



Competition Act 1998

1998 CHAPTER 41

PART I

COMPETITION

CHAPTER II

ABUSE OF DOMINANT POSITION

Introduction

17 Enactments replaced.

Sections 2 to 10 of the ^{M1}Competition Act 1980 (control of anti-competitive practices) shall cease to have effect.

Marginal Citations

M1 1980 c. 21.

The prohibition

18 Abuse of dominant position.

- (1) Subject to section 19, any conduct on the part of one or more undertakings which amounts to the abuse of a dominant position in a market is prohibited if it may affect trade within the United Kingdom.
- (2) Conduct may, in particular, constitute such an abuse if it consists in—
 - (a) directly or indirectly imposing unfair purchase or selling prices or other unfair trading conditions;

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- (b) limiting production, markets or technical development to the prejudice of consumers;
 - (c) applying dissimilar conditions to equivalent transactions with other trading parties, thereby placing them at a competitive disadvantage;
 - (d) making the conclusion of contracts subject to acceptance by the other parties of supplementary obligations which, by their nature or according to commercial usage, have no connection with the subject of the contracts.
- (3) In this section—
- “dominant position” means a dominant position within the United Kingdom; and
 - “the United Kingdom” means the United Kingdom or any part of it.
- (4) The prohibition imposed by subsection (1) is referred to in this Act as “the Chapter II prohibition”.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** S. 18 restricted (31.12.2020) by S.I. 2019/93, Sch. 4 para. 17A(2) (as inserted by [The Competition \(Amendment etc.\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations 2020](#) (S.I. 2020/1343), regs. 1(1), **40(2)**)
- C2** S. 18(1) excluded (18.6.2001) by 2000 c. 8, s. 164(3)(5); S.I. 2001/1820, art. 2, **Sch.**
 s. 18(1) excluded (3.9.2001) by 2000 c. 8, s. 312(2); S.I. 2001/2632, art. 2(2), **Sch. Pt. 2**

Excluded cases

19 Excluded cases.

- (1) The Chapter II prohibition does not apply in any of the cases in which it is excluded by or as a result of—
- (a) Schedule 1 (mergers and concentrations); or
 - (b) Schedule 3 (general exclusions).
- (2) The Secretary of State may at any time by order amend Schedule 1, with respect to the Chapter II prohibition, by—
- (a) providing for one or more additional exclusions; or
 - (b) amending or removing any provision (whether or not it has been added by an order under this subsection).
- (3) The Secretary of State may at any time by order amend paragraph 8 of Schedule 3 with respect to the Chapter II prohibition.
- (4) Schedule 3 also gives the Secretary of State power to provide that the Chapter II prohibition is not to apply in certain circumstances.

Notification

20 Requests for [F¹OFT] to consider conduct.

- [F²(1) Sections 21 and 22 provide for conduct of a person which that person thinks may infringe the Chapter II prohibition to be considered by the [F¹OFT] on the application of that person.

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- (2) Schedule 6 provides for the procedure to be followed—
- (a) by any person making an application, and
 - (b) by the [^{F1}OFT], in considering an application.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 20 substituted (1.4.2003) by Enterprise Act 2002 (c. 40), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38(14); S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3(2), Sch.)
- F2** Ss. 20-24 ceased to have effect (1.5.2004) by virtue of The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments (Amendment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/1261), reg. 1(a), Sch. 1 para. 9 (with reg. 6(2))

21 Notification for guidance.

- [^{F2}(1) A person who applies for conduct to be considered under this section must—
- (a) notify the [^{F3}OFT] of it; and
 - (b) apply to [^{F3}the OFT] for guidance.
- (2) On an application under this section, the [^{F3}OFT] may give the applicant guidance as to whether or not, in [^{F3}its] view, the conduct is likely to infringe the Chapter II prohibition.]

Textual Amendments

- F2** Ss. 20-24 ceased to have effect (1.5.2004) by virtue of The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments (Amendment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/1261), reg. 1(a), Sch. 1 para. 9 (with reg. 6(2))
- F3** Words in s. 21 substituted (1.4.2003) by Enterprise Act 2002 (c. 40), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38(15); S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3(2), Sch.)

22 Notification for a decision.

- [^{F2}(1) A person who applies for conduct to be considered under this section must—
- (a) notify the [^{F4}OFT] of it; and
 - (b) apply to [^{F4}the OFT] for a decision.
- (2) On an application under this section, the [^{F4}OFT] may make a decision as to—
- (a) whether the Chapter II prohibition has been infringed; and
 - (b) if it has not been infringed, whether that is because of the effect of an exclusion.]

Textual Amendments

- F2** Ss. 20-24 ceased to have effect (1.5.2004) by virtue of The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments (Amendment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 2004/1261), reg. 1(a), Sch. 1 para. 9 (with reg. 6(2))
- F4** Words in s. 22 substituted (1.4.2003) by Enterprise Act 2002 (c. 40), s. 279, Sch. 25 para. 38(16); S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3(2), Sch.)

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23 Effect of guidance.

- [^{F2}(1) This section applies to conduct if the [^{F5}OFT] has determined an application under section 21 by giving guidance that the conduct is unlikely to infringe the Chapter II prohibition.
- (2) The [^{F5}OFT] is to take no further action under this Part with respect to the conduct to which this section applies, unless—
- (a) [^{F5}it] has reasonable grounds for believing that there has been a material change of circumstance since [^{F5}it] gave [^{F5}its] guidance;
 - (b) [^{F5}it] has a reasonable suspicion that the information on which [^{F5}it] based [^{F5}its] guidance was incomplete, false or misleading in a material particular; or
 - (c) a complaint about the conduct has been made to [^{F5}it].
- (3) No penalty may be imposed under this Part in respect of any infringement of the Chapter II prohibition by conduct to which this section applies.
- (4) But the [^{F5}OFT] may remove the immunity given by subsection (3) if—
- (a) [^{F5}it] takes action under this Part with respect to the conduct in one of the circumstances mentioned in subsection (2);
 - (b) [^{F5}it] considers that it is likely that the conduct will infringe the prohibition; and
 - (c) [^{F5}it] gives notice in writing to the undertaking on whose application the guidance was given that [^{F5}it] is removing the immunity as from the date specified in [^{F5}its] notice.
- (5) If the [^{F5}OFT] has a reasonable suspicion that information—
- (a) on which [^{F5}it] based [^{F5}its] guidance, and
 - (b) which was provided to [^{F5}it] by an undertaking engaging in the conduct,
- was incomplete, false or misleading in a material particular, the date specified in a notice under subsection (4)(c) may be earlier than the date on which the notice is given.]

Textual Amendments

- F2** Ss. 20-24 ceased to have effect (1.5.2004) by virtue of [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1261\)](#), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 9** (with reg. 6(2))
- F5** Words in s. 23 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(17)**; [S.I. 2003/766](#), art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by [S.I. 2007/1846](#), reg. 3(2), Sch.)

24 Effect of a decision that the Chapter II prohibition has not been infringed.

- [^{F2}(1) This section applies to conduct if the [^{F6}OFT] has determined an application under section 22 by making a decision that the conduct has not infringed the Chapter II prohibition.
- (2) The [^{F6}OFT] is to take no further action under this Part with respect to the conduct unless—
- (a) [^{F6}it] has reasonable grounds for believing that there has been a material change of circumstance since [^{F6}it] gave [^{F6}its] decision; or
 - (b) [^{F6}it] has a reasonable suspicion that the information on which [^{F6}it] based [^{F6}its] decision was incomplete, false or misleading in a material particular.

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- (3) No penalty may be imposed under this Part in respect of any infringement of the Chapter II prohibition by conduct to which this section applies.
- (4) But the [F6OFT] may remove the immunity given by subsection (3) if—
- (a) [F6it] takes action under this Part with respect to the conduct in one of the circumstances mentioned in subsection (2);
 - (b) [F6it] considers that it is likely that the conduct will infringe the prohibition; and
 - (c) [F6it] gives notice in writing to the undertaking on whose application the decision was made that [F6it] is removing the immunity as from the date specified in [F6its] notice.
- (5) If the [F6OFT] has a reasonable suspicion that information—
- (a) on which [F6it] based [F6its] decision, and
 - (b) which was provided to [F6it] by an undertaking engaging in the conduct,
- was incomplete, false or misleading in a material particular, the date specified in a notice under subsection (4)(c) may be earlier than the date on which the notice is given.]

Textual Amendments

- F2** Ss. 20-24 ceased to have effect (1.5.2004) by virtue of [The Competition Act 1998 and Other Enactments \(Amendment\) Regulations 2004](#) (S.I. 2004/1261), reg. 1(a), **Sch. 1 para. 9** (with reg. 6(2))
- F6** Words in s. 24 substituted (1.4.2003) by [Enterprise Act 2002 \(c. 40\)](#), s. 279, **Sch. 25 para. 38(18)**; S.I. 2003/766, art. 2, Sch. (with art. 3) (as amended (20.7.2007) by S.I. 2007/1846, reg. 3(2), Sch.)

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

- Blanket Amendment words substituted by [2005 c. 4 Sch. 11 para. 5](#)

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

- s. 31G-31L and cross-heading inserted by S.I. 2019/93, reg. 8A (as inserted) by [S.I. 2019/1245 reg. 3](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). The affecting statutory instrument has no legal effect. It was made under a procedure which meant that it ceased to have effect 28 days after signing unless it was debated and approved in Parliament within that time. It was not debated and approved within 28 days, so it has expired with no effect.)
- s. 46(3)(ha)(hb) inserted by S.I. 2019/93, reg. 14(d) (as inserted) by [S.I. 2019/1245 reg. 5](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). The affecting statutory instrument has no legal effect. It was made under a procedure which meant that it ceased to have effect 28 days after signing unless it was debated and approved in Parliament within that time. It was not debated and approved within 28 days, so it has expired with no effect.)
- s. 47(1)(ca) inserted by S.I. 2019/93, reg. 15(b) (as substituted) by [S.I. 2019/1245 reg. 6](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). The affecting statutory instrument has no legal effect. It was made under a procedure which meant that it ceased to have effect 28 days after signing unless it was debated and approved in Parliament within that time. It was not debated and approved within 28 days, so it has expired with no effect.)
- s. 60A(10) inserted by [2023 c. 28 s. 6\(10\)](#)
- Sch. 6A para. 1A inserted by S.I. 2019/93, reg. 29A(2) (as inserted) by [S.I. 2019/1245 reg. 7](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). The affecting statutory instrument has no legal effect. It was made under a procedure which meant that it ceased to have effect 28 days after signing unless it was debated and approved in Parliament within that time. It was not debated and approved within 28 days, so it has expired with no effect.)
- Sch. 6A Pt. 3 inserted by S.I. 2019/93, reg. 29A(4) (as inserted) by [S.I. 2019/1245 reg. 7](#) (This amendment not applied to [legislation.gov.uk](#). The affecting statutory instrument has no legal effect. It was made under a procedure which meant that it ceased to have effect 28 days after signing unless it was debated and approved in Parliament within that time. It was not debated and approved within 28 days, so it has expired with no effect.)