**, s. 77, **Sch. 14 para. 47**

F50 “£100” substituted for “£50” by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1**

Marginal Citations

M9 1933 c. 12.

M10 1969 c. 54.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

VALID FROM 18/06/2012

[^{F51}24A Child or young person to indicate intention as to plea in certain cases

- (1) This section applies where—
 - (a) a person under the age of 18 years appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with an offence other than one falling within section 51A(12) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (“the 1998 Act”); and
 - (b) but for the application of the following provisions of this section, the court would be required at that stage, by virtue of section 51(7) or (8) or 51A(3) (b), (4) or (5) of the 1998 Act to determine, in relation to the offence, whether to send the person to the Crown Court for trial (or to determine any matter, the effect of which would be to determine whether he is sent to the Crown Court for trial).
- (2) Where this section applies, the court shall, before proceeding to make any such determination as is referred to in subsection (1)(b) above (the “relevant determination”), follow the procedure set out in this section.
- (3) Everything that the court is required to do under the following provisions of this section must be done with the accused person in court.
- (4) The court shall cause the charge to be written down, if this has not already been done, and to be read to the accused.
- (5) The court shall then explain to the accused in ordinary language that he may indicate whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) he would plead guilty or not guilty, and that if he indicates that he would plead guilty—
 - (a) the court must proceed as mentioned in subsection (7) below; and
 - (b) (in cases where the offence is one mentioned in section 91(1) of the Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000) he may be sent to the Crown Court for sentencing under section 3B or (if applicable) 3C of that Act if the court is of such opinion as is mentioned in subsection (2) of the applicable section.
- (6) The court shall then ask the accused whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) he would plead guilty or not guilty.
- (7) If the accused indicates that he would plead guilty, the court shall proceed as if—
 - (a) the proceedings constituted from the beginning the summary trial of the information; and
 - (b) section 9(1) above was complied with and he pleaded guilty under it, and, accordingly, the court shall not (and shall not be required to) proceed to make the relevant determination or to proceed further under section 51 or (as the case may be) section 51A of the 1998 Act in relation to the offence.
- (8) If the accused indicates that he would plead not guilty, the court shall proceed to make the relevant determination and this section shall cease to apply.
- (9) If the accused in fact fails to indicate how he would plead, for the purposes of this section he shall be taken to indicate that he would plead not guilty.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

- (10) Subject to subsection (7) above, 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) he would plead guilty or not guilty;
 - (b) an indication by the accused under this section of how he would plead.

Textual Amendments

F51 Ss. 24A-24D inserted (prosp.) by [Criminal Justice Act 2003 \(c. 44\)](#), ss. 41, 336, [Sch. 3 para. 10](#)

VALID FROM 18/06/2012

24B Intention as to plea by child or young person: absence of accused

- (1) This section shall have effect where—
- (a) a person under the age of 18 years appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with an offence other than one falling within section 51A(12) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
 - (b) but for the application of the following provisions of this section, the court would be required at that stage to make one of the determinations referred to in paragraph (b) of section 24A(1) above (“the relevant determination”);
 - (c) the accused is represented by a legal representative;
 - (d) the court considers that by reason of the accused’s disorderly conduct before the court it is not practicable for proceedings under section 24A above to be conducted in his presence; and
 - (e) the court considers that it should proceed in the absence of the accused.
- (2) In such a case—
- (a) the court shall cause the charge to be written down, if this has not already been done, and to be read to the representative;
 - (b) the court shall ask the representative whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) the accused would plead guilty or not guilty;
 - (c) if the representative indicates that the accused would plead guilty the court shall proceed as if the proceedings constituted from the beginning the summary trial of the information, and as if section 9(1) above was complied with and the accused pleaded guilty under it;
 - (d) if the representative indicates that the accused would plead not guilty the court shall proceed to make the relevant determination and this section shall cease to apply.
- (3) If the representative in fact fails to indicate how the accused would plead, for the purposes of this section he shall be taken to indicate that the accused would plead not guilty.
- (4) Subject to subsection (2)(c) above, the following shall not for any purpose be taken to constitute the taking of a plea—
- (a) asking the representative under this section whether (if the offence were to proceed to trial) the accused would plead guilty or not guilty;

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- (b) an indication by the representative under this section of how the accused would plead.

Textual Amendments

F51 Ss. 24A-24D inserted (prosp.) by Criminal Justice Act 2003 (c. 44), ss. 41, 336, **Sch. 3 para. 10**

VALID FROM 18/06/2012

24C Intention as to plea by child or young person: adjournment

- (1) A magistrates' court proceeding under section 24A or 24B above may adjourn the proceedings at any time, and on doing so on any occasion when the accused is present may remand the accused.
- (2) Where the court remands the accused, the time fixed for the resumption of proceedings shall be that at which he is required to appear or be brought before the court in pursuance of the remand or would be required to be brought before the court but for section 128(3A) below.

Textual Amendments

F51 Ss. 24A-24D inserted (prosp.) by Criminal Justice Act 2003 (c. 44), ss. 41, 336, **Sch. 3 para. 10**

VALID FROM 18/06/2012

24D Functions under sections 24A to 24C capable of exercise by single justice

- (1) The functions of a magistrates' court under sections 24A to 24C above may be discharged by a single justice.
- (2) Subsection (1) above shall not be taken as authorising—
 - (a) the summary trial of an information (other than a summary trial by virtue of section 24A(7) or 24B(2)(c) above); or
 - (b) the imposition of a sentence,
 by a magistrates' court composed of fewer than two justices.]

Textual Amendments

F51 Ss. 24A-24D inserted (prosp.) by Criminal Justice Act 2003 (c. 44), ss. 41, 336, **Sch. 3 para. 10**

25 Power to change from summary trial to committal proceedings, and vice versa.

- (1) Subsections (2) to (4) below shall have effect where a person who has attained the age of 17 appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with an offence triable either way.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

- (2) Where the court has (otherwise than in pursuance of section 22(2) above) begun to try the information summarily, the court may, at any time before the conclusion of the evidence for the prosecution, discontinue the summary trial and proceed to inquire into the information as examining justices and, on doing so, may adjourn the hearing without remanding the accused.
- (3) Where the court has begun to inquire into the information as examining justices, then, if at any time during the inquiry it appears to the court, having regard to any representations made in the presence of the accused by the prosecutor, or made by the accused, and to the nature of the case, that the offence is after all more suitable for summary trial, the court may, after doing as provided in subsection (4) below, ask the accused whether he consents to be tried summarily and, if he so consents, may ^{F52}subject to subsection (3A) below]proceed to try the information summarily; ^{F53}
- ^{F54}(3A) Where the prosecution is being carried on by the Attorney General or the Solicitor General, the court shall not exercise the power conferred by subsection (3) above without his consent and, where the prosecution is being carried on by the Director of Public Prosecutions, shall not exercise that power if the Attorney General directs that it should not be exercised.]
- (4) Before asking the accused under subsection (3) above whether he consents to be tried summarily, the court shall in ordinary language—
- (a) explain to him that it appears to the court more suitable for him to be tried summarily for the offence, but that this can only be done if he consents to be so tried; and
 - (b) unless it has already done so, explain to him, as provided in section 20(2)(b) above, about the court's power to commit to the Crown Court for sentence.
- (5) Where a person under the age of 17 appears or is brought before a magistrates' court on an information charging him with an indictable offence other than homicide, and the court—
- (a) has begun to try the information summarily on the footing that the case does not fall within paragraph (a) or (b) of section 24(1) above and must therefore be tried summarily, as required by the said section 24(1); or
 - (b) has begun to inquire into the case as examining justices on the footing that the case does so fall,
- subsection (6) or (7) below, as the case may be, shall have effect.
- (6) If, in a case falling within subsection (5)(a) above, it appears to the court at any time before the conclusion of the evidence for the prosecution that the case is after all one which under the said section 24(1) ought not to be tried summarily, the court may discontinue the summary trial and proceed to inquire into the information as examining justices and, on doing so, may adjourn the hearing without remanding the accused.
- (7) If, in a case falling within subsection (5)(b) above, it appears to the court at any time during the inquiry that the case is after all one which under the said section 24(1) ought to be tried summarily, the court may proceed to try the information summarily.

Textual Amendments

F52 Words inserted by [Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 \(c. 23, SIF 39:1\), s. 31\(5\), Sch. 1 Pt. I para. 3](#)

F53 Words repealed by [Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 \(c. 23, SIF 39:1\), s. 31\(6\), Sch. 2](#)

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F54 S. 25(3A) inserted by Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 (c. 23, SIF 39:1), s. 31(5), **Sch. 1 Pt. I para. 3**

26 Power to issue summons to accused in certain circumstances.

(1) Where—

- (a) in the circumstances mentioned in section 23(1)(a) above the court is not satisfied that there is good reason for proceeding in the absence of the accused; or
- (b) subsection (4)(b) or (5) of section 23 or subsection (2) or (6) of section 25 above applies, and the court adjourns the hearing in pursuance of that subsection without remanding the accused,

the justice or any of the justices of which the court is composed may issue a summons directed to the accused requiring his presence before the court.

(2) If the accused is not present at the time and place appointed—

- (a) in a case within subsection (1)(a) above, for the proceedings under section 19(1) or 22(1) above, as the case may be; or
- (b) in a case within subsection (1)(b) above, for the resumption of the hearing, the court may issue a warrant for his arrest.

27 Effect of dismissal of information for offence triable either way.

Where on the summary trial of an information for an offence triable either way the court dismisses the information, the dismissal shall have the same effect as an acquittal on indictment.

28 Using in summary trial evidence given in committal proceedings.

Where under section 25(3) or (7) above a magistrates' court, having begun to inquire into an information as examining justices, proceeds to try the information summarily, then, subject to sections 102(9) and 103(3) below, any evidence already given before the court shall be deemed to have been given in and for the purposes of the summary trial.

VALID FROM 01/04/2005

^{F55}Transfer of criminal proceedings

Textual Amendments

F55 S. 27A and cross-heading inserted (1.4.2005) after s. 27 by Courts Act 2003 (c. 39), **ss. 46(1)**, 110; S.I. 2005/910, **art. 3(p)**

27A Power to transfer criminal proceedings

(1) Where a person appears or is brought before a magistrates' court—

- (a) to be tried by the court for an offence, or
- (b) for the court to inquire into the offence as examining justices,

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the court may transfer the matter to another magistrates' court.

- (2) The court may transfer the matter before or after beginning the trial or inquiry.
- (3) But if the court transfers the matter after it has begun to hear the evidence and the parties, the court to which the matter is transferred must begin hearing the evidence and the parties again.
- (4) The power of the court under this section to transfer any matter must be exercised in accordance with any directions given under section 30(3) of the Courts Act 2003.]

Power to remit person under 17 for trial to juvenile court

29 Power of magistrates' court to remit a person under 17 for trial to a juvenile court in certain circumstances.

(1) Where—

(a) a person under the age of 17 (“the juvenile”) appears or is brought before a magistrates' court other than a juvenile court on an information jointly charging him and one or more other persons with an offence; and

(b) that other person, or any of those other persons, has attained that age,

subsection (2) below shall have effect notwithstanding proviso (a) in section 46(1) of the ^{MII}Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (which would otherwise require the charge against the juvenile to be heard by a magistrates' court other than a juvenile court).

In the following provisions of this section “the older accused” means such one or more of the accused as have attained the age of 17.

(2) If—

(a) the court proceeds to the summary trial of the information in the case of both or all of the accused, and the older accused or each of the older accused pleads guilty; or

(b) the court—

(i) in the case of the older accused or each of the older accused, proceeds to inquire into the information as examining justices and either commits him for trial or discharges him; and

(ii) in the case of the juvenile, proceeds to the summary trial of the information,

then, if in either situation the juvenile pleads not guilty, the court may before any evidence is called in his case remit him for trial to a juvenile court acting for the same place as the remitting court or for the place where he habitually resides.

(3) A person remitted to a juvenile court under subsection (2) above shall be brought before and tried by a juvenile court accordingly.

(4) Where a person is so remitted to a juvenile court—

(a) he shall have no right of appeal against the order of remission; and

(b) the remitting court may give such directions as appear to be necessary with respect to his custody or for his release on bail until he can be brought before the juvenile court.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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- (5) The preceding provisions of this section shall apply in relation to a corporation as if it were an individual who has attained the age of 17.

Marginal Citations

M11 1933 c. 12.

Remand for medical examination

30 Remand for medical examination.

- (1) If, on the trial by a magistrates' court of an offence punishable on summary conviction with imprisonment, the court is satisfied that the accused did the act or made the omission charged but is of opinion that an inquiry ought to be made into his physical or mental condition before the method of dealing with him is determined, the court shall adjourn the case to enable a medical examination and report to be made and shall remand him; but the adjournment shall not be for more than 3 weeks at a time where the court remands him in custody nor for more than 4 weeks at a time where it remands him on bail.
- (2) Where on an adjournment under subsection (1) above the accused is remanded on bail, the court shall impose conditions under paragraph (d) of section 3(6) of the ^{M12}Bail Act 1976 and the requirements imposed as conditions under that paragraph shall be or shall include requirements that the accused—
- (a) undergo medical examination by a duly qualified medical practitioner or, where the inquiry is into his mental condition and the court so directs, two such practitioners; and
 - (b) for that purpose attend such an institution or place, or on such practitioner, as the court directs and, where the inquiry is into his mental condition, comply with any other directions which may be given to him for that purpose by any person specified by the court or by a person of any class so specified.
- (3) ^{F56}

Textual Amendments

F56 S. 30(3) repealed by Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 (c. 23, SIF 39:1), s. 31(6), Sch. 2

Marginal Citations

M12 1976 c. 63.

Powers in respect of offenders

31 General limit on power of magistrates' court to impose imprisonment.

- (1) Without prejudice to section 133 below, a magistrates' court shall not have power to impose imprisonment [^{F57}or youth custody] for more than 6 months in respect of any one offence.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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- (2) Unless expressly excluded, subsection (1) above shall apply even if the offence in question is one for which a person would otherwise be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment ^{F57} or youth custody]for more than 6 months.
- (3) Any power of a magistrates' court to impose a term of imprisonment for non-payment of a fine, or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy a fine, shall not be limited by virtue of subsection (1) above.
- (4) In subsection (3) above "fine" includes a pecuniary penalty but does not include a pecuniary forfeiture or pecuniary compensation.

Textual Amendments

F57 Words inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, **Sch. 14 para. 48**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C12 S. 31 extended (N.I.) by [Finance Act 1983 \(c. 28, SIF 40:2\)](#), s. 47, **Sch. 9 para. 1(1)(2)**

C13 S. 31(1)(2) excluded by [Criminal Attempts Act 1981 \(c. 47, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 4(5)(b)(ii)

C14 S. 31(3) modified by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 75(2), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**

32 Penalties on summary conviction for offences triable either way.

- (1) On summary conviction of any of the offences triable either way listed in Schedule 1 to this Act a person shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to a fine not exceeding the prescribed sum or both, except that—
 - (a) a magistrates' court shall not have power to impose imprisonment for an offence so listed if the Crown Court would not have that power in the case of an adult convicted of it on indictment;
 - (b) on summary conviction of an offence consisting in the incitement to commit an offence triable either way a person shall not be liable to any greater penalty than he would be liable to on summary conviction of the last-mentioned offence; and
 - (c) ^{F58}
- (2) For any offence triable either way which is not listed in Schedule 1 to this Act, being an offence under a relevant enactment, the maximum fine which may be imposed on summary conviction shall by virtue of this subsection be the prescribed sum unless the offence is one for which by virtue of an enactment other than this subsection a larger fine may be imposed on summary conviction.
- (3) Where, by virtue of any relevant enactment, a person summarily convicted of an offence triable either way would, apart from this section, be liable to a maximum fine of one amount in the case of a first conviction and of a different amount in the case of a second or subsequent conviction, subsection (2) above shall apply irrespective of whether the conviction is a first, second or subsequent one.
- (4) Subsection (2) above shall not affect so much of any enactment as (in whatever words) makes a person liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding a specified amount for each day on which a continuing offence is continued after conviction or the occurrence of any other specified event.
- (5) Subsection (2) above shall not apply on summary conviction of any of the following offences:—

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- (a) offences under section 5(2) of the ^{M13}Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 (having possession of a controlled drug) where the controlled drug in relation to which the offence was committed was a Class B or Class C drug;
- (b) offences under the following provisions of that Act, where the controlled drug in relation to which the offence was committed was a Class C drug, namely—
- (i) section 4(2) (production, or being concerned in the production, of a controlled drug);
 - (ii) section 4(3) (supplying or offering a controlled drug or being concerned in the doing of either activity by another);
 - (iii) section 5(3) (having possession of a controlled drug with intent to supply it to another);
 - (iv) section 8 (being the occupier, or concerned in the management, of premises and permitting or suffering certain activities to take place there);
 - (v) section 12(6) (contravention of direction prohibiting practitioner etc. from possessing, supplying etc. controlled drugs); or
 - (vi) section 13(3) (contravention of direction prohibiting practitioner etc. from prescribing, supplying etc. controlled drugs).
- (6) Where, as regards any offence triable either way, there is under any enactment (however framed or worded) a power by subordinate instrument to restrict the amount of the fine which on summary conviction can be imposed in respect of that offence—
- (a) subsection (2) above shall not affect that power or override any restriction imposed in the exercise of that power; and
 - (b) the amount to which that fine may be restricted in the exercise of that power shall be any amount less than the maximum fine which could be imposed on summary conviction in respect of the offence apart from any restriction so imposed.
- (7) ^{F59}
- (8) In subsection (5) above “controlled drug”, “Class B drug” and “Class C drug” have the same meaning as in the ^{M14}Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.
- (9) In this section—
- “fine” includes a pecuniary penalty but does not include a pecuniary forfeiture or pecuniary compensation;
- “the prescribed sum” means [^{F60}£1,000][^{F60}£2,000] or such sum as is for the time being substituted in this definition by an order in force under section 143(1) below;
- “relevant enactment” means an enactment contained in the ^{M15}Criminal Law Act 1977 or in any Act passed before, or in the same Session as, that Act.

Textual Amendments

- F58** S. 32(1)(c) repealed by Criminal Attempts Act 1981 (c. 47, SIF 39:1), s. 10, **Sch. Pt. I**
- F59** S. 32(7) repealed by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 123(6), 170(2), **Sch. 8 para. 16, Sch. 16**
- F60** S. 32(9): £2,000 substituted for £1,000 (E.W., and N.I. to the extent that s. 143 of this Act has been extended to N.I.) by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1**

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C15** S. 32 extended (N.I.) by Finance Act 1983 (c. 28, SIF 40:2), s. 47, **Sch. 9 para. 1(1)(2)**, Copyright (Amendment) Act 1983 (c. 42, SIF 32), s. 1, Car Tax Act 1983 (c. 53, SIF 40:2), s. 1(4), **Sch. 1 para. 8(6)(a)**, Value Added Tax Act 1983 (c. 55, SIF 40:2), s. 48(2)(a)
- C16** S. 32 extended (N.I.) by Telecommunications Act 1984 (c.12, SIF 96), s. 106(2)(a)
- C17** S. 32 amended by S.I. 1984/703 (N.I. 3), art. 4(7)
- C18** S. 32(9) extended (N.I.) by Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 (c. 54, SIF 96), s. 14(9) (as added by Telecommunications Act 1984 (c. 12, SIF 96), s. 75(2), **Sch. 3 para. 2**)

Marginal Citations

- M13** 1971 c. 38.
M14 1971 c. 38.
M15 1977 c. 45.

33 Maximum penalties on summary conviction in pursuance of section 22.

- (1) Where in pursuance of subsection (2) of section 22 above a magistrates' court proceeds to the summary trial of an information, then, if the accused is summarily convicted of the offence—
- the court shall not have power to impose on him in respect of that offence imprisonment for more than 3 months or a fine greater than [^{F61}£1,000]; and
 - section 38 below shall not apply as regards that offence.
- (2) In subsection (1) above “fine” includes a pecuniary penalty but does not include a pecuniary forfeiture or pecuniary compensation.

Textual Amendments

- F61** “£1,000” substituted for “£500” by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1**

34 Mitigation of penalties, etc.

- (1) Where under any enactment whether passed before or after the commencement of this Act a magistrates' court has power to sentence an offender to imprisonment for a period specified by the enactment, or to a fine of an amount specified by the enactment, then, except where an Act passed after 31st December 1879 expressly provides to the contrary, the court may sentence him to imprisonment for less than that period or, as the case may be, to a fine of less than that amount.
- (2) Where under any such enactment an offender sentenced on summary conviction to imprisonment or a fine is required to enter into a recognizance with or without sureties to keep the peace or observe any other condition, the court convicting him may dispense with or modify the requirement.
- (3) Where under any such enactment a magistrates' court has power to sentence an offender to imprisonment or other detention but not to a fine, then, except where an Act passed after 31st December 1879 expressly provides to the contrary, the court may, instead of sentencing him to imprisonment or other detention, impose a fine which—
- for an offence triable either way, shall not exceed the prescribed sum within the meaning of section 32 above; and
 - for a summary offence, shall—

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Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

- (i) not exceed [^{F62}£400]; and
- (ii) not be of such an amount as would subject the offender, in default of payment of the fine, to a longer term of imprisonment or detention than the term to which he is liable on conviction of the offence.

Textual Amendments

F62 “£400” substituted for “£200” by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(1), Sch. 1

35 Fixing amount of fine.

In fixing the amount of a fine, a magistrates' court shall take into consideration among other things the means of the person on whom the fine is imposed so far as they appear or are known to the court.

36 Restriction on fines in respect of young persons.

- (1) Where a person under 17 years of age is found guilty by a magistrates' court of an offence for which, apart from this section, the court would have power to impose a fine of an amount exceeding [^{F63}£400], the amount of any fine imposed by the court shall not exceed [^{F63}£400].
- (2) In relation to a person under the age of 14 subsection (1) above shall have effect as if for the words “£200”, in both the places where they occur, there were substituted the words [^{F64}“£100”]; but this subsection shall cease to have effect on the coming into force of section 4 of the ^{M16}Children and Young Persons Act 1969 (which prohibits criminal proceedings against children).

Textual Amendments

F63 “£400” substituted for “£200” by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(1), Sch. 1

F64 “£100” substituted for “£50” by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(1), Sch. 1

Marginal Citations

M16 1969 c. 54.

[^{F65}36A Alterations of names of petty sessions areas in inner London area.

- (1) The committee of magistrates may at any time submit to the Secretary of State a draft order altering the name of any petty sessions area in the inner London area.
- (2) Where the committee submit a draft order to the Secretary of State under this section, he may by statutory instrument make the order either in the terms of the draft or with such modifications as he thinks fit.
- (3) Any order under this section may contain transitional and other consequential provisions.]

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Textual Amendments

F65 S. 36A inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 123(6), 164(3), [Sch. 8 para. 16](#)

37 Committal to Crown Court with a view to borstal sentence.

[^{F66}(1) Where a person who is not less than 15 [^{F67}but under 17]years old is convicted by a magistrates' court of an offence punishable on conviction on indictment with a term of imprisonment exceeding six months, then, if the court is of opinion that he should be sentenced to a greater term of youth custody than it has power to impose, the court may commit him in custody or on bail to the Crown Court for sentence.

(1A) If by virtue of an order made under section 14 of the Criminal Justice Act ^{M17}1982, the term specified in section 7(5) of that Act as the usual term of youth custody is increased to a term exceeding six months, subsection (1) above shall have effect, for so long as the term so specified exceeds six months, as if after the word "opinion" there were inserted the following words—

“(a) that a youth custody sentence should be passed on him but that it has no power to do so; or
(b)”.]

(2) A person committed in custody under subsection (1) above shall be committed—

- (a) if the court has been notified by the Secretary of State that a remand centre is available for the reception, from that court, of persons of the class or description of the person committed, to a remand centre;
- (b) if the court has not been so notified, to a prison.

Textual Amendments

F66 S. 37(1)(1A) substituted for subsection (1) by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, [Sch. 14 para. 49](#)

F67 Words substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 123(6), 170(1), [Sch. 15 para. 67](#)

Marginal Citations

M17 1982 c. 48 (39:1).

38 Committal for sentence on summary trial of offence triable either way

Where on the summary trial of an offence triable either way (not being an offence as regards which this section is excluded by section 33 above) a person who is not less than 17 years old is convicted of the offence, then, if on obtaining information about his character and antecedents the court is of opinion that they are such that greater punishment should be inflicted for the offence than the court has power to inflict, the court may, in accordance with section 56 of the ^{M18}Criminal Justice Act 1967, commit him in custody or on bail to the Crown Court for sentence in accordance with the provisions of section 42 of the ^{M19}Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C19 S. 38 extended by [Mental Health Act 1983 \(c. 20, SIF 85\)](#), s. 43(4)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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Marginal Citations

M18 1967 c. 80.

M19 1973 c. 62.

VALID FROM 01/10/1997

[^{F68}38A Committal for sentence on indication of guilty plea to offence triable either way.

- (1) This section applies where—
 - (a) a person who is 18 or over appears or is brought before a magistrates' court ("the court") on an information charging him with an offence triable either way ("the offence");
 - (b) he or his representative indicates that he would plead guilty if the offence were to proceed to trial; and
 - (c) proceeding as if section 9(1) above was complied with and he pleaded guilty under it, the court convicts him of the offence.
- (2) If the court has committed the offender to the Crown Court for trial for one or more related offences, that is to say, one or more offences which, in its opinion, are related to the offence, it may, in accordance with section 56 of the Criminal Justice Act 1967, commit him in custody or on bail to the Crown Court to be dealt with in respect of the offence in accordance with the provisions of section 42 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973.
- (3) If the power conferred by subsection (2) above is not exercisable but the court is still to inquire, as examining justices, into one or more related offences—
 - (a) it shall adjourn the proceedings relating to the offence until after the conclusion of its inquiries; and
 - (b) if it commits the offender to the Crown Court for trial for one or more related offences, it may then exercise that power.
- (4) Where the court—
 - (a) commits the offender to the Crown Court to be dealt with in respect of the offence; and
 - (b) does not state that, in its opinion, it also has power so to commit him under section 38(2) above,
 the provisions of section 42 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973 shall not apply unless he is convicted before the Crown Court of one or more of the related offences.
- (5) Where those provisions of that section do not apply, the Crown Court shall have power to deal with the offender in respect of the offence in any manner in which the court might have dealt with him.
- (6) For the purposes of this section one offence is related to another if, were they both to be prosecuted on indictment, the charges for them could be joined in the same indictment.]

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Textual Amendments

F68 S. 38A inserted (1.10.1997) by 1997 c. 43, s.51; S.I. 1997/2200, art.2(1)(k)

39 Cases where magistrates' court may remit offender to another such court for sentence.

- (1) Where a person who has attained the age of 17 (“the offender”) has been convicted by a magistrates' court (“the convicting court”) of an offence to which this section applies (“the instant offence”) and—
 - (a) it appears to the convicting court that some other magistrates' court (“the other court”) has convicted him of another such offence in respect of which the other court has neither passed sentence on him nor committed him to the Crown Court for sentence nor dealt with him in any other way; and
 - (b) the other court consents to his being remitted under this section to the other court,the convicting court may remit him to the other court to be dealt with in respect of the instant offence by the other court instead of by the convicting court.
- (2) The offender, if remitted under this section, shall have no right of appeal against the order of remission.
- (3) Where the convicting court remits the offender to the other court under this section, it shall adjourn the trial of the information charging him with the instant offence, and—
 - (a) section 128 below and all other enactments (whenever passed) relating to remand or the granting of bail in criminal proceedings shall have effect in relation to the convicting court's power or duty to remand the offender on that adjournment as if any reference to the court to or before which the person remanded is to be brought or appear after remand were a reference to the court to which he is being remitted; and
 - (b) subject to subsection (4) below, the other court may deal with the case in any way in which it would have power to deal with it (including, where applicable, the remission of the offender under this section to another magistrates' court in respect of the instant offence) if all proceedings relating to that offence which took place before the convicting court had taken place before the other court.
- (4) Nothing in this section shall preclude the convicting court from making any order which it has power to make under section 28 of the ^{M20}Theft Act 1968 (orders for restitution) by virtue of the offender's conviction of the instant offence.
- (5) Where the convicting court has remitted the offender under this section to the other court, the other court may remit him back to the convicting court; and the provisions of subsection (3) above (so far as applicable) shall apply with the necessary modifications in relation to any remission under this subsection.
- (6) This section applies to—
 - (a) any offence punishable with imprisonment; and
 - (b) any offence in respect of which the convicting court has a power or duty to order the offender to be disqualified under [^{F69}section 34 or 36 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988](disqualification for certain motoring offences);

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and in this section “conviction” includes a finding under section 30(1) above that the person in question did the act or made the omission charged, and “convicted” shall be construed accordingly.

Textual Amendments

F69 Words substituted (15.5.1989) by [Road Traffic \(Consequential Provisions\) Act 1988 \(c. 54, SIF 107:1\)](#), ss. 4, 5, [Sch. 3 para. 20](#), [Sch. 4 paras. 1, 2](#)

Marginal Citations

M20 [1968 c. 60](#).

40 Restriction on amount payable under compensation order of magistrates' court.

- (1) The compensation to be paid under a compensation order made by a magistrates' court in respect of any offence of which the court has convicted the offender shall not exceed [^{F70}£2,000]; and the compensation or total compensation to be paid under a compensation order or compensation orders made by a magistrates' court in respect of any offence or offences taken into consideration in determining sentence shall not exceed the difference (if any) between the amount or total amount which under the preceding provisions of this subsection is the maximum for the offence or offences of which the offender has been convicted and the amount or total amounts (if any) which are in fact ordered to be paid in respect of that offence or those offences.
- (2) In subsection (1) above “compensation order” has the meaning assigned to it by section 35(1) of the ^{M21}Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973.

Textual Amendments

F70 “£2,000” substituted for “£1,000” by [S.I. 1984/447, art. 2\(1\), Sch. 1](#)

Marginal Citations

M21 [1973 c. 62](#).

Miscellaneous

41 Restriction on grant of bail in treason.

A person charged with treason shall not be granted bail except by order of a judge of the High Court or the Secretary of State.

42 Restriction on justices sitting after dealing with bail.

- (1) A justice of the peace shall not take part in trying the issue of an accused's guilt on the summary trial of an information if in the course of the same proceedings the justice has been informed, for the purpose of determining whether the accused shall be granted bail, that he has one or more previous convictions.
- (2) For the purposes of this section any committal proceedings from which the proceedings on the summary trial arose shall be treated as part of the trial.

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[^{F71} **43 Bail on arrest.**

- (1) Where a person has been granted bail under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 subject to a duty to appear before a magistrates' court, the court before which he is to appear may appoint a later time as the time at which he is to appear and may enlarge the recognizances of any sureties for him at that time.
- (2) The recognizance of any surety for any person granted bail subject to a duty to attend at a police station may be enforced as if it were conditioned for his appearance before a magistrates' court for the petty sessions area in which the police station named in the recognizance is situated.]

Textual Amendments

F71 S. 43 substituted by [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(c. 60, SIF 95\)](#), **ss. 47(8)(a)**, 51, 52

[^{F72} **43A Functions of magistrates' court where a person in custody is brought before it with a view to his appearance before the Crown Court.**

- (1) Where a person in custody in pursuance of a warrant issued by the Crown Court with a view to his appearance before the Crown Court is brought before a magistrates' court in pursuance of section 81(5) of the ^{M22}Supreme Court Act 1981—
 - (a) the magistrates' court shall commit him in custody or release him on bail until he can be brought or appear before the Crown Court at the time and place appointed by the Crown Court;
 - (b) if the warrant is endorsed for bail, but the person in custody is unable to satisfy the conditions endorsed, the magistrates' court may vary those conditions, if satisfied that it is proper to do so.
- (2) A magistrates' court shall have jurisdiction under subsection (1) whether or not the offence was committed, or the arrest was made, within the court's area.]

Textual Amendments

F72 S. 43A inserted by [Supreme Court Act 1981 \(c. 54, SIF 37\)](#), s. 152(1), **Sch. 5**

Marginal Citations

M22 1981 c. 54 (37).

VALID FROM 10/04/1995

[^{F73} **43B Power to grant bail where police bail has been granted.**

- (1) Where a custody officer—
 - (a) grants bail to any person under Part IV of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in criminal proceedings and imposes conditions, or
 - (b) varies, in relation to any person, conditions of bail in criminal proceedings under section 3(8) of the Bail Act 1976,a magistrates' court may, on application by or on behalf of that person, grant bail or vary the conditions.

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- (2) On an application under subsection (1) the court, if it grants bail and imposes conditions or if it varies the conditions, may impose more onerous conditions.
- (3) On determining an application under subsection (1) the court shall remand the applicant, in custody or on bail in accordance with the determination, and, where the court withholds bail or grants bail the grant of bail made by the custody officer shall lapse.
- (4) In this section “bail in criminal proceedings” and “vary” have the same meanings as they have in the Bail Act 1976.]

Textual Amendments

F73 S. 43B inserted (10.4.1995) by 1994 c. 33, s. 27(4), **Sch. 3 para.3**; S.I. 1995/721, **art. 2**,Sch.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C20 S. 43B excluded (4.4.2005) by Criminal Justice Act 2003 (c. 44), **ss. 88(1)(c)**, 336; S.I. 2005/950, **art. 2**, **Sch. 1 para. 5** (subject to **art. 2(2)** and with **Sch. 2**)

44 Aiders and abettors.

- (1) A person who aids, abets, counsels or procures the commission by another person of a summary offence shall be guilty of the like offence and may be tried (whether or not he is charged as a principal) either by a court having jurisdiction to try that other person or by a court having by virtue of his own offence jurisdiction to try him.
- (2) Any offence consisting in aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring the commission of an offence triable either way (other than an offence listed in Schedule 1 to this Act) shall by virtue of this subsection be triable either way.

45 Incitement.

- (1) Any offence consisting in the incitement to commit a summary offence shall be triable only summarily.
- (2) Subsection (1) above is without prejudice to any other enactment by virtue of which any offence is triable only summarily.
- (3) On conviction of an offence consisting in the incitement to commit a summary offence a person shall be liable to the same penalties as he would be liable to on conviction of the last-mentioned offence.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C21 S. 45(3) excluded by Public Order Act 1986 (c. 64, SIF 39:2), **ss. 12(10)**, 13(13), 14(10)
S. 45(3) excluded by 1986 c. 64, **s. 14B(7)** (as inserted (3.11.1994) by 1994 c. 33, **s.70**)
S. 45(3) excluded (1.8.2005) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), **ss. 136(4)**, 178;
S.I. 2005/1521 {art. 4(1)} (subject to art. 4(2))

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46 Corporations.

The provisions of Schedule 3 to this Act shall have effect where a corporation is charged with an offence before a magistrates' court.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C22 S. 46 applied (1.5.2009) by [The Payment Services Regulations 2009 \(S.I. 2009/209\)](#), regs. 1(2)(b)(xiii), [118\(4\)\(a\)](#)

47 Service of summons out of time after failure to prove service by post.

Where any enactment requires, expressly or by implication, that a summons in respect of an offence shall be issued or served within a specified period after the commission of the offence, and service of the summons may under the rules be effected by post, then, if under the rules service of the summons is not treated as proved, but it is shown that a letter containing the summons was posted at such time as to enable it to be delivered in the ordinary course of post within that period, a second summons may be issued on the same information; and the enactment shall have effect, in relation to that summons, as if the specified period were a period running from the return day of the original summons.

48 Return of property taken from accused.

Where a summons or warrant has been issued requiring any person to appear or be brought before a magistrates' court to answer to an information, or where any person has been arrested without a warrant for an offence, and property has been taken from him after the issue of the summons or warrant or, as the case may be, on or after his arrest without a warrant, the police shall report the taking of the property, with particulars of the property, to the magistrates' court which deals with the case; and, if the court, being of opinion that the whole or any part of the property can be returned to the accused consistently with the interests of justice and the safe custody of the accused, so directs, the property, or such part of it as the court directs, shall be returned to the accused or to such other person as he may require.

49 F74

Textual Amendments

F74 S. 49 repealed by [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(c. 64, SIF 95\)](#), s. 119(2), [Sch. 7 Pt. 1](#)

50 Construction of references to complaint in enactments dealing with offences.

In any enactment conferring power on a magistrates' court to deal with an offence, or to issue a summons or warrant against a person suspected of an offence, on the complaint of any person, for references to a complaint there shall be substituted references to an information.

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PART II

CIVIL JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURE

Jurisdiction to issue summons and deal with complaints

51 Issue of summons on complaint.

Subject to the provisions of this Act, where a complaint is made to a justice of the peace acting for any petty sessions area upon which a magistrates' court acting for that area has power to make an order against any person, the justice may issue a summons directed to that person requiring him to appear before a magistrates' court acting for that area to answer to the complaint.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C23 S. 51 applied (with modifications) (1.4.1997) by S.I. 1997/704, **rule 5(2)(3)(4)(a)**

52 Jurisdiction to deal with complaints.

Where no express provision is made by any Act or the rules specifying what magistrates' courts shall have jurisdiction to hear a complaint, a magistrates' court shall have such jurisdiction if the complaint relates to anything done within the commission area for which the court is appointed or anything left undone that ought to have been done there, or ought to have been done either there or elsewhere, or relates to any other matter arising within that area.

In this section "commission area" has the same meaning as in the ^{M23} Justices of the Peace Act 1979.

Marginal Citations

M23 1979 c. 55.

Hearing of complaint

53 Procedure on hearing.

- (1) On the hearing of a complaint, the court shall, if the defendant appears, state to him the substance of the complaint.
- (2) The court, after hearing the evidence and the parties, shall make the order for which the complaint is made or dismiss the complaint.
- (3) Where a complaint is for an order for the payment of a sum recoverable summarily as a civil debt, or for the variation of the rate of any periodical payments ordered by a magistrates' court to be made, or for such other matter as may be prescribed, the court may make the order with the consent of the defendant without hearing evidence.

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54 Adjournalment

- (1) A magistrates' court may at any time, whether before or after beginning to hear a complaint, adjourn the hearing, and may do so, notwithstanding anything in this Act, when composed of a single justice.
- (2) The court may when adjourning either fix the time and place at which the hearing is to be resumed or, unless it remands the defendant under section 55 below, leave the time and place to be determined later by the court; but the hearing shall not be resumed at that time and place unless the court is satisfied that the parties have had adequate notice thereof.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C24 S. 54 applied (with modifications) (1.4.1997) by S.I. 1997/704, rule 5(2)(3)(4)(c)

55 Non-appearance of defendant.

- (1) Where at the time and place appointed for the hearing or adjourned hearing of a complaint the complainant appears but the defendant does not, the court may, subject to subsection (3) below, proceed in his absence.
- (2) Where the court, instead of proceeding in the absence of the defendant, adjourns, or further adjourns, the hearing, the court may, if the complaint has been substantiated on oath, and subject to the following provisions of this section, issue a warrant for his arrest.
- (3) The court shall not begin to hear the complaint in the absence of the defendant or issue a warrant under this section unless either it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that the summons was served on him within what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before the hearing or adjourned hearing or the defendant has appeared on a previous occasion to answer to the complaint.
- (4) Where the defendant fails to appear at an adjourned hearing, the court shall not issue a warrant under this section unless it is satisfied that he has had adequate notice of the time and place of the adjourned hearing.
- (5) Where the defendant is arrested under a warrant issued under this section, the court may, on any subsequent adjournment of the hearing, but subject to the provisions of subsection (6) below, remand him.
- (6) The court shall not issue a warrant or remand a defendant under this section or further remand him by virtue of section 128(3) below after he has given evidence in the proceedings.
- (7) Where the court remands the defendant, the time fixed for the resumption of the hearing shall be that at which he is required to appear or be brought before the court in pursuance of the remand.
- (8) A warrant under this section shall not be issued in any proceedings for the recovery or enforcement of a sum recoverable summarily as a civil debt or in proceedings in any matter of bastardy.

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C25** S. 55 applied (with modifications) (1.4.1997) by S.I. 1997/704, **rule 5(2)(3)(4)(d)(5)**
C26 S. 55(2) restricted by S.I. 1989/438, **art. 29(4)**
C27 S. 55(2) excluded (3.11.1994) by 1994 c. 33, **s. 78(6)**
C28 S. 55(3)(4) applied (with modifications) (25.8.2000) by 2000 c. 6, ss. 65, 168(1), **Sch. 7 para. 7(3)**
 S. 55(3)(4) applied (with modifications) (25.8.2000) by 2000 c. 6, ss. 72, 75, 168(1), **Sch. 8 para. 6(3)**

56 Non-appearance of complainant.

Where at the time and place appointed for the hearing or adjourned hearing of a complaint the defendant appears but the complainant does not, the court may dismiss the complaint or, if evidence has been received on a previous occasion, proceed in the absence of the complainant.

57 Non-appearance of both parties.

Where at the time and place appointed for the hearing or adjourned hearing of a complaint neither the complainant nor the defendant appears, the court may dismiss the complaint.

VALID FROM 01/04/2005

[^{F75}Transfer of civil proceedings (other than family proceedings)]

Textual Amendments

- F75** S. 57A and cross-heading inserted (1.4.2005) by Courts Act 2003 (c. 39), ss. 48, 110; S.I. 2005/910, **art. 3(q)**

57A Power to transfer civil proceedings (other than family proceedings)

- (1) A magistrates' court may at any time, whether before or after beginning to hear a complaint, transfer the hearing to another magistrates' court.
- (2) But if the court transfers the matter after it has begun to hear the evidence and the parties, the court to which the matter is transferred must begin hearing the evidence and the parties again.
- (3) This section does not apply to family proceedings.
- (4) The power of the court under this section to transfer a hearing must be exercised in accordance with any directions given under section 30(3) of the Courts Act 2003.]

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

Civil debt

58 Money recoverable summarily as civil debt.

- (1) A magistrates' court shall have power to make an order on complaint for the payment of any money recoverable summarily as a civil debt.
- (2) Any sum payment of which may be ordered by a magistrates' court shall be recoverable summarily as a civil debt except—
 - (a) a sum recoverable on complaint for [^{F76}a magistrates' court maintenance order]; or
 - (b) a sum that may be adjudged to be paid by a summary conviction or by an order enforceable as if it were a summary conviction.

Textual Amendments

F76 Words substituted by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), ss. 33(1)(2), Sch. 2 para. 80, Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6

Orders for periodical payment

59 Periodical payment through justices' clerk.

- (1) Where a magistrates' court orders money to be paid periodically by one person to another, the court may order that the payment shall be made to the clerk of the court or the clerk of any other magistrates' court.
- (2) Where the order is ^{F77}, an order under [^{F78}the Guardianship of Minors Acts 1971 and 1973][^{F78}(or having effect as if made under) Schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989]or an order under Part I of the ^{M24}Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act 1978, the court shall, unless upon representations expressly made in that behalf by the applicant for the order it is satisfied that it is undesirable to do so, exercise its power under subsection (1) above.
- (3) Where periodical payments under an order of any court are required to be paid to or through the clerk of a magistrates' court and any sums payable under the order are in arrear, the clerk shall, if the person for whose benefit the payment should have been made so requests in writing, and unless it appears to the clerk that it is unreasonable in the circumstances to do so, proceed in his own name for the recovery of those sums; but the said person shall have the same liability for all the costs properly incurred in or about the proceedings as if the proceedings had been taken by him.
- (4) Nothing in this section shall affect any right of a person to proceed in his own name for the recovery of sums payable on his behalf under an order of any court.

Textual Amendments

F77 Words repealed by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), s. 33(2)(4), Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6, Sch. 4

F78 Words "(or having effect as if made under) Schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989" substituted (*prosp.*) for "the Guardianship of Minors Acts 1971 and 1973" by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), s. 108(2)(5)(6), Sch. 13 para. 44(1), Sch. 14 para. 1(1)

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Marginal Citations

M24 1978 c. 22.

VALID FROM 01/04/1992

[^{F79}59A Orders for periodical payment: proceedings by clerk.

- (1) Where payments under a relevant UK order are required to be made periodically—
 - (a) to or through the clerk of a magistrates' court, or
 - (b) by any method of payment falling within section 59(6) above,
 and any sums payable under the order are in arrear, the clerk of the relevant court shall, if the person for whose benefit the payments are required to be made so requests in writing, and unless it appears to the clerk that it is unreasonable in the circumstances to do so, proceed in his own name for the recovery of those sums.
- (2) Where payments under a relevant UK order are required to be made periodically to or through the clerk of a magistrates' court, the person for whose benefit the payments are required to be made may, at any time during the period in which the payments are required to be so made, give authority in writing to the clerk of the relevant court for the clerk to proceed as mentioned in subsection (3) below.
- (3) Where authority under subsection (2) above is given to the clerk of the relevant court, the clerk shall, unless it appears to him that it is unreasonable in the circumstances to do so, proceed in his own name for the recovery of any sums payable to or through him under the order in question which, on or after the date of the giving of the authority, fall into arrear.
- (4) In any case where—
 - (a) authority under subsection (2) above has been given to the clerk of a relevant court, and
 - (b) the person for whose benefit the payments are required to be made gives notice in writing to the clerk cancelling the authority,
 the authority shall cease to have effect and, accordingly, the clerk shall not continue any proceedings already commenced by virtue of the authority.
- (5) The person for whose benefit the payments are required to be made shall have the same liability for all the costs properly incurred in or about proceedings taken under subsection (1) above at his request or under subsection (3) above by virtue of his authority (including any costs incurred as a result of any proceedings commenced not being continued) as if the proceedings had been taken by him.
- (6) Nothing in subsection (1) or (3) above shall affect any right of a person to proceed in his own name for the recovery of sums payable on his behalf under an order of any court.
- (7) In this section—

“the relevant court”, in relation to an order, means—

 - (a) in a case where payments under the order are required to be made to or through the clerk of a magistrates' court, that magistrates' court; and
 - (b) in a case where such payments are required to be made by any method of payment falling within section 59(6) above, the magistrates' court which

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made the order or, if the order was not made by a magistrates' court, the magistrates' court in which the order is registered;

“relevant UK order” means—

- (a) an order made by a magistrates' court, other than an order made by virtue of Part II of the ^{M25}Maintenance Orders (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act 1972;
- (b) an order made by the High Court or a county court (including an order deemed to be made by the High Court by virtue of section 1(2) of the ^{M26}Maintenance Orders Act 1958) and registered under Part I of that Act of 1958 in a magistrates' court; or
- (c) an order made by a court in Scotland or Northern Ireland and registered under Part II of the ^{M27}Maintenance Orders Act 1950 in a magistrates' court;

and any reference to payments required to be made periodically includes, in the case of a maintenance order, a reference to instalments required to be paid in respect of a lump sum payable by instalments.]

Textual Amendments

F79 [S. 59A](#) inserted (1.4.1992) by [Maintenance Enforcement Act 1991 \(c. 17, SIF 49:3\)](#), [s.2](#); [S.I. 1992/455](#), [art.2](#)

Marginal Citations

M25 1972 c. 18

M26 1958 c. 39

M27 1950 c. 37

VALID FROM 01/04/1992

[^{F80}59B Maintenance orders: penalty for breach.

- (1) In any case where—
 - (a) payments under a relevant English maintenance order are required to be made periodically in the manner mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b) of section 59A(1) above, and
 - (b) the debtor fails, on or after the date of commencement of this section, to comply with the order in so far as the order relates to the manner of payment concerned,the person for whose benefit the payments are required to be made may make a complaint to a relevant justice giving details of the failure to comply.
- (2) If the relevant justice is satisfied that the nature of the alleged failure to comply may be such as to justify the relevant court in exercising its power under subsection (3) below, he shall issue a summons directed to the debtor requiring him to appear before the relevant court to answer the complaint.
- (3) On the hearing of the complaint, the relevant court may order the debtor to pay a sum not exceeding £1000.

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(4) Any sum ordered to be paid under subsection (3) above shall for the purposes of this Act be treated as adjudged to be paid by a conviction of a magistrates' court.

(5) In this section—

“debtor” has the same meaning as it has in section 59 above;

“the relevant court” has the same meaning as it has in section 59A above;

“relevant English maintenance order” means—

(a) a maintenance order made by a magistrates' court, other than an order made by virtue of Part II of the ^{M28}Maintenance Orders (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act 1972; or

(b) an order made by the High Court or a county court (other than an order deemed to be made by the High Court by virtue of section 1(2) of the ^{M29}Maintenance Orders Act 1958) and registered under Part I of that Act of 1958 in a magistrates' court;

“relevant justice”, in relation to a relevant court, means a justice of the peace for the petty sessions area for which the relevant court is acting;

and any reference to payments required to be made periodically includes a reference to instalments required to be paid in respect of a lump sum payable by instalments.]

Textual Amendments

F80 S. 59B inserted (1.4.1992) by [Maintenance Enforcement Act 1991 \(c. 17, SIF 49:3\)](#), [s.3](#); [S.I. 1992/455](#), [art.2](#)

Marginal Citations

M28 1972 c. 18

M29 1958 c. 39

60 Revocation, variation, etc., of orders for periodical payment.

Where a magistrates' court has made an order for the periodical payment of money, the court may, by order on complaint, revoke, revive or vary the order.

The power to vary an order by virtue of this section shall include power to suspend the operation of any provision of that order temporarily and to revive the operation of any provision so suspended.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C29 S. 60 excluded (*prosp.*) by [Children Act 1989 \(c. 41, SIF 20\)](#), [ss. 15\(2\), 108\(2\)\(6\)](#), [Sch. 14 para. 1\(1\)](#)

61 Periodical payments payable by one person under more than one order.

(1) The power to make rules conferred by section 144 below shall, without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of that section, include power to make provision—

(a) for enabling a person to make one complaint for the recovery of payments required to be made to him by another person under more than one periodical payments order; and

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- (b) for apportioning between two or more periodical payments orders, in such manner as may be prescribed by the rules, any sum paid to a clerk to a magistrates' court on any date by the person liable to make payments under the orders which is less than the total sum required to be paid on that date to that clerk by that person in respect of those orders (being orders one of which requires payments to be made for the benefit of a child to the person with whom the child has his home and one or more of which requires payments to be made to that person either for his own benefit or for the benefit of another child who has his home with him) [^{F81}and sums paid into court in pursuance of orders under section 35 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973 (compensation orders)].

(2) In this section—

“child” means a person who has not attained the age of 18;

“periodical payments order” means an order made by a magistrates' court, or registered in a magistrates' court under Part II of the ^{M30}Maintenance Orders Act 1950 or Part I of the ^{M31}Maintenance Orders Act 1958, which requires the making of periodical payments,

and any payments required under a periodical payments order to be made to a child shall for the purposes of subsection (1) above be treated as if they were required to be made to the person with whom the child has his home.

Textual Amendments

F81 Words added by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 123(6), 170(1), Sch. 8 para. 16, **Sch. 15 para. 63**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C30 S. 61 amended by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 81(8), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**

Marginal Citations

M30 1950 c. 37.

M31 1958 c. 39.

Payments to children

62 Provisions as to payments required to be made to a child, etc.

(1) Where—

- (a) periodical payments are required to be made, or a lump sum is required to be paid, to a child under an order made by a magistrates' court, or
- (b) periodical payments are required to be made to a child under an order which is registered in a magistrates' court,

any sum required under the order to be paid to the child may be paid to the person with whom the child has his home, and that person—

- (i) may proceed in his own name for the variation, revival or revocation of the order, and
- (ii) may either proceed in his own name for the recovery of any sum required to be paid under the order or request the clerk to the magistrates' court, under subsection (3) of section 59 above, to proceed for the recovery of that sum.

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- (2) Where a child has a right under any enactment to apply for the revival of an order made by a magistrates' court which provided for the making of periodical payments to or for the benefit of the child, the person with whom the child has his home may proceed in his own name for the revival of that order.
- (3) Where any person by whom periodical payments are required to be paid to a child under an order made by or registered in a magistrates' court makes a complaint for the variation or revocation of that order, the person with whom the child has his home may answer the complaint in his own name.
- (4) Nothing in subsections (1) and (2) above shall affect any right of a child to proceed in his own name for the variation, revival or revocation of an order or for the recovery of any sum payable thereunder.
- [^{F82X1}(5) In this section references to the person with whom a child has his home shall be construed in accordance with Part IV of the ^{M32}Children Act 1975, except that, in the case of any child in the care of a local authority, the local authority shall be treated for the purposes of this section as the person with whom the child has his home.]
- [^{F82X1}(5) In this section references to the person with whom a child has his home—
- (a) in the case of any child who is being looked after by a local authority (within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989), are references to that local authority; and
 - (b) in any other case, are references to the person who, disregarding any absence of the child at a hospital or boarding school and any other temporary absence, has care of the child.]
- (6) In this section any reference to an order registered in a magistrates' court is a reference to an order registered in a magistrates' court under Part II of the ^{M33}Maintenance Orders Act 1950 or Part I of the ^{M34}Maintenance Orders Act 1958.
- (7) In this section "child" means a person who has not attained the age of 18.

Editorial Information

- X1** S. 62(5) commencing "In this section references to the person with whom a child has his home—" substituted (*prosp.*) for s. 62(5) commencing "In this section references to the person with whom a child has his home shall be construed" by [Children Act 1989 \(c. 41, SIF 20\), s. 108\(2\)\(5\), Sch. 13 para. 44\(2\), Sch. 14 para. 1\(1\)](#)

Textual Amendments

- F82** S. 62(5) commencing "In this section references to the person with whom a child has his home—" substituted (*prosp.*) for s. 62(5) commencing "In this section references to the person with whom a child has his home shall be construed" by [Children Act 1989 \(c. 41, SIF 20\), s. 108\(2\)\(5\), Sch. 13 para. 44\(2\), Sch. 14 para. 1\(1\)](#)

Marginal Citations

- M32** 1975 c. 72.
M33 1950 c. 37.
M34 1958 c. 39.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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Orders other than for payment of money

63 Orders other than for payment of money.

- (1) Where under any Act passed after 31st December 1879 a magistrates' court has power to require the doing of anything other than the payment of money, or to prohibit the doing of anything, any order of the court for the purpose of exercising that power may contain such provisions for the manner in which anything is to be done, for the time within which anything is to be done, or during which anything is not to be done, and generally for giving effect to the order, as the court thinks fit.
- (2) The court may by order made on complaint suspend or rescind any such order as aforesaid.
- (3) Where any person disobeys an order of a magistrates' court made under an Act passed after 31st December 1879 to do anything other than the payment of money or to abstain from doing anything the court may—
 - (a) order him to pay a sum not exceeding £50 for every day during which he is in default or a sum not exceeding [^{F83}£2,000]; or
 - (b) commit him to custody until he has remedied his default or for a period not exceeding 2 months;but a person who is ordered to pay a sum for every day during which he is in default or who is committed to custody until he has remedied his default shall not by virtue of this section be ordered to pay more than £1,000 or be committed for more than 2 months in all for doing or abstaining from doing the same thing contrary to the order (without prejudice to the operation of this section in relation to any subsequent default).
- (4) Any sum ordered to be paid under subsection (3) above shall for the purposes of this Act be treated as adjudged to be paid by a conviction of a magistrates' court.
- (5) The preceding provisions of this section shall not apply to any order for the enforcement of which provision is made by any other enactment.

Textual Amendments

F83 "£2,000" substituted for "£1,000" by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(3), **Sch. 3**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C31 S. 63(2) excluded by [Public Order Act 1986 \(c. 64, SIF 39:2\)](#), **s. 33(6)**

C32 S. 63(2) excluded by [Football Spectators Act 1989 \(c. 37, SIF 45A\)](#), **s. 17(6)**

C33 S. 63(3) amended by [Contempt of Court Act 1981 \(c. 49, SIF 39:3\)](#), **s. 17(1)**

C34 S. 63(3) extended (*prosp.*) by [Children Act 1989 \(c. 41, SIF 20\)](#) ss. 14(1), 108(2)(6), Sch. 14 para. 1(1)

Costs

64 Power to award costs and enforcement of costs.

- (1) On the hearing of a complaint, a magistrates' court shall have power in its discretion to make such order as to costs—
 - (a) on making the order for which the complaint is made, to be paid by the defendant to the complainant;

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- (b) on dismissing the complaint, to be paid by the complainant to the defendant, as it thinks just and reasonable; but if the complaint is for an order for the periodical payment of money, or for the revocation, revival or variation of such an order, or for the enforcement of such an order, the court may, whatever adjudication it makes, order either party to pay the whole or any part of the other's costs.
- (2) The amount of any sum ordered to be paid under subsection (1) above shall be specified in the order, or order of dismissal, as the case may be.
- (3) Subject to subsection (4) below, costs ordered to be paid under this section shall be enforceable as a civil debt.
- [^{F84}(4) Any costs awarded on a complaint for a maintenance order, or for the enforcement, variation, revocation, discharge or revival of such an order, against the person liable to make payments under the order shall be enforceable as a sum ordered to be paid by a magistrates' court maintenance order.]
- (5) The preceding provisions of this section shall have effect subject to any other Act enabling a magistrates' court to order a successful party to pay the other party's costs.

Textual Amendments

F84 S. 64(4) substituted by [Family Law Reform Act 1987 \(c. 42, SIF 49:7\)](#), ss. 33(1)(2), Sch. 2 para. 81, Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6

Domestic proceedings

65 Meaning of domestic proceedings.

- (1) In this Act “[^{F85}domestic proceedings]” “[^{F85f}family proceedings]” means proceedings under any of the following enactments, that is to say—
- (a) the ^{M35}Maintenance Orders (Facilities for Enforcement) Act 1920;
 - (b) section 43 ^{F86}of the ^{M36}National Assistance Act 1948;
 - (c) section 3 of the ^{M37}Marriage Act 1949;
 - (d) ^{F87}
 - [^{F88}(e) the Guardianship of Minors Acts 1971 and 1973;]
 - [^{F89}(ee) section 35 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973;]
 - (f) Part I of the ^{M38}Maintenance Orders (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act 1972;
 - [^{F88}(g) Part II of the ^{M39}Children Act 1975;]
 - (h) the ^{M40}Adoption Act 1976, except proceedings under section 34 of that Act;
 - (i) section 18 ^{F86}of the ^{M41}Supplementary Benefits Act 1976;
 - (j) Part I of the ^{M42}Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act 1978;
 - [^{F90}(k) section 47, ^{F86}of the ^{M43}Child Care Act 1980;]
 - (l) section 60 of this Act;
 - [^{F91X2}(m) Part I of the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982, so far as that Part relates to the recognition or enforcement of maintenance orders;]
 - [^{F92X3}(m) section 24 or 25 of the Social Security Act 1986;]
 - [^{F93X4}(m) section 4 or 15 of the Family Law Reform Act 1987;]
 - [^{F94}(n) the Children Act 1989]

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except that, subject to subsection (2) below, it does not include—

- (i) proceedings for the enforcement of any order made, confirmed or registered under any of those enactments;
- (ii) proceedings for the variation of any provision for the periodical payment of money contained in an order made, confirmed or registered under any of those enactments; or
- (iii) proceedings on an information in respect of the commission of an offence under any of those enactments.

(2) The court before which there fall to be heard any of the following proceedings, that is to say—

- (a) proceedings (whether under this Act or any other enactment) for the enforcement of any order made, confirmed or registered under any of the enactments specified in paragraphs (a) to (k) ^{F95}and (m) ^{F95}(m) and (n) of subsection (1) above;
- (b) proceeding (whether under this Act or any other enactment) for the variation of any provision for the making of periodical payments contained in an order made, confirmed or registered under any of those enactments;
- (c) proceedings for an attachment of earnings order to secure maintenance payments within the meaning of the ^{M44}Attachment of Earnings Act 1971 or for the discharge or variation of such an order; or
- (d) proceedings for the enforcement of a maintenance order which is registered in a magistrates' court under Part II of the ^{M45}Maintenance Orders Act 1950 or Part I of the ^{M46}Maintenance Orders Act 1958 or for the variation of the rate of payments specified by such an order.

may if it thinks fit order that those proceedings and any other proceedings being heard therewith shall, notwithstanding anything in subsection (1) above, be treated as ^{F85}domestic proceedings ^{F85}family proceedings for the purposes of this Act.

(3) Where the same parties are parties—

- (a) to proceedings which are ^{F85}domestic proceedings ^{F85}family proceedings by virtue of subsection (1) above, and
- (b) to proceedings which the court has power to treat as ^{F85}domestic proceedings ^{F85}family proceedings by virtue of subsection (2) above,

and the proceedings are heard together by a magistrates' court, the whole of those proceedings shall be treated as ^{F85}domestic proceedings ^{F85}family proceedings for the purposes of this Act.

(4) No appeal shall lie from the making of, or refusal to make, an order under subsection (2) above.

(5) Until the ^{M47}Adoption Act 1976 comes into force subsection (1) above shall have effect as if for paragraph (h) thereof there were substituted the following paragraph—

“(h) The Adoption Act 1958, the Adoption Act 1960 or Part I of the Children Act 1975, except proceedings under section 42 or 43 of the Adoption Act 1958.”

(6) Until the ^{M48}Child Care Act 1980 comes into force subsection (1) above shall have effect as if for paragraph (k) thereof there were substituted the following paragraph—

“(k) Section 87 or section 88 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 or section 26 of the Children Act 1948.”

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Editorial Information

- X2** S. 65(1)(m) commencing "Part I of the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982" inserted (1.1.1987) by Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982 (c. 27, SIF 45:3), s. 15(4), **Sch. 12 Pt. I para. 7(a)**
- X3** S. 65(1)(m) commencing "section 24" added (11.4.1988) (E.W.S.) by Social Security Act 1986 (c. 50, SIF 113:1), s. 86(1), **Sch. 10 Pt. II para. 54**
- X4** S. 65(1)(m) commencing "section 4" inserted (1.4.1989) (E.W.) by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), s. 33(1)(2), Sch. 2 para. 82, Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6 and repealed (*prosp.*) by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), s. 108(2)(6)(7), Sch. 14 paras. 1(1), 27(4), **Sch. 15**

Textual Amendments

- F85** Words "family proceedings" substituted (*prosp.*) for "domestic proceedings" by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(c), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**
- F86** Words repealed by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), s. 33(2)(4), Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6, **Sch. 4**
- F87** S. 65(d) repealed by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), ss. 33(2)(4), Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6, **Sch. 4**
- F88** S. 65(e)(g) repealed (*prosp.*) by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), s. 108(2)(6)(7), Sch. 14 paras. 1(1), 27(4), **Sch. 15**
- F89** S. 65(ee) inserted by Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984 (c. 42, SIF 49:3), s. 44
- F90** S. 65(k) repealed (*prosp.*) by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 76:1, 82), ss. 116, 124, 125(7), Sch. 16 para. 40, **Sch. 20**
- F91** S. 65(1)(m) commencing "Part I of the Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982" inserted (1.1.1987) by Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982 (c. 27, SIF 45:3), s. 15(4), **Sch. 12 Pt. I para. 7(a)**
- F92** S. 65(1)(m) commencing "section 24" added (11.4.1988) (E.W.S.) by Social Security Act 1986 (c. 50, SIF 113:1), s. 86(1), **Sch. 10 Pt. II para. 54**
- F93** S. 65(1)(m) commencing "section 4" inserted (1.4.1989) (E.W.) by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), s. 33(1)(2), Sch. 2 para. 82, Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6 and repealed (*prosp.*) by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), s. 108(2)(6)(7), Sch. 14 paras. 1(1), 27(4), **Sch. 15**
- F94** S. 65(1)(n) inserted (*prosp.*) by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92(11), 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(a), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**
- F95** Words "and (m)" inserted by Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982 (c. 27, SIF 45:3), s. 15(4), **Sch. 12 Pt. I para. 7(b)** and for "(m)" as so inserted "(m) and (n)" substituted (*prosp.*) by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92(11), 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(b), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**

Marginal Citations

- M35** 1920 c. 33.
- M36** 1948 c. 29.
- M37** 1949 c. 76
- M38** 1972 c. 18.
- M39** 1975 c. 72
- M40** 1976 c. 36
- M41** 1976 c. 71.
- M42** 1978 c. 22.
- M43** 1980 c. 5.
- M44** 1971 c. 32.
- M45** 1950 c. 37.
- M46** 1958 c. 39
- M47** 1976 c. 36.
- M48** 1980 c. 5.

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66 Composition of magistrates' courts for domestic proceedings: general.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, a magistrates' court when hearing domestic proceedings shall be composed of not more than 3 justices of the peace, including, so far as practicable, both a man and a woman.
- (2) Subsection (1) above shall not apply to a magistrates' court for an inner London petty sessions area, and, notwithstanding anything in section 67 below, for the purpose of exercising jurisdiction to hear domestic proceedings such a court shall be composed of—
 - (a) a metropolitan stipendiary magistrate as chairman and one or 2 lay justices who are members of the domestic court panel for that area; or
 - (b) 2 or 3 lay justices who are members of that panel;or, if it is not practicable for such a court to be so composed, the court shall for that purpose be composed of a metropolitan stipendiary magistrate sitting alone.
- (3) Where in pursuance of subsection (2) above a magistrates' court includes lay justices it shall, so far as practicable, include both a man and a woman.
- (4) In the preceding provisions of this section "lay justices" means justices of the peace for the inner London area who are not metropolitan stipendiary magistrates.
- (5) In this section "inner London petty sessions area" means the City of London or any petty sessional division of the inner London area.

67 Domestic courts and panels.

- (1) Magistrates' courts constituted in accordance with the provisions of this section and sitting for the purpose of hearing [F96domestic proceedings][F96family proceedings] shall be known as [F97domestic courts][F97family proceedings courts].
- (2) A justice shall not be qualified to sit as a member of a [F98domestic court][F98family proceedings court] unless he is a member of a [F99domestic court panel][F99family panel], that is to say a panel of justices specially appointed to deal with [F96domestic proceedings][F96family proceedings].
- (3) Without prejudice to the generality of the power to make rules under section 144 below relating to the procedure and practice to be followed in magistrates' courts, provision may be made by such rules with respect to any of the following matters, that is to say—
 - (a) the formation and revision of [F100domestic court panels][F100family panels] and the eligibility of justices to be members of such panels;
 - (b) the appointment of persons as chairmen of [F97domestic courts][F97family proceedings courts]; and
 - (c) the composition of domestic courts.
- (4) Any provision made by rules by virtue of subsection (3) above for the formation of [F100domestic court panels][F100family panels] shall include provision for the formation of at least one [F99domestic court panel][F99family panel] for each commission area, but provision shall not be made by the rules for the formation of more than one [F99domestic court panel][F99family panel] for any petty sessions area.

In this subsection "commission area" has the same meaning as in the ^{M49} Justice of the Peace Act 1979.

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- (5) Rules made by virtue of subsection (3) above may confer powers on the Lord Chancellor with respect to any of the matters specified in the rules and may, in particular, provide for the appointment of [F100domestic court panels][F100family panels]by him and for the removal from a [F99domestic court panel][F99family panel]of any justice who, in his opinion, is unsuitable to serve on a [F98domestic court][F98family proceedings court].
- (6) Rules made by virtue of subsection (3) above may make different provision in relation to different areas for which [F100domestic court panels][F100family panels]are formed; and in the application of this section to the counties of Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire for any reference in subsection (5) above to the Lord Chancellor there shall be substituted a reference to the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
- (7) A stipendiary magistrate who is a member of a [F99domestic court panel][F99family panel]may, notwithstanding anything in section 66(1) above, hear and determine [F96domestic proceedings][F96family proceedings]when sitting alone.
- (8) Nothing in this section shall require the formation of a [F99domestic court panel][F99family panel]for the City of London.

Textual Amendments

- F96** Words “family proceedings” substituted (*prosp.*) for “domestic proceedings” by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(c), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**
- F97** Words “family proceedings courts” substituted (*prosp.*) for “domestic courts” by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(f), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**
- F98** Words “family proceedings court” substituted (*prosp.*) for “domestic court” by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(g), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**
- F99** Words “family panel” substituted (*prosp.*) for “domestic court panel” by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(d), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**
- F100** Words “family panels” substituted (*prosp.*) for “domestic court panels” by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(e), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**

Marginal Citations

M49 1979 c. 55

68 Combined domestic court panels.

- (1) Where the Secretary of State considers—
- that a combined [F101domestic court panel][F101family panel]should be formed for 2 or more petty sessions areas, or
 - that any combined [F101domestic court panel][F101family panel]which has been so formed should be dissolved,
- he may direct the magistrates' courts committee for the area concerned to review the functioning of [F102domestic courts][F102family proceedings courts]in their area and on completion of the review to submit a report to the Secretary of State.
- (2) Where the Secretary of State gives a direction under subsection (1) above, then—
- after consideration of any report submitted to him under that subsection, or
 - if the committee fail to comply with the direction within 6 months from the giving thereof, after the expiration of that period of 6 months,

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the Secretary of State may, if he thinks fit, make an order for the formation of a combined [^{F101}domestic court panel][^{F101}family panel]for the petty sessions areas concerned or, as the case may be, for the dissolution of the combined [^{F101}domestic court panel][^{F101}family panel]concerned.

- (3) Where the Secretary of State proposes to make an order under subsection (2) above, he shall send a copy of the proposed order to the magistrates' courts committee for any area the whole or part of which is concerned and to any [^{F101}domestic court panel][^{F101}family panel]which is concerned.
- (4) Where a copy of the proposed order is required to be sent under subsection (3) above to any committee or panel, the Secretary of State shall, before making an order, consider any representations made to him by the committee or panel within one month from the time the copy of the proposed order was sent.
- (5) An order of the Secretary of State under subsection (2) above shall be made by statutory instrument and may be revoked or varied by a subsequent order thereunder.
- (6) Any order made under subsection (2) above may contain supplementary, incidental and consequential provisions.
- (7) In the application of this section to the inner London area any reference to the magistrates' courts committee shall be treated as a reference to the committee of magistrates.

Textual Amendments

F101 Words "family panel" substituted (*prosp.*) for "domestic court panel" by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(d), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**

F102 Words "family proceedings courts" substituted (*prosp.*) for "domestic courts" by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(f), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**

69 **Sittings of magistrates' courts for domestic proceedings.**

- (1) The business of magistrates' courts shall, so far as is consistent with the due dispatch of business, be arranged in such manner as may be requisite for separating the hearing and determination of [^{F103}domestic proceedings][^{F103}family proceedings]from other business.
- (2) In the case of [^{F103}domestic proceedings][^{F103}family proceedings]in a magistrates' court other than proceedings under the ^{M50}Adoption Act 1976, no person shall be present during the hearing and determination by the court of the proceedings except—
 - (a) officers of the court;
 - (b) parties to the case before the court, their [^{F104}legal representatives], witnesses and other persons directly concerned in the case;
 - (c) representatives of newspapers or news agencies;
 - (d) any other person whom the court may in its discretion permit to be present, so, however, that permission shall not be withheld from a person who appears to the court to have adequate grounds for attendance.
- (3) In relation to any [^{F103}domestic proceedings][^{F103}family proceedings]under the ^{M51}Adoption Act 1976, subsection (2) above shall apply with the omission of paragraphs (c) and (d).

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- (4) When hearing [^{F103}domestic proceedings][^{F103}family proceedings], a magistrates' court may, if it thinks it necessary in the interest of the administration of justice or of public decency, direct that any persons, not being officers of the court or parties to the case, the parties' [^{F105}legal representatives], or other persons directly concerned in the case, be excluded during the taking of any indecent evidence.
- (5) The powers conferred on a magistrates' court by this section shall be in addition and without prejudice to any other powers of the court to hear proceedings in camera.
- (6) Nothing in this section shall affect the exercise by a magistrates' court of the power to direct that witnesses shall be excluded until they are called for examination.
- (7) Until the coming into operation of the ^{M52}Adoption Act 1976 this section shall have effect as if for any reference to that Act there were substituted a reference to the ^{M53}Adoption Act 1958, the ^{M54}Adoption Act 1960 and Part I of the ^{M55}Children Act 1975.

Textual Amendments

- F103** Words "family proceedings" substituted (*prosp.*) for "domestic proceedings" by [Children Act 1989](#) (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(c), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**
- F104** Words substituted by [Courts and Legal Services Act 1990](#) (c. 41, SIF 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(6)(a)**
- F105** Words substituted by [Courts and Legal Services Act 1990](#) (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(6)(b)**

Marginal Citations

- M50** 1976 c. 36.
- M51** 1976 c. 36.
- M52** 1976 c. 36.
- M53** 1958 c. 5 (7 & 8 Eliz. 2).
- M54** 1960 c. 59.
- M55** 1975 c. 72.

70 Jurisdiction of magistrates' courts in inner London for domestic proceedings.

- (1) A relevant court for an inner London petty sessions area shall, in addition to hearing proceedings which (apart from subsection (2) below) may be heard by a relevant court for that area, have jurisdiction to hear proceedings which could be heard before a relevant court for any other such area, but shall not exercise the jurisdiction conferred by this subsection except in such cases or classes of case as may be determined by the committee of magistrates.
- (2) A magistrates' court for an inner London petty sessions area shall not hear any [^{F106}domestic proceedings][^{F106}family proceedings] if the committee of magistrates' so determine.
- (3) In this section—

"relevant court" means a magistrates' court when composed for the purpose of exercising jurisdiction to hear [^{F106}domestic proceedings][^{F106}family proceedings];

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“inner London petty sessions area” means the City of London or any petty sessional division of the inner London area.

Textual Amendments

F106 Words “family proceedings” substituted (*prosp.*) for “domestic proceedings” by [Children Act 1989](#) (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(c), [Sch. 14 para. 1\(1\)](#)

71 Newspaper reports of domestic proceedings.

[^{F107}(1) In the case of [^{F108}domestic proceedings][^{F108}family proceedings]in a magistrates' court (other than proceedings under the Adoption Act 1976) it shall not be lawful for a person to whom this subsection applies—

- (a) to print or publish, or cause or procure to be printed or published, in a newspaper or periodical, or
- (b) to include, or cause or procure to be included, in a programme included in a programme service (within the meaning of the Broadcasting Act 1990) for reception in Great Britain,

any particulars of the proceedings other than such particulars as are mentioned in subsection (1A) below.

(1A) The particulars referred to in subsection (1) above are—

- (a) the names, addresses and occupations of the parties and witnesses;
- (b) the grounds of the application, and a concise statement of the charges, defences and counter-charges in support of which evidence has been given;
- (c) submissions on any point of law arising in the course of the proceedings and the decision of the court on the submissions;
- (d) the decision of the court, and any observations made by the court in giving it.

(1B) Subsection (1) above applies—

- (a) in relation to paragraph (a) of that subsection, to the proprietor, editor or publisher of the newspaper or periodical, and
- (b) in relation to paragraph (b) of that subsection, to any body corporate which provides the service in which the programme is included and to any person having functions in relation to the programme corresponding to those of an editor of a newspaper.]

(2) In the case of [^{F108}domestic proceedings][^{F108}family proceedings]in a magistrates' court under the ^{M56}Adoption Act 1976, [^{F109}subsection (1A)]above shall apply with the omission of paragraphs (a) and (b) and the reference in that subsection to the particulars of the proceedings shall, in relation to any child concerned in the proceedings, include—

- (a) the name, address or school of the child,
- (b) any picture as being, or including, a picture of the child, and
- (c) any other particulars calculated to lead to the identification of the child.

(3) Any person acting in contravention of this section shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding [^{F110}level 4 on the standard scale].

(4) No prosecution for an offence under this section shall be begun without the consent of the Attorney General.

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- (5) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the printing or publishing of any matter in a newspaper or periodical of a technical character bona fide intended for circulation among members of the legal or medical professions.
- (6) Until the coming into operation of the ^{M57}Adoption Act 1976 this section shall have effect as if for any reference to that Act there were substituted a reference to the ^{M58}Adoption Act 1958, the ^{M59}Adoption Act 1960 and Part I of the ^{M60}Children Act 1975.

Textual Amendments

- F107** S. 71(1)(1A)(1B) substituted (1.1.1991) for s. 71(1) by Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), ss. 4(6), 87(6), 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(2)**
- F108** Words "family proceedings" substituted (*prosp.*) for "domestic proceedings" by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(c), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**
- F109** Words substituted by Broadcasting Act 1990 (c. 42, SIF 96), s. 203(1), **Sch. 20 para. 29(2)**
- F110** Words substituted by virtue of Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), **s. 46**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C35** S. 71 applied (*prosp.*) by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 97(8), 108(2)(6), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**

Marginal Citations

- M56** 1976 c. 36.
M57 1976 c. 36.
M58 1958 c. 5 (7 & 8 Eliz. 2).
M59 1960 c. 59.
M60 1975 c. 72.

72 Report by probation officer on means of parties.

- (1) Where in any [^{F111}domestic proceedings][^{F111}family proceedings]in which an order may be made for the payment of money by any person, or in any proceedings for the enforcement or variation of any such order, a magistrates' court has requested a probation officer to investigate the means of the parties to the proceedings, the court may direct the probation officer to report the result of his investigation to the court in accordance with the provisions of this section; but in the case of any such [^{F111}domestic proceedings][^{F111}family proceedings]no direction to report to the court shall be given to a probation officer under this subsection until the court has determined all issues arising in the proceedings other than the amount to be directed to be paid by such an order.
- (2) Where the court directs a probation officer under this section to report to the court the result of any such investigation as aforesaid, the court may require him—
- to furnish to the court a statement in writing about his investigation; or
 - to make an oral statement to the court about his investigation.
- (3) Where the court requires a probation officer to furnish a statement in writing under subsection (2) above—
- a copy of the statement shall be given to each party to the proceedings or to his [^{F112}legal representative]at the hearing; and

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- (b) the court may, if it thinks fit, require that the statement, or such part of the statement as the court may specify, shall be read aloud at the hearing.
- (4) The court may and, if requested to do so at the hearing by a party to the proceedings or his ^{F112}legal representative] shall, require the probation officer to give evidence about his investigation, and if the officer gives such evidence, any party to the proceedings may give or call evidence with respect to any matter referred to either in the statement or in the evidence given by the officer.
- (5) Any statement made by a probation officer in a statement furnished or made by him under subsection (2) above, or any evidence which he is required to give under subsection (4) above, may be received by the court as evidence, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any enactment or rule of law relating to the admissibility of evidence.

Textual Amendments

F111 Words “family proceedings” substituted (*prosp.*) for “domestic proceedings” by [Children Act 1989](#) (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(c), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**

F112 Words substituted by [Courts and Legal Services Act 1990](#) (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(4)(b)**

73 Examination of witnesses by court.

Where in any ^{F113}domestic proceedings][^{F113}family proceedings], or in any proceedings for the enforcement or variation of an order made in ^{F113}domestic proceedings][^{F113}family proceedings], it appears to a magistrates' court that any party to the proceedings who is not legally represented is unable effectively to examine or cross-examine a witness, the court shall ascertain from that party what are the matters about which the witness may be able to depose or on which the witness ought to be cross-examined, as the case may be, and shall put, or cause to be put, to the witness such questions in the interests of that party as may appear to the court to be proper.

Textual Amendments

F113 Words “family proceedings” substituted (*prosp.*) for “domestic proceedings” by [Children Act 1989](#) (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(c), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**

74 Reasons for decisions in domestic proceedings.

- (1) The power to make rules conferred by section 144 below shall, without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of that section, include power to make provision for the recording by a magistrates' court, in such manner as may be prescribed by the rules, of reasons for a decision made in such ^{F114}domestic proceedings][^{F114}family proceedings] or class of ^{F114}domestic proceedings][^{F114}family proceedings] as may be so prescribed, and for making available a copy of any record made in accordance with those rules of the reasons for a decision of a magistrates' court to any person who requests a copy thereof for the purposes of an appeal against that decision or for the purpose of deciding whether or not to appeal against that decision.

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- (2) A copy of any record made by virtue of this section of the reasons for a decision of a magistrates' court shall, if certified by such officer of the court as may be prescribed, be admissible as evidence of those reasons.

Textual Amendments

F114 Words "family proceedings" substituted (*prosp.*) for "domestic proceedings" by [Children Act 1989](#) (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 92, 108(2)(6), Sch. 11 Pt. II para. 8(c), **Sch. 14 para. 1(1)**

PART III

SATISFACTION AND ENFORCEMENT

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C36** Part III (ss. 75–96) modified: (E.W.) by [Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986](#) (c. 32, SIF 39:1), **s. 6(4)(6)**; by [Criminal Justice Act 1988](#) (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 75(5)(6), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**; (3.2.1995) by 1994 c. 37, **ss. 9(4)(6)**, 69(2) (with s. 66(2))
Part III (ss. 75–96) extended (1.9.1994) by 1994 c. 22, **ss. 32(3)(a)**, 41(3)(a), 66(1)
Part III (ss. 75–96) applied (with modifications) (24.3.2003) (E.W.) by 2002 c. 29, ss. 35(3), 458(1)(3); S.I. 2003/333, **art. 2** Sch.
- C37** Pt. III applied (1.10.2009) by [Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008](#) (c. 4), **ss. 85**, 153; S.I. 2009/2606, **art. 2(f)**
- C38** Pt. III restricted (*prosp.*) by [Education and Skills Act 2008](#) (c. 25), ss. 56, 57, **58**, 173

General provisions

75 Power to dispense with immediate payment.

- (1) A magistrates' court by whose conviction or order a sum is adjudged to be paid may, instead of requiring immediate payment, allow time for payment, or order payment by instalments.
- (2) Where a magistrates' court has allowed time for payment, the court may, on application by or on behalf of the person liable to make the payment, allow further time or order payment by instalments.
- (3) Where a court has ordered payment by instalments and default is made in the payment of any one instalment, proceedings may be taken as if the default had been made in the payment of all the instalments then unpaid.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C39 S. 75 extended (with modifications) by [Legal Aid Act 1988](#) (c. 34, SIF 77:1), ss. 24(6), 30, **Sch. 3 Pt. I para. 2(3)**

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76 Enforcement of sums adjudged to be paid.

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this Part of this Act, and to section 132 below ^{F115}, where default is made in paying a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction or order of a magistrates' court, the court may issue a warrant of distress for the purpose of levying the sum or issue a warrant committing the defaulter to prison.
- (2) A warrant of commitment may be issued as aforesaid either—
 - (a) where it appears on the return to a warrant of distress that the money and goods of the defaulter are insufficient to satisfy the sum with the costs and charges of levying the sum; or
 - (b) instead of a warrant of distress.
- (3) The period for which a person may be committed to prison under such a warrant as aforesaid shall not, subject to the provisions of any enactment passed after 31st December 1879, exceed the period applicable to the case under Schedule 4 to this Act.

Textual Amendments

F115 Words repealed by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 78, [Sch. 16](#)

77 Postponement of issue of warrant.

- (1) Where a magistrates' court has power to issue a warrant of distress under this Part of this Act, it may, if it thinks it expedient to do so, postpone the issue of the warrant until such time and on such conditions, if any, as the court thinks just.
- (2) Where a magistrates' court has power to issue a warrant of commitment under this Part of this Act, it may, if it thinks it expedient to do so, fix a term of imprisonment [^{F116}or detention under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982 (detention of persons aged 17 to 20 for default)]and postpone the issue of the warrant until such time and on such conditions, if any, as the court thinks just.
- [^{F117}(3) A magistrates' court shall have power at any time to do either or both of the following—
 - (a) to direct that the issue of the warrant of commitment shall be postponed until a time different from that to which it was previously postponed;
 - (b) to vary any of the conditions on which its issue is postponed,but only if it thinks it just to do so having regard to a change of circumstances since the relevant time.
- (4) In this section "the relevant time" means—
 - (a) where neither of the powers conferred by subsection (3) above has been exercised previously, the date when the issue of the warrant was postponed under subsection (2) above; and
 - (b) in any other case, the date of the exercise or latest exercise of either or both of the powers.
- (5) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (3) above, if on an application by a person in respect of whom issue of a warrant has been postponed it appears to a justice of the peace acting for the petty sessions area in which the warrant has been or would have been issued that since the relevant time there has been a change of circumstances

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which would make it just for the court to exercise one or other or both of the powers conferred by that subsection, he shall refer the application to the court.

- (6) Where such an application is referred to the court, it shall be the duty of the clerk of the court—
- (a) to fix a time and place for the application to be heard; and
 - (b) to give the applicant notice of the time and place which he fixes.
- (7) Where such a notice has been given but the applicant does not appear at the time and place specified in the notice, the court may proceed with the consideration of the application in his absence.
- (8) If a warrant of commitment in respect of the sum adjudged to be paid has been issued before the hearing of the application, the court shall have power to order that the warrant shall cease to have effect and, if the applicant has been arrested in pursuance of it, to order that he shall be released, but it shall only make an order under this subsection if it is satisfied that the change of circumstances on which the applicant relies was not put before the court when it was determining whether to issue the warrant.]

Textual Amendments

F116 Words inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, **Sch. 14 para. 50**

F117 [S. 77\(3\)–\(8\)](#) added (E.W.) by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 61(1)(2), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C40 [S. 77\(1\)](#) extended by [S.I. 1985/215](#), **art. 4(3)**, 1985/313, art. 4(3), 1985/487, art. 5(3), 1986/110, art. 4(3), 1986/250, art. 5(3), 1986/779, art. 3(3), 1986/2090, art. 5(3), 1987/213, art. 4(3), 1987/292, art. 3(3)

C41 [S. 77\(1\)](#) applied: by [S.I. 1990/137](#), **art. 5(3)**; by [S.I. 1991/138](#), **art. 5(3)**; by [S.I. 1991/139](#), **reg. 7(3)**; by [S.I. 1991/522](#), **art. 3(3)**; (31.1.1992) by [S.I. 1992/130](#), **reg. 8(3)**; (8.2.1992) by [S.I. 1992/190](#), **art. 5(3)**; (27.2.1993) by [S.I. 1993/387](#), **art. 5(3)**; (5.5.1993) by [S.I. 1993/1197](#), **art. 3(3)**; (1.9.1993) by [S.I. 1993/2015](#), **art. 6(3)** and [S.I. 1993/2016](#), **art. 5(3)**; (22.3.1994) by [S.I. 1994/451](#), **art. 5(3)**; (15.7.1994) by [S.I. 1994/1679](#), **art. 5(3)** and [S.I. 1994/1681](#), **art. 4(3)**; (18.4.1995) by [S.I. 1995/907](#), **art. 4(3)** and [S.I. 1995/908](#), **art. 5(3)**; (29.2.1996) by [S.I. 1996/247](#), **art. 5(3)**; (24.4.1996) by [S.I. 1996/1036](#), **art. 5(3)**; (9.4.1997) by [S.I. 1997/883](#), **art. 5(3)**; (12.8.1997) by [S.I. 1997/1949](#), **art. 5(3)**; (14.3.1998) by [S.I. 1998/268](#), **art. 5(3)**; (18.3.1999) by [S.I. 1999/424](#), **art. 5(3)**; (8.2.2000) by [S.I. 2000/51](#), **art. 5(2)**; (21.2.2000) by [S.I. 2000/181](#), **art. 5(2)**; (25.2.2000) by [S.I. 2000/435](#), **art. 5(2)**; (W.)(18.3.2000) by [S.I. 2000/976](#), **art. 5(2)**; (W.)(1.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1075](#), **art. 5(2)**; (W.)(7.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1078](#), **art. 6(2)**; (11.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/827](#), **art. 5(2)**; (W.)(11.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1096](#), **art. 5(2)**; (15.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1081](#), **art. 5(2)**; (24.7.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1843](#), **art. 6(2)**

78 Defect in distress warrant and irregularity in its execution.

- (1) A warrant of distress issued for the purpose of levying a sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction or order of a magistrates' court shall not, if it states that the sum has been so adjudged to be paid, be held void by reason of any defect in the warrant.
- (2) A person acting under a warrant of distress shall not be deemed to be a trespasser from the beginning by reason only of any irregularity in the execution of the warrant.

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- (3) Nothing in this section shall prejudice the claim of any person for special damages in respect of any loss caused by a defect in the warrant or irregularity in its execution.
- (4) If any person removes any goods marked in accordance with the rules as articles impounded in the execution of a warrant of distress, or defaces or removes any such mark, he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding [^{F118}level 1 on the standard scale].
- (5) If any person charged with the execution of a warrant of distress wilfully retains from the proceeds of a sale of the goods on which distress is levied, or otherwise exacts, any greater costs and charges than those properly payable, or makes any improper charge, he shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding [^{F118}level 1 on the standard scale].

Textual Amendments

F118 Words substituted by virtue of [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 46

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C42** S. 78 extended by [S.I. 1985/215, art. 4\(3\)](#), 1985/313, art. 4(3), 1985/487, art. 5(3), 1986/110, art. 4(3), 1986/250, art. 5(3), 1986/779, art. 3(3), 1986/2090, art. 5(3), 1987/213, art. 4(3), 1987/292, art. 3(3)
- C43** S. 78 applied: by [S.I. 1990/137, art. 5\(3\)](#); by [S.I. 1991/138, art. 5\(3\)](#); by [S.I. 1991/139, reg. 7\(3\)](#); by [S.I. 1991/522, art. 3\(3\)](#); (31.1.1992) by [S.I. 1992/130, reg. 8\(3\)](#); (8.2.1992) by [S.I. 1992/190, art. 5\(3\)](#); (27.2.1993) by [S.I. 1993/387, art. 5\(3\)](#); (5.5.1993) by [S.I. 1993/1197, art. 3\(3\)](#); (1.9.1993) by [S.I. 1993/2015, art. 6\(3\)](#) and [S.I. 1993/2016, art. 5\(3\)](#); (22.3.1994) by [S.I. 1994/451, art. 5\(3\)](#); (15.7.1994) by [S.I. 1994/1679, art. 5\(3\)](#) and [S.I. 1994/1681, art. 4\(3\)](#); (18.4.1995) by [S.I. 1995/907, art. 4\(3\)](#) and [S.I. 1995/908, art. 5\(3\)](#); (29.2.1996) by [S.I. 1996/247, art. 5\(3\)](#); (24.4.1996) by [S.I. 1996/1036, art. 5\(3\)](#); (9.4.1997) by [S.I. 1997/883, art. 5\(3\)](#); (12.8.1997) by [S.I. 1997/1949, art. 5\(3\)](#); (14.3.1998) by [S.I. 1998/268, art. 5\(3\)](#); (W.) (18.3.1999) by [S.I. 1999/424, art. 5\(3\)](#); (8.2.2000) by [S.I. 2000/51, art. 5\(2\)](#); (21.2.2000) by [S.I. 2000/181, art. 5\(2\)](#); (25.2.2000) by [S.I. 2000/435, art. 5\(2\)](#); (W.) (18.3.2000) by [S.I. 2000/976, art. 5\(2\)](#); (W.) (1.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1075, art. 5\(2\)](#); (W.) (7.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1078, art. 6\(2\)](#); (11.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/827, art. 5\(2\)](#); (W.) (11.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1096, art. 5\(2\)](#); (15.4.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1081, art. 5\(2\)](#); (24.7.2000) by [S.I. 2000/1843, art. 6\(2\)](#); (W.) (24.7.2000) by [S.I. 2000/2230, art. 5\(2\)](#); S. 78 applied (29.5.2001) by [S.I. 2001/1631, art. 5\(2\)](#) (which was revoked (8.3.2002) by [S.I. 2002/272](#) art. 13); s. 78 applied (8.2.2002) by [S.I. 2002/272, art. 5\(2\)](#)
- C44** S. 78 applied (8.2.2003) by [The Sea Fishing \(Restriction on Days at Sea\) Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/229\), art. 13\(2\)](#)
S. 78 applied (7.7.2003) by [The Sea Fishing \(Restriction on Days at Sea\)\(No. 2\) Order 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1535\)](#), {art. 13(2)}
S. 78 applied (with modifications) (temp.) (23.2.2004 and 29.3.2004 for certain purposes, otherwise 5.4.2004 until 31.3.2006) by [The Fines Collection Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/176\)](#), regs. 1(3), 10 (with reg. 3) (as amended (30.3.2005) by [S.I. 2005/484](#), regs. 1(1)(a)(2), 2)
S. 78 applied (E.) (26.5.2004) by [The Sea Fishing \(Enforcement of Community Quota and Third Country Fishing Measures\) \(England\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1237\)](#), art. 6(2)

79 Release from custody and reduction of detention on payment.

- (1) Where imprisonment or other detention has been imposed on any person by the order of a magistrates' court in default of payment of any sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction or order of a magistrates' court or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum, then, on the payment of the sum, together with the costs and charges, if

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any, of the commitment and distress, the order shall cease to have effect; and if the person has been committed to custody he shall be released unless he is in custody for some other cause.

- (2) Where, after a period of imprisonment or other detention has been imposed on any person in default of payment of any sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction or order of a magistrates' court or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum, payment is made in accordance with the rules of part of the sum, the period of detention shall be reduced by such number of days as bears to the total number of days in that period less one day the same proportion as the amount so paid bears to so much of the said sum, and the costs and charges of any distress levied to satisfy that sum, as was due at the time the period of detention was imposed.
- (3) In calculating the reduction required under subsection (2) above any fraction of a day shall be left out of account.

80 Application of money found on defaulter to satisfy sum adjudged.

- (1) Where a magistrates' court has adjudged a person to pay a sum by a conviction or has ordered the enforcement of a sum due from a person under [^{F119}a magistrates' court maintenance order], the court may order him to be searched.
- (2) Any money found on the arrest of a person adjudged to pay such a sum as aforesaid, or on a search as aforesaid, or on his being taken to a prison or other place of detention in default of payment of such a sum or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum, may, unless the court otherwise directs, be applied towards payment of the said sum; and the balance, if any, shall be returned to him.
- (3) A magistrates' court shall not allow the application as aforesaid of any money found on a person if it is satisfied that the money does not belong to him or that the loss of the money would be more injurious to his family than would be his detention.

Textual Amendments

F119 Words substituted by [Family Law Reform Act 1987 \(c. 42, SIF 49:7\)](#), s. 33(1), [Sch. 2 para. 83](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C45 [S. 80](#) applied by [Legal Aid Act 1988 \(c. 34, SIF 77:1\)](#), ss. 24(6), 30, [Sch. 3 Pt. I para. 2\(4\)](#)

[S. 80](#) applied (2.4.2001) by [1991 c. 48, s. 40B\(10\)](#) (as inserted (2.4.2001) by [2000 c. 19, s. 16\(3\)](#)), (with s. 86(3); [S.I. 2000/3354, art. 2\(3\)](#))

Sums adjudged to be paid by a conviction

81 Enforcement of fines imposed on young offenders.

- (1) Where a magistrates' court would, but for [^{F120}section 1 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982], have power to commit to prison a person under the age of 17 for a default consisting in failure to pay, or want of sufficient distress to satisfy, a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction, the court may, subject to the following provisions of this section, make—

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- (a) an order requiring the defaulter's parent or guardian to enter into a recognizance to ensure that the defaulter pays so much of that sum as remains unpaid; or
 - (b) an order directing so much of that sum as remains unpaid to be paid by the defaulter's parent or guardian instead of by the defaulter.
- (2) An order under subsection (1) above shall not be made in respect of a defaulter—
- (a) in pursuance of paragraph (a) of that subsection, unless the parent or guardian in question consents;
 - (b) in pursuance of paragraph (b) of that subsection, unless the court is satisfied in all the circumstances that it is reasonable to make the order.
- (3) None of the following orders, namely—
- (a) an order under section 19(1) of the ^{M61}Criminal Justice Act 1948 for attendance at an attendance centre; or
 - (b) any order under subsection (1) above,
- shall be made by a magistrates' court in consequence of a default of a person under the age of 17 years consisting in failure to pay, or want of sufficient distress to satisfy, a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction unless the court has since the conviction inquired into the defaulter's means in his presence on at least one occasion.
- (4) An order under subsection (1) above shall not be made by a magistrates' court unless the court is satisfied that the defaulter has, or has had since the date on which the sum in question was adjudged to be paid, the means to pay the sum or any instalment of it on which he has defaulted, and refuses or neglects or, as the case may be, has refused or neglected, to pay it.
- (5) An order under subsection (1) above may be made in pursuance of paragraph (b) of that subsection against a parent or guardian who, having been required to attend, has failed to do so; but, save as aforesaid, an order under that subsection shall not be made in pursuance of that paragraph without giving the parent or guardian an opportunity of being heard.
- (6) A parent or guardian may appeal to the Crown Court against an order under subsection (1) above made in pursuance of paragraph (b) of that subsection.
- (7) Any sum ordered under subsection (1)(b) above to be paid by a parent or guardian may be recovered from him in like manner as if the order had been made on the conviction of the parent or guardian of an offence.
- (8) In this section—
- “guardian”, in relation to a person under the age of 17, means a person appointed, according to law, to be his guardian [^{F121}by deed or will], or by order of a court of competent jurisdiction;
- ^{F122}
- “sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction” means any fine, costs, compensation or other sum adjudged to be paid by an order made on a finding of guilt, including an order made under section 35 of the ^{M62}Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973 (compensation orders) [^{F121}as applied by section 3(6) of the ^{M63}Children and Young Persons Act 1969].

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Textual Amendments

- F120** Words substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, [Sch. 14 para. 51](#)
- F121** Words repealed (*prosp.*) by [Children Act 1989 \(c. 41, SIF 20\)](#), s. 108(2)(6)(7), [Sch. 14 paras. 1\(1\), 27\(4\)](#), [Sch. 15](#)
- F122** Definition of “the statutory restrictions upon the imprisonment of young offenders” repealed by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 78, [Sch. 16](#)

Marginal Citations

- M61** 1948 c. 58.
- M62** 1973 c. 62.
- M63** 1969 c. 54.

82 Restriction on power to impose imprisonment for default.

- (1) A magistrates' court shall not on the occasion of convicting an offender of an offence issue a warrant of commitment for a default in paying any sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction unless—
- in the case of an offence punishable with imprisonment, he appears to the court to have sufficient means to pay the sum forthwith;
 - it appears to the court that he is unlikely to remain long enough at a place of abode in the United Kingdom to enable payment of the sum to be enforced by other methods; or
 - on the occasion of that conviction the court sentences him to immediate imprisonment [^{F123}, youth custody] or detention in a detention centre for that or another offence or he is already serving [^{F124} a sentence of custody for life, or a term of imprisonment, youth custody, detention under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982] or detention in a detention centre.
- (2) A magistrates' court shall not in advance of the issue of a warrant of commitment fix a term of imprisonment which is to be served by an offender in the event of a default in paying a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction, except where it has power to issue a warrant of commitment forthwith, but postpones issuing the warrant under section 77(2) above.
- (3) Where on the occasion of the offender's conviction a magistrates' court does not issue a warrant of commitment for a default in paying any such sum as aforesaid or fix a term of imprisonment under the said section 77(2) which is to be served by him in the event of any such default, it shall not thereafter issue a warrant of commitment for any such default or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum unless—
- he is already serving [^{F124} a sentence of custody for life, or a term of imprisonment, youth custody, detention under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982] or detention in a detention centre; or
 - the court has since the conviction inquired into his means in his presence on at least one occasion.
- (4) Where a magistrates' court is required by subsection (3) above to inquire into a person's means, the court may not on the occasion of the inquiry or at any time thereafter issue a warrant of commitment for a default in paying any such sum unless—
- in the case of an offence punishable with imprisonment, the offender appears to the court to have sufficient means to pay the sum forthwith; or

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- (b) the court—
 - (i) is satisfied that the default is due to the offender's wilful refusal or culpable neglect; and
 - (ii) has considered or tried all other methods of enforcing payment of the sum and it appears to the court that they are inappropriate or unsuccessful.

[^{F125}(4A) The methods of enforcing payment mentioned in subsection (4)(b)(ii) above are—

- (a) a warrant of distress under section 76 above;
- (b) an application to the High Court or county court for enforcement under section 87 below;
- (c) an order under section 88 below;
- (d) an attachment of earnings order; and
- (e) if the offender is under the age of 21, an order under section 17 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982 (attendance centre orders).]

(5) After the occasion of an offender's conviction by a magistrates' court, the court shall not, unless—

- (a) the court has previously fixed a term of imprisonment under section 77(2) above which is to be served by the offender in the event of a default in paying a sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction; or
- (b) the offender is serving [^{F124}a sentence of custody for life, or a term of imprisonment, youth custody, detention under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982]or detention in a detention centre,

issue a warrant of commitment for a default in paying the sum or fix such a term except at a hearing at which the offender is present.

[^{F126}(5A) A magistrates' court may not issue a warrant of commitment under subsection (5) above at a hearing at which the offender is not present unless the clerk of the court has first served on the offender a notice in writing stating that the court intends to hold a hearing to consider whether to issue such a warrant and giving the reason why the court so intends.

(5B) Where after the occasion of an offender's conviction by a magistrates' court the court holds a hearing for the purpose of considering whether to issue a warrant of commitment for default in paying a sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction, it shall consider such information about the offender's means as is available to it unless it has previously—

- (a) inquired into the offender's means; and
- (b) postponed the issue of the warrant of commitment under section 77(2) above.

(5C) A notice under subsection (5A) above—

- (a) shall state the time and place appointed for the hearing; and
- (b) shall inform the offender that, if he considers that there are grounds why the warrant should not be issued, he may make representations to the court in person or in writing,

but the court may exercise its powers in relation to the issue of a warrant whether or not he makes representations.

(5D) Except as mentioned in subsection (5E) below, the time stated in a notice under subsection (5A) above shall not be earlier than 21 days after the issue of the notice.

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- (5E) Where a magistrates' court exercises in relation to an offender the power conferred by section 77(2) above and at the same hearing issues a notice under subsection (5A) above in relation to him, the time stated in the notice may be a time on any day following the end of the period for which the issue of the warrant of commitment has been postponed.
- (5F) A notice under subsection (5A) above to be served on any person shall be deemed to be served on that person if it is sent by registered post or the recorded delivery service addressed to him at his last known address, notwithstanding that the notice is returned as undelivered or is for any other reason not received by that person.]
- (6) Where a magistrates' court issues a warrant of commitment on the ground that one of the conditions mentioned in subsection (1) or (4) above is satisfied, it shall state that fact, specifying the ground, in the warrant.

Textual Amendments

F123 Words inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, **Sch. 14 para. 52(a)**

F124 Words substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, **Sch. 14 para. 52(b)**

F125 [S. 82\(4A\)](#) added (E.W.) by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 61(3), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**

F126 [S. 82\(5A\)–\(5F\)](#) added (E.W.) by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 61(4), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**

83 Process for securing attendance of offender for purposes of section 82.

- (1) A magistrates' court may, for the purpose of enabling inquiry to be made under section 82 above or for securing the attendance of an offender at a hearing required to be held by subsection (5) of that section—
- issue a summons requiring the offender to appear before the court at the time and place appointed in the summons; or
 - issue a warrant to arrest him and bring him before the court.
- (2) On the failure of the offender to appear before the court in answer to a summons under this section the court may issue a warrant to arrest him and bring him before the court.
- (3) A warrant issued under this section may be executed in like manner, and the like proceedings may be taken with a view to its execution, in any part of the United Kingdom, as if it had been issued under section 13 above.
- (4) Notwithstanding anything in section 125 below, a warrant under this section shall cease to have effect when the sum in respect of which the warrant is issued is paid to the police officer holding the warrant.

84 Power to require statement of means.

- (1) A magistrates' court may, either before or on inquiring into a person's means under section 82 above, and a justice of the peace acting for the same petty sessions area as that court may before any such inquiry, order him to furnish to the court within a period specified in the order such a statement of his means as the court may require.
- (2) A person who fails to comply with an order under subsection (1) above shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding [^{F127}level 3 on the standard scale].

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- (3) If a person in furnishing any statement in pursuance of an order under subsection (1) above makes a statement which he knows to be false in a material particular or recklessly furnishes a statement which is false in a material particular, or knowingly fails to disclose any material fact, he shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 4 months or a fine not exceeding [^{F127}level 3 on the standard scale] or both.
- (4) Proceedings in respect of an offence under subsection (3) above may, notwithstanding anything in section 127(1) below, be commenced at any time within 2 years from the date of the commission of the offence or within 6 months from its first discovery by the prosecutor, whichever period expires the earlier.

Textual Amendments

F127 Words substituted by virtue of [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), [ss. 38, 46](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C46 S. 84(2)-(4) applied (21.9.2004) by [Courts Act 2003 \(c. 39\)](#), [ss. 97\(2\), 110](#), [Sch. 6 para. 2\(4\)](#); S.I. 2004/2195, [art. 2](#)

C47 S. 84(2)-(4) applied (21.9.2004) by [Courts Act 2003 \(c. 39\)](#), [ss. 97\(2\), 110](#), [Sch. 6 para. 2\(4\)](#); S.I. 2004/2195, [art. 2](#)

C48 S. 84(2)-(4) applied (21.9.2004) by [Courts Act 2003 \(c. 39\)](#), [ss. 97\(2\), 110](#), [Sch. 6 para. 2\(4\)](#); S.I. 2004/2195, [art. 2](#)

[^{F128}85 Power to remit fine.

- (1) Where a fine has been imposed on conviction of an offender by a magistrates' court, the court may at any time remit the whole or any part of the fine, but only if it thinks it just to do so having regard to a change of circumstances which has occurred—
 - (a) where the court is considering whether to issue a warrant of commitment after the issue of such a warrant in respect of the fine has been postponed under subsection (2) of section 77 above, since the relevant time as defined in subsection (4) of that section; and
 - (b) in any other case, since the date of the conviction.
- (2) Where the court remits the whole or part of the fine after a term of imprisonment has been fixed, it shall also reduce the term by an amount which bears the same proportion to the whole term as the amount remitted bears to the whole or, as the case may be, shall remit the whole term.
- (3) In calculating the reduction in a term of imprisonment required by subsection (2) above any fraction of a day shall be left out of account.
- (4) Notwithstanding the definition of “fine” in section 150(1) below, references in this section to a fine do not include any other sum adjudged to be paid on conviction, whether as a pecuniary penalty, forfeiture, compensation or otherwise.]

Textual Amendments

F128 S. 85 substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), [ss. 61\(5\), 123\(6\)](#), [Sch. 8 para. 16](#)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 12 June 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C49** S. 85 modified by Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (c. 53, SIF 107:1), **ss. 71(8), 92**
S. 85 restricted (3.2.1995) by 1994 c. 37, **ss. 9(4)(a), 69(2)** (with s. 66(2))

[^{F129}85A Variation of instalments of sum adjudged to be paid by conviction.

Where under section 75 above a magistrates' court orders that a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction shall be paid by instalments, the court, on an application made by the person liable to pay that sum, shall have power to vary that order by varying the number of instalments payable, the amount of any instalment payable, and the date on which any instalment becomes payable.]

Textual Amendments

- F129** S. 85A inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), **s. 51(1)**

86 Power of magistrates' court to fix day for appearance of offender at means inquiry etc.

[^{F130}(1) A magistrates' court which has exercised in relation to a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction either of the powers conferred by section 75(1) above shall have power, either then or later, to fix a day on which, if the relevant condition is satisfied, the offender must appear in person before the court for either or both of the following purposes, namely—

- (a) to enable an inquiry into his means to be made under section 82 above;
- (b) to enable a hearing required by subsection (5) of the said section 82 to be held.

(1A) Where the power which the court has exercised is the power to allow time for payment of a sum ("the adjudged sum"), the relevant condition is satisfied if any part of that sum remains unpaid on the day fixed by the court.

(1B) Where the power which the court has exercised is the power to order payment by instalments, the relevant condition is satisfied if an instalment which has fallen due remains unpaid on the day fixed by the court.]

(2) Except as provided in subsection (3) below, the power to fix a day under this section shall be exercisable only in the presence of the offender.

(3) Where a day has been fixed under this section, the court may fix a later day in substitution for the day previously fixed, and may do so—

- (a) when composed of a single justice; and
- (b) whether the offender is present or not.

(4) Subject to subsection (5) below, if on the day fixed under this section—

- [^{F131}(a) the relevant condition is satisfied; and]
(b) the offender fails to appear in person before the court,

the court may issue a warrant to arrest him and bring him before the court; and subsection (3) and (4) of section 83 above shall apply in relation to a warrant issued under this section.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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- (5) Where under subsection (3) above a later day has in the absence of the offender been fixed in substitution for a day previously fixed under this section, the court shall not issue a warrant under this section unless it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that notice in writing of the substituted day was served on the offender not less than what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before that day.

Textual Amendments

- F130** S. 86(1)(1A)(1B) substituted for subsection (1) by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. [51\(2\)\(a\)](#)
F131 S. 86(4)(a) substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. [51\(2\)\(b\)](#)

87 Enforcement of payment of fines by High Court and county court.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (2) below, payment of a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction of a magistrates' court may be enforced by the High Court or a county court (otherwise than by issue of a writ of fieri facias or other process against goods or by imprisonment or attachment of earnings) as if the sum were due to the clerk of the magistrates' court in pursuance of a judgment or order of the High Court or county court, as the case may be.

^{F132}(2)

^{F133}(2A)

- (3) The clerk of the magistrates' court shall not take proceedings by virtue of subsection (1) above to recover any sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction of the court from any person unless authorised to do so by the court after an inquiry under section 82 above into that person's means.
- (4) Any expenses incurred by the clerk of a magistrates' court in recovering any such sum shall be treated for the purposes of Part VI of the Justices of the ^{M64}Peace Act 1979 as expenses of the magistrates' courts committee.

Textual Amendments

- F132** S. 87(2) omitted (1.7.1991) by virtue of [S.I. 1991/724, art. 2\(8\)](#), [Sch. Pt.I](#) (with art. 12)
F133 S. 87(2A) omitted (1.7.1991) by virtue of [S.I. 1991/724, art. 2\(8\)](#), [Sch. Pt.I](#) (with art. 12)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C50** S. 87 extended (1.7.1991) by [S.I. 1991/724, art. 2\(1\)\(j\)](#) (with art. 12)
S. 87 modified (3.2.1995) by [1994 c. 37, ss. 9\(4\)\(b\)\(6\)](#), [69\(2\)](#) (with s. 66(2))

Marginal Citations

- M64** 1979 c. 55.

^{F134}87A Fines imposed on companies.

- (1) Where—

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- (a) a magistrates' court has, or is treated by any enactment as having, adjudged a company by a conviction to pay a sum; and
- (b) the court has issued a warrant of distress under section 76(1) above for the purpose of levying the sum; and
- (c) it appears on the return to the warrant that the money and goods of the company are insufficient to satisfy the sum with the costs and charges of levying the same,

the clerk of the court may make an application in relation to the company under section 9 or 124 of the ^{M65}Insolvency Act 1986 (administration or winding up).

- (2) Any expenses incurred under subsection (1) above by the clerk of a magistrates' court shall be treated for the purposes of Part VI of the ^{M66}Justices of the Peace Act 1979 as expenses of the magistrates' courts committee.]

Textual Amendments

F134 S. 87A inserted (E.W.) by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 62(1), 123(6), Sch. 8 para. 16

Marginal Citations

M65 1986 c. 45 (66).

M66 1979 c. 55 (82).

88 Supervision pending payment.

- (1) Where any person is adjudged to pay a sum by a summary conviction and the convicting court does not commit him to prison forthwith in default of payment, the court may, either on the occasion of the conviction or on a subsequent occasion, order him to be placed under the supervision of such person as the court may from time to time appoint.
- (2) An order placing a person under supervision in respect of any sum shall remain in force so long as he remains liable to pay the sum or any part of it unless the order ceases to have effect or is discharged under subsection (3) below.
- (3) An order under this section shall cease to have effect on the making of a transfer of fine order under section 89 below with respect to the sum adjudged to be paid and may be discharged by the court that made it, without prejudice in either case to the making of a new order.
- (4) Where a person under 21 years old has been adjudged to pay a sum by a summary conviction and the convicting court does not commit him to [^{F135}detention under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982]forthwith in default of payment, the court shall not commit him to [^{F136}to such detention]in default of payment of the sum, or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy the sum, unless he has been placed under supervision in respect of the sum or the court is satisfied that it is undesirable or impracticable to place him under supervision.
- (5) Where a court, being satisfied as aforesaid, commits a person under 21 years old to [^{F137}such detention]without an order under this section having been made, the court shall state the grounds on which it is so satisfied in the warrant of commitment.

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- (6) Where an order placing a person under supervision with respect to a sum is in force, a magistrates' court shall not commit him to prison in default of payment of the sum, or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy the sum, unless the court has before committing him taken such steps as may be reasonably practicable to obtain from the person appointed for his supervision an oral or written report on the offender's conduct and means and has considered any report so obtained, in addition, in a case where an inquiry is required by section 82 above, to that inquiry.

Textual Amendments

F135 Words substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, [Sch. 14 para. 53\(a\)\(i\)](#)

F136 Words substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, [Sch. 14 para. 53\(a\)\(ii\)](#)

F137 Words substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, [Sch. 14 para. 53\(b\)](#)

89 Transfer of fine order.

- (1) Where a magistrates' court has, or is treated by any enactment as having, adjudged a person by a conviction to pay a sum and it appears to the court that the person is residing in any petty sessions area other than that for which the court acted, the court may make a transfer of fine order, that is to say, an order making payments enforceable in the petty sessions area in which it appears to the court that he is residing; and that area shall be specified in the order.
- (2) As from the date on which a transfer of fine order is made with respect to any sum, all functions under this Part of this Act relating to that sum which, if no such order had been made, would have been exercisable by the court which made the order, or the clerk of that court, shall be exercisable by a court acting for the petty sessions area specified in the order, or the clerk of that court, as the case may be, and not otherwise.
- (3) Where it appears to a court by which functions in relation to any sum are for the time being exercisable by virtue of a transfer of fine order that the person liable to pay the sum is residing in a petty sessions area other than that for which the court is acting, the court may make a further transfer of fine order with respect to that sum.
- (4) In this section and sections 90 and 91 below, references to this Part of this Act do not include references to section 81(1) above.

90 Transfer of fines to Scotland or Northern Ireland.

- (1) Where a magistrates' court has, or is treated by any enactment as having, adjudged a person by a conviction to pay a sum, and it appears to the court that he is residing—
- within the jurisdiction of a court of summary jurisdiction in Scotland, or
 - in any petty sessions district in Northern Ireland,
- the court may order that payment of the sum shall be enforceable by that court of summary jurisdiction or, as the case may be, in that petty sessions district.
- (2) An order under this section shall specify the court of summary jurisdiction by which or petty sessions district in which payment of the sum in question is to be enforceable; and if—
- that sum is more than £100 or is a fine originally imposed by the Crown Court or the sheriff court, and

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(b) payment is to be enforceable in Scotland,
the court to be so specified shall be the sheriff court.

- (3) Where an order is made under this section with respect to any sum, any functions under this Part of this Act relating to that sum which, if no such order had been made, would have been exercisable by the court which made the order or by the clerk of that court shall cease to be so exercisable.

91 Transfer of fines from Scotland or Northern Ireland.

- (1) Where a transfer of fine order under section 403 of the ^{M67}Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 or [^{F138}Article 95 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981] provides that payment of a sum shall be enforceable in a specified petty sessions area in England and Wales, a magistrates' court acting for that area, and the clerk of that court, shall, subject to the provisions of this section, have all the like functions under this Part of this Act in respect of the sum (including power to make an order under section 89 or section 90 above) as if the sum were a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction of that court and as if any order made under the said Act of 1975 or, as the case may be, [^{F139}the said Order of 1981] in respect of the sum before the making of the transfer of fine order had been made by that court.
- (2) For the purpose of determining the period of imprisonment which may be imposed under this Act in default of payment of a fine originally imposed by a court in Scotland, Schedule 4 to this Act shall have effect as if for the Table set out in paragraph 1 there were substituted the Table set out in section 407 of the ^{M68}Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975.
- (3) Where a transfer of fine order under section 403 of the ^{M69}Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 or [^{F140}Article 95 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981] provides for the enforcement in a petty sessions area in England and Wales of a fine originally imposed by the Crown Court, a magistrates' court acting for that area shall have all the like functions under this Part of this Act, exercisable subject to the like restrictions, as if it were the magistrates' court by which payment of the fine fell to be enforced by virtue of section 32(1) of the ^{M70}Powers of Criminal Courts Act 1973, and as if any order made under the said Act of 1975 or, as the case may be, [^{F141}the said Order of 1981] in respect of the fine before the making of the transfer of fine order had been made by that court.

Textual Amendments

- F138** Words substituted by S.I. 1981/1675 (N.I. 26), art. 170(2), **Sch. 6 Pt. I para. 59(a)(i)**
F139 Words substituted by S.I. 1981/1675 (N.I. 26), art. 170(2), **Sch. 6 Pt. I para. 59(a)(ii)**
F140 Words substituted by S.I. 1981/1675 (N.I. 26), art. 170(2), **Sch. 6 para. 59(b)(i)**
F141 Words substituted by S.I. 1981/1675 (N.I. 26), art. 170(2), **Sch. 6 Pt. I para. 56(b)(ii)**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C51** S. 91 amended by Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980 (c. 62, SIF 39:1), s. 66
S. 91 modified (S.) (1.4.1996) by 1995 c. 43, ss. 14(1), 50(2) and by 1995 c. 46, ss. 252(1), 309(2) (with s. 24(2))
S. 91 amended (S.) (*prosp.*) by 1995 c. 20, ss. 70(2), 80(1) (with s. 113(1)) (which amending Act was repealed (S.) (1.4.1996) by 1995 c. 40, ss. 3(1), 6(1), 7(2), Sch. 3 para. 16(3), **Sch. 5**)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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Marginal Citations

- M67 1975 c. 21.
- M68 1975 c. 21.
- M69 1975 c. 21.
- M70 1973 c. 62.

Sums adjudged to be paid by an order

92 Restriction on power to impose imprisonment for default.

- (1) A magistrates' court shall not exercise its power under section 76 above to issue a warrant to commit to prison a person who makes default in paying a sum adjudged to be paid by an order of such a court except where the default is under—
 - (a) a magistrates' court maintenance order;
 - (b) an order under [^{F142}section 23 of the Legal Aid Act 1988](contribution by legally assisted person to cost of his defence in a criminal case); or
 - (c) an order for the payment of any of the taxes, contributions, premiums or liabilities specified in Schedule 4 to the ^{M71}Administration of Justice Act 1970.
- (2) This section does not affect the power of a magistrates' court to issue such a warrant as aforesaid in the case of default in paying a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction, or treated (by any enactment relating to the collection or enforcement of fines, costs, compensation or forfeited recognizances) as so adjudged to be paid.
- (3) ^{F143}

Textual Amendments

- F142** Words substituted by virtue of Legal Aid Act 1982 (c. 44, SIF 77:1), s. 14(3) and Legal Aid Act 1988 (c. 34, SIF 77:1), ss. 45(1), 47(2), Sch. 5 para. 9
- F143** S. 92(3) repealed by Family Law Reform Act 1987 (c. 42, SIF 49:7), s. 33(2)(4), Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6, Sch. 4

Marginal Citations

- M71 1970 c. 31.

93 Complaint for arrears.

- (1) Where default is made in paying a sum ordered to be paid by [^{F144}a magistrates' court maintenance order], the court shall not enforce payment of the sum under section 76 above except by an order made on complaint.
- (2) A complaint under this section shall be made not earlier than the fifteenth day after the making of the order for the enforcement of which it is made; but subject to this such a complaint may be made at any time notwithstanding anything in this or any other Act.
- (3) In relation to complaints under this section, section 55 above shall not apply and section 56 above shall have effect as if the words "if evidence has been received on a previous occasion" were omitted.

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- (4) Where at the time and place appointed for the hearing or adjourned hearing of a complaint under this section the complainant appears but the defendant does not, the court may proceed in his absence; but the court shall not begin to hear the complaint in the absence of the defendant unless either it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that the summons was served on him within what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before the hearing or adjourned hearing or the defendant has appeared on a previous occasion to answer the complaint.
- (5) If a complaint under this section is substantiated on oath, any justice of the peace acting for the same petty sessions area as a court having jurisdiction to hear the complaint may issue a warrant for the defendant's arrest, whether or not a summons has been previously issued.
- (6) A magistrates' court shall not impose imprisonment in respect of a default to which a complaint under this section relates unless the court has inquired in the presence of the defendant whether the default was due to the defendant's wilful refusal or culpable neglect, and shall not impose imprisonment as aforesaid if it is of opinion that the default was not so due; and, without prejudice to the preceding provisions of this subsection, a magistrates' court shall not impose imprisonment as aforesaid—
- (a) in a case in which the court has power to make an attachment of earnings order unless the court is of opinion that it is inappropriate to make such an order;
 - (b) in any case, in the absence of the defendant.
- (7) Notwithstanding anything in section 76(3) above, the period for which a defendant may be committed to prison under a warrant of commitment issued in pursuance of a complaint under this section shall not exceed 6 weeks.
- (8) The imprisonment or other detention of a defendant under a warrant of commitment issued as aforesaid shall not operate to discharge the defendant from his liability to pay the sum in respect of which the warrant was issued.

Textual Amendments

F144 Words substituted by [Family Law Reform Act 1987 \(c. 42, SIF 49:7\)](#), s. 33(1)(2), Sch. 2 para. 84, Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C52 S. 93 applied by [Legal Aid Act 1988 \(c. 34, SIF 77:1\)](#), ss. 24(6), 30, **Sch. 3 Pt. I para. 2(4)**

94 Effect of committal on arrears.

Where a person is committed to custody under this Part of this Act for failure to pay a sum due under [^{F145}a magistrates' court maintenance order], then, unless the court that commits him otherwise directs, no arrears shall accrue under the order while he is in custody.

Textual Amendments

F145 Words substituted by [Family Law Reform Act 1987 \(c. 42, SIF 49:7\)](#), s. 33(1)(2), Sch. 2 para. 85, Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C53 S. 94 applied by Legal Aid Act 1988 (c. 34, SIF 77:1), ss. 24(6), 30, Sch. 3 Pt. I para. 2(4)

[^{F146}94A Interest on arrears.

- (1) The Secretary of State may by order provide that a magistrates' court, on the hearing of a complaint for the enforcement, revocation, revival, variation or discharge of an English maintenance order, may order that interest of an amount calculated at the prescribed rate shall be paid on so much of the sum due under the order as they may determine.
- (2) In subsection (1) above "the prescribed rate" means such rate of interest as the Secretary of State may by order prescribe.
- (3) An order under this section may make provision for the manner in which and the periods by reference to which interest is to be calculated.
- (4) Where, by virtue of subsection (1) above, a magistrates' court orders the payment of interest on any sum due under a maintenance order—
 - (a) then if it orders that the whole or any part of the interest be paid by instalments that order shall be regarded as an instalments order for the purposes of section 95 below and that section shall accordingly apply in relation to it; and
 - (b) the whole of the interest shall be enforceable as a sum adjudged to be paid by the maintenance order.
- (5) In this section—

"English maintenance order" means—

 - (a) a qualifying maintenance order made by a magistrates' court, other than an order made by virtue of Part II of the Maintenance Orders (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act 1972; or
 - (b) an order made by the High Court or a county court (other than an order deemed to be made by the High Court by virtue of section 1(2) of the Maintenance Orders Act 1958) and registered under Part I of that Act of 1958 in a magistrates' court;

"qualifying maintenance order" has the same meaning as it has in section 59 above.
- (6) The power of the Secretary of State to make an order under this section shall be exercisable by statutory instrument made with the concurrence of the Treasury and any such statutory instrument shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.]

Textual Amendments

F146 S. 94A inserted (*prosp.*) by Maintenance Enforcement Act 1991 (c. 17, SIF 49:3), ss.8, 12(2)

95 Power to remit arrears.

On the hearing of a complaint for the enforcement, revocation, revival, variation or discharge of [^{F147}a magistrates' court maintenance order], the court may remit the whole or any part of the sum due under the order.

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Textual Amendments

F147 Words substituted by [Family Law Reform Act 1987 \(c. 42, SIF 49:7\)](#), s. 33(1), **Sch. 2 para. 86**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C54 [S. 95](#) applied by [Legal Aid Act 1988 \(c. 34, SIF 77:1\)](#), ss. 24(6), 30, **Sch. 3 Pt. I para. 2(4)**

96 Civil debt: complaint for non-payment.

- (1) A magistrates' court shall not commit any person to prison or other detention in default of payment of a sum enforceable as a civil debt or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum except by an order made on complaint and on proof to the satisfaction of the court that that person has, or has had since the date on which the sum was adjudged to be paid, the means to pay the sum or any instalment of it on which he has defaulted, and refuses or neglects or, as the case may be, has refused or neglected to pay it.
- (2) A complaint under this section may be made at any time notwithstanding anything in this or any other Act.
- (3) Where on any such complaint the defendant is committed to custody, such costs incurred by the complainant in proceedings for the enforcement of the sum as the court may direct shall be included in the sum on payment of which the defendant may be released from custody.

[^{F148}96A Application of Part III to persons aged 17 to 20.

This Part of this Act shall have effect in relation to a person aged 17 or over but less than 21 as if any reference to committing a person to prison, or fixing a term of imprisonment for a default, were a reference to committing the person to, or, as the case may be, to fixing a term of, detention under section 9 of the^{M72} Criminal Justice Act 1982; and any reference to warrants of commitment, or to periods of imprisonment imposed for default, shall be construed accordingly.]

Textual Amendments

F148 [S. 96A](#) inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, **Sch. 14 para. 54**

Marginal Citations

M72 [1982 c. 48 \(39:1\)](#).

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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PART IV

WITNESSES AND EVIDENCE

Procuring attendance of witness

97 Summons to witness and warrant for his arrest.

- (1) Where a justice of the peace for any county, any London commission area or the City of London is satisfied that any person in England or Wales is likely to be able to give material evidence, or produce any document or thing likely to be material evidence, at any inquiry into an indictable offence by a magistrates' court for that county, that London commission area or the City (as the case may be) or at the summary trial of an information or hearing of a complaint by such a court and that that person will not voluntarily attend as a witness or will not voluntarily produce the document or thing, the justice shall issue a summons directed to that person requiring him to attend before the court at the time and place appointed in the summons to give evidence or to produce the document or thing.
- (2) If a justice of the peace is satisfied by evidence on oath of the matters mentioned in subsection (1) above, and also that it is probable that a summons under that subsection would not procure the attendance of the person in question, the justice may instead of issuing a summons issue a warrant to arrest that person and bring him before such a court as aforesaid at a time and place specified in the warrant; but a warrant shall not be issued under this subsection where the attendance is required for the hearing of a complaint.
- [^{F149}(2A) A summons may also be issued under subsection (1) above if the justice is satisfied that the person in question is outside the British Islands but no warrant shall be issued under subsection (2) above unless the justice is satisfied by evidence on oath that the person in question is in England or Wales.]
- (3) On the failure of any person to attend before a magistrates' court in answer to a summons under this section, if—
 - (a) the court is satisfied by evidence on oath that he is likely to be able to give material evidence or produce any document or thing likely to be material evidence in the proceedings; and
 - (b) it is proved on oath, or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that he has been duly served with the summons, and that a reasonable sum has been paid or tendered to him for costs and expenses; and
 - (c) it appears to the court that there is no just excuse for the failure,the court may issue a warrant to arrest him and bring him before the court at a time and place specified in the warrant.
- (4) If any person attending or brought before a magistrates' court refuses without just excuse to be sworn or give evidence, or to produce any document or thing, the court may commit him to custody until the expiration of such period not exceeding [^{F150}one month] as may be specified in the warrant or until he sooner gives evidence or produces the document or thing [^{F151}or impose on him a fine not exceeding [^{F152}£1,000] or both].

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Textual Amendments

- F149** S. 97(2A) inserted (10.6.1991) by Criminal Justice (International Co-operation) Act 1990 (c. 5, SIF 39:1), s. 31(1), **Sch. 4 para. 2**; S.I. 1991/1072, art. 2(a), **Schedule Pt. I**.
- F150** Words substituted by Contempt of Court Act 1981 (c. 49, SIF 39:3), s. 14(5), **Sch. 2 Pt. III para. 7**
- F151** Words added by Contempt of Court Act 1981 (c. 49, SIF 39:3), s. 14(5), **Sch. 2 Pt. III para. 7**
- F152** Words substituted by S.I. 1984/447, art. 2(3), **Sch. 3**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C55** S. 97 extended by Licensing Act 1964 (c. 26, SIF 68A:1), **s. 196A** (as inserted by Licensing Act 1988 (c.17, SIF 68A:1), s. 19, **Sch. 3 para. 19**)
- C56** S. 97(1) extended by Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983 (c. 24, SIF 68A:1), **s. 2(7)**
- C57** S. 97(3) extended by Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983 (c. 24, SIF 68A:1), **s. 2(7)**
- C58** S. 97(4) extended by Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983 (c. 24, SIF 68A:1), **s. 2(7)**

VALID FROM 04/07/1996

[^{F153}97A Summons or warrant as to committal proceedings.

- (1) Subsection (2) below applies where a justice of the peace for any commission area is satisfied that—
- (a) any person in England or Wales is likely to be able to make on behalf of the prosecutor a written statement containing material evidence, or produce on behalf of the prosecutor a document or other exhibit likely to be material evidence, for the purposes of proceedings before a magistrates' court inquiring into an offence as examining justices,
 - (b) the person will not voluntarily make the statement or produce the document or other exhibit, and
 - (c) the magistrates' court mentioned in paragraph (a) above is a court for the commission area concerned.
- (2) In such a case the justice shall issue a summons directed to that person requiring him to attend before a justice at the time and place appointed in the summons to have his evidence taken as a deposition or to produce the document or other exhibit.
- (3) If a justice of the peace is satisfied by evidence on oath of the matters mentioned in subsection (1) above, and also that it is probable that a summons under subsection (2) above would not procure the result required by it, the justice may instead of issuing a summons issue a warrant to arrest the person concerned and bring him before a justice at the time and place specified in the warrant.
- (4) A summons may also be issued under subsection (2) above if the justice is satisfied that the person concerned is outside the British Islands, but no warrant may be issued under subsection (3) above unless the justice is satisfied by evidence on oath that the person concerned is in England or Wales.
- (5) If—
- (a) a person fails to attend before a justice in answer to a summons under this section,

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- (b) the justice is satisfied by evidence on oath that he is likely to be able to make a statement or produce a document or other exhibit as mentioned in subsection (1)(a) above,
 - (c) it is proved on oath, or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that he has been duly served with the summons and that a reasonable sum has been paid or tendered to him for costs and expenses, and
 - (d) it appears to the justice that there is no just excuse for the failure,
- the justice may issue a warrant to arrest him and bring him before a justice at a time and place specified in the warrant.
- (6) Where—
- (a) a summons is issued under subsection (2) above or a warrant is issued under subsection (3) or (5) above, and
 - (b) the summons or warrant is issued with a view to securing that a person has his evidence taken as a deposition,
- the time appointed in the summons or specified in the warrant shall be such as to enable the evidence to be taken as a deposition before a magistrates' court begins to inquire into the offence concerned as examining justices.
- (7) If any person attending or brought before a justice in pursuance of this section refuses without just excuse to have his evidence taken as a deposition, or to produce the document or other exhibit, the justice may do one or both of the following—
- (a) commit him to custody until the expiration of such period not exceeding one month as may be specified in the summons or warrant or until he sooner has his evidence taken as a deposition or produces the document or other exhibit;
 - (b) impose on him a fine not exceeding £2,500.
- (8) A fine imposed under subsection (7) above shall be deemed, for the purposes of any enactment, to be a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction.
- (9) If in pursuance of this section a person has his evidence taken as a deposition, the clerk of the justice concerned shall as soon as is reasonably practicable send a copy of the deposition to the prosecutor.
- (10) If in pursuance of this section a person produces an exhibit which is a document, the clerk of the justice concerned shall as soon as is reasonably practicable send a copy of the document to the prosecutor.
- (11) If in pursuance of this section a person produces an exhibit which is not a document, the clerk of the justice concerned shall as soon as is reasonably practicable inform the prosecutor of the fact and of the nature of the exhibit.]

Textual Amendments

F153 S. 97A inserted (4.7.1996, with effect as mentioned in Sch. 1 Pt. III para. 39 of the inserting Act) by 1996 c. 25, s. 47, **Sch. 1 Pt. I para.8** (with s. 78(1)); S.I. 1997/683, **art. 1(2)**

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Evidence generally

98 Evidence on oath.

Subject to the provisions of any enactment or rule of law authorising the reception of unsworn evidence, evidence given before a magistrates' court shall be given on oath.

99 Proof of non-payment of sum adjudged.

Where a magistrates' court has ordered one person to pay to another any sum of money, and proceedings are taken before that or any other magistrates' court to enforce payment of that sum, then—

- (a) if the person to whom the sum is ordered to be paid is a clerk of a magistrates' court, a certificate purporting to be signed by the clerk that the sum has not been paid to him; and
- (b) in any other case a document purporting to be a statutory declaration by the person to whom the sum is ordered to be paid that the sum has not been paid to him,

shall be admissible as evidence that the sum has not been paid to him, unless the court requires the clerk or other person to be called as a witness.

100 Statement of wages to be evidence.

A statement in writing to the effect that wages of any amount have been paid to a person during any period, purporting to be signed by or on behalf of his employer, shall be evidence of the facts therein stated in any proceedings taken before a magistrates' court—

- (a) for enforcing payment by the person to whom the wages are stated to have been paid of a sum adjudged to be paid by a summary conviction or order; or
- [^{F154}(b) on any application made by or against that person for the making of a magistrates' court maintenance order, or for the variation, revocation, discharge or revival of such an order]

Textual Amendments

F154 S. 100(b) substituted by [Family Law Reform Act 1987 \(c. 42, SIF 49:7\)](#), s. 33(1)(2), Sch. 2 para. 87, Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6

101 Onus of proving exceptions, etc.

Where the defendant to an information or complaint relies for his defence on any exception, exemption, proviso, excuse or qualification, whether or not it accompanies the description of the offence or matter of complaint in the enactment creating the offence or on which the complaint is founded, the burden of proving the exception, exemption, proviso, excuse or qualification shall be on him; and this notwithstanding that the information or complaint contains an allegation negating the exception, exemption, proviso, excuse or qualification.

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C59 S. 101 applied (with modifications) (1.4.1997) by S.I. 1997/704, rule5(2)(3)(4)(f)

Evidence in criminal cases

102 Written statements before examining justices.

- (1) In committal proceedings a written statement by any person shall, if the conditions mentioned in subsection (2) below are satisfied, be admissible as evidence to the like extent as oral evidence to the like effect by that person.
- (2) The said conditions are—
 - (a) the statement purports to be signed by the person who made it;
 - (b) the statement contains a declaration by that person to the effect that it is true to the best of his knowledge and belief and that he made the statement knowing that, if it were tendered in evidence, he would be liable to prosecution if he wilfully stated in it anything which he knew to be false or did not believe to be true;
 - (c) before the statement is tendered in evidence, a copy of the statement is given, by or on behalf of the party proposing to tender it, to each of the other parties to the proceedings; and
 - (d) none of the other parties, before the statement is tendered in evidence at the committal proceedings, objects to the statement being so tendered under this section.
- (3) The following provisions shall also have effect in relation to any written statement tendered in evidence under this section, that is to say—
 - (a) if the statement is made by a person under 21 years old, it shall give his age;
 - (b) if it is made by a person who cannot read it, it shall be read to him before he signs it and shall be accompanied by a declaration by the person who so read the statement to the effect that it was so read; and
 - (c) if it refers to any other document as an exhibit, the copy given to any other party to the proceedings under subsection (2)(c) above shall be accompanied by a copy of that document or by such information as may be necessary in order to enable the party to whom it is given to inspect that document or a copy thereof.
- (4) Notwithstanding that a written statement made by any person may be admissible in committal proceedings by virtue of this section, the court before which the proceedings are held may, of its own motion or on the application of any party to the proceedings, require that person to attend before the court and give evidence.
- (5) So much of any statement as is admitted in evidence by virtue of this section shall, unless the court commits the accused for trial by virtue of section 6(2) above or the court otherwise directs, be read aloud at the hearing, and where the court so directs an account shall be given orally of so much of any statement as is not read aloud.
- (6) Any document or object referred to as an exhibit and identified in a written statement tendered in evidence under this section shall be treated as if it had been produced as an exhibit and identified in court by the maker of the statement.

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- (7) Subsection (3) of section 13 of the ^{M73}Criminal Justice Act 1925 (reading of deposition as evidence at the trial) shall apply to any written statement tendered in evidence in committal proceedings under this section as it applies to a deposition taken in such proceedings, but in its application to any such statement that subsection shall have effect as if paragraph (b) thereof were omitted.
- (8) In section 2(2) of the ^{M74}Administration of Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1933 (procedure for preferring bills of indictment) the reference in proviso (i) to facts disclosed in any deposition taken before a justice in the presence of the accused shall be construed as including a reference to facts disclosed in any such written statement as aforesaid [^{F155}and section 40 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (power to join in indictment count for common assault etc.) shall be given a corresponding construction].
- (9) Section 28 above shall not apply to any such statement as aforesaid.
- (10) A person whose written statement is tendered in evidence in committal proceedings under this section shall be treated for the purposes of section 1 of the ^{M75}Criminal Procedure (Attendance of Witnesses) Act 1965 (witness orders) as a witness who has been examined by the court.

Textual Amendments

F155 Words added by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 123(6), 170(1), [Sch. 15 para. 68](#)

Marginal Citations

M73 1925 c. 86.
M74 1933 c. 36.
M75 1965 c. 69.

^{F156}103 Evidence of persons under 14 in committal proceedings for assault, sexual offences etc.

- (1) In any proceedings before a magistrates' court inquiring into an offence to which this section applies as examining justices—
- (a) a child shall not be called as a witness for the prosecution; but
 - (b) any statement made by or taken from a child shall be admissible in evidence of any matter of which his oral testimony would be admissible,
- except in a case where the application of this subsection is excluded under subsection (3) below.
- (2) This section applies—
- (a) to an offence which involves an assault, or injury or a threat of injury to, a person;
 - (b) to an offence under section 1 of the ^{M76}Children and Young Persons Act 1933 (cruelty to persons under 16);
 - (c) to an offence under the ^{M77}Sexual Offences Act 1956, the ^{M78}Indecency with Children Act 1960, the ^{M79}Sexual Offences Act 1967, section 54 of the ^{M80}Criminal Law Act 1977 or the ^{M81}Protection of Children Act 1978; and

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- (d) to an offence which consists of attempting or conspiring to commit, or of aiding, abetting, counselling, procuring or inciting the commission of, an offence falling within paragraph (a), (b) or (c) above.
- (3) The application of subsection (1) above is excluded—
- (a) where at or before the time when the statement is tendered in evidence the defence objects to its admission; or
 - (b) where the prosecution requires the attendance of the child for the purpose of establishing the identity of any person; or
 - (c) where the court is satisfied that it has not been possible to obtain from the child a statement that may be given in evidence under this section; or
 - (d) where the inquiry into the offence takes place after the court has discontinued to try it summarily and the child has given evidence in the summary trial.
- (4) Section 28 above shall not apply to any statement admitted in pursuance of subsection (1) above.
- (5) In this section “child” means a person under the age of 14.]

Textual Amendments

F156 S. 103 substituted by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 33, 123(6), [Sch. 8 para. 16](#)

Marginal Citations

M76 1933 c. 12 (20).
M77 1956 c. 69 (39:5).
M78 1960 c. 33 (39:5).
M79 1967 c. 60 (39:5).
M80 1977 c. 45 (39:5).
M81 1978 c. 37 (39:5).

104 Proof of previous convictions.

Where a person is convicted of a summary offence by a magistrates' court, other than a juvenile court, and—

- (a) it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that not less than 7 days previously a notice was served on the accused in the prescribed form and manner specifying any alleged previous conviction of the accused of a summary offence proposed to be brought to the notice of the court in the event of his conviction of the offence charged; and
 - (b) the accused is not present in person before the court,
- the court may take account of any such previous conviction so specified as if the accused had appeared and admitted it.

105 Deposition of person dangerously ill.

- (1) Where a person appears to a justice of the peace to be able and willing to give material information relating to an indictable offence or to any person accused of an indictable offence, and—

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- (a) the justice is satisfied, on a representation made by a duly qualified medical practitioner, that the person able and willing to make the statement is dangerously ill and unlikely to recover; and
 - (b) it is not practicable for examining justices to take the evidence of the sick person in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the rules,
- the justice may take in writing the deposition of the sick person on oath.
- (2) A deposition taken under this section may be given in evidence before examining justices inquiring into an information against the offender or in respect of the offence to which the deposition relates, but subject to the same conditions as apply, under section 6 of the ^{M82}Criminal Law Amendment Act 1867, to its being given in evidence upon the trial of the offender or offence.

Marginal Citations

M82 1867 c. 35.

Offences

106 False written statements tendered in evidence.

- (1) If any person in a written statement tendered in evidence in criminal proceedings by virtue of section 102 above wilfully makes a statement material in those proceedings which he knows to be false or does not believe to be true, he shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years or a fine or both.
- (2) The ^{M83}Perjury Act 1911 shall have effect as if this section were contained in that Act.

Marginal Citations

M83 1911 c. 6.

107 False statements in declaration proving service, etc.

If, in any solemn declaration, certificate or other writing made or given for the purpose of its being used in pursuance of the rules as evidence of the service of any document or the handwriting or seal of any person, a person makes a statement that he knows to be false in a material particular, or recklessly makes any statement that is false in a material particular, he shall be liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding [^{F157}level 3 on the standard scale] or both.

Textual Amendments

F157 Words substituted by virtue of [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 38, 46

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PART V

APPEAL AND CASE STATED

Appeal

108 Right of appeal to the Crown Court.

- (1) A person convicted by a magistrates' court may appeal to the Crown Court—
- (a) if he pleaded guilty, against his sentence;
 - (b) if he did not, against the conviction or sentence.

[^{F158}(1A) Section 13 of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act ^{M84}1973 (under which a conviction of an offence for which a probation order or an order for conditional or absolute discharge is made is deemed not to be a conviction except for certain purposes) shall not prevent an appeal under this Act, whether against conviction or otherwise.]

- (2) A person sentenced by a magistrates' court for an offence in respect of which a probation order or an order for conditional discharge has been previously made may appeal to the Crown Court against the sentence.

- (3) In this section “sentence” includes any order made on conviction by a magistrates' court, not being—

- (a) ^{F159}
- (b) an order for the payment of costs;
- (c) an order under section 2 of the ^{M85}Protection of Animals Act 1911 (which enables a court to order the destruction of an animal); or
- (d) an order made in pursuance of any enactment under which the court has no discretion as to the making of the order or its terms

[^{F160}and also includes a declaration of relevance under the Football Spectators Act 1989].

Textual Amendments

F158 S. 108(1A) inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 66(2)

F159 S. 108(3)(a) repealed by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), Sch. 16

F160 Words inserted by Football Spectators Act 1989 (c. 37, SIF 45A), s. 23(3)(c)

Marginal Citations

M84 1973 c. 62 (39:1).

M85 1911 c. 27.

109 Abandonment of appeal.

- (1) Where notice to abandon an appeal has been duly given by the appellant—
- (a) the court against whose decision the appeal was brought may issue process for enforcing that decision, subject to anything already suffered or done under it by the appellant; and
 - (b) the said court may, on the application of the other party to the appeal, order the appellant to pay to that party such costs as appear to the court to be just and

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reasonable in respect of expenses properly incurred by that party in connection with the appeal before notice of the abandonment was given to that party.

- (2) In this section “appeal” means an appeal from a magistrates’ court to the Crown Court, and the reference to a notice to abandon an appeal is a reference to a notice shown to the satisfaction of the magistrates’ court to have been given in accordance with Crown Court rules.

110 Enforcement of decision of the Crown Court.

After the determination by the Crown Court of an appeal from a magistrates’ court the decision appealed against as confirmed or varied by the Crown Court, or any decision of the Crown Court substituted for the decision appealed against, may, without prejudice to the powers of the Crown Court to enforce the decision, be enforced—

- (a) by the issue by the court by which the decision appealed against was given of any process that it could have issued if it had decided the case as the Crown Court decided it;
- (b) so far as the nature of any process already issued to enforce the decision appealed against permits, by that process;

and the decision of the Crown Court shall have effect as if it had been made by the magistrates’ court against whose decision the appeal is brought.

Case stated

111 Statement of case by magistrates’ court.

- (1) Any person who was a party to any proceeding before a magistrates’ court or is aggrieved by the conviction, order, determination or other proceeding of the court may question the proceeding on the ground that it is wrong in law or is in excess of jurisdiction by applying to the justices composing the court to state a case for the opinion of the High Court on the question of law or jurisdiction involved; but a person shall not make an application under this section in respect of a decision against which he has a right of appeal to the High Court or which by virtue of any enactment passed after 31st December 1879 is final.
- (2) An application under subsection (1) above shall be made within 21 days after the day on which the decision of the magistrates’ court was given.
- (3) For the purpose of subsection (2) above, the day on which the decision of the magistrates’ court is given shall, where the court has adjourned the trial of an information after conviction, be the day on which the court sentences or otherwise deals with the offender.
- (4) On the making of an application under this section in respect of a decision any right of the applicant to appeal against the decision to the Crown Court shall cease.
- (5) If the justices are of opinion that an application under this section is frivolous, they may refuse to state a case, and, if the applicant so requires, shall give him a certificate stating that the application has been refused; but the justices shall not refuse to state a case if the application is made by or under the direction of the Attorney General.

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- (6) Where justices refuse to state a case, the High Court may, on the application of the person who applied for the case to be stated, make an order of mandamus requiring the justices to state a case.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C60 S. 111 applied (1.7.1999) by S.I. 1999/1517, reg. 12(3), **Sch. 4 para. 9(4)**

C61 S. 111 referred to (11.3.2005) by **Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 (c. 2), s. 12(7)(b)**

VALID FROM 06/04/2009

[^{F161}**111A Appeals on ground of error of law etc in family proceedings**

- (1) This section applies in relation to family proceedings in a magistrates' court.
- (2) Any person who was a party to any proceeding before the court, or is aggrieved by the order, determination or other proceeding of the court, may question the proceeding on the ground that it is wrong in law or is in excess of jurisdiction by appealing to a county court.
- (3) But a person may not appeal under subsection (2) in respect of a decision if-
- (a) the person has a right of appeal to a county court against the decision otherwise than under this section, or
 - (b) the decision is final by virtue of any enactment passed after 31st December 1879.
- (4) A notice of appeal under subsection (2) shall be filed within 21 days after the day on which the decision of the magistrates' court was given.
- (5) In this section “family proceedings” means —
- (a) proceedings which, by virtue of section 65 of this Act, are or may be treated as family proceedings for the purposes of this Act; and
 - (b) proceedings under the Child Support Act 1991.]

Textual Amendments

F161 S. 111A inserted (6.4.2009) by The Access to Justice Act 1999 (Destination of Appeals) (Family Proceedings) Order 2009 (S.I. 2009/871), **art. 4(3)**

112 Effect of decision of High Court on case stated by magistrates' court.

Any conviction, order, determination or other proceeding of a magistrates' court varied by the High Court on an appeal by case stated, and any judgment or order of the High Court on such an appeal, may be enforced as if it were a decision of the magistrates' court from which the appeal was brought.

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Supplemental provisions as to appeal and case stated

113 Bail on appeal or case stated.

- (1) Where a person has given notice of appeal to the Crown Court against the decision of a magistrates' court or has applied to a magistrates' court to state a case for the opinion of the High Court, then, if he is in custody, the magistrates' court may grant him bail.
- (2) If a person is granted bail under subsection (1) above, the time and place at which he is to appear (except in the event of the determination in respect of which the case is stated being reversed by the High Court) shall be—
 - (a) if he has given notice of appeal, the Crown Court at the time appointed for the hearing of the appeal;
 - (b) if he has applied for the statement of a case, the magistrates' court at such time within 10 days after the judgment of the High Court has been given as may be specified by the magistrates' court;
 and any recognizance that may be taken from him or from any surety for him shall be conditioned accordingly.
- (3) Subsection (1) above shall not apply where the accused has been committed to the Crown Court for sentence under section 37 or 38 above.
- (4) Section 37(6) of the ^{M86}Criminal Justice Act 1948 (which relates to the currency of a sentence while a person is released on bail by the High Court) shall apply to a person released on bail by a magistrates' court under this section pending the hearing of a case stated as it applies to a person released on bail by the High Court under section 22 of the ^{M87}Criminal Justice Act 1967.

Marginal Citations

M86 1948 c. 58.

M87 1967 c. 80.

114 Recognizances and fees on case stated.

Justices to whom application has been made to state a case for the opinion of the High Court on any proceeding of a magistrates' court shall not be required to state the case until the applicant has entered into a recognizance, with or without sureties, before the magistrates' court, conditioned to prosecute the appeal without delay and to submit to the judgment of the High Court and pay such costs as that Court may award; and (except in any criminal matter) the clerk of a magistrates' court shall not be required to deliver the case to the applicant until the applicant has paid him the fees payable for the case and for the recognizances.

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PART VI

RECOGNIZANCES

Recognizances to keep the peace or be of good behaviour

115 Binding over to keep the peace or be of good behaviour.

- (1) The power of a magistrates' court on the complaint of any person to adjudge any other person to enter into a recognizance, with or without sureties, to keep the peace or to be of good behaviour towards the complainant shall be exercised by order on complaint.
- (2) Where a complaint is made under this section, the power of the court to remand the defendant under subsection (5) of section 55 above shall not be subject to the restrictions imposed by subsection (6) of that section.
- (3) If any person ordered by a magistrates' court under subsection (1) above to enter into a recognizance, with or without sureties, to keep the peace or to be of good behaviour fails to comply with the order, the court may commit him to custody for a period not exceeding 6 months or until he sooner complies with the order.

116 Discharge of recognizance to keep the peace or be of good behaviour on complaint of surety.

- (1) On complaint being made to a justice of the peace for any area to which this section applies by a surety to a recognizance to keep the peace or to be of good behaviour entered into before a magistrates' court that the person bound by the recognizance as principal has been, or is about to be, guilty of conduct constituting a breach of the conditions of the recognizance, the justice may, if the complaint alleges that the principal is, or is believed to be, in that area, or if the recognizance was entered into before a magistrates' court for that area, issue a warrant to arrest the principal and bring him before a magistrates' court for that area or a summons requiring the principal to appear before such a court; but the justice shall not issue a warrant unless the complaint is in writing and substantiated on oath.
- (2) The magistrates' court before which the principal appears or is brought in pursuance of such a summons or warrant as aforesaid may, unless it adjudges the recognizance to be forfeited, order the recognizance to be discharged and order the principal to enter into a new recognizance, with or without sureties, to keep the peace or to be of good behaviour.
- (3) The areas to which this section applies are any county, any London commission area and the City of London.

Other provisions

117 Warrant endorsed for bail.

- (1) A justice of the peace on issuing a warrant for the arrest of any person may grant him bail by endorsing the warrant for bail, that is to say, by endorsing the warrant with a direction in accordance with subsection (2) below.
- (2) A direction for bail endorsed on a warrant under subsection (1) above shall—

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- (a) in the case of bail in criminal proceedings, state that the person arrested is to be released on bail subject to a duty to appear before such magistrates' court and at such time as may be specified in the endorsement;
- (b) in the case of bail otherwise than in criminal proceedings, state that the person arrested is to be released on bail on his entering into such a recognizance (with or without sureties) conditioned for his appearance before a magistrates' court as may be specified in the endorsement;

and the endorsement shall fix the amounts in which any sureties and, in a case falling within paragraph (b) above, that person is or are to be bound.

[^{F162}(3) Where a warrant has been endorsed for bail under subsection (1) above—

- (a) where the person arrested is to be released on bail on his entering into a recognizance without sureties, it shall not be necessary to take him to a police station, but if he is so taken, he shall be released from custody on his entering into the recognizance; and
- (b) where he is to be released on his entering into a recognizance with sureties, he shall be taken to a police station on his arrest, and the custody officer there shall (subject to his approving any surety tendered in compliance with the endorsement) release him from custody as directed in the endorsement.]

Textual Amendments

F162 S. 117(3) substituted by [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(c. 60, SIF 95\)](#), **ss. 47(8)(b)**, 51, 52

118 Varying or dispensing with requirement as to sureties.

- (1) Subject to subsection (2) below, where a magistrates' court has committed a person to custody in default of finding sureties, the court may, on application by or on behalf of the person committed, and after hearing fresh evidence, reduce the amount in which it is proposed that any surety should be bound or dispense with any of the sureties or otherwise deal with the case as it thinks just.
- (2) Subsection (1) above does not apply in relation to a person granted bail in criminal proceedings.

119 Postponement of taking recognizance.

- (1) Where a magistrates' court has power to take any recognizance, the court may, instead of taking it, fix the amount in which the principal and his sureties, if any, are to be bound; and thereafter the recognizance may be taken by any such person as may be prescribed.
- (2) Where, in pursuance of this section, a recognizance is entered into otherwise than before the court that fixed the amount of it, the same consequences shall follow as if it had been entered into before that court; and references in this or any other Act to the court before which a recognizance was entered into shall be construed accordingly.
- (3) Nothing in this section shall enable a magistrates' court to alter the amount of a recognizance fixed by the High Court [^{F163}or the Crown Court].

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Textual Amendments

F163 Words added by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#) s. 77, Sch. 14 para. 55

120 Forfeiture of recognizance.

- (1) Where a recognizance to keep the peace or to be of good behaviour has been entered into before a magistrates' court or any recognizance is conditioned for the appearance of a person before a magistrates' court or for his doing any other thing connected with a proceeding before a magistrates' court, and the recognizance appears to the court to be forfeited, the court may, subject to subsection (2) below, declare the recognizance to be forfeited and adjudge the persons bound thereby, whether as principal or sureties, or any of them, to pay the sum in which they are respectively bound.
- (2) Where a recognizance is conditioned to keep the peace or to be of good behaviour, the court shall not declare it forfeited except by order made on complaint.
- (3) The court which declares the recognizance to be forfeited may, instead of adjudging any person to pay the whole sum in which he is bound, adjudge him to pay part only of the sum or remit the sum.
- (4) Payment of any sum adjudged to be paid under this section, including any costs awarded against the defendant, may be enforced, and any such sum shall be applied, as if it were a fine and as if the adjudication were a summary conviction of an offence not punishable with imprisonment and so much of section 85(1) above as empowers a court to remit fines shall not apply to the sum but so much thereof as relates to remission after a term of imprisonment has been imposed shall so apply; but at any time before the issue of a warrant of commitment to enforce payment of the sum, or before the sale of goods under a warrant of distress to satisfy the sum, the court may remit the whole or any part of the sum either absolutely or on such conditions as the court thinks just.
- (5) A recognizance such as is mentioned in this section shall not be enforced otherwise than in accordance with this section, and accordingly shall not be transmitted to the Crown Court nor shall its forfeiture be certified to that Court.

PART VII

MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTARY

Constitution and place of sitting of magistrates' courts

121 Constitution and place of sitting of court.

- (1) A magistrates' court shall not try an information summarily or hear a complaint except when composed of at least 2 justices unless the trial or hearing is one that by virtue of any enactment may take place before a single justice.
- (2) A magistrates' court shall not hold an inquiry into the means of an offender for the purposes of section 82 above ^{F164}or determine under that section at a hearing at which

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the offender is not present whether to issue a warrant of commitment]except when composed of at least 2 justices.

- (3) A magistrates' court shall not—
 - (a) try summarily an information for an indictable offence or hear a complaint except when sitting in a petty-sessional court-house;
 - (b) try an information for a summary offence or hold an inquiry into the means of an offender for the purposes of section 82 above, or impose imprisonment, except when sitting in a petty-sessional court-house or an occasional court-house.
- (4) Subject to the provisions of any enactment to the contrary, where a magistrates' court is required by this section to sit in a petty-sessional or occasional court-house, it shall sit in open court.
- (5) A magistrates' court composed of a single justice, or sitting in an occasional court-house, shall not impose imprisonment for a period exceeding 14 days or order a person to pay more than £1.
- (6) Subject to the provisions of subsection (7) below, the justices composing the court before which any proceedings take place shall be present during the whole of the proceedings; but, if during the course of the proceedings any justice absents himself, he shall cease to act further therein and, if the remaining justices are enough to satisfy the requirements of the preceding provisions of this section, the proceedings may continue before a court composed of those justices.
- (7) Where the trial of an information is adjourned after the accused has been convicted and before he is sentenced or otherwise dealt with, the court which sentences or deals with him need not be composed of the same justices as that which convicted him; but, where among the justices composing the court which sentences or deals with an offender there are any who were not sitting when he was convicted, the court which sentences or deals with the offender shall before doing so make such inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the case as will enable the justices who were not sitting when the offender was convicted to be fully acquainted with those facts and circumstances.
- (8) This section shall have effect subject to the provisions of this Act relating to domestic proceedings.

Textual Amendments

F164 Words inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 61(6), 123(6), [Sch. 8 para. 16](#)

Appearance by counsel or solicitor

122 Appearance by counsel or solicitor.

- (1) A party to any proceedings before a magistrates' court may be represented by [^{F165}a legal representative].
- (2) Subject to subsection(3) below, an absent party so represented shall be deemed not to be absent.
- (3) Appearance of a party by [^{F165}a legal representative] shall not satisfy any provision of any enactment or any condition of a recognizance expressly requiring his presence.

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Textual Amendments

F165 Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(3)(b)**

Process

123 Defect in process.

- (1) No objection shall be allowed to any information or complaint, or to any summons or warrant to procure the presence of the defendant, for any defect in it in substance or in form, or for any variance between it and the evidence adduced on behalf of the prosecutor or complainant at the hearing of the information or complaint.
- (2) If it appears to a magistrates' court that any variance between a summons or warrant and the evidence adduced on behalf of the prosecutor or complainant is such that the defendant has been misled by the variance, the court shall, on the application of the defendant, adjourn the hearing.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C62 S. 123 applied (with modifications) (1.4.1997) by S.I. 1997/704, **rule 5(1)(3)(4)(h)(6)**

124 Process valid notwithstanding death, etc., of justice.

A warrant or summons issued by a justice of the peace shall not cease to have effect by reason of his death or his ceasing to be a justice.

125 Warrants.

- (1) A warrant of arrest issued by a justice of the peace shall remain in force until it is executed or withdrawn.
- (2) A warrant of arrest, warrant of commitment, warrant of distress or search warrant issued by a justice of the peace may be executed anywhere in England and Wales by any person to whom it is directed or by any constable acting within his police area.

[^{F166}A warrant of arrest, warrant of commitment or warrant of distress which is issued by a justice of the peace for the enforcement of [^{F167}any sum adjudged to be paid] may also be executed by a person who—

- (a) is employed by an authority of a prescribed class;
- (b) is authorised in the prescribed manner to execute such warrants; and
- (c) is acting within the area for which the authority that employs him performs its functions.]

This subsection does not apply to a warrant of commitment or a warrant of distress issued under Part VI of the ^{M88}General Rate Act 1967.

- (3) A warrant to [^{F168}which this subsection applies] may be executed by a constable notwithstanding that it is not in his possession at the time; but the warrant shall, on the demand of the person arrested, be shown to him as soon as practicable.

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[^{F169}(4) The warrants to which subsection (3) above applies are—

- (a) a warrant to arrest a person in connection with an offence;
- (b) without prejudice to paragraph (a) above, a warrant under section 186(3) of the Army Act ^{M89}1955, section 186(3) of the Air Force Act ^{M90}1955, section 105(3) of the Naval Discipline Act ^{M91}1957 or Schedule 5 to the Reserve Forces Act ^{M92}1980 (desertion etc.);
- (c) a warrant under—
 - (i) section 102 or 104 of the General Rate Act ^{M93}1967 (insufficiency of distress);
 - (ii) section 18(4) of the Domestic Proceedings and Magistrates' Courts Act ^{M94}1978 (protection of parties to marriage and children of family); and
 - (iii) section 55, 76, 93 or 97 above.]

Textual Amendments

F166 Para. inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 65(1), 123(6), **Sch. 8 para. 16**

F167 Words substituted by [Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 \(c. 41, SIF 37, 82\)](#), s. 125(2), **Sch. 17 para. 11**

F168 Words substituted by [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(c. 60, SIF 95\)](#), s. 33(a)

F169 S. 125(4) added by [Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 \(c. 60, SIF 95\)](#), s. 33(b)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C63 S. 125(3) applied by [S.I. 1989/1058, reg. 17\(6\)](#); and (1.4.1992) by [S.I. 1992/613, reg. 48\(6\)](#)

Marginal Citations

M88 1967 c. 9.

M89 1955 c. 18(7:1).

M90 1955 c. 19 (7:1).

M91 1957 c. 53 (7:1).

M92 1980 c. 9 (7:2).

M93 1967 c. 9 (103:1).

M94 1978 c. 22 (49:3).

VALID FROM 06/04/2014

[^{F170}~~125Z~~**Warrants of control**

- (1) This section applies to a warrant of control issued by a justice of the peace.
- (2) The person to whom it is directed must endorse the warrant as soon as possible after receiving it.
- (3) For the purposes of this section a person endorses a warrant by inserting on the back the date and time when he received it.
- (4) No fee may be charged for endorsing a warrant under this section.]

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Textual Amendments

F170 S. 125ZA inserted (prosp.) by Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 (c. 15), ss. 68, 148 (with s. 89)

VALID FROM 08/01/2001

[^{F171}125A] Civilian enforcement officers.

- (1) A warrant to which this subsection applies may be executed anywhere in England and Wales by a civilian enforcement officer.
- (2) In this section “civilian enforcement officer”, in relation to a warrant, means a person who—
 - (a) is employed by an authority of a prescribed class which performs functions in relation to any area specified in the warrant; and
 - (b) is authorised in the prescribed manner to execute warrants.
- (3) The warrants to which subsection (1) above applies are any warrant of arrest, commitment, detention or distress issued by a justice of the peace—
 - (a) under any provision specified for the purposes of this subsection by an order made by the Lord Chancellor and the Secretary of State, acting jointly; or
 - (b) for the enforcement of a court order of any description so specified.
- (4) Where a warrant has been executed by a civilian enforcement officer, a written statement indicating—
 - (a) the name of the officer;
 - (b) the authority by which he is employed; and
 - (c) that he is authorised in the prescribed manner to execute warrants,shall, on the demand of the person arrested, committed or detained or against whom distress is levied, be shown to him as soon as practicable.
- (5) The power to make orders conferred by subsection (3) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.]

Textual Amendments

F171 S. 125A inserted (8.1.2001) by 1999 c. 22, s. 92, (with s. 107, Sch. 14 para. 7(2)); S.I. 2000/3280, art. 2(b)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C64 S. 125-126 applied (temp.) (23.2.2004 and 29.3.2004 for certain purposes, otherwise 5.4.2004 until 31.3.2006) by The Fines Collection Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/176), regs. 1(3), 10 (with reg. 3) (as amended (30.3.2005) by S.I. 2005/484, regs. 1(1)(a)(2), 2, 4)

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VALID FROM 08/01/2001

[^{F172}125B Execution by approved enforcement agency.

- (1) A warrant to which section 125A(1) above applies may also be executed anywhere in England and Wales—
 - (a) by an individual who is an approved enforcement agency;
 - (b) by a director of a company which is an approved enforcement agency;
 - (c) by a partner in a partnership which is an approved enforcement agency; or
 - (d) by an employee of an approved enforcement agency who is authorised in writing by the agency to execute warrants.
- (2) In this section “approved enforcement agency”, in relation to a warrant, means a person or body approved under section 31A of the ^{M95}Justices of the Peace Act 1997 by the magistrates’ courts committee for the petty sessions area of the justice (or any of the justices) who issued the warrant.
- (3) Failure by a magistrates’ courts committee to comply with any provision of, or made under, section 31A(2) to (5) of the Justices of the Peace Act 1997 does not of itself render unlawful the execution of a warrant.
- (4) Where a warrant has been executed by a person mentioned in subsection (1) above, a written statement indicating the matters specified in subsection (5) below shall, on the demand of the person arrested, committed or detained or against whom distress is levied, be shown to him as soon as practicable.
- (5) The matters referred to in subsection (4) above are—
 - (a) the name of the person by whom the warrant was executed;
 - (b) if he is a director of, or partner in, an approved enforcement agency, the fact that he is a director of, or partner in, that agency;
 - (c) if he is an employee of an approved enforcement agency, the fact that he is an employee authorised in writing by that agency to execute warrants; and
 - (d) the fact that his name, or (where paragraph (b) or (c) above applies) that of the agency indicated, is contained in the register maintained under section 31A(4) of the Justices of the ^{M96}Peace Act 1997 by the magistrates’ courts committee concerned.]

Textual Amendments

F172 S. 125B inserted (8.1.2001) by 1999 c. 22, s. 93(2), (with s. 107, Sch. 14 para. 7(2)); S.I. 2000/3280, art. 2(b)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C65 S. 125-126 applied (temp.) (23.2.2004 and 29.3.2004 for certain purposes, otherwise 5.4.2004 until 31.3.2006) by The Fines Collection Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/176), regs. 1(3), 10 (with reg. 3) (as amended (30.3.2005) by S.I. 2005/484, regs. 1(1)(a)(2), 2, 4)

Marginal Citations

M95 1997 c.25.

M96 1997 c.25.

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VALID FROM 18/07/2005

[^{F173}125B Powers of persons authorised under section 125A or 125B

Schedule 4A to this Act, which confers powers on persons authorised under section 125A or 125B for the purpose of executing warrants for the enforcement of fines and other orders, shall have effect.]

Textual Amendments

F173 S. 125BA inserted (18.7.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\), ss. 27\(1\), 60; S.I. 2005/1821, art. 2](#)

VALID FROM 08/01/2001

[^{F174}125C Disclosure of information for enforcing warrants.

- (1) Basic personal information held by a relevant public authority may, on the application of a justices' chief executive, be supplied by the authority to him (or to a justices' clerk appointed by, or member of the staff of, his magistrates' courts committee who is specified in the application) for the purpose of facilitating the enforcement of a section 125A(1) warrant which is so specified.
- (2) In this section—
 - “basic personal information” means a person's name, date of birth or national insurance number or the address (or any of the addresses) of a person;
 - “relevant public authority” means a Minister of the Crown, government department, local authority or chief officer of police specified in an order made by the Lord Chancellor; and
 - “a section 125A(1) warrant” means a warrant to which section 125A(1) above applies and which has been issued by a justice of the peace to whom the justices' chief executive making the application is chief executive.
- (3) Information supplied to any person under subsection (1) above, or this subsection, for the purpose of facilitating the enforcement of a section 125A(1) warrant may be supplied by him for that purpose to—
 - (a) any person entitled to execute the warrant;
 - (b) any employee of a body or person who, for the purposes of section 125B above, is an approved enforcement agency in relation to the warrant; or
 - (c) any person who is the justices' chief executive, a justices' clerk or a member of the staff of the magistrates' courts committee whose justices' chief executive made the application for the information.
- (4) A person who intentionally or recklessly—
 - (a) discloses information supplied to him under this section otherwise than as permitted by subsection (3) above; or
 - (b) uses information so supplied otherwise than for the purpose of facilitating the enforcement of the section 125A(1) warrant concerned,

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commits an offence.

- (5) But it is not an offence under subsection (4) above—
- (a) to disclose any information in accordance with any enactment or order of a court or for the purposes of any proceedings before a court; or
 - (b) to disclose any information which has previously been lawfully disclosed to the public.
- (6) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (4) above is liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum; or
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine.
- (7) The power to make orders conferred by subsection (2) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.]

Textual Amendments

F174 S. 125C inserted (8.1.2001) by 1999 c. 22, s. 94, (with s. 107, Sch. 14 para. 7(2)); S.I. 2000/3280, art. 2(b) (with transitional provisions in art. 3)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C66 S. 125C extended (8.1.2001) by S.I. 2000/3277, art. 2

VALID FROM 31/03/2005

^{F175} 125CA Power to make disclosure order

- (1) A magistrates' court may make a disclosure order if satisfied that it is necessary to do so for the purpose of executing a warrant to which this section applies.
- (2) This section applies to a warrant of arrest, commitment, detention or distress issued by a justice of the peace in connection with the enforcement of a fine or other order imposed or made on conviction.
- (3) A disclosure order is an order requiring the person to whom it is directed to supply the designated officer for the court with any of the following information about the person to whom the warrant relates—
 - (a) his name, date of birth or national insurance number;
 - (b) his address (or any of his addresses).
- (4) A disclosure order may be made only on the application of a person entitled to execute the warrant.
- (5) This section applies to the Crown as it applies to other persons.

Textual Amendments

F175 Ss. 125CA, 125CB inserted (31.3.2005) by Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 (c. 28), ss. 28, 60; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3(c)

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VALID FROM 31/03/2005

125CB Use of information supplied under disclosure order

- (1) Information supplied to a person under a disclosure order, or under this subsection, may be supplied by him to—
 - (a) the applicant for the order or any other person entitled to execute the warrant concerned;
 - (b) any employee of a body or person who, for the purposes of section 125B above, is an approved enforcement agency in relation to the warrant;
 - (c) any justices' clerk or other person appointed under section 2(1) of the Courts Act 2003.
- (2) A person who intentionally or recklessly—
 - (a) discloses information supplied under a disclosure order otherwise than as permitted by subsection (1) above, or
 - (b) uses information so supplied otherwise than for the purpose of facilitating the execution of the warrant concerned,commits an offence.
- (3) But it is not an offence under subsection (2) above—
 - (a) to disclose any information in accordance with any enactment or order of a court or for the purposes of any proceedings before a court; or
 - (b) to disclose any information which has previously been lawfully disclosed to the public.
- (4) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (2) above is liable—
 - (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine.
- (5) In this section “disclosure order” has the meaning given by section 125CA(3) above.]

Textual Amendments

F175 Ss. 125CA, 125CB inserted (31.3.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\)](#), ss. 28, 60; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3(c)

VALID FROM 19/02/2001

^{F176}125D Execution by person not in possession of warrant.

- (1) A warrant to which section 125A(1) above applies may be executed by any person entitled to execute it even though it is not in his possession at the time.
- (2) A warrant to which this subsection applies (and which is not a warrant to which section 125A(1) above applies) may be executed by a constable even though it is not in his possession at the time.
- (3) Subsection (2) above applies to—

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- (a) a warrant to arrest a person in connection with an offence;
 - (b) a warrant under section 186(3) of the ^{M97}Army Act 1955, section 186(3) of the ^{M98}Air Force Act 1955, section 105(3) of the ^{M99}Naval Discipline Act 1957 or Schedule 2 to the ^{M100}Reserve Forces Act 1996 (desertion etc.);
 - (c) a warrant under section 102 or 104 of the ^{M101}General Rate Act 1967 (insufficiency of distress);
 - (d) a warrant under section 47(8) of the ^{M102}Family Law Act 1996 (failure to comply with occupation order or non-molestation order);
 - (e) a warrant under paragraph 4 of Schedule 3 to the ^{M103}Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (unwilling witnesses);
 - (f) a warrant under paragraph 3(2) of Schedule 1 to the ^{M104}Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 (offenders referred to court by youth offender panel); and
 - (g) a warrant under section 55, 76, 93, 97 or 97A above.
- (4) Where by virtue of this section a warrant is executed by a person not in possession of it, it shall, on the demand of the person arrested, committed or detained or against whom distress is levied, be shown to him as soon as practicable.]

Textual Amendments

F176 S. 125D inserted (19.2.2001) by 1999 c. 22, s. 96 (with s. 107, Sch. 14 para. 7(2)); S.I. 2001/168, arts. 1, 2(a) (subject to transitional provisions in art. 3 of that S.I.)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C67 Ss. 125-126 applied (temp.) (23.2.2004 and 29.3.2004 for certain purposes, otherwise 5.4.2004 until 31.3.2006) by The Fines Collection Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/176), regs. 1(3), 10 (with reg. 3) (as amended (30.3.2005) by S.I. 2005/484, regs. 1(1)(a)(2), 2, 4)

Marginal Citations

M97 1955 c.18.
M98 1955 c.19.
M99 1957 c.53.
M100 1966 c.14.
M101 1967 c.9.
M102 1996 c.27.
M103 1998 c.37.
M104 1999 c.23.

126 Execution of certain warrants outside England and Wales.

Sections 12 to 14 of the ^{M105}Indictable Offences Act 1848 (which relate, among other things, to the execution in Scotland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man and the Channel Islands of warrants of arrest for the offences referred to in those sections) shall, so far as applicable, apply to—

- (a) warrants of arrest issued under section 1 above for offences other than those referred to in the said sections 12 to 14;
- (b) warrants of arrest issued under section 13 above;
- (c) warrants of arrest issued under section 97 above other than warrants issued in bastardy proceedings to arrest a witness; and

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(d) warrants of commitment issued under this Act.

Marginal Citations

M105 1848 c. 42.

Limitation of time

127 Limitation of time.

- (1) Except as otherwise expressly provided by any enactment and subject to subsection (2) below, a magistrates' court shall not try an information or hear a complaint unless the information was laid, or the complaint made, within 6 months from the time when the offence was committed, or the matter of complaint arose.
- (2) Nothing in—
 - (a) subsection (1) above; or
 - (b) subject to subsection (4) below, any other enactment (however framed or worded) which, as regards any offence to which it applies, would but for this section impose a time-limit on the power of a magistrates' court to try an information summarily or impose a limitation on the time for taking summary proceedings,shall apply in relation to any indictable offence.
- (3) Without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (b) of subsection (2) above, that paragraph includes enactments which impose a time-limit that applies only in certain circumstances (for example, where the proceedings are not instituted by or with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions or some other specified authority).
- (4) Where, as regards any indictable offence, there is imposed by any enactment (however framed or worded, and whether falling within subsection (2) (b) above or not) a limitation on the time for taking proceedings on indictment for that offence no summary proceedings for that offence shall be taken after the latest time for taking proceedings on indictment.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C68** S. 127 excluded by Insurance Companies Act 1982 (c. 50, SIF 67), s. 94(2)
- C69** S. 127 excluded by Water Act 1989 (c. 15, SIF 130), ss. 58(7), 101(1), 121(2), 141(6), 160(1)(2)(4), 163, 189(4)–(10), 190, 193(1), sch. 26 paras. 3(1)(2), 17, 40(4), 57(6), 58
- C70** S. 127(1) modified by Transport Act 1982 (c. 49, SIF 107:1), ss. 38(3)(8), 49(13)(b)
- C71** S. 127(1) excluded by Companies Act 1985 (c. 6, SIF 27), s. 731(2)
- C72** S. 127(1) modified by Surrogacy Arrangements Act 1985 (c. 49, SIF 39:2), s. 4(6)
- C73** S. 127(1) excluded by Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 (c. 14, SIF 4:5), s. 26(3)
- C74** S. 127(1) excluded by Insolvency Act 1986 (c. 45, SIF 66), s. 431(2)
- C75** S. 127(1) excluded by Banking Act 1987 (c. 22, SIF 10), s. 97(2)
- C76** S. 127(1) modified by Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (c. 53, SIF 107:1), ss. 64(7)(b), 66(4), 92
- C77** S. 127(1) excluded by S.I. 1989/438, reg. 29(3)
- C78** S. 127(1) excluded by S.I. 1989/1058, reg. 12(3)
- C79** S. 127(1) excluded (*prosp.*) by Children Act 1989 (c. 41, SIF 20), ss. 70(8), 108(2)(6), Sch. 14 para. 1(1)

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C80 S. 127(1) excluded by S.I. 1990/1768, art. 8(6) (as replaced by S.I. 1990/2144, art. 3)

Remand

128 Remand in custody or on bail.

- (1) Where a magistrates' court has power to remand any person, then, subject to section 4 of the ^{M106}Bail Act 1976 and to any other enactment modifying that power, the court may—
- (a) remand him in custody, that is to say, commit him to custody to be brought before the court [^{F177}, subject to subsection (3A) below,] at the end of the period of remand or at such earlier time as the court may require; or
 - (b) where it is inquiring into or trying an offence alleged to have been committed by that person or has convicted him of an offence, remand him on bail in accordance with the ^{M107}Bail Act 1976, that is to say, by directing him to appear as provided in subsection (4) below; or
 - (c) except in a case falling within paragraph (b) above, remand him on bail by taking from him a recognizance (with or without sureties) conditioned as provided in that subsection;

and may, in a case falling within paragraph (c) above, instead of taking recognizances in accordance with that paragraph, fix the amount of the recognizances with a view to their being taken subsequently in accordance with section 119 above.

[^{F178}(1A) Where—

- (a) on adjourning a case under section 5, 10(1) or 18(4) above the court proposes to remand or further remand a person in custody; and
- (b) he is before the court; and
- (c) he has attained the age of 17; and
- (d) he is legally represented in that court,

it shall be the duty of the court—

- (i) to explain the effect of subsections (3A) and (3B) below to him in ordinary language; and
- (ii) to inform him in ordinary language that, notwithstanding the procedure for a remand without his being brought before a court, he would be brought before a court for the hearing and determination of at least every fourth application for his remand, and of every application for his remand heard at a time when it appeared to the court that he had no [^{F179}legal representative] acting for him in the case.

(1B) For the purposes of subsection (1A) above a person is to be treated as legally represented in a court if, but only if, he has the assistance of [^{F180}a legal representative] to represent him in the proceedings in that court.

(1C) After explaining to an accused as provided by subsection (1A) above the court shall ask him whether he consents to hearing and determination of such applications in his absence.]

- (2) Where the court fixes the amount of a recognizance under subsection (1) above or section 8(3) of the ^{M108}Bail Act 1976 with a view to its being taken subsequently the court shall in the meantime commit the person so remanded to custody in accordance with paragraph (a) of the said subsection (1).

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(3) Where a person is brought before the court after remand, the court may further remand him.

[^{F181}(3A) Subject to subsection (3B) below, where a person has been remanded in custody [^{F182}and the remand was not a remand under section 128A below for a period exceeding 8 clear days,], the court may further remand him [^{F182}(otherwise than in the exercise of the power conferred by that section)] on an adjournment under section 5, 10(1) or 18(4) above without his being brought before it if it is satisfied—

- (a) that he gave his consent, either in response to a question under subsection (1C) above or otherwise, to the hearing and determination in his absence of any application for his remand on an adjournment of the case under any of those provisions; and
- (b) that he has not by virtue of this subsection been remanded without being brought before the court on more than two such applications immediately preceding the application which the court is hearing; and
- (c) that he had attained the age of 17 years when he gave his consent to the hearing and determination of such applications in his absence; and
- (d) that he has not withdrawn his consent to their being so heard and determined.

(3B) The court may not exercise the power conferred by subsection (3A) above if it appears to the court, on an application for a further remand being made to it, that the person to whom the application relates has no [^{F183}legal representative] acting for him in the case (whether present in court or not).

(3C) Where—

- (a) a person has been remanded in custody on an adjournment of a case under section 5, 10(1) or 18(4) above; and
- (b) an application is subsequently made for his further remand on such an adjournment; and
- (c) he is not brought before the court which hears and determines the application; and
- (d) that court is not satisfied as mentioned in subsection (3A) above,

the court shall adjourn the case and remand him in custody for the period for which it stands adjourned.

(3D) An adjournment under subsection (3C) above shall be for the shortest period that appears to the court to make it possible for the accused to be brought before it.

(3E) Where—

- (a) on an adjournment of a case under section 5, 10(1) or 18(4) above a person has been remanded in custody without being brought before the court; and
- (b) it subsequently appears—
 - (i) to the court which remanded him in custody; or
 - (ii) to an alternate magistrates' court to which he is remanded under section 130 below,

that he ought not to have been remanded in custody in his absence, the court shall require him to be brought before it at the earliest time that appears to the court to be possible.]

(4) Where a person is remanded on bail under subsection (1) above the court may, where it remands him on bail in accordance with the Bail Act 1976 direct him to appear or, in any other case, direct that his recognizance be conditioned for his appearance—

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- (a) before that court at the end of the period of remand; or
- (b) at every time and place to which during the course of the proceedings the hearing may be from time to time adjourned;

and, where it remands him on bail conditionally on his providing a surety during an inquiry into an offence alleged to have been committed by him, may direct that the recognizance of the surety be conditioned to secure that the person so bailed appears—

- (c) at every time and place to which during the course of the proceedings the hearing may be from time to time adjourned and also before the Crown Court in the event of the person so bailed being committed for trial there.
- (5) Where a person is directed to appear or a recognizance is conditioned for a person's appearance in accordance with paragraph (b) or (c) of subsection (4) above, the fixing at any time of the time for him next to appear shall be deemed to be a remand; but nothing in this subsection or subsection (4) above shall deprive the court of power at any subsequent hearing to remand him afresh.
- (6) Subject to the provisions of [^{F184}sections 128A and]129 below, a magistrates' court shall not remand a person for a period exceeding 8 clear days, except that—
- (a) if the court remands him on bail, it may remand him for a longer period if he and the other party consent;
 - (b) where the court adjourns a trial under section 10(3) or 30 above, the court may remand him for the period of the adjournment;
 - (c) where a person is charged with an offence triable either way, then, if it falls to the court to try the case summarily but the court is not at the time so constituted, and sitting in such a place, as will enable it to proceed with the trial, the court may remand him until the next occasion on which it will be practicable for the court to be so constituted, and to sit in such a place, as aforesaid, notwithstanding that the remand is for a period exceeding 8 clear days.
- (7) A magistrates' court having power to remand a person in custody may, if the remand is for a period not exceeding 3 clear days, commit him to [^{F185}detention at a police station].

- [^{F186}(8) Where a person is committed to detention at a police station under subsection (7) above—
- (a) he shall not be kept in such detention unless there is a need for him to be so detained for the purposes of inquiries into other offences;
 - (b) if kept in such detention, he shall be brought back before the magistrates' court which committed him as soon as that need ceases;
 - (c) he shall be treated as a person in police detention to whom the duties under section 39 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (responsibilities in relation to persons detained) relate;
 - (d) his detention shall be subject to periodic review at the times set out in section 40 of that Act (review of police detention).]

Textual Amendments

F177 Words inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 59(1), [Sch. 9 para. 2](#)

F178 [S. 128\(1A\)](#)—(1C) inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 59(1), [Sch. 9 para. 3](#)

F179 Words substituted by [Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 \(c. 41, SIF 37, 82\)](#), s. 125(3), [Sch. 18 para. 25\(4\)\(a\)](#)

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F180 Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(3)(a)(b)**

F181 S. 128(3A)–(3E) inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 59(1), **Sch. 9 para. 4**

F182 Words inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 123(6), 170(1), **Sch. 15 para. 69(1)**

F183 Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37, 82), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(4)(a)**

F184 Words substituted by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), **ss. 123(6)** 170(1), Sch. 15 para. 69(2)

F185 Words substituted by Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (c. 60, SIF 95), **ss. 48(a)**, 51, 52

F186 S. 128(8) inserted by Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (c. 60, SIF 95), **ss. 48(b)**, 51, 52

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C81 S. 128 amended by Mental Health Act 1983 (c. 20, SIF 85), **s. 52(3)**

C82 S. 128(7) modified (1.10.1992) by Children and Young Persons Act 1969 (c. 54, SIF 20), **s. 23(14)** (as substituted (1.10.1992) by Criminal Justice Act 1991 (c. 53, SIF 39:1), **s. 60(1)**; S.I. 1992/333, art. 2(2), **Sch.2**)

Marginal Citations

M106 1976 c. 63.

M107 1976 c.63.

M108 1976 c. 63.

[^{F187}128A Remands in custody for more than eight days.

- (1) The Secretary of State may by order made by statutory instrument provide that this section shall have effect—
 - (a) in an area specified in the order; or
 - (b) in proceedings of a description so specified,in relation to any accused person (“the accused”) who has attained the age of 17.
- (2) A magistrates’ court may remand the accused in custody for a period exceeding 8 clear days if—
 - (a) it has previously remanded him in custody for the same offence; and
 - (b) he is before the court,but only if, after affording the parties an opportunity to make representations, it has set a date on which it expects that it will be possible for the next stage in the proceedings, other than a hearing relating to a further remand in custody or on bail, to take place, and only—
 - (i) for a period ending not later than that date; or
 - (ii) for a period of 28 clear days,whichever is the less.
- (3) Nothing in this section affects the right of the accused to apply for bail during the period of the remand.
- (4) A statutory instrument containing an order under this section shall not be made unless a draft of the instrument has been laid before Parliament and been approved by a resolution of each House.]

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Textual Amendments

F187 S. 128A inserted (E.W.) by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 123(6), 155(1), [Sch. 8 para. 16](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C83 S. 128A extended (2.12.1991) by [S.I. 1991/2667](#), [art.2](#)

129 Further remand.

- (1) If a magistrates' court is satisfied that any person who has been remanded is unable by reason of illness or accident to appear or be brought before the court at the expiration of the period for which he was remanded, the court may, in his absence, remand him for a further time; and section 128(6) above shall not apply.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything in section 128(1) above, the power of a court under subsection (1) above to remand a person on bail for a further time—
 - (a) where he was granted bail in criminal proceedings, includes power to enlarge the recognizance of any surety for him to a later time;
 - (b) where he was granted bail otherwise than in criminal proceedings, may be exercised by enlarging his recognizance and those of any sureties for him to a later time.
- (3) Where a person remanded on bail is bound to appear before a magistrates' court at any time and the court has no power to remand him under subsection (1) above, the court may in his absence—
 - (a) where he was granted bail in criminal proceedings, appoint a later time as the time at which he is to appear and enlarge the recognizances of any sureties for him to that time;
 - (b) where he was granted bail otherwise than in criminal proceedings, enlarge his recognizance and those of any sureties for him to a later time;
 and the appointment of the time or the enlargement of his recognizance shall be deemed to be a further remand.
- (4) Where a magistrates' court commits a person for trial on bail and the recognizance of any surety for him has been conditioned in accordance with paragraph (a) of subsection (4) of section 128 above the court may, in the absence of the surety, enlarge his recognizance so that he is bound to secure that the person so committed for trial appears also before the Crown Court.

130 Transfer of remand hearings.

- (1) A magistrates' court adjourning a case under section 5, 10(1) or 18(4) above, and remanding the accused in custody, may, if he has attained the age of 17, order that he be brought up for any subsequent remands before an alternate magistrates' court nearer to the prison where he is to be confined while on remand.
- (2) The order shall require the accused to be brought before the alternate court at the end of the period of remand or at such earlier time as the alternate court may require.

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- (3) While the order is in force, the alternate court shall, to the exclusion of the court which made the order, have all the powers in relation to further remand (whether in custody or on bail) and the grant of legal aid which that court would have had but for the order.
- (4) The alternate court may, on remanding the accused in custody, require him to be brought before the court which made the order at the end of the period of remand or at such earlier time as that court may require; and, if the alternate court does so, or the accused is released on bail, the order under subsection (1) above shall cease to be in force.

- [^{F188}(4A) Where a magistrates' court is satisfied as mentioned in section 128(3A) above—
- (a) subsection (1) above shall have effect as if for the words “he be brought up for any subsequent remands before” there were substituted the words “applications for any subsequent remands be made to”;
 - (b) subsection (2) above shall have effect as if for the words “the accused to be brought before” there were substituted the words “an application for a further remand to be made to” and
 - (c) subsection (4) above shall have effect as if for the words “him to be brought before” there were substituted the words “an application for a further remand to be made to”.]

- (5) Schedule 5 to this Act shall have effect to supplement this section.

Textual Amendments

F188 S. 130(4A) inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 59(1), [Sch. 9 para. 5](#)

131 Remand of accused already in custody.

- (1) When a magistrates' court remands an accused person in custody and he is already detained under a custodial sentence, the period for which he is remanded may be up to 28 clear days.
- (2) But the court shall inquire as to the expected date of his release from that detention; and if it appears that it will be before 28 clear days have expired, he shall not be remanded in custody for more than 8 clear days or (if longer) a period ending with that date.
- (3) ^{F189}

Textual Amendments

F189 S. 131(3) repealed by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 59(1), [Sch. 9 para. 6](#), [Sch. 16](#)

Restrictions on imprisonment

132 Minimum term.

A magistrates' court shall not impose imprisonment for less than 5 days.

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133 Consecutive terms of imprisonment.

- (1) A magistrates' court imposing imprisonment [^{F190}or youth custody]on any person may order that the term of imprisonment [^{F190}or youth custody]shall commence on the expiration of any other term of imprisonment [^{F190}or youth custody]imposed by that or any other court; but where a magistrates' court imposes two or more terms of imprisonment [^{F190}or youth custody]to run consecutively the aggregate of such terms shall not, subject to the provisions of this section, exceed 6 months.
- (2) If two or more of the terms imposed by the court are imposed in respect of an offence triable either way which was tried summarily otherwise than in pursuance of section 22(2) above, the aggregate of the terms so imposed and any other terms imposed by the court may exceed 6 months but shall not, subject to the following provisions of this section, exceed 12 months.
- [^{F191}(2A) In relation to the imposition of terms of detention in a young offender institution subsection (2) above shall have effect as if the reference to an offence triable either way were a reference to such an offence or an offence triable only on indictment.]
- (3) The limitations imposed by the preceding subsections shall not operate to reduce the aggregate of the terms that the court may impose in respect of any offences below the term which the court has power to impose in respect of any one of those offences.
- (4) Where a person has been sentenced by a magistrates' court to imprisonment and a fine for the same offence, a period of imprisonment imposed for non-payment of the fine, or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy the fine, shall not be subject to the limitations imposed by the preceding subsections.
- (5) For the purposes of this section a term of imprisonment shall be deemed to be imposed in respect of an offence if it is imposed as a sentence or in default of payment of a sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum.

Textual Amendments
F190 Words inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, **Sch. 14 para. 56**
F191 [S. 133\(2A\)](#) inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 123(6), 170(1), **Sch. 15 para. 70**

Detention for short periods

134 ^{F192}

Textual Amendments
F192 S. 134 repealed by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 49, 123, 170(2), **Sch. 8 para. 16, Sch. 16**

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135 Detention of offender for one day in court-house or police station.

- (1) A magistrates' court that has power to commit to prison a person convicted of an offence, or would have that power but for section 82 or 88 above, may order him to be detained within the precincts of the court-house or at any police station until such hour, not later than 8 o'clock in the evening of the day on which the order is made, as the court may direct, and, if it does so, shall not, where it has power to commit him to prison, exercise that power.
- (2) A court shall not make such an order under this section as will deprive the offender of a reasonable opportunity of returning to his abode on the day of the order.
- [^{F193}(3) This section shall have effect in relation to a person aged 17 or over but less than 21 as if references in it to prison were references to detention under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982 (detention of persons aged 17 to 20 for default).]

Textual Amendments

F193 S. 135(3) added by [Criminal Justice Act 1982 \(c. 48, SIF 39:1\)](#), s. 77, [Sch. 14 para. 58](#)

136 Committal to custody overnight at police station for non-payment of sum adjudged by conviction.

- (1) A magistrates' court that has power to commit to prison a person in default of payment of a sum adjudged to be paid by a summary conviction, or would have that power but for section 82 or 88 above, may issue a warrant for his detention in a police station, and, if it does so, shall not, where it has power to commit him to prison, exercise that power.
- (2) A warrant under this section, unless the sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction is sooner paid,—
 - (a) shall authorise any police constable [^{F194}or any person who—
 - (a) is employed by an authority of a prescribed class;
 - (b) is authorised in the prescribed manner to execute such warrants; and
 - (c) is acting within the area for which the authority that employs him performs its functions.]to arrest the defaulter and take him to a police station, and
 - (b) shall require the officer in charge of the station to detain him there until 8 o'clock in the morning of the day following that on which he is arrested, or, if he is arrested between midnight and 8 o'clock in the morning, until 8 o'clock in the morning of the day on which he is arrested.
- (3) Notwithstanding subsection (2)(b) above, the officer may release the defaulter at any time within 4 hours before 8 o'clock in the morning if the officer thinks it expedient to do so in order to enable him to go to his work or for any other reason appearing to the officer to be sufficient.
- [^{F195}(4) This section shall have effect in relation to a person aged 17 or over but less than 21 as if references in it to prison were references to detention under section 9 of the Criminal Justice Act 1982 (detention of persons aged 17 to 20 for default).]

Textual Amendments

F194 Words inserted by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\)](#), ss. 65(2), 123, [Sch. 8 para. 16](#)

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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F195 S. 136(4) added by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 77, **Sch. 14 para. 58**

Fees, fines, forfeitures, etc.

137 Fees.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of this section, the court fees set out in Part I of Schedule 6 to this Act, and no others, shall be chargeable by clerks of magistrates' courts; and any enactment providing for the payment of any fees for the payment of which provision is made in the said Part I shall have effect accordingly.
- (2) No fee shall be chargeable by a clerk of a magistrates' court in respect of any matter specified in Part II of the said Schedule.
- (3) Nothing in this section shall affect the fees chargeable in respect of the matters specified in Part III of the said Schedule.
- (4) The Secretary of State may from time to time by order make such variations in Part I of the said Schedule as may seem to him proper.
- (5) The power to make an order under subsection (4) above shall be exercisable by statutory instrument; and a draft of any such statutory instrument shall be laid before Parliament.
- (6) This section shall apply to magistrates' courts held by metropolitan stipendiary magistrates as it applies to other magistrates' courts.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C84 S. 137(1) excluded by Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act 1985 (c. 57, SIF 39:2), s. 4(6)

138 Remission of fees

A magistrates' court may on the ground of poverty or for other reasonable cause remit in whole or in part any fee payable in proceedings before the court.

139 Disposal of sums adjudged to be paid by conviction.

A clerk of a magistrates' court shall apply moneys received by him on account of a sum adjudged to be paid by a summary conviction as follows—

- (a) in the first place in payment of any compensation adjudged by the conviction to be paid to any person;
- (b) in the second place in payment of any costs so adjudged to be paid to the prosecutor; and
- (c) the balance to the fund to which, or the person to whom, he is required to pay the sum by section 61 of the Justices of the ^{M109}Peace Act 1979 or any other enactment relating to the sum.

Marginal Citations

M109 1979 c. 55.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/07/1991. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

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140 Disposal of non-pecuniary forfeitures.

Subject to any enactment relating to customs or excise, anything other than money forfeited on a conviction by a magistrates' court or the forfeiture of which may be enforced by a magistrates' court shall be sold or otherwise disposed of in such manner as the court may direct; and the proceeds shall be applied as if they were a fine imposed under the enactment on which the proceedings for the forfeiture are founded.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C85** S. 140 excluded by [Telecommunications Act 1984 \(c. 12, SIF 96\)](#), **s. 80(12)**
- C86** S. 140 excluded by [Wireless Telegraphy Act 1949 \(c. 54, SIF 96\)](#), **s. 14(3C)** (as substituted by [Telecommunications Act 1984 \(c. 12, SIF 96\)](#), **s. 82**)
- C87** S. 140 excluded (E.W.) by [Prevention of Terrorism \(Temporary Provisions\) Act 1989 \(c. 4, SIF 39:2\)](#), **s. 13(8)**, **Sch. 4 para. 1(7)**
- C88** S. 140 excluded (19.2.2001) by [2000 c. 11, s. 23\(9\)](#), **Sch. 4 para. 2(4)**; [S.I. 2001/421, art. 2](#)
- C89** S. 140 excluded (25.7.2003) by [The Advanced Television Services Regulations 2003 \(S.I. 2003/1901\)](#), **reg. 8, Sch. para. 8(10)**
- S. 140 excluded (8.2.2007) by [Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 \(c. 36\)](#), **ss. 103, 126, Sch. 5 para. 6**

Clerks to justices

141 Clerks to justices.

- (1) Any reference in this Act to a clerk of any magistrates' court shall be construed as a reference to the clerk to the justices for the petty sessions area for which the court is acting, or was acting at the relevant time.
- (2) Where there is more than one clerk to the justices for any petty sessions area, anything that this Act requires or authorises to be done by or to the clerk to the justices shall or may be done by or to any of the clerks or by or to such of the clerks as the magistrates' courts committee having power over the appointment of clerks to justices for that area generally or in any particular case or cases may direct.
- (3) Subsections (1) and (2) above shall apply to the justices' clerks for the inner London area as if the reference in subsection (2) to the magistrates' courts committee were a reference to the committee of magistrates.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C90** S. 141 applied by [Public Order Act 1986 \(c. 64, SIF 39:2\)](#), **ss. 34(3), 37**
- C91** S. 141 applied (E.W.) by [Prevention of Terrorism \(Temporary Provisions\) Act 1989 \(c. 4, SIF 39:2\)](#), **s. 13(8)**, **Sch. 4 para. 1(5)**
- C92** S. 141 applied with modifications (*prosp.*) by [s. 7\(10\)\(c\) and \(24.4.1991\) by s. 18\(4\) of Football Spectators Act 1989 \(c. 37, SIF 45A\)](#)

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Power to rectify mistakes etc.

142 Power of magistrates' court to re-open cases to rectify mistakes etc.

- (1) Subject to subsection (4) below, a magistrates' court may vary or rescind a sentence or other order imposed or made by it when dealing with an offender; and it is hereby declared that this power extends to replacing a sentence or order which for any reason appears to be invalid by another which the court has power to impose or make.
- (2) Where a person is found guilty by a magistrates' court in a case in which he has pleaded not guilty or the court has proceeded in his absence under section 11(1) above, and it subsequently appears to the court that it would be in the interests of justice that the case should be heard again by different justices, the court may, subject to subsection (4) below, so direct.
- (3) Where a court gives a direction under subsection (2) above—
 - (a) the finding of guilty and any sentence or other order imposed or made in consequence thereof shall be of no effect; and
 - (b) section 10(4) above shall apply as if the trial of the person in question had been adjourned.
- (4) The powers conferred by subsections (1) and (2) above shall be exercisable only within the period of 28 days beginning with the day on which the sentence or order was imposed or made or the person was found guilty, as the case may be, and only—
 - (a) by a court constituted in the same manner as the court by which the sentence or order was imposed or made or, as the case may be, by which the person in question was found guilty, or
 - (b) where that court comprised 3 or more justices of the peace, by a court which consists of or comprises a majority of those justices.
- (5) Where a sentence or order is varied under subsection (1) above, the sentence or other order, as so varied, shall take effect from the beginning of the day on which it was originally imposed or made, unless the court otherwise directs.

Power to alter sums specified in certain provisions

143 Power to alter sums specified in certain provisions.

- [^{F196}(1) If it appears to the Secretary of State that there has been a change in the value of money since the relevant date, he may by order substitute for the sum or sums for the time being specified in any provision mentioned in subsection (2) below such other sum or sums as appear to him justified by the change.]
- (2) The said provisions are—
 - (a) section 22 (1) above;
 - [^{F197}(aa) section 24(3) and (4) above;]
 - (b) the definition of “the prescribed sum” in section 32(9) above;
 - (c) paragraph (a) of section 33(1) above
 - [^{F198}(ca) section 34(3)(b) above;
 - (cb) section 36 above;]
 - (d) section 40(1) above;
 - (e) the Table in paragraph 1 of Schedule 4 to this Act.

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- [^{F199}(f) any provision mentioned in Schedule 6A to this Act;
- (g) paragraph 11(2) of Schedule 5A to the Army Act ^{M110}1955 and to the Air Force Act ^{M111}1955 (compensation orders);
- (h) paragraph 14(1) of that Schedule and paragraph 14(1) of Schedule 4A to the Naval Discipline Act ^{M112}1957 (recognizance from parents and guardians);
- (i) section 2(13) of the Children and Young Persons Act ^{M113}1969 (recognizance from parents and guardians);
- (j) the Table in section 31(3A) of the Powers of Criminal Courts Act ^{M114}1973;
- (k) section 8(1)(b) of the Armed Forces Act ^{M115}1976 (maximum fine awarded by Standing Civilian Courts);
- (l) ^{F200}
- (o) section 37(2) of the Criminal Justice Act 1982.]

[^{F201}(3) In subsection (1) above “the relevant date” means—

- (a) in relation to the first order under this section, 29th July 1977; and
- (b) in relation to each subsequent order, the date of the previous order.]

(4) ^{F202}

(6) An order under subsection (1) ^{F203}above—

- (a) shall be made by statutory instrument subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament and may be revoked by a subsequent order thereunder; and
- (b) shall not affect the punishment for an offence committed before that order comes into force.

Textual Amendments

- F196** S. 143(1) substituted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 48(1)(a)
- F197** S. 143(2)(aa) inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 48(1)(b)(i)
- F198** S. 143(2)(ca)(cb) inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1) s. 48(1)(b)(ii)
- F199** S. 143(2)(f)–(o) inserted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 48(1)(b)(iii)
- F200** S. 143(2)(l)–(n) repealed by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 123, 170(2), Sch. 8 para. 16, Sch. 16
- F201** S. 143(3) substituted by Criminal Justice Act 1982 (c. 48, SIF 39:1), s. 48(1)(c)
- F202** S. 143(4)(5) repealed by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1), ss. 123, 170(2), Sch. 8 para. 16, Sch. 16
- F203** Words in s. 143(6) repealed by Criminal Justice Act 1988 (c. 33, SIF 39:1) ss. 123, 170(2), Sch. 8 para. 16, Sch. 16

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C93** S. 143 extended (N.I.) by Finance Act 1983 (c. 28, SIF 40:2), s. 47, Sch. 9 para. 1(1)
- C94** S. 143(2) extended by Drug Trafficking Offences Act 1986 (c. 32, SIF 39:1), s. 6(5)(6)

Marginal Citations

- M110** 1955 c. 18 (7:1).
- M111** 1955 c. 19 (7:1).
- M112** 1957 c. 53 (7:1).
- M113** 1969 c. 54 (20).
- M114** 1973 c. 62 (39:1).
- M115** 1976 c. 52 (7:1).

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Rules

144 Rule committee and rules of procedure.

- (1) The Lord Chancellor may appoint a rule committee for magistrates' courts, and may on the advice of or after consultation with the rule committee make rules for regulating and prescribing the procedure and practice to be followed in magistrates' courts and by justices' clerks.
- (2) The rule committee shall consist of the Lord Chief Justice, the President of the Family Division of the High Court, the chief metropolitan stipendiary magistrate and such number of other persons appointed by the Lord Chancellor as he may determine.
- (3) Among the members of the committee appointed by the Lord Chancellor there shall be at least
 - [^{F204}(a) one justices' clerk;
 - (b) one person who has a Supreme Court qualification (within the meaning of section 71 of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990); and
 - (c) one person who has been granted by an authorised body, under Part II of that Act, the right to conduct litigation in relation to all proceedings in the Supreme Court.]
- (4) The power to make rules conferred by this section shall be exercisable by statutory instrument which shall be subject to annulment by resolution of either House of Parliament.
- (5) In this section the expression "justices' clerk" means a clerk to the justices for a petty sessions area.

Textual Amendments

F204 S. 144(3)(a)(b)(c) substituted for words from "one justice's clerk" to the end by [Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 \(c. 41, SIF 37, 82\), s. 125\(3\), Sch. 18 para. 25\(7\)\(a\)](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C95** S. 144 extended by [Criminal Law Act 1977 \(c. 45, SIF 39:1\), s. 48](#) (as amended by [Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 \(c. 43, SIF 82\), s. 154\(1\), Sch. 7 para. 151](#))
- C96** S. 144 extended by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\), ss. 28, 123\(6\), Sch. 2 para. 4\(c\), Sch. 8 para. 16](#)
- C97** S. 144 extended (1.7.1991) by [Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 \(c. 41, SIF 82\), s. 10\(2\)](#); S.I. 1991/1364, [art. 2](#), Sch.
- C98** S. 144 extended by [Extradition Act 1989 \(c. 33, SIF 48\), ss. 1\(3\), 7\(3\), 14\(2\), Sch. 1 para. 9\(2\)](#)
- C99** S. 144 extended (prosp.) by [Criminal Justice Act 1988 \(c. 33, SIF 39:1\), ss. 29\(5\)\(c\), 171\(1\)](#) (with s. 123(6), Sch. 8 para. 16) (which s. 29 was repealed (10.6.1991) by [Criminal Justice \(International Co-operation\) Act 1990 \(c. 5\), s. 31\(3\), Sch. 5](#)); S.I. 1991/1072, [art. 2\(a\)](#), Part I, Appendix B)

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VALID FROM 03/04/2006

[^{F205}144A] Rules to be made if required by Lord Chancellor

- (1) This section applies if the Lord Chancellor gives the Lord Chief Justice written notice that he thinks it is expedient for rules made under section 144 to include provision that would achieve a purpose specified in the notice.
- (2) The Lord Chief Justice must make such rules as he considers necessary to achieve the specified purpose.
- (3) Those rules must be—
 - (a) made within a reasonable period after the Lord Chancellor gives notice to the Lord Chief Justice;
 - (b) made in accordance with section 144.
- (4) The Lord Chief Justice may nominate a judicial office holder (as defined in section 109(4) of the Constitutional Reform Act 2005) to exercise his functions under this section.]

Textual Amendments

F205 S. 144A inserted (3.4.2006) by [Constitutional Reform Act 2005 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 15, 148, Sch. 4 para. 103 ; [S.I. 2006/1014](#), art. 2(a)

145 Rules: supplementary provisions.

- (1) The power to make rules conferred by section 144 above shall, without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of that section, include power to make provision—
 - (a) as to the practice and procedure of justices in exercising functions preliminary or incidental to proceedings before a magistrates' court;
 - (b) as to the service and execution of process issued by or for the purposes of a magistrates' court, including the service and execution in England and Wales of process issued in other parts of the United Kingdom;
 - (c) as to the keeping of records of proceedings before magistrates' courts and the manner in which things done in the course of, or as preliminary or incidental to, any such proceedings, or any proceedings on appeal from a magistrates' court to the Crown Court, may be proved in any legal proceedings;
 - (d) as to the extent to which a justices' clerk may engage in practice as a [^{F206}legal representative];
 - (e) as to the functions of officers of the Crown Court for the purposes of securing the attendance at a trial on indictment of persons in respect of whom conditional witness orders, or orders treated as conditional witness orders, have been made under section 1 of the ^{M116}Criminal Procedure (Attendance of Witnesses) Act 1965;
 - (f) as to the furnishing by any person having custody of the depositions of copies thereof, and of copies of the information if it is in writing, to a person committed for trial;
 - (g) as to what magistrates' court shall have jurisdiction to hear any complaint;

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- (h) as to the matters additional to those specified in section 53 above on complaint for which a magistrates' court shall have power to make an order with the consent of the defendant without hearing evidence;
 - (i) as to any other matters as to which immediately before the coming into force of section 15 of the Justices of the ^{M117}Peace Act 1949 provision was or could have been made by virtue of the enactments and parts of enactments repealed by Part II of Schedule 7 to the said Act of 1949.
- (2) Where any Act expressly confers jurisdiction on any magistrates' court to hear a complaint, rules made under subsection (1)(g) above shall not take away that jurisdiction, but may extend it to any other magistrates' court.
- (3) Any Act passed before 16th December 1949, in so far as that Act relates to matters about which rules may be made under section 144 above, shall have effect subject to any rules so made and may be amended or repealed by the rules accordingly; but nothing in the said section shall authorise the rules to reduce the number of justices required for any purpose by any Act.
- (4) No provision included in rules under section 144 above which dispenses with the need to prove that a summons issued under section 1 above and served in accordance with the rules has come to the knowledge of the accused shall apply to a summons for an indictable offence.
- (5) Any rules, directions, forms or other instrument having effect immediately before this subsection comes into force as if contained in rules made under section 15 of the Justices of the ^{M118}Peace Act 1949 by virtue of section 15(8) of that Act (rules etc. which previously had effect under the enactments repealed by Part II of Schedule 7 to that Act) shall have effect as if contained in rules made under section 144 above.

Textual Amendments

F206 Words substituted by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 37), s. 125(3), **Sch. 18 para. 25(4)(c)**

Marginal Citations

M116 1965 c. 69.

M117 1949 c. 101.

M118 1949 c. 101.

VALID FROM 01/10/1991

^{F207} **145A Rules: costs order against legal representative.**

- (1) In any civil proceedings, a magistrates' court may disallow or (as the case may be) order the legal or other representative concerned to meet the whole of any wasted costs or such part of them as may be determined in accordance with rules.
- (2) In subsection (1), "wasted costs" means any costs incurred by a party—
 - (a) as a result of any improper, unreasonable or negligent act or omission on the part of any legal or other representative or any employee of such a representative; or

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- (b) which, in the light of any such act or omission occurring after they were incurred, the court considers it is unreasonable to expect that party to pay.
- (3) In this section “legal or other representative”, in relation to any proceedings, means any person who is exercising a right of audience, or a right to conduct litigation, on behalf of any party to the proceedings.
- (4) Rules made by virtue of this section may, in particular, make provision as to the destination of any payment required to be made under the rules (including provision for the reimbursement of sums paid by the Legal Aid Board).
- (5) Rules made by virtue of this section—
 - (a) shall require a magistrates' court which proposes to act under the rules against a legal or other representative to allow him a reasonable opportunity to appear before it and show cause why it should not do so;
 - (b) shall provide that action may be taken under the rules either on the application of any party to the proceedings or on the motion of the court;
 - (c) shall provide that no such action shall be taken after the end of the period of six months beginning with the date on which the proceedings are disposed of by the court; and
 - (d) shall provide that a legal or other representative against whom action is taken under the rules may appeal to the Crown Court.]

Textual Amendments

F207 S. 145A inserted (1.10.1991) by Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c. 41, SIF 82), s. 112; S.I. 1991/1883, art.2.

Rules about juvenile courts

146 Rules relating to juvenile court panels and composition of juvenile courts.

- (1) Without prejudice to the generality of the power to make rules under section 144 above relating to the procedure and practice to be followed by magistrates' courts, provision may be made by such rules with respect to any of the following matters, namely,—
 - (a) the formation and revision of juvenile court panels, that is to say, panels of justices specially qualified to deal with juvenile cases and the eligibility of justices to be members of such panels;
 - (b) the appointment of persons as chairmen of juvenile courts; and
 - (c) the composition of juvenile courts.
- (2) Rules making any such provisions as are referred to in subsection (1) above may confer powers on the Lord Chancellor with respect to any of the matters specified in the rules and may, in particular, provide for the appointment of juvenile court panels by him and for the removal from a juvenile court panel of any justice who, in his opinion, is unsuitable to serve on a juvenile court.
- (3) Rules made by virtue of this section may make different provision in relation to different areas for which juvenile court panels are formed; and in the application of this section to the county palatine of Lancaster, for any reference in subsection (2)

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above to the Lord Chancellor there shall be substituted a reference to the Chancellor of the Duchy.

- (4) Nothing in this section or in any rules made under section 144 above shall affect—
- (a) the areas for which juvenile court panels are formed and juvenile courts are constituted;
 - (b) the provisions of Part I of Schedule 2 to the ^{M119}Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (and, as it has effect by virtue of section 17(1) of that Act, Part I of Schedule 2 to the ^{M120}Children and Young Persons Act 1933) with respect to the making of recommendations and orders relating to the formation of combined juvenile court panels; or
 - (c) the provisions of paragraph 14 of that Schedule relating to the divisions of the metropolitan area for which juvenile courts sit;

but rules under section 144 above may repeal, either generally or with respect to any part of the metropolitan area, any provision contained in paragraphs 15 to 18 of that Schedule (which contain provisions applicable in the metropolitan area with respect to certain of the matters referred to in subsection (1) above) and in subsections (2) and (3) of section 12 of the ^{M121}Administration of Justice Act 1964 (which amend those paragraphs).

- (5) In this section “the metropolitan area” means the inner London area and the City of London.

Marginal Citations

- M119** 1963 c. 37.
M120 1933 c. 12.
M121 1964 c. 42

Occasional court-houses

147 Occasional court-house.

- (1) The justices acting for a petty sessions area may appoint as an occasional court-house any place that is not a petty-sessional court-house.
- (2) A place appointed as an occasional court-house after 31st May 1953 shall not be used as such unless public notice has been given that it has been appointed.
- (3) There may be more than one occasional court-house for each petty sessions area; and an occasional court-house may be outside the petty sessions area for which it is appointed, and if so shall be deemed to be in that area for the purpose of the jurisdiction of the justices acting for that area.

Interpretation

148 “Magistrates’ court”.

- (1) In this Act the expression “magistrates’ court” means any justice or justices of the peace acting under any enactment or by virtue of his or their commission or under the common law.

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- (2) Except where the contrary is expressed, anything authorised or required by this Act to be done by, to or before the magistrates' court by, to or before which any other thing was done, or is to be done, may be done by, to or before any magistrates' court acting for the same petty sessions area as that court.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C100 S. 148(2) extended (4.7.1996) by 1996 c. 25, s. 76 (with s. 78(1))

149 Isles of Scilly.

For the purposes of this Act the Isles of Scilly form part of the county of Cornwall.

150 Interpretation of other terms.

- (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions have the meaning hereby assigned to them, that is to say—

“Act” includes local Act;

F208

“bail in criminal proceedings” has the same meaning as in the^{M122}Bail Act 1976;

“commit to custody” means commit to prison or, where any enactment authorises or requires committal to some other place of detention instead of committal to prison, to that other place;

“committal proceedings” means proceedings before a magistrates' court acting as examining justices;

“domestic proceedings” has the meaning assigned to it by section 65 above;

“enactment” includes an enactment contained in a local Act or in any order, regulation or other instrument having effect by virtue of an Act;

“fine”, except for the purposes of any enactment imposing a limit on the amount of any fine, includes any pecuniary penalty or pecuniary forfeiture or pecuniary compensation payable under a conviction;

“impose imprisonment” means pass a sentence of imprisonment or fix a term of imprisonment for failure to pay any sum of money, or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy any sum of money, or for failure to do or abstain from doing anything required to be done or left undone;

[^{F209}“legal representative” means an authorised advocate or authorised litigator, as defined by section 119(1) of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990;]

“London commission area” has the same meaning as in the Justices of the^{M123}Peace Act 1979;

[^{F210}“magistrates' court maintenance order” means a maintenance order enforceable by a magistrates' court;

“maintenance order” means any order specified in Schedule 8 to the Administration of Justice Act^{M124}1970 and includes such an order which has been discharged, if any arrears are recoverable thereunder;]

“petty-sessional court-house” means any of the following, that is to say—

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- (a) a court-house or place at which justices are accustomed to assemble for holding special or petty sessions or for the time being appointed as a substitute for such a court-house or place (including, where justices are accustomed to assemble for either special or petty sessions at more than one court-house or place in a petty sessional division, any such court-house or place);
 - (b) a court-house or place at which a stipendiary magistrate is authorised by law to do alone any act authorised to be done by more than one justice of the peace;
 - [^{F211}“petty sessions area” has the same meaning as in the Justices of the Peace Act ^{M125}1979;]
 - “prescribed” means prescribed by the rules;
 - “the register” means the register of proceedings before a magistrates’ court required by the rules to be kept by the clerk of the court;
 - “the rules” means rules made under section 144 above;
 - “sentence” does not include a committal in default of payment of any sum of money, or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy any sum of money, or for failure to do or abstain from doing anything required to be done or left undone;
 - “sum enforceable as a civil debt” means—
 - (a) any sum recoverable summarily as a civil debt which is adjudged to be paid by the order of a magistrates’ court;
 - (b) any other sum expressed by this or any other Act to be so enforceable;
 - “transfer of fine order” has the meaning assigned to it by section 89 above.
- (2) Except where the contrary is expressed or implied, anything required or authorised by this Act to be done by justices may, where two or more justices are present, be done by one of them on behalf of the others.
- (3) Any reference in this Act to a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction or order of a magistrates’ court shall be construed as including a reference to any costs, damages or compensation adjudged to be paid by the conviction or order of which the amount is ascertained by the conviction or order; but this subsection does not prejudice the definition of “sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction” contained in subsection (8) of section 81 above for the purposes of that section.
- (4) Where the age of any person at any time is material for the purposes of any provision of this Act regulating the powers of a magistrates’ court, his age at the material time shall be deemed to be or to have been that which appears to the court after considering any available evidence to be or to have been his age at that time.
- (5) Except where the context otherwise requires, any reference in this Act to an offence shall be construed as including a reference to an alleged offence; and any reference in this Act to an offence committed, completed or begun anywhere shall be construed as including a reference to an offence alleged to have been committed, completed or begun there.
- (6) References in this Act to an offence punishable with imprisonment or punishable on summary conviction with imprisonment shall be construed without regard to any prohibition or restriction imposed by or under this or any other Act on imprisonment of young offenders.
- (7) The provisions of this Act authorising a magistrates’ court on conviction of an offender to pass a sentence or make an order instead of dealing with him in any other way shall

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not be construed as taking away any power to order him to pay costs, damages or compensation.

Textual Amendments

- F208** Definition of “affiliation order” repealed by [Family Law Reform Act 1987 \(c. 42, SIF 49:7\)](#), ss. 33(1)(2)(4), [Sch. 2 para. 88\(a\)](#), Sch. 3 paras. 1, 6, Sch. 4
- F209** Definition of “legal representative” inserted by [Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 \(c. 41, SIF 37, 82\)](#), s. 125(3), [Sch. 18 para. 25\(2\)](#)
- F210** Definitions of “magistrates' court maintenance order” and “maintenance order” inserted by [Family Law Reform Act 1987 \(c. 42, SIF 49:7\)](#), s. 33(1)(2), [Sch. 2 para. 88\(b\)](#), Sch. 3 paras 1, 6
- F211** Definition of “petty sessions area” substituted by [Local Government Act 1985 \(c. 51, SIF 81:1\)](#), s. 12(11)

Marginal Citations

- M122** 1976 c. 63.
- M123** 1979 c. 55.
- M124** 1970 c. 31 (45:1).
- M125** 1979 c. 55 (82).

Miscellaneous

151 Application of Act to distress for rates.

- (1) Justices may state a case under this Act when called upon to issue a warrant of distress for any rate other than a rate within the meaning of the ^{M126}General Rate Act 1967.
- (2) Sections 79(2) and 100 above shall apply to proceedings for the non-payment of any rate to which subsection (1) above applies as they apply to proceedings for the non-payment of a sum adjudged to be paid by a magistrates' court.
- (3) Except as provided in the preceding provisions of this section, the power of justices to issue a warrant of distress for a rate, the form and execution of such a warrant and the committal of persons for want of sufficient distress to satisfy a rate shall not be subject to the provisions of this Act.

Marginal Citations

- M126** 1967 c. 9.

152 Saving for juvenile courts.

The provisions of this Act relating to the constitution, place of sitting and procedure of magistrates' courts shall, in their application to juvenile courts, have effect subject to any provision contained in the rules or any enactment regulating the constitution, place of sitting or procedure of juvenile courts.

153 Magistrates' court may sit on Sundays and public holidays.

It is hereby declared that a magistrates' court may sit on any day of the year, and in particular (if the court thinks fit) on Christmas Day, Good Friday or any Sunday.

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Repeals, short title, etc.

154 Consequential amendments, transitional provisions, repeals, etc.

- (1) Subject to subsection (2) below, the enactments mentioned in Schedule 7 to this Act shall have effect subject to the amendments specified in that Schedule, being amendments consequential on the provisions of this Act.
- (2) The transitional provisions and savings in Schedule 8 to this Act shall have effect.
- (3) Subject to subsection (2) above, the enactments specified in Schedule 9 to this Act (which include enactments which were spent before the passing of this Act) are hereby repealed to the extent specified in the third column of that Schedule.
- (4) Nothing in this Act shall be taken as prejudicing the operation of sections 16 and 17 of the ^{M127}Interpretation Act 1978 (which relate to the effect of repeals).

Marginal Citations

^{M127} 1978 c. 30.

155 Short title, extent and commencement.

- (1) This Act may be cited as the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980.
- (2) The following provisions of this Act extend to Scotland—
 - (a) sections 8 (except subsection (9)), 12(8), 83(3), 90 and 91 and this section; and
 - (b) section 154 and Schedules 7, 8 and 9 so far as they relate to any enactment extending to Scotland.
- (3) The following provisions of this Act extend to Northern Ireland—
 - (a) sections 83(3), 90 and 91 and this section; and
 - (b) section 154 and Schedules 7, 8 and 9 so far as they relate to an enactment extending to Northern Ireland.
- (4) The provisions of section 126 above have the same extent as the sections of the ^{M128}Indictable Offences Act 1848 to which they refer.
- (5) The provisions of section 32(7) and (9) above, in their operation in relation to the provision that may be made under subsection (2) of section 2 of the ^{M129}European Communities Act 1972, extend to all places to which the said section 2 extends (except Scotland [^{F212}and Northern Ireland]).
- (6) Except as stated in subsections (2) to (5) above, and except so far as relates to the interpretation or commencement of the provisions mentioned in those subsections, this Act extends to England and Wales only.
- (7) This Act shall come into force on such date as the Secretary of State may appoint by order made by statutory instrument.

Subordinate Legislation Made

P1 Power of appointment conferred by s. 155(7) fully exercised: 6.7.1981 appointed by [S.I. 1981/457](#)

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Textual Amendments

F212 Words inserted by [S.I. 1984/703](#), (N.I. 3), art. 19(1), Sch. 6 para. 16

Marginal Citations

M128 1848 c. 42.

M129 1972 c. 68.

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