



Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018

2018 asp 5

PART 1

OFFENCE AS TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

Engaging in course of abusive behaviour

1 Abusive behaviour towards partner or ex-partner

- (1) A person commits an offence if—
 - (a) the person (“A”) engages in a course of behaviour which is abusive of A’s partner or ex-partner (“B”), and
 - (b) both of the further conditions are met.
- (2) The further conditions are—
 - (a) that a reasonable person would consider the course of behaviour to be likely to cause B to suffer physical or psychological harm,
 - (b) that either—
 - (i) A intends by the course of behaviour to cause B to suffer physical or psychological harm, or
 - (ii) A is reckless as to whether the course of behaviour causes B to suffer physical or psychological harm.
- (3) In the further conditions, the references to psychological harm include fear, alarm and distress.

Commencement Information

II S. 1 in force at 1.4.2019 by S.S.I. 2018/387, reg. 2 (with reg. 4)

2 What constitutes abusive behaviour

- (1) Subsections (2) to (4) elaborate on section 1(1) as to A’s behaviour.
- (2) Behaviour which is abusive of B includes (in particular)—

Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, Cross Heading: Engaging in course of abusive behaviour. (See end of Document for details)

- (a) behaviour directed at B that is violent, threatening or intimidating,
- (b) behaviour directed at B, at a child of B or at another person that either—
 - (i) has as its purpose (or among its purposes) one or more of the relevant effects set out in subsection (3), or
 - (ii) would be considered by a reasonable person to be likely to have one or more of the relevant effects set out in subsection (3).
- (3) The relevant effects are of—
 - (a) making B dependent on, or subordinate to, A,
 - (b) isolating B from friends, relatives or other sources of support,
 - (c) controlling, regulating or monitoring B's day-to-day activities,
 - (d) depriving B of, or restricting B's, freedom of action,
 - (e) frightening, humiliating, degrading or punishing B.
- (4) In subsection (2)—
 - (a) in paragraph (a), the reference to violent behaviour includes sexual violence as well as physical violence,
 - (b) in paragraph (b), the reference to a child is to a person who is under 18 years of age.

Commencement Information

I2 S. 2 in force at 1.4.2019 by S.S.I. 2018/387, reg. 2 (with reg. 4)

3 Extra-territorial jurisdiction

- (1) An offence under section 1(1) can be constituted by a course of behaviour engaged in by A even if the course of behaviour occurs wholly or partly outside the United Kingdom.
- (2) If the course of behaviour occurs wholly outside the United Kingdom—
 - (a) A may be prosecuted, tried and punished for the offence—
 - (i) in a sheriff court district in which A is apprehended or in custody, or
 - (ii) in a sheriff court district that is determined by the Lord Advocate, as if the offence has been committed entirely in that district,
 - (b) the offence is, for all things incidental to or consequential on trial and punishment, deemed to have been committed entirely in that district.
- (3) Subsections (1) and (2) apply only if A, when the course of behaviour occurs—
 - (a) is habitually resident in Scotland, or
 - (b) is a UK national.
- (4) “UK national” means someone who is, as referred to in the British Nationality Act 1981—
 - (a) a British citizen,
 - (b) a British overseas territories citizen, a British National (Overseas) or a British Overseas citizen, or
 - (c) a British subject or a British protected person.

Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018, Cross Heading: Engaging in course of abusive behaviour. (See end of Document for details)*

Commencement Information

I3 [S. 3](#) in force at 1.4.2019 by [S.S.I. 2018/387](#), **reg. 2** (with [reg. 4](#))

Changes to legislation:

There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018,
Cross Heading: Engaging in course of abusive behaviour.