



# Magistrates' Courts Act 1980

## 1980 CHAPTER 43

### PART I

#### CRIMINAL JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURE

##### *Offences triable on indictment or summarily*

#### **[<sup>F1</sup>20 Procedure where summary trial appears more suitable**

- (1) If the court decides under section 19 above that the offence appears to it more suitable for summary trial, the following provisions of this section shall apply (unless they are excluded by section 23 below).
- (2) The court shall explain to the accused in ordinary language—
  - (a) that it appears to the court more suitable for him to be tried summarily for the offence;
  - (b) that he can either consent to be so tried or, if he wishes, be tried on indictment; and
  - [(c) that if he is tried summarily and is convicted by the court, he may be committed for sentence to the Crown Court under [<sup>F2</sup>section 14 or (if applicable) 15 of the Sentencing Code] if the court is of such opinion as is mentioned in [<sup>F3</sup>subsection (1)(b)] of the applicable section.]
- (3) The accused may then request an indication (“an indication of sentence”) of whether a custodial sentence or non-custodial sentence would be more likely to be imposed if he were to be tried summarily for the offence and to plead guilty.
- (4) If the accused requests an indication of sentence, the court may, but need not, give such an indication.
- (5) If the accused requests and the court gives an indication of sentence, the court shall ask the accused whether he wishes, on the basis of the indication, to reconsider the indication of plea which was given, or is taken to have been given, under section 17A or 17B above.

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*Changes to legislation: Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, Section 20 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 01 May 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) View outstanding changes*

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- (6) If the accused indicates that he wishes to reconsider the indication under section 17A or 17B above, the court shall 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 that time the summary trial of the information; and
  - (b) section 9(1) above were complied with and he pleaded guilty under it.
- (8) Subsection (9) below applies where—
- (a) the court does not give an indication of sentence (whether because the accused does not request one or because the court does not agree to give one);
  - (b) the accused either—
    - (i) does not indicate, in accordance with subsection (5) above, that he wishes; or
    - (ii) indicates, in accordance with subsection (5) above, that he does not wish,
 to reconsider the indication of plea under section 17A or 17B above; or
  - (c) the accused does not indicate, in accordance with subsection (6) above, that he would plead guilty.
- (9) The court shall ask the accused whether he consents to be tried summarily or wishes to be tried on indictment and—
- (a) if he consents to be tried summarily, shall proceed to the summary trial of the information; and
  - (b) if he does not so consent, shall proceed in relation to the offence in accordance with section 51(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.]

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Ss. 20, 20A substituted for s. 20 (18.6.2012 for specified purposes, 5.11.2012 for specified purposes, 28.5.2013 for specified purposes) by [Criminal Justice Act 2003 \(c. 44\)](#), s. 336(3)(4), [Sch. 3 para. 6](#); [S.I. 2012/1320](#), art. 4(1)(c)(2)(3) (with art. 5) (see [S.I. 2012/2574](#), art. 4(2) and [S.I. 2013/1103](#), art. 4); [S.I. 2012/2574](#), art. 2(2)(3)(c), Sch. (with arts. 3, 4) (as amended (4.11.2012) by [S.I. 2012/2761](#), art. 2) (with [S.I. 2013/1103](#), art. 4); [S.I. 2013/1103](#), art. 2(1)(c)(2)(3) (with arts. 3, 4)
- F2** Words in s. 20(2)(c) substituted (1.12.2020) by [Sentencing Act 2020 \(c. 17\)](#), s. 416(1), [Sch. 24 para. 46\(a\)](#) (with [Sch. 27](#)); [S.I. 2020/1236](#), reg. 2
- F3** Words in s. 20(2)(c) substituted (1.12.2020) by [Sentencing Act 2020 \(c. 17\)](#), s. 416(1), [Sch. 24 para. 46\(b\)](#) (with [Sch. 27](#)); [S.I. 2020/1236](#), reg. 2

**Changes to legislation:**

Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, Section 20 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 01 May 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.

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**Changes and effects yet to be applied to :**

- s. 20(5) word inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(8\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 20(6) word inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(8\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 20(7) words inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(8\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 20(8)(b) word inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(8\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 20(9)(b) word substituted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 10\(2\)](#)

**Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:**

- Act applied by [2017 anaw 2 Sch. 3 para. 18\(5\)](#)

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 1(6A) inserted by [2003 c. 44 Sch. 36 para. 8\(5\)](#)
- s. 1(6A) words substituted by [2015 c. 2 Sch. 11 para. 3\(4\)](#) (Effect not applied as (6A) was only inserted prospectively.)
- s. 1(7A) inserted by [2003 c. 44 Sch. 36 para. 8\(6\)](#)
- s. 12(2A) inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 4\(3\)](#)
- s. 12(5A)-(5F) inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 4\(6\)](#)
- s. 17A(1A) inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 17B(1A)-(1F) substituted for s. 17B(1) by [2022 c. 35 s. 9\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 17B(5) inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 9\(2\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 17BA inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 7](#)
- s. 17ZA-17ZC inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 6\(2\)](#)
- s. 18(1)-(1B) substituted for s. 18(1) by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(7\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 18(4A)(4B) inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(7\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 18(6) inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(7\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 20(7A)(7B) inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(8\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 22(2A)-(2E) inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(9\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 22A(1A)-(1E) inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 6\(3\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 23(1A)-(1G) substituted for s. 23(1) by [2022 c. 35 s. 9\(4\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 23(4A)(4B) inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 9\(4\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 24A(1A) inserted by [2022 c. 35 Sch. 2 para. 6\(11\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 24BA inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 9\(5\)](#)
- s. 24ZA24ZB inserted by [2022 c. 35 s. 8](#)
- s. 75A inserted by [2013 c. 22 s. 26\(1\)](#)
- s. 85(5) inserted by [2013 c. 22 s. 26\(4\)](#)
- s. 139A inserted by [2013 c. 22 s. 26\(6\)](#)
- s. 145(1A) inserted by [2010 c. 26 Sch. 3 para. 8\(3\)](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Sch. 3 Pt. 2 repealed (4.9.2013) without ever being in force by [2013 c. 22](#), s. 17(4) ; S.I. 2013/2200 art. 2(a))
- s. 145(1A) repealed by [2010 c. 26 Sch. 4 Pt. 2](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). Sch. 4 Pt. 2 repealed (4.9.2013) without ever being in force by [2013 c. 22](#), s. 17(4) ; S.I. 2013/2200 art. 2(a))
- Sch. 6A (entry) by [2000 c. 43 Sch. 7 para. 69](#)