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STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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**1999 No. 2789**

**The Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1999**

**<sup>F1</sup>[<sup>F2</sup>PART 2A**

**USE OF LIVE LINK [<sup>F1</sup>AND INTERMEDIARY] FOR  
EVIDENCE OF CERTAIN ACCUSED PERSONS**

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| <p><b>F1</b> Words in Pt. 2A inserted (10.5.2013 for specified purposes, 11.11.2013 for specified purposes, 1.4.2015 for specified purposes, 3.4.2017 for specified purposes) by <a href="#">Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (c. 24)</a>, <b>ss. 12(2)</b>, 111(3); S.R. 2013/125, art. 2; S.R. 2013/252, art. 2; S.R. 2015/158, art. 2; S.R. 2017/6, art. 2</p> <p><b>F2</b> Pt. 2A (arts. 21A-21C) inserted (2.2.2009) by <a href="#">Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (S.I. 2008/1216 (N.I. 1))</a>, arts. 1(4), <b>82(2)</b>; S.R. 2008/472, <b>art. 2(4)</b>, Sch. Pt. IV</p> |
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**<sup>F1</sup>[<sup>F3</sup>Live link directions**

**21A.**—(1) This Article applies—

- (a) to any proceedings in a magistrates' court or before the Crown Court against a person for an offence; and
- (b) to any proceedings in the county court on an appeal by a person under Article 140 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981;

and in this Article references to “A” are to the person concerned.

(2) The court may, on the application of A, give a live link direction if it is satisfied—

- (a) that the conditions in paragraph (4) or paragraph (5) are met in relation to A when the application is made; and
- (b) that it is in the interests of justice for A to give evidence through a live link.

(3) A live link direction is a direction that any oral evidence to be given before the court by A is to be given through a live link.

(4) The conditions in this paragraph are that—

- (a) A has a physical disability or suffers from a physical disorder; and
- (b) A's ability to participate effectively in the proceedings as a witness giving oral evidence in court is for that reason compromised.

(5) The conditions in this paragraph are—

- (a) if A is aged under 18, that—
  - (i) A's ability to participate effectively in the proceedings as a witness giving oral evidence in court is compromised by A's level of intellectual ability or social functioning; and

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- (ii) use of a live link would enable A to participate more effectively in the proceedings as a witness (whether by improving the quality of A's evidence or otherwise);
- (b) if A is aged 18 or over, that—
  - (i) A suffers from a mental disorder (within the meaning of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986) or otherwise has a significant impairment of intelligence and social function;
  - (ii) A is for that reason unable to participate effectively in the proceedings as a witness giving oral evidence in court; and
  - (iii) use of a live link would enable A to participate more effectively in the proceedings as a witness (whether by improving the quality of A's evidence or otherwise).
- (6) While a live link direction has effect A may not give oral evidence before the court in the proceedings otherwise than through a live link.
- (7) The court may discharge a live link direction at any time before or during any hearing to which it applies if it appears to the court to be in the interests of justice to do so (but this does not affect the power to give a further live link direction in relation to A). The court may exercise this power of its own motion or on an application by a party.
- (8) The court must state in open court its reasons for—
  - (a) giving or discharging a live link direction, or
  - (b) refusing an application for or for the discharge of a live link direction,
 and, if it is a magistrates' court, it must cause those reasons to be entered in the Order Book.]

**F3** Art. 21A substituted (5.7.2011) by [Justice Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011 \(c. 24\), ss. 19, 111\(3\)](#) (with s. 106(4)); S.R. 2011/224, [art. 2\(a\)](#)

### <sup>F1</sup>**Meaning and effect of live link.**

**21B.**—(1) In Article 21A “live link” means an arrangement by which the accused, while absent from the place where the proceedings are being held, is able—

- (a) to see and hear a person there; and
- (b) to be seen and heard by the persons mentioned in paragraph (2);

and for this purpose any impairment of eyesight or hearing is to be disregarded.

- (2) The persons are—
  - (a) the judge and the jury (if there is one);
  - (b) where there are two or more accused in the proceedings, each of the other accused;
  - (c) legal representatives acting in the proceedings; and
  - (d) any interpreter or other person appointed by the court to assist the accused.

### <sup>F1</sup><sup>F4</sup>**Examination of accused through intermediary**

<sup>F1</sup>**21BA.**—(1) This Article applies to any proceedings (whether in a magistrates' court or before the Crown Court) against a person for an offence.

(2) <sup>F5</sup>[Subject to paragraph (2A),] the court may, on the application of the accused, give a direction under paragraph (3) if it is satisfied—

- (a) that the condition in paragraph (5) is or, as the case may be, the conditions in paragraph (6) are met in relation to the accused; and

(b) that giving the direction is necessary in order to ensure that the accused receives a fair trial.

<sup>F5</sup>  
(2A) A court may not give a direction under paragraph (3) unless—

- (a) the court has been notified by the Department of Justice that arrangements for implementing such a direction have been made in relation to that court; and
- (b) the notice has not been withdrawn.

(2B) The withdrawal of a notice given to a court under paragraph (2A) does not affect the operation of any direction under paragraph (3) given by that court before the notice is withdrawn.]

(3) A direction under this paragraph is a direction that provides for any examination of the accused to be conducted through an interpreter or other person approved by the court for the purposes of this Article (“an intermediary”).

(4) The function of an intermediary is to communicate—

- (a) to the accused, questions put to the accused, and
- (b) to any person asking such questions, the answers given by the accused in reply to them,

and to explain such questions or answers so far as necessary to enable them to be understood by the accused or the person in question.

(5) Where the accused is aged under 18 when the application is made the condition is that the accused's ability to participate effectively in the proceedings as a witness giving oral evidence in court is compromised by the accused's level of intellectual ability or social functioning.

(6) Where the accused has attained the age of 18 when the application is made the conditions are that—

- (a) the accused suffers from a mental disorder (within the meaning of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986) or otherwise has a significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning; and
- (b) the accused is for that reason unable to participate effectively in the proceedings as a witness giving oral evidence in court.

(7) Any examination of the accused in pursuance of a direction under paragraph (3) must take place in the presence of such persons as rules of court or the direction may provide and in circumstances in which—

- (a) the judge and legal representatives acting in the proceedings are able to see and hear the examination of the accused and to communicate with the intermediary;
- (b) the jury (if there is one) are able to see and hear the examination of the accused; and
- (c) where there are two or more accused in the proceedings, each of the other accused is able to see and hear the examination of the accused.

For the purposes of this paragraph any impairment of eyesight or hearing is to be disregarded.

(8) Where two or more legal representatives are acting for a party to the proceedings, paragraph (7)(a) is to be regarded as satisfied in relation to those representatives if at all material times it is satisfied in relation to at least one of them.

(9) A person may not act as an intermediary in a particular case except after making a declaration, in such form as may be prescribed by rules of court, that the person will faithfully perform the function of an intermediary.

(10) Article 3 of the Perjury (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 (perjury) applies in relation to a person acting as an intermediary as it applies in relation to a person lawfully sworn as an interpreter in a judicial proceeding.

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- F4** Arts. 21BA, 21BB inserted (10.5.2013 for specified purposes, 11.11.2013 for specified purposes, 1.4.2015 for specified purposes, 3.4.2017 for specified purposes) by [Justice Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011 \(c. 24\)](#), **ss. 12(1)**, 111(3); S.R. 2013/125, art. 2; S.R. 2013/252, art. 2; S.R. 2015/158, art. 2; S.R. 2017/6, art. 2
- F5** Words in art. 21BA inserted by [Justice Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011 \(c. 24\)](#), **s. 12(1)** as amended (26.4.2013) by [Criminal Justice Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2013 \(c. 7\)](#), **ss. 11(1)-(3)**, 15(1)

### **<sup>F1</sup>Further provision as to directions under Article 21BA(3)**

**<sup>F1</sup>21BB.**—(1) The court may discharge a direction given under Article 21BA(3) at any time before or during the proceedings to which it applies if it appears to the court that the direction is no longer necessary in order to ensure that the accused receives a fair trial (but this does not affect the power to give a further direction under Article 21BA(3) in relation to the accused).

(2) The court may vary (or further vary) a direction given under Article 21BA(3) at any time before or during the proceedings to which it applies if it appears to the court that it is necessary for the direction to be varied in order to ensure that the accused receives a fair trial.

(3) The court may exercise the power in paragraph (1) or (2) of its own motion or on an application by a party.

(4) The court must state in open court its reasons for—

- (a) giving, varying or discharging a direction under Article 21BA(3), or
- (b) refusing an application for, or for the variation or discharge of, a direction under Article 21BA(3),

and, if it is a magistrates' court, it must cause those reasons to be entered in the Order Book.]

- F4** Arts. 21BA, 21BB inserted (10.5.2013 for specified purposes, 11.11.2013 for specified purposes, 1.4.2015 for specified purposes, 3.4.2017 for specified purposes) by [Justice Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2011 \(c. 24\)](#), **ss. 12(1)**, 111(3); S.R. 2013/125, art. 2; S.R. 2013/252, art. 2; S.R. 2015/158, art. 2; S.R. 2017/6, art. 2

### **<sup>F1</sup>Saving**

**21C.** Nothing in this Part affects—

- (a) any power of a court to make an order, give directions or give leave of any description in relation to any witness (including an accused), or
- (b) the operation of any rule of law relating to evidence in criminal proceedings.]

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

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

- art. 29(3)(aa) inserted by [2015 c. 9 \(N.I.\) Sch. 2 para. 11](#)
- art. 29(3)(aa) words substituted in earlier affecting provision [2015 c. 9 \(N.I.\), Sch. 2 para. 11](#) by [2022 c. 4 \(N.I.\) s. 4\(9\)\(h\)](#)