



Criminal Justice Act 1991

1991 CHAPTER 53

PART I

POWERS OF COURTS TO DEAL WITH OFFENDERS

Custodial sentences

2 Length of custodial sentences

- (1) This section applies where a court passes a custodial sentence other than one fixed by law.
- (2) The custodial sentence shall be—
 - (a) for such term (not exceeding the permitted maximum) as in the opinion of the court is commensurate with the seriousness of the offence, or the combination of the offence and other offences associated with it; or
 - (b) where the offence is a violent or sexual offence, for such longer term (not exceeding that maximum) as in the opinion of the court is necessary to protect the public from serious harm from the offender.
- (3) Where the court passes a custodial sentence for a term longer than is commensurate with the seriousness of the offence, or the combination of the offence and other offences associated with it, the court shall—
 - (a) state in open court that it is of the opinion that subsection (2)(b) above applies and why it is of that opinion; and
 - (b) explain to the offender in open court and in ordinary language why the sentence is for such a term.
- (4) A custodial sentence for an indeterminate period shall be regarded for the purposes of subsections (2) and (3) above as a custodial sentence for a term longer than any actual term.