



Telecommunications Act 1984

1984 CHAPTER 12

PART II

PROVISION OF TELECOMMUNICATION SERVICES

Offences

42 Fraudulent use of telecommunication system.

- [^{F1}(1) A person who dishonestly obtains a [^{F2}service to which this subsection applies] with intent to avoid payment of any charge applicable to the provision of that service shall be guilty of an offence and liable—
- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum or to both;
 - (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [^{F3}five years] or to a fine or to both.
- (2) [^{F4}Subsection (1) above applies to any service (other than a service [^{F5}such as is mentioned in section 297(1) of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988)] which is provided by means of] a telecommunication system the running of which is authorised by a licence granted under section 7 above.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** S. 42 repealed (25.7.2003 for specified purposes, 29.12.2003 otherwise) by [Communications Act 2003](#) (c. 21), ss. 406, 408, 411, [Sch. 19\(1\)](#) (with [Sch. 18](#), [Sch. 19\(1\)](#) Note 1); S.I. 2003/1900, arts. 1(2), [2\(1\)](#), 3(1), [Sch. 1](#) (with [art. 3\(2\)](#) (as amended (8.12.2003) by S.I. 2003/3142, [art. 1\(3\)](#))); S.I. 2003/3142, [art. 3](#), [Sch. 1](#) (with [art. 11](#))
- F2** Words substituted by [Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984](#) (c. 46, SIF 96), [Sch. 5 para.45\(2\)](#)
- F3** Words in s. 42(1)(b) substituted (27.4.1997) by 1997 c. 4, [ss. 2\(1\)](#) 3(3) (with s. 2(2))
- F4** Words substituted by [Cable and Broadcasting Act 1984](#) (c. 46, SIF 96), s. 57(1), [Sch. 5 para. 45\(3\)](#)
- F5** Words substituted by [Broadcasting Act 1990](#) (c. 42, SIF 96), s. 203(1), [Sch. 20 para. 38\(3\)](#)

Status: Point in time view as at 26/05/2011.

Changes to legislation: Telecommunications Act 1984, Cross Heading: Offences is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 15 August 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)

[^{F6}42A Possession or supply of anything for fraudulent purpose in connection with use of telecommunication system.

[^{F7}(1) Subsection (2) below applies if a person has in his custody or under his control anything [^{F8}(other than an unauthorised decoder as defined in section 297A(4) of the ^{M1}Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988)] which may be used for the purpose of obtaining, or for a purpose connected with the obtaining of, a service to which section 42(1) above applies.

(2) If the person intends—

- (a) to use the thing—
 - (i) to obtain such a service dishonestly, or
 - (ii) for a purpose connected with the dishonest obtaining of such a service,
- (b) dishonestly to allow the thing to be used to obtain such a service, or
- (c) to allow the thing to be used for a purpose connected with the dishonest obtaining of such a service,

he shall be guilty of an offence.

(3) Subsection (4) below applies if a person supplies or offers to supply anything [^{F9}(other than an unauthorised decoder as defined in section 297A(4) of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988)] which may be used for the purpose of obtaining, or for a purpose connected with the obtaining of, a service to which section 42(1) above applies.

(4) If the person supplying or offering to supply the thing knows or believes that the person to whom it is supplied or offered intends or intends if it is supplied to him—

- (a) to use it—
 - (i) to obtain such a service dishonestly, or
 - (ii) for a purpose connected with the dishonest obtaining of such a service,
- (b) dishonestly to allow it to be used to obtain such a service, or
- (c) to allow it to be used for a purpose connected with the dishonest obtaining of such a service,

he shall be guilty of an offence.

(5) A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable—

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

(6) In this section, references to use of a thing include, in the case of a thing which is used to record any data, use of any of the data.]]

Textual Amendments

- F6** S. 42A inserted (27.4.1997) by 1997 C. 4, ss. 1, 3(3)
- F7** S. 42A repealed (25.7.2003 for specified purposes, 29.12.2003 otherwise) by [Communications Act 2003](#) (c. 21), ss. 406, 408, 411, [Sch. 19\(1\)](#) (with [Sch. 18](#), [Sch. 19\(1\)](#) Note 1); S.I. 2003/1900, arts. 1(2), [2\(1\)](#), 3(1), [Sch. 1](#) (with [art. 3\(2\)](#) (as amended (8.12.2003) by S.I. 2003/3142, [art. 1\(3\)](#))); S.I. 2003/3142, [art. 3](#), [Sch. 1](#) (with [art. 11](#))
- F8** Words in s. 42A(1) inserted (28.5.2000) by S.I. 2000/1175, [reg. 3](#)
- F9** Words in s. 42A(3) inserted (28.5.2000) by S.I. 2000/1175, [reg. 3](#)

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Marginal Citations

M1 1988 c. 48.

43 Improper use of public telecommunication system.

[^{F10}(1) A person who—

- (a) sends, by means of a public telecommunication system, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character; or
- (b) sends by those means, for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety to another, a message that he knows to be false or persistently makes use for that purpose of a public telecommunication system,

shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to [^{F11}imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months or a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or both].

- (2) Subsection (1) above does not apply to anything done in the course of providing a [^{F12}programme service (within the meaning of the Broadcasting Act 1990)].

Textual Amendments

F10 S. 43 repealed (25.7.2003 for specified purposes, 29.12.2003 otherwise) by [Communications Act 2003](#) (c. 21), ss. 406, 408, 411, [Sch. 19\(1\)](#) (with [Sch. 18](#), [Sch. 19\(1\) Note 1](#)); S.I. 2003/1900, arts. 1(2), [2\(1\)](#), 3(1), [Sch. 1](#) (with art. 3(2) (as amended (8.12.2003) by S.I. 2003/3142, art. 1(3))); S.I. 2003/3142, [art. 3](#), [Sch. 1](#) (with art. 11)

F11 Words in s. 43(1) substituted (3.2.1995) by 1994 c. 33, s. [92\(1\)\(2\)](#); S.I. 1995/127, art. 2(1), [Sch. 1](#)

F12 Words substituted by [Broadcasting Act 1990](#) (c. 42, SIF 96), s. 203(1), [Sch. 20 para. 38\(4\)](#)

44 Modification etc. of messages.

[^{F13}(1) A person engaged in the running of a public telecommunication system who otherwise than in the course of his duty intentionally modifies or interferes with the contents of a message sent by means of that system shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) above shall be liable—

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

Textual Amendments

F13 Ss. 44-46 repealed (25.7.2003 for specified purposes, 29.12.2003 otherwise) by [Communications Act 2003](#) (c. 21), ss. 406, 408, 411, [Sch. 17 para. 63\(1\)](#), [Sch. 19\(1\)](#) (with [Sch. 17 para. 63\(2\)\(3\)](#), [Sch. 18](#), [Sch. 19\(1\) Note 1](#)); S.I. 2003/1900, arts. 1(2), [2\(1\)](#), 3(1), [Sch. 1](#) (with art. 3(2) (as amended (8.12.2003) by S.I. 2003/3142, art. 1(3))); S.I. 2003/3142, [art. 3](#), [Sch. 1](#) (with art. 11)

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[^{F14}45 Disclosure of messages etc.

[^{F15}(1) A person engaged in the running of a public telecommunication system who otherwise than in the course of his duty intentionally discloses to any person —

- (a) the contents of any message which has been intercepted in the course of its transmission by means of that system; or
- (b) any information concerning the use made of telecommunication services provided for any other person by means of that system,

shall be guilty of an offence.

[^{F16}(2) Subsection (1) above does not apply to any disclosure made—

- (a) in accordance with the order of any court or for the purposes of any criminal proceedings;
- (b) in accordance with any warrant, authorisation or notice issued, granted or given under any provision of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000;
- (c) in compliance with any requirement imposed (apart from that Act) in consequence of the exercise by any person of any statutory power exercisable by him for the purpose of obtaining any document or other information; or
- (d) in pursuance of any duty under that Act of 2000, or under Part III of the ^{M2}Police Act 1997, to provide information or produce any document to the Interception of Communications Commissioner or to the tribunal established under section 65 of that Act of 2000.

^{F16}(3) In subsection (2) above “criminal proceedings” and “statutory power” have the same meanings as in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.]

(4) A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable—

- (a) on summary conviction, to a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum;
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to a fine.]]

Textual Amendments

F14 S. 45 substituted by [Interception of Communications Act 1985 \(c. 56, SIF 96\)](#), s. 11(1)(4), [Sch. 2](#)

F15 Ss. 44-46 repealed (25.7.2003 for specified purposes, 29.12.2003 otherwise) by [Communications Act 2003 \(c. 21\)](#), ss. 406, 408, 411, [Sch. 17 para. 63\(1\)](#), [Sch. 19\(1\)](#) (with [Sch. 17 para. 63\(2\)\(3\)](#), [Sch. 18](#), [Sch. 19\(1\) Note 1](#)); [S.I. 2003/1900](#), arts. 1(2), [2\(1\)](#), 3(1), [Sch. 1](#) (with [art. 3\(2\)](#) (as amended (8.12.2003) by [S.I. 2003/3142](#), [art. 1\(3\)](#))); [S.I. 2003/3142](#), [art. 3](#), [Sch. 1](#) (with [art. 11](#))

F16 S. 45(2)(3) substituted (2.10.2000) by [2000 c. 23](#), s. 82, [Sch. 4 para. 3](#) (with s. 82(3)); [S.I. 2000/2543](#), [art. 3](#) (with [art. 5\(2\)](#))

Marginal Citations

M2 [1997 c. 50](#).

46 Assaults etc. on persons engaged in the business of public telecommunications operator.

[^{F17}(1) A person who—

- (a) assaults or intentionally obstructs a person engaged in the business of a public telecommunications operator; or

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- (b) whilst in any premises used for the purposes of the business of such an operator, intentionally obstructs the course of business of the operator, shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.
- (2) Any person engaged in the business of a public telecommunications operator may require any person guilty of an offence under subsection (1) above to leave premises used for the purposes of that business and, if any such offender who is so required refuses or fails to comply with the requirement, he shall be liable on summary conviction to a further fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale and may be removed by a person engaged in that business; and any constable shall on demand remove or assist in removing any such offender.]

Textual Amendments

F17 Ss. 44-46 repealed (25.7.2003 for specified purposes, 29.12.2003 otherwise) by [Communications Act 2003 \(c. 21\)](#), ss. 406, 408, 411, Sch. 17 para. 63(1), **Sch. 19(1)** (with Sch. 17 para. 63(2)(3), Sch. 18, Sch. 19(1) Note 1); S.I. 2003/1900, arts. 1(2), **2(1)**, 3(1), Sch. 1 (with art. 3(2) (as amended (8.12.2003) by S.I. 2003/3142, art. 1(3))); S.I. 2003/3142, **art. 3**, Sch. 1 (with art. 11)

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