



Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

1974 CHAPTER 53

^{F1} _{F29A} **Unauthorised disclosure of spent cautions**

- (1) In this section—
 - (a) “ official record ” means a record which—
 - (i) contains information about persons given a caution for any offence or offences; and
 - (ii) is kept for the purposes of its functions by any court, police force, Government department or other public authority in England and Wales;
 - (b) “ caution information ” means information imputing that a named or otherwise identifiable living person (“the named person”) has committed, been charged with or prosecuted or cautioned for any offence which is the subject of a spent caution; and
 - (c) “ relevant person ” means any person who, in the course of his official duties (anywhere in the United Kingdom), has or at any time has had custody of or access to any official record or the information contained in it.
- (2) Subject to the terms of any order made under subsection (5), a relevant person shall be guilty of an offence if, knowing or having reasonable cause to suspect that any caution information he has obtained in the course of his official duties is caution information, he discloses it, otherwise than in the course of those duties, to another person.
- (3) In any proceedings for an offence under subsection (2) it shall be a defence for the defendant to show that the disclosure was made—
 - (a) to the named person or to another person at the express request of the named person;
 - (b) to a person whom he reasonably believed to be the named person or to another person at the express request of a person whom he reasonably believed to be the named person.
- (4) Any person who obtains any caution information from any official record by means of any fraud, dishonesty or bribe shall be guilty of an offence.

Changes to legislation: Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, Section 9A is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 15 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

- (5) The Secretary of State may by order make such provision as appears to him to be appropriate for excepting the disclosure of caution information derived from an official record from the provisions of subsection (2) in such cases or classes of case as may be specified in the order.
- (6) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (2) is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale.
- (7) A person guilty of an offence under subsection (4) is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 51 weeks, or to both.
- (8) Proceedings for an offence under subsection (2) shall not be instituted except by or on behalf of the Director of Public Prosecutions.]]

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words substituted by [Criminal Justice \(Scotland\) Act 1980 \(c. 62, SIF 39:1\)](#), **Sch. 7 para. 24(a)(ii)**
- F2** S. 9A inserted (E.W.) (19.12.2008) by [Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 \(c. 4\)](#), ss. 49, 153(7), **Sch. 10 para. 4** (with [Sch. 27 para. 19](#)); S.I. 2008/3260, **art. 2(1)(d)**

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

- Act applied by [2017 anaw 2 s. 66\(10\)](#)

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

- s. 5(2AA) inserted by [2020 asp 13 sch. 5 para. 2\(2\)](#)
- s. 5J(1)(ba) inserted by [2020 asp 13 sch. 5 para. 2\(8\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 5J(1A)(1B) inserted by [2020 asp 13 sch. 5 para. 2\(8\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 8A(2)(aa)-(ad) substituted for s. 8A(2)(a) by [2022 c. 32 Sch. 11 para. 2\(a\)](#)
- s. 8B(1A)-(1E) inserted by [2011 asp 1 s. 187\(2\)\(a\)](#)
- Sch. 3 para. 1(1)(aa)(ab) inserted by [2011 asp 1 s. 187\(3\)](#)