



Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

2014 CHAPTER 12

PART 10

FORCED MARRIAGE

121 Offence of forced marriage: England and Wales

- (1) A person commits an offence under the law of England and Wales if he or she—
 - (a) uses violence, threats or any other form of coercion for the purpose of causing another person to enter into a marriage, and
 - (b) believes, or ought reasonably to believe, that the conduct may cause the other person to enter into the marriage without free and full consent.
 - (2) In relation to a victim who lacks capacity to consent to marriage, the offence under subsection (1) is capable of being committed by any conduct carried out for the purpose of causing the victim to enter into a marriage (whether or not the conduct amounts to violence, threats or any other form coercion).
 - (3) A person commits an offence under the law of England and Wales if he or she—
 - (a) practises any form of deception with the intention of causing another person to leave the United Kingdom, and
 - (b) intends the other person to be subjected to conduct outside the United Kingdom that is an offence under subsection (1) or would be an offence under that subsection if the victim were in England or Wales.
- [^{F1}(3A) A person commits an offence under the law of England and Wales if he or she carries out any conduct for the purpose of causing a child to enter into a marriage before the child's eighteenth birthday (whether or not the conduct amounts to violence, threats, any other form of coercion or deception, and whether or not it is carried out in England and Wales).]

Changes to legislation: Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Section 121 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 20 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

(4) “Marriage” means any religious or civil ceremony of marriage (whether or not legally binding).

(5) “Lacks capacity” means lacks capacity within the meaning of the Mental Capacity Act 2005.

[^{F2}(5A) “Child” means a person under the age of 18 years.]

(6) It is irrelevant whether the conduct mentioned in paragraph (a) of subsection (1) [^{F3}or subsection (3A)] is directed at the victim of the offence under [^{F4}either of those subsections] or another person.

(7) A person commits an offence under subsection (1) or (3) only if, at the time of the conduct or deception—

- (a) the person or the victim or both of them are in England or Wales,
- (b) neither the person nor the victim is in England or Wales but at least one of them is habitually resident in England and Wales, or
- (c) neither the person nor the victim is in the United Kingdom but at least one of them is a UK national.

[^{F5}(7A) A person commits an offence under subsection (3A) only if—

- (a) the conduct is for the purpose of causing the child to enter into a marriage in England or Wales,
- (b) at the time of the conduct, the person or child is habitually resident in England and Wales, or
- (c) at the time of the conduct, the child is a United Kingdom national who—
 - (i) has been habitually resident in England and Wales, and
 - (ii) is not habitually resident or domiciled in Scotland or Northern Ireland.]

(8) “UK national” means an individual who is—

- (a) a British citizen, a British overseas territories citizen, a British National (Overseas) or a British Overseas citizen;
- (b) a person who under the British Nationality Act 1981 is a British subject; or
- (c) a British protected person within the meaning of that Act.

(9) A person guilty of an offence under this section is liable—

- (a) on summary conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding [^{F6}the general limit in a magistrates’ court] or to a fine or both;
- (b) on conviction on indictment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 7 years.

(10) In relation to an offence committed before [^{F7}2 May 2022], the reference to [^{F8}the general limit in a magistrates’ court] in subsection (9)(a) is to be read as a reference to six months.

Textual Amendments

F1 S. 121(3A) inserted (27.2.2023) by [Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022 \(c. 28\), ss. 2\(2\), 7\(1\)](#) (with s. 8); [S.I. 2023/88, reg. 2](#) (with regs. 3-17)

F2 S. 121(5A) inserted (27.2.2023) by [Marriage and Civil Partnership \(Minimum Age\) Act 2022 \(c. 28\), ss. 2\(3\), 7\(1\)](#) (with s. 8); [S.I. 2023/88, reg. 2](#) (with regs. 3-17)

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- F3** Words in s. 121(6) inserted (27.2.2023) by Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 (c. 28), **ss. 2(4)(a)**, 7(1) (with s. 8); S.I. 2023/88, reg. 2 (with regs. 3-17)
- F4** Words in s. 121(6) substituted (27.2.2023) by Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 (c. 28), **ss. 2(4)(b)**, 7(1) (with s. 8); S.I. 2023/88, reg. 2 (with regs. 3-17)
- F5** S. 121(7A) inserted (27.2.2023) by Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 (c. 28), **ss. 2(5)**, 7(1) (with s. 8); S.I. 2023/88, reg. 2 (with regs. 3-17)
- F6** Words in s. 121(9)(a) substituted (7.2.2023 at 12.00 p.m.) by The Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 (Magistrates' Court Sentencing Powers) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 2023/149), regs. 1(2), 2(1), **Sch. Pt. 1**
- F7** Words in s. 121(10) substituted (28.4.2022) by The Criminal Justice Act 2003 (Commencement No. 33) and Sentencing Act 2020 (Commencement No. 2) Regulations 2022 (S.I. 2022/500), regs. 1(2), 5(1), **Sch. Pt. 1**
- F8** Words in s. 121(10) substituted (7.2.2023 at 12.00 p.m.) by The Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 (Magistrates' Court Sentencing Powers) Regulations 2023 (S.I. 2023/149), regs. 1(2), 2(1), **Sch. Pt. 1**

Commencement Information

- I1** S. 121 in force at 16.6.2014 by S.I. 2014/949, **art. 5(b)**

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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. 102(2)(ba) inserted by [2022 c. 32 Sch. 11 para. 35\(2\)\(a\)](#)