



Contempt of Court Act 1981

1981 CHAPTER 49

Other aspects of law and procedure

8 Confidentiality of jury's deliberations

- (1) Subject to subsection (2) below, it is a contempt of court to obtain, disclose or solicit any particulars of statements made, opinions expressed, arguments advanced or votes cast by members of a jury in the course of their deliberations in any legal proceedings.
- (2) This section does not apply to any disclosure of any particulars—
 - (a) in the proceedings in question for the purpose of enabling the jury to arrive at their verdict, or in connection with the delivery of that verdict, or
 - (b) in evidence in any subsequent proceedings for an offence alleged to have been committed in relation to the jury in the first mentioned proceedings, or to the publication of any particulars so disclosed.
- (3) Proceedings for a contempt of court under this section (other than Scottish proceedings) shall not be instituted except by or with the consent of the Attorney General or on the motion of a court having jurisdiction to deal with it.

9 Use of tape recorders

- (1) Subject to subsection (4) below, it is a contempt of court—
 - (a) to use in court, or bring into court for use, any tape recorder or other instrument for recording sound, except with the leave of the court;
 - (b) to publish a recording of legal proceedings made by means of any such instrument, or any recording derived directly or indirectly from it, by playing it in the hearing of the public or any section of the public, or to dispose of it or any recording so derived, with a view to such publication ;
 - (c) to use any such recording in contravention of any conditions of leave granted under paragraph (a).
- (2) Leave under paragraph (a) of subsection (1) may be granted or refused at the discretion of the court, and if granted may be granted subject to such conditions as the court

thinks proper with respect to the use of any recording made pursuant to the leave; and where leave has been granted the court may at the like discretion withdraw or amend it either generally or in relation to any particular part of the proceedings.

- (3) Without prejudice to any other power to deal with an act of contempt under paragraph (a) of subsection (1), the court may order the instrument, or any recording made with it, or both, to be forfeited; and any object so forfeited shall (unless the court otherwise determines on application by a person appearing to be the owner) be sold or otherwise disposed of in such manner as the court may direct.
- (4) This section does not apply to the making or use of sound recordings for purposes of official transcripts of proceedings.

10 Sources of information

No court may require a person to disclose, nor is any person guilty of contempt of court for refusing to disclose, the source of information contained in a publication for which he is responsible, unless it be established to the satisfaction of the court that disclosure is necessary in the interests of justice or national security or for the prevention of disorder or crime.

11 Publication of matters exempted from disclosure in court

In any case where a court (having power to do so) allows a name or other matter to be withheld from the public in proceedings before the court, the court may give such directions prohibiting the publication of that name or matter in connection with the proceedings as appear to the court to be necessary for the purpose for which it was so withheld.

12 Offences of contempt of magistrates' courts

- (1) A magistrates' court has jurisdiction under this section to deal with any person who—
 - (a) wilfully insults the justice or justices, any witness before or officer of the court or any solicitor or counsel having business in the court, during his or their sitting or attendance in court or in going to or returning from the court; or
 - (b) wilfully interrupts the proceedings of the court or otherwise misbehaves in court.
- (2) In any such case the court may order any officer of the court, or any constable, to take the offender into custody and detain him until the rising of the court; and the court may, if it thinks fit, commit the offender to custody for a specified period not exceeding one month or impose on him a fine not exceeding £500, or both.
- (3) The court shall not deal with the offender by making an order under section 19 of the Criminal Justice Act 1948 (an attendance centre order) if it appears to the court, after considering any available evidence, that he is under 17 years of age.
- (4) A magistrates' court may at any time revoke an order of committal made under subsection (2) and, if the offender is in custody, order his discharge.
- (5) The following provisions of the Magistrates' Courts Act 1980 apply in relation to an order under this section as they apply in relation to a sentence on conviction or finding of guilty of an offence, namely: section 36 (restriction on fines in respect of young persons); sections 75 to 91 (enforcement); section 198 (appeal to Crown Court);

section 136 (overnight detention in default of payment); and section 142(1) (power to rectify mistakes).

13 Legal aid

- (1) In any case where a person is liable to be committed or fined—
 - (a) by a magistrates' court under section 12 of this Act;
 - (b) by a county court under section 30, 127 or 157 of the County Courts Act 1959 ; or
 - (c) by any superior court for contempt in the face of that or any other court,the court may order that he shall be given legal aid for the purposes of the proceedings.
- (2) Where an order under subsection (1) is made by any court, the court may order that the legal aid to be given shall consist of representation by counsel only or, in any court where solicitors have a right of audience, by a solicitor only; and the court may assign for the purpose any counsel or solicitor who is within the precincts of the court at the time when the order is made.
- (3) Part II of the Legal Aid Act 1974 shall have effect subject to the amendments set out in Part I of Schedule 2, being amendments consequential on the foregoing provisions of this section.
- (4) In any case where a person is liable to be dealt with for contempt of court during the course of or in connection with Scottish proceedings he may be given legal aid, and the Legal Aid (Scotland) Act 1967 shall have effect subject to the amendments set out in Part II of Schedule 2.
- (5) This section is without prejudice to any other enactment by virtue of which legal aid may be granted in or for purposes of civil or criminal proceedings.