



# Defamation Act 1996

## 1996 CHAPTER 31

### *General provisions*

#### 18 Extent. **U.K.**

- (1) The following provisions of this Act extend to England and Wales—  
section 1 (responsibility for publication),  
sections 2 to 4 (offer to make amends), except section 3(9),  
section 5 (time limit for actions for defamation or malicious falsehood),  
section 7 (ruling on the meaning of a statement),  
sections 8 to 10 (summary disposal of claim),  
section 12(1) (evidence of convictions),  
section 13 (evidence concerning proceedings in Parliament),  
sections 14 and 15 and Schedule 1 (statutory privilege),  
section 16 and Schedule 2 (repeals) so far as relating to enactments extending to England and Wales,  
section 17(1) (interpretation),  
this subsection,  
section 19 (commencement) so far as relating to provisions which extend to England and Wales, and  
section 20 (short title and saving).
- (2) The following provisions of this Act extend to Scotland—  
F1  
...  
F2  
...  
section 12(2) (evidence of convictions),  
section 13 (evidence concerning proceedings in Parliament),  
F3  
...  
section 16 and Schedule 2 (repeals) so far as relating to enactments extending to Scotland,  
section 17 (interpretation),

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*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Defamation Act 1996, Cross Heading: General provisions. (See end of Document for details)*

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this subsection,  
section 19 (commencement) so far as relating to provisions which extend to Scotland, and  
section 20 (short title and saving).

- (3) The following provisions of this Act extend to Northern Ireland—  
section 1 (responsibility for publication),  
sections 2 to 4 (offer to make amends), except section 3(9),  
section 6 (time limit for actions for defamation or malicious falsehood),  
section 7 (ruling on the meaning of a statement),  
sections 8 to 11 (summary disposal of claim),  
section 12(3) (evidence of convictions),  
section 13 (evidence concerning proceedings in Parliament),  
sections 14 and 15 and Schedule 1 (statutory privilege),  
section 16 and Schedule 2 (repeals) so far as relating to enactments extending to Northern Ireland,  
section 17(1) (interpretation),  
this subsection,  
section 19 (commencement) so far as relating to provisions which extend to Northern Ireland, and  
section 20 (short title and saving).

#### Extent Information

- E1** [S. 18\(1\)](#) extends to England and Wales; [s. 18\(2\)](#) extends to Scotland; [s. 18\(3\)](#) extends to Northern Ireland.

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in [s. 18\(2\)](#) repealed (S.) (8.8.2022) by [Defamation and Malicious Publication \(Scotland\) Act 2021 \(asp 10\)](#), [ss. 35\(3\)\(b\)\(i\)](#), 39(2); S.S.I. 2022/154, regs. 1(2), 2
- F2** Words in [s. 18\(2\)](#) repealed (S.) (8.8.2022) by [Defamation and Malicious Publication \(Scotland\) Act 2021 \(asp 10\)](#), [ss. 35\(3\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#), 39(2); S.S.I. 2022/154, regs. 1(2), 2
- F3** Words in [s. 18\(2\)](#) repealed (S.) (8.8.2022) by [Defamation and Malicious Publication \(Scotland\) Act 2021 \(asp 10\)](#), [ss. 35\(3\)\(b\)\(iii\)](#), 39(2); S.S.I. 2022/154, regs. 1(2), 2

## 19 Commencement. **U.K.**

- (1) Sections 18 to 20 (extent, commencement and other general provisions) come into force on Royal Assent.
- (2) The following provisions of this Act come into force at the end of the period of two months beginning with the day on which this Act is passed—  
section 1 (responsibility for publication),  
sections 5 and 6 (time limit for actions for defamation or malicious falsehood),  
section 12 (evidence of convictions),  
section 13 (evidence concerning proceedings in Parliament),  
section 16 and the repeals in Schedule 2, so far as consequential on the above provisions, and  
section 17 (interpretation), so far as relating to the above provisions.

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- (3) The provisions of this Act otherwise come into force on such day as may be appointed—
- (a) for England and Wales or Northern Ireland, by order of the Lord Chancellor, or
  - (b) for Scotland, by order of the Secretary of State,
- and different days may be appointed for different purposes.
- (4) Any such order shall be made by statutory instrument and may contain such transitional provisions as appear to the Lord Chancellor or Secretary of State to be appropriate.

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#### Subordinate Legislation Made

- P1** S. 19(3) power partly exercised (12.3.1999): 1.4.1999 appointed for specified provisions by S.I. 1999/817, **art. 2**
- P2** S. 19(3)(b)(4) power partly exercised: 31.3.2001 appointed for specified provisions for S. by S.S.I. 2001/98, **art. 3** (with transitional provision in **art. 4**)

## 20 Short title and saving. **U.K.**

(1) This Act may be cited as the Defamation Act 1996.

[<sup>F4</sup>(2) Nothing in this Act affects the law relating to criminal libel.]

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#### Textual Amendments

- F4** S. 20(2) repealed (E.W.) (12.1.2010) by **Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (c. 25)**, s. 182(2)(e)(x), **Sch. 23 Pt. 2 Notes 1, 2** (with s. 180) and s. 20(2) repealed (S.) (28.3.2011) by **Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010 (asp 13)**, s. 206(1), **Sch. 7 para. 64**; S.S.I. 2011/178, art. 2, Sch.

**Changes to legislation:**

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