

These notes refer to the Football (Offences and Disorder) Act 1999 (c.21) which received Royal Assent on 27th July 1999

FOOTBALL (OFFENCES AND DISORDER) ACT 1999

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND

3. At present measures aimed at football hooliganism and other problems associated with football matches are contained in the Public Order Act 1986, the Football Spectators Act 1989, the Football (Offences) Act 1991 and the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.
4. The Public Order Act 1986 (“the 1986 Act”) enables exclusion orders to be made in respect of persons convicted of football-related offences in England and Wales. The effect of an exclusion order is to prohibit a person from attending prescribed football matches in England and Wales.
5. The Football Spectators Act 1989 (“the 1989 Act”) enables restriction orders to be made in respect of persons convicted of football-related offences in England and Wales or overseas. The effect of a restriction order is to require a person to report to a police station on the occasion of designated football matches outside England and Wales. This is designed to prevent hooligans from travelling to games abroad.
6. Broadly speaking, the offences in respect of which exclusion orders and restriction orders can be made are offences of violence or disorder-
 - which occur at or in the neighbourhood of a football ground and during the period from two hours before a match starts until one hour after it ends; or
 - which occur on a journey to or from a football match.
7. Section 3 of the Football (Offences) Act 1991 (“the 1991 Act”) makes it an offence for a person to take part with others in indecent or racist chanting.
8. Section 166 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 (“the 1994 Act”) creates an offence of ticket-touting in respect of tickets for football matches in England and Wales.
9. In recent years, hooliganism inside football grounds has decreased. There are still isolated incidents, but trouble associated with football now tends to happen away from the stadium, in the streets or in bars. It often occurs several hours outside the time limits set in the legislation and those responsible do not necessarily attend the match. Violence at matches held overseas, which can extend for several days either side of the match, is also inadequately covered by the present legislation. The result is that the courts often do not have the power to make exclusion or restriction orders in relation to those convicted of football hooliganism.

Recent Developments

10. In November 1998, the Government issued a consultation document, entitled the Review of Football-Related Legislation, which set out suggested changes to improve and strengthen the existing legislation relating to football. The measures proposed

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would provide recourse to the law to prevent a range of offenders from attending matches in this country and travelling to and attending designated matches abroad.

11. Respondents generally welcomed the measures proposed. They also recognised the need to ensure that the law-abiding supporter was able to attend and watch football matches in a safe and secure environment. Respondents also recognised that the recommendations of the consultation document were aimed at targeting those individuals who choose to disrupt football.