



Criminal Justice Act 2003

2003 CHAPTER 44

PART 12

SENTENCING

CHAPTER 6

[^{F1} RELEASE, LICENCES^{F1}, SUPERVISION] AND RECALL]

Release on licence

246 Power to release prisoners on licence before required to do so

- (1) Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Secretary of State may—
- (a) release on licence under this section a fixed-term prisoner ^{F1}... at any time during the period of [^{F2}180] days ending with the day on which the prisoner will have served the requisite custodial period, ^{F3}...
 - ^{F3}(b)
- (2) Subsection (1)(a) does not apply in relation to a prisoner unless—
- (a) the length of the requisite custodial period is at least 6 weeks, [^{F4}and
 - (b) he has served—
 - (i) at least 4 weeks of that period, and
 - (ii) at least one-half of that period.]
- ^{F5}(3)
- (4) Subsection (1) does not apply where—
- (a) the sentence is imposed under section [^{F6}226A,] 227 [^{F7}, 228 or 236A][^{F8} or under section 265, 266, 278 or 279 of the Sentencing Code],
 - [^{F9}(aa) the sentence is for a term of 4 years or more,]
 - [^{F10}(ab) the prisoner is one to whom section 247A applies,]

Changes to legislation: *Criminal Justice Act 2003, Section 246 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 23 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. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

- (b) the sentence is for an offence under section 1 of the Prisoners (Return to Custody) Act 1995 (c. 16),
 - (c) the prisoner is subject to a hospital order, hospital direction or transfer direction under section 37, 45A or 47 of the Mental Health Act 1983 (c. 20),
 - (d) the sentence was imposed by virtue of paragraph 9(1)(b) or (c) or 10(1)(b) or (c) of Schedule 8 ^{F11}, or paragraph 10(5)(c) or (d) or 11(2)(c) or (d) of Schedule 10 to the Sentencing Code,] in a case where the prisoner has failed to comply with a curfew requirement of a community order,
 - (e) the prisoner is subject to the notification requirements of Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (c. 42),
 - (f) the prisoner is liable to removal from the United Kingdom,
 - ^{F12}(fa) the prisoner’s case has been referred to the Board under section 244ZB,
 - (fb) a notice given to the prisoner under subsection (4) of that section is in force,]
 - (g) the prisoner has been released on licence under this section ^{F13}at any time], and has been recalled to prison under section 255(1)(a) ^{F14}(and the revocation has not been cancelled under section 255(3))],
 - ^{F15}(ga) the prisoner has at any time been released on licence under section 34A of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and has been recalled to prison under section 38A(1)(a) of that Act (and the revocation of the licence has not been cancelled under section 38A(3) of that Act);]
 - (h) the prisoner has been released on licence under section 248 during the currency of the sentence, and has been recalled to prison under section 254, ^{F16}...
 - ^{F17}(ha) the prisoner has at any time been returned to prison under section 40 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 or section 116 of ^{F18}the PCC(S)A 2000], or]
 - (i) in the case of a prisoner ^{F19}to whom section 240ZA applies or a direction under section 240A ^{F20}or under section 325 of the Sentencing Code] relates], the interval between the date on which the sentence was passed and the date on which the prisoner will have served the requisite custodial period is less than 14 days ^{F21}... .
- ^{F22}(4ZA) Where subsection (4)(aa) applies to a prisoner who is serving two or more terms of imprisonment, the reference to the term of the sentence is—
- (a) if the terms are partly concurrent, a reference to the period which begins when the first term begins and ends when the last term ends;
 - (b) if the terms are to be served consecutively, a reference to the aggregate of the terms.]
- ^{F23}(4A) In subsection (4)—
- (a) the reference in paragraph (d) to a community order includes a service community order or overseas community order under the Armed Forces Act 2006; and
 - (b) the reference in paragraph (i) to ^{F24}section 240ZA includes] section 246 of that Act.]
- (5) The Secretary of State may by order—
- (a) amend the number of days for the time being specified in subsection (1)(a) ^{F25}... or (4)(i),
 - (b) amend the number of weeks for the time being specified in subsection (2)(a) or (b)(i), and
 - (c) amend the fraction for the time being specified in subsection (2)(b)(ii) ^{F26}... .

Changes to legislation: *Criminal Justice Act 2003, Section 246 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 23 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. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

(6) In this section—

^{F27}

“the requisite custodial period” in relation to a person serving any sentence ^{F28} ... , has the meaning given by [^{F29} paragraph (a) or (b) of section 243A(3) or (as the case may be)] paragraph (a) ^{F28} ... or (d) of section 244(3);

^{F30}

[^{F31}“term of imprisonment” includes a determinate sentence of detention under section 91 or 96 of [^{F32}the PCC(S)A 2000, under section 250, 254, 262, 265, 266, 278 or 279 of the Sentencing Code] or under section [^{F33}226A, 226B,] 227 [^{F34}, 228 or 236A] of this Act.]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 246(1)(a) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(2)(a)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F2** Word in s. 246(1)(a) substituted (6.6.2023) by The Criminal Justice Act 2003 (Home Detention Curfew) Order 2023 (S.I. 2023/390), arts. 1(2), **2**
- F3** S. 246(1)(b) and preceding word omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(2)(b)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F4** S. 246(2)(b) and word substituted (14.7.2008) for s. 246(2)(b) by Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 (c. 4), **ss. 24, 153**; S.I. 2008/1586, **art. 2(1)**, Sch. 1 para. 11
- F5** S. 246(3) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(3)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F6** Words in s. 246(4)(a) inserted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 20 para. 5(2)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(r)
- F7** Words in s. 246(4)(a) substituted (13.4.2015) by Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (c. 2), s. 95(1), **Sch. 1 para. 7(2)**; S.I. 2015/778, art. 3, Sch. 1 para. 72
- F8** Words in s. 246(4)(a) inserted (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), s. 416(1), **Sch. 24 para. 224(2)(a)** (with Sch. 27); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2
- F9** S. 246(4)(aa) inserted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 112(2), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)
- F10** S. 246(4)(ab) inserted (26.2.2020) by Terrorist Offenders (Restriction of Early Release) Act 2020 (c. 3), **ss. 2(5), 10(4)**
- F11** Words in s. 246(4)(d) inserted (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), s. 416(1), **Sch. 24 para. 224(2)(b)** (with Sch. 27); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2
- F12** S. 246(4)(fa)(fb) inserted (28.4.2022) by Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (c. 32), **ss. 132(5), 208(4)(p)**
- F13** Words in s. 246(4)(g) substituted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 112(3)(a), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)
- F14** Words in s. 246(4)(g) inserted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 112(3)(b), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)
- F15** S. 246(4)(ga) inserted (13.4.2015) by Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (c. 2), **ss. 15(4), 95(1)** (with s. 15(10)); S.I. 2015/778, art. 3, Sch. 1 para. 11
- F16** Word in s. 246(4)(h) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 112(4), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)
- F17** S. 246(4)(ha) inserted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 112(4), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)
- F18** Words in s. 246(4)(ha) substituted (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), s. 416(1), **Sch. 24 para. 224(2)(c)** (with Sch. 27); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2
- F19** Words in s. 246(4)(i) substituted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 110(9)(a), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)

Changes to legislation: *Criminal Justice Act 2003, Section 246 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 23 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. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

- F20** Words in s. 246(4)(i) inserted (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), s. 416(1), **Sch. 24 para. 224(2)(d)** (with Sch. 27); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2
- F21** Words in s. 246(4)(i) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(4)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F22** S. 246(4ZA) inserted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 112(5), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)
- F23** S. 246(4A) inserted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes, otherwise 31.10.2009) by Armed Forces Act 2006 (c. 52), ss. 378(1), 383, **Sch. 16 para. 221**; S.I. 2009/812, **art. 3** (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, **art. 4**
- F24** Words in s. 246(4A)(b) substituted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 110(9)(b), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)
- F25** Words in s. 246(5)(a) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(5)(a)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F26** Words in s. 246(5)(c) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(5)(b)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F27** Words in s. 246(6) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(6)(a)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F28** Words in s. 246(6) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(6)(b)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F29** Words in s. 246(6) inserted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 14 para. 7**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(l)
- F30** Words in s. 246(6) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 10 para. 23(6)(c)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(h)
- F31** Words in s. 246(6) inserted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), **ss. 112(6), 151(1)** (with Sch. 15); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d)
- F32** Words in s. 246(6) substituted (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), s. 416(1), **Sch. 24 para. 224(3)** (with Sch. 27); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2
- F33** Words in s. 246(6) inserted (3.12.2012) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 20 para. 5(3)**; S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(r)
- F34** Words in s. 246(6) substituted (13.4.2015) by Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 (c. 2), s. 95(1), **Sch. 1 para. 7(3)**; S.I. 2015/778, art. 3, Sch. 1 para. 72

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Pt. 12 Ch. 6 modified (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), **s. 245(1)(2)(c)**, 416(1) (with ss. 2, 245(3), 398(1), 406, Sch. 27); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2
- C2** Pt. 12 Ch. 6 modified (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), **s. 244(1)(2)(c)**, 416(1) (with ss. 2, 244(3), 398(1), 406, Sch. 27); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2
- C3** Pt. 12 Ch. 6 applied (29.6.2021) by 1984 c. 47, **Sch. para. 2(3B)** (as inserted by Counter Terrorism and Sentencing Act 2021 (c. 11), s. 50(2)(r), **Sch. 11 para. 2**)
- C4** S. 246 excluded (1.12.2020) by Sentencing Act 2020 (c. 17), **ss. 237(5)**, 416(1) (with ss. 2, 398(1), 406, Sch. 27); S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2

Commencement Information

- I1** S. 246 wholly in force at 4.4.2005; s. 246 not in force at Royal Assent, see s. 336(3); s. 246(1)(b)(3) (4)(b)-(i)(5)(6) in force for certain purposes at 26.1.2004 by S.I. 2003/3282, **art. 2**, Sch.; s. 246(5) in force at 7.3.2005 by S.I. 2005/373, **art. 2**; s. 246 in force in so far as not already in force at 4.4.2005 by S.I. 2005/950, **art. 2(1)**, Sch. 1 para. 19 (subject to art. 2(2), Sch. 2)

Changes to legislation:

Criminal Justice Act 2003, Section 246 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 23 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 :

- s. 246(1) word repealed by [2004 c. 28 Sch. 11](#)
- s. 246(6) word repealed by [2004 c. 28 Sch. 11](#)
- s. 246(6) words repealed by [2004 c. 28 Sch. 11](#)
- specified provision(s) amendment to earlier commencing SI 2012/2574, Sch. by [S.I. 2012/2761 art. 2](#)

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. 150(aa) inserted by [2012 c. 10 Sch. 26 para. 19\(2\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Sch. 26 para. 19 omitted (11.12.2013) by virtue of 2013 c. 22, Sch. 16 para. 23(2); S.I. 2013/2981, art. 2(d))
- s. 150(ba) inserted by [2012 c. 10 Sch. 26 para. 19\(3\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Sch. 26 para. 19 omitted (11.12.2013) by virtue of 2013 c. 22, Sch. 16 para. 23(2); S.I. 2013/2981, art. 2(d))
- s. 151(A1) inserted by [2008 c. 4 s. 11\(3\)](#)
- s. 151(1A) inserted by [2008 c. 4 s. 11\(5\)](#)
- s. 151(1A)(b) word substituted by [2008 c. 4 Sch. 4 para. 76\(3\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. S. 151(1A) is still only prospectively inserted by 2008 c. 4, s. 11(5))
- s. 151(1A)(c) substituted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 8\(3\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. S. 151(1A) is still only prospectively inserted by 2008 c. 4, s. 11(5))
- s. 151(2A)(b) substituted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 8\(4\)](#)
- s. 151(4A) inserted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 8\(5\)](#)
- s. 151(8)(a) words substituted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 8\(6\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 151(8)(b) words inserted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 8\(6\)\(b\)\(i\)](#)
- s. 151(8)(b) words substituted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 8\(6\)\(b\)\(ii\)](#)
- s. 151(8)(c)-(f) inserted by [2009 c. 25 Sch. 17 para. 8\(6\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 165(5) inserted by [2014 c. 12 s. 179\(3\)](#)
- s. 237(1A) inserted by [2006 c. 48 s. 34\(3\)](#)
- s. 237(1B)(f)(g) inserted by [2021 c. 11 Sch. 13 para. 40\(b\)](#)
- s. 239A inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 8\(1\)](#)
- s. 239A cross-heading inserted by [2015 c. 2 Sch. 3 para. 5](#)
- s. 250(5C) inserted by [2015 c. 2 Sch. 3 para. 7\(4\)](#)
- s. 255A(4A) inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 9\(2\)](#)
- s. 255B(3A) inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 9\(3\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 255B(4A)-(4C) inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 9\(3\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 255C(3A) inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 9\(4\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 255C(4A)-(4C) inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 9\(4\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 256A(1)-(1B) substituted for s. 256A(1) by [2015 c. 2 s. 9\(6\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 256A(4A)(4B) inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 9\(6\)\(f\)](#)
- s. 256A(5)(6) substituted for s. 256A(5) by [2015 c. 2 s. 9\(6\)\(g\)](#)
- s. 256AZA inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 10\(1\)](#)
- s. 257(3) inserted by [2006 c. 48 s. 34\(4\)](#)
- s. 258(1A) inserted by [2006 c. 48 s. 34\(5\)](#)

- s. 260(4)(aa) substituted for word by [2008 c. 4 s. 34\(7\)\(b\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. S. 34(2)(4)(b)(7)(10) omitted (3.12.2012) by virtue of 2012 c. 10, s. 118(4)(b); S.I. 2012/2906, art. 2(d))
- Sch. 15B para. 49A omitted by [S.I. 2019/780 reg. 26\(4\)\(c\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 21, 25, 26, 27, 30 revoked (1.12.2020) by 2020 c. 17, Sch. 28; S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2)
- Sch. 15B para. 49B omitted by [S.I. 2019/780 reg. 26\(4\)\(d\)](#) (This amendment not applied to legislation.gov.uk. Regs. 21, 25, 26, 27, 30 revoked (1.12.2020) by 2020 c. 17, Sch. 28; S.I. 2020/1236, reg. 2)
- Sch. 20B para. 34(6)(7) substituted for Sch. 20B para. 34(6) by [2015 c. 2 Sch. 3 para. 10](#)