



Public Order Act 1986

1986 CHAPTER 64

PART I

NEW OFFENCES

4 Fear or provocation of violence.

- (1) A person is guilty of an offence if he—
- (a) uses towards another person threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour, or
 - (b) distributes or displays to another person any writing, sign or other visible representation which is threatening, abusive or insulting,

with intent to cause that person to believe that immediate unlawful violence will be used against him or another by any person, or to provoke the immediate use of unlawful violence by that person or another, or whereby that person is likely to believe that such violence will be used or it is likely that such violence will be provoked.

- (2) An offence under this section may be committed in a public or a private place, except that no offence is committed where the words or behaviour are used, or the writing, sign or other visible representation is distributed or displayed, by a person inside a dwelling and the other person is also inside that or another dwelling.

- (3) ^{F1}

- (4) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or both.

Textual Amendments

F1 S. 4(3) repealed (1.1.2006) by [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(c. 15\)](#), ss. 111, 174(2), 178(8), Sch. 7 para. 26(3), [Sch 17 Pt. 2](#); S.I. 2005/3495, [art. 2\(m\)\(u\)\(xxvi\)](#)

Changes to legislation:

Public Order Act 1986, Section 4 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 10 April 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.

[View outstanding changes](#)

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

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

- s. 4B inserted by [2023 c. 47 s. 1](#)