



# Witnesses (Public Inquiries) Protection Act 1892

1892 CHAPTER 64 55 and 56 Vict

An Act for the better Protection of Witnesses giving Evidence before any Royal Commission or any Committee of either House of Parliament, or on other Public Inquiries. [28th June 1892]

**Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

C1 This Act is not necessarily in the form in which it has effect in Northern Ireland.

**Commencement Information**

II Act Wholly in force at Royal Assent.

**1 Definition.**

In this Act the word “inquiry” shall mean any inquiry held under the authority of any Royal Commission or by any committee of either House of Parliament, or pursuant to any statutory authority, whether the evidence at such inquiry is or is not given on oath, but shall not include any inquiry by any court of Justice.

**2 Persons obstructing or intimidating witnesses guilty of misdemeanor.**

Every person who commits any of the following acts, that is to say, who threatens, or in any way punishes, damnifies, or injures, or attempts to punish, damnify, or injure, any person for having given evidence upon any inquiry, or on account of the evidence which he has given upon any such inquiry, shall, unless such evidence was given in bad faith, be guilty of a misdemeanor, and be liable on conviction thereof to a maximum penalty of one hundred pounds, or to a maximum imprisonment of three months.

*Changes to legislation: Witnesses (Public Inquiries) Protection Act 1892 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 29 July 2023. 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*

**3 Prosecution of offences.**

A prosecution for any offence under this Act may be heard and determined by a court of summary jurisdiction under the Summary Jurisdiction Acts, . . . <sup>F1</sup>

**Textual Amendments**

**F1** Words repealed (E.W.) (S.) by [Criminal Law Act 1977 \(c. 45\), s. 65\(7\), Sch. 13](#)

**Modifications etc. (not altering text)**

**C2** [S. 3 explained \(E.W.\) by Magistrates' Courts Act 1952 \(c. 55\), s. 127\(2\)](#)

**4 Court to have power to award costs and compensation to party aggrieved.**

It shall be lawful for any court before which any person may be convicted of any offence under this Act, if it thinks fit, in addition to sentence or punishment by way of fine or imprisonment, [<sup>F2</sup> to condemn such person to pay the whole or any part of the costs and expenses incurred in and about the prosecution and conviction for the offence of which he shall be convicted, and,] upon the application of the complainant, and immediately after such conviction, to award to complainant any sum of money which it may think reasonable, having regard to all the circumstances of the case, by way of satisfaction or compensation for any loss of situation, wages, status, or other damnification or injury suffered by the complainant through or by means of the offence of which such person shall be so convicted; [<sup>F2</sup>provided that where the case is tried before a jury, such jury shall determine what amount, if any, is to be paid by way of satisfaction or compensation].

**Textual Amendments**

**F2** Words in [s. 4](#) repealed (E.W.) (5.11.1993) by [1993 c. 50, s. 1\(1\), Sch. 1 Pt. I](#) Group1.

**5 Costs and compensation to be a judgment debt.**

The amount awarded for such satisfaction or compensation, [<sup>F3</sup>together with such costs, to be taxed by the proper officer of the court,] shall be deemed a judgment debt due to the person entitled to receive the same from the person so convicted, and be recoverable accordingly.

**Textual Amendments**

**F3** Words in [s. 5](#) repealed (E.W.) (5.11.1993) by [1993 c. 50, s. 1\(1\), Sch. 1 Pt. I](#) Group1.

**6 Application to Scotland.**

In the application of this Act to Scotland the following modifications shall have effect:

(1) A court of summary jurisdiction means the sheriff.

(2) . . . . . <sup>F4</sup>

---

**Changes to legislation:** Witnesses (Public Inquiries) Protection Act 1892 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 29 July 2023. 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](#)

---

(3) Judgment debt means a civil debt, and such debt may be recovered in any competent court.

**Textual Amendments**

**F4** S. 6(2) repealed by [Criminal Law Act 1977 \(c. 45\), s. 65\(7\)](#). Sch. 13

**7 Saving.**

Nothing in this Act contained shall in any way lessen or affect any power or privilege possessed by either House of Parliament, or any power given by statute in the premises.

**8 Short title.**

This Act may be cited as the Witnesses (Public Inquiries) Protection Act 1892.

**Changes to legislation:**

Witnesses (Public Inquiries) Protection Act 1892 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 29 July 2023. 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. 2 words substituted by [2003 c. 44 Sch. 26 para. 4](#)