



# Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

## 2000 CHAPTER 23

### PART V

#### MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTAL

##### *Supplemental*

#### **81 General interpretation.**

(1) In this Act—

[<sup>F1</sup>“apparatus” has the same meaning as in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (see section 263(1) of that Act);]

“Assistant Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis” includes the Deputy Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis;

<sup>F2</sup>  
...

“civil proceedings” means any proceedings in or before any court or tribunal that are not criminal proceedings;

“communication” includes—

- (a) <sup>F3</sup>... anything transmitted by means of a postal service;
- (b) anything comprising speech, music, sounds, visual images or data of any description; and
- (c) signals serving either for the impartation of anything between persons, between a person and a thing or between things or for the actuation or control of any apparatus;

“criminal”, in relation to any proceedings <sup>F4</sup>..., shall be construed in accordance with subsection (4);

<sup>F5</sup>  
.....

“document” includes a map, plan, design, drawing, picture or other image;

“enactment” includes—

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- (a) an enactment passed after the passing of this Act; and
  - (b) an enactment contained in Northern Ireland legislation;
- “GCHQ” has the same meaning as in the <sup>M1</sup>Intelligence Services Act 1994;
- “Her Majesty’s forces” has the same meaning as in the [<sup>F6</sup>Armed Forces Act 2006];
- “intelligence service” means the Security Service, the Secret Intelligence Service or GCHQ;
- “interception” and cognate expressions shall be construed (so far as it is applicable) in accordance with [<sup>F7</sup>sections 4 and 5 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016];
- “interception warrant” means [<sup>F8</sup>—
- (a) a targeted interception warrant or mutual assistance warrant under Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016, or
  - (b) a bulk interception warrant under Chapter 1 of Part 6 of that Act];
- [<sup>F9</sup>“the Investigatory Powers Commissioner” and “Judicial Commissioner” have the same meanings as in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (see section 263(1) of that Act);]
- [<sup>F10</sup> “justice of the peace” does not include a justice of the peace in Northern Ireland;]
- “legal proceedings” means civil or criminal proceedings in or before any court or tribunal [<sup>F11</sup>or proceedings before an officer in respect of a service offence within the meaning of the Armed Forces Act 2006];
- “modification” includes alterations, additions and omissions, and cognate expressions shall be construed accordingly;
- <sup>F2</sup>  
...
- “person” includes any organisation and any association or combination of persons;
- “police force” means any of the following—
- (a) any police force maintained under section 2 of the <sup>M2</sup>Police Act 1996 (police forces in England and Wales outside London);
  - (b) the metropolitan police force;
  - (c) the City of London police force;
  - (d) [<sup>F12</sup>the Police Service of Scotland;]
  - (e) the Royal Ulster Constabulary;
  - (f) the Ministry of Defence Police;
  - (g) the [<sup>F13</sup>Royal Navy Police];
  - (h) the Royal Military Police;
  - (i) the Royal Air Force Police;
  - (j) the British Transport Police;
- [<sup>F14</sup>“postal service” has the same meaning as in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (see section 262(7) of that Act);]
- <sup>F15</sup>  
...
- “public authority” means any public authority within the meaning of section 6 of the <sup>M3</sup>Human Rights Act 1998 (acts of public authorities) other than a court or tribunal;
- “senior official” means, subject to subsection (7), a member of the Senior Civil Service or a member of the Senior Management Structure of Her Majesty’s Diplomatic Service;

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“statutory”, in relation to any power or duty, means conferred or imposed by or under any enactment or subordinate legislation;

“subordinate legislation” means any subordinate legislation (within the meaning of the <sup>M4</sup>Interpretation Act 1978) or any statutory rules (within the meaning of the <sup>M5</sup>Statutory Rules (Northern Ireland) Order 1979);

<sup>F2</sup>  
...

“telecommunication system” and “telecommunications service” have [<sup>F16</sup>the same meanings as in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (see section 261(11) to (13) of that Act)];

[<sup>F17</sup>“tri-service serious crime unit” means the unit described in section 375(1A) of the Armed Forces Act 2006;]

“the Tribunal” means the tribunal established under section 65;

“wireless telegraphy” has the same meaning as in the [<sup>F18</sup>the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006] and, in relation to wireless telegraphy, “interfere” has the same meaning as in that Act;

“working day” means any day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday under the <sup>M6</sup>Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 in any part of the United Kingdom.

(2) In this Act—

- (a) references to crime are references to conduct which constitutes one or more criminal offences or is, or corresponds to, any conduct which, if it all took place in any one part of the United Kingdom would constitute one or more criminal offences; and
- (b) references to serious crime are references to crime that satisfies the test in subsection (3)(a) or (b).

(3) Those tests are—

- (a) that the offence or one of the offences that is or would be constituted by the conduct is an offence for which a person who has attained the age of twenty-one and has no previous convictions could reasonably be expected to be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of three years or more;
- (b) that the conduct involves the use of violence, results in substantial financial gain or is conduct by a large number of persons in pursuit of a common purpose.

(4) In this Act “criminal proceedings” includes [<sup>F19</sup>proceedings before a court in respect of a service offence within the meaning of the Armed Forces Act 2006,]<sup>F20</sup>....

(5) For the purposes of this Act detecting crime shall be taken to include—

- (a) establishing by whom, for what purpose, by what means and generally in what circumstances any crime was committed; and
- (b) the apprehension of the person by whom any crime was committed;

and any reference in this Act to preventing or detecting serious crime shall be construed accordingly<sup>F21</sup>....

(6) In this Act—

- (a) references to a person holding office under the Crown include references to any servant of the Crown and to any member of Her Majesty’s forces; and
- (b) references to a member of a police force, in relation to the [<sup>F22</sup>Royal Navy Police], the Royal Military Police or the Royal Air Force Police, do not include

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references to any member of [<sup>F23</sup>that force who is not for the time being attached to or [<sup>F24</sup>serving—

- (i) with that force,
- (ii) with another of those police forces, or
- (iii) with the tri-service serious crime unit.]]

(7) If it appears to the Secretary of State that it is necessary to do so in consequence of any changes to the structure or grading of the [<sup>F25</sup>statutory civil service (or any part of it)], he may by order make such amendments of the definition of “senior official” in subsection (1) as appear to him appropriate to preserve, so far as practicable, the effect of that definition.

[<sup>F26</sup>(8) In subsection (7) “the statutory civil service” means—

- (a) the civil service within the meaning of Chapter 1 of Part 1 of the Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (see section 1(4) of that Act), but
- (b) also includes the Government Communications Headquarters.]

[<sup>F27</sup>(9) References in this Act to provision which, if it were contained in an Act of the Northern Ireland Assembly, would deal with a Northern Ireland transferred matter or (as the case may be) a transferred matter (see sections <sup>F28</sup>... 32A(8)(c) and 77B(3)) do not include references to any such provision which would be ancillary to other provision (whether in the Act of the Northern Ireland Assembly or previously enacted) which deals with an excepted or reserved matter (within the meaning given by section 4(1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998).]

#### Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 81(1) substituted (5.2.2019) by Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (c. 25), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 6(2)** (with **Sch. 9** paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2019/174, reg. 2(p)(i)
- F2** Words in s. 81(1) omitted (1.9.2017) by virtue of Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (c. 25), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 83(2)** (with **Sch. 9** paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2017/859, reg. 2(j)
- F3** Words in s. 81(1) omitted (27.12.2018) by virtue of Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (c. 25), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 6(3)** (with **Sch. 9** paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/940, reg. 5(b)
- F4** Words in s. 81(1) omitted (27.12.2018) by virtue of Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (c. 25), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 49(2)(a)** (with **Sch. 9** paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/940, reg. 5(h)
- F5** S. 81(1): definition of “customs officer” repealed (15.2.2008) by Serious Crime Act 2007 (c. 27), ss. 88, 92, 94, **Sch. 12 para. 27, Sch. 14**; S.I. 2008/219, **art. 2(d)(ii)**
- F6** S. 81(1): words in the definition of “Her Majesty’s forces” substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes, otherwise 30.10.2009) by Armed Forces Act 2006 (c. 52), ss. 378, 383, **Sch. 16 para. 175(2)(a)**; S.I. 2009/812, **art. 3** (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, **art. 4**
- F7** Words in s. 81(1) substituted (27.6.2018 for specified purposes, 22.7.2020 for specified purposes) by Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (c. 25), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 6(4)** (with **Sch. 9** paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/652, reg. 12(g)(aa)(ii); S.I. 2020/766, reg. 2(e)(i)
- F8** Words in s. 81(1) substituted (27.12.2018) by Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (c. 25), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 49(2)(b)** (with **Sch. 9** paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/940, reg. 5(h)
- F9** Words in s. 81(1) inserted (1.9.2017) by Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (c. 25), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 83(3)** (with **Sch. 9** paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2017/859, reg. 2(j)
- F10** S. 81(1): definition inserted (1.4.2005) by 2002 c. 26, ss. 10, 87, **Sch. 4 para. 40**; S.R. 2005/109, **art. 2, Sch.**
- F11** S. 81(1): words in the definition of “legal proceedings” inserted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by Armed Forces Act 2006 (c. 52), ss. 378, 383, **Sch. 16 para. 175(2)(b)**; S.I. 2009/812, **art. 3** (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, **art. 4**

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- F12** S. 81(1): para. (d) in the definition of "police force" substituted (1.4.2013) by [The Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012 \(Consequential Provisions and Modifications\) Order 2013 \(S.I. 2013/602\)](#), art. 1(2), **Sch. 2 para. 33(24)**
- F13** S. 81(1): words in the definition of "police force" substituted (4.6.2007) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378, 383, **Sch. 16 para. 175(2)(c)**; S.I. 2007/1442, **art. 2(1)**
- F14** Words in s. 81(1) substituted (27.6.2018 for specified purposes, 22.7.2020 for specified purposes) by [Investigatory Powers Act 2016 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 6(5)** (with Sch. 9 paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/652, reg. 12(g)(bb)(ii); S.I. 2020/766, reg. 2(e)(i)
- F15** Words in s. 81(1) omitted (27.12.2018) by virtue of [Investigatory Powers Act 2016 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 6(6)** (with Sch. 9 paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/940, reg. 5(b)
- F16** Words in s. 81(1) substituted (27.12.2018) by [Investigatory Powers Act 2016 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 6(7)** (with Sch. 9 paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/940, reg. 5(b)
- F17** Words in s. 81(1) inserted (1.5.2022 for specified purposes, 5.12.2022 in so far as not already in force) by [Armed Forces Act 2021 \(c. 35\)](#), s. 24(1), **Sch. 5 para. 21(2)**; S.I. 2022/471, reg. 2(e); S.I. 2022/1095, reg. 4
- F18** S. 81(1): words in the definition of "wireless telegraphy" substituted (8.2.2007) by [Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 \(c. 36\)](#), ss. 123, 126, **Sch. 7 para. 24**
- F19** S. 81(4): words substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes, otherwise 31.10.2009) for s. 81(4)(a)-(c) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378, 383, **Sch. 16 para. 175(3)**; S.I. 2009/812, **art. 3** (with transitional provisions in S.I. 2009/1059); S.I. 2009/1167, **art. 4**
- F20** Words in s. 81(5) omitted (27.12.2018) by virtue of [Investigatory Powers Act 2016 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 49(4)** (with Sch. 9 paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/940, reg. 5(h)
- F21** Words in s. 81(4) omitted (27.12.2018) by virtue of [Investigatory Powers Act 2016 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 49(3)** (with Sch. 9 paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2018/940, reg. 5(h)
- F22** Words in s. 81(6)(b) substituted (4.6.2007) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378, 383, **Sch. 16 para. 175(4)(a)**; S.I. 2007/1442, **art. 2(1)**
- F23** Words in s. 81(6)(b) substituted (4.6.2007) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378, 383, **Sch. 16 para. 175(4)(b)**; S.I. 2007/1442, **art. 2(1)**
- F24** S. 81(6)(b)(i)-(iii) and words substituted for words (1.5.2022 for specified purposes, 5.12.2022 in so far as not already in force) by [Armed Forces Act 2021 \(c. 35\)](#), s. 24(1), **Sch. 5 para. 21(3)**; S.I. 2022/471, reg. 2(e); S.I. 2022/1095, reg. 4
- F25** Words in s. 81(7) substituted (11.11.2010) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), ss. 19, 52(2), **Sch. 2 para. 11(2)**; S. I. 2010/2703, **art. 2(a)**
- F26** S. 81(8) inserted (11.11.2010) by [Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 \(c. 25\)](#), ss. 19, 52(2), **Sch. 2 para. 11(3)**; S. I. 2010/2703, **art. 2(a)**
- F27** S. 81(9) inserted (1.11.2012) by [Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 \(c. 9\)](#), s. 120, **Sch. 9 para. 17** (with s. 97); S.I. 2012/2075, art. 4(d)
- F28** Words in s. 81(9) omitted (22.7.2020) by virtue of [Investigatory Powers Act 2016 \(c. 25\)](#), s. 272(1), **Sch. 10 para. 60** (with Sch. 9 paras. 7, 8, 10); S.I. 2020/766, reg. 2(e)(iii)

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

- C1** S. 81(5) applied (25.9.2000) by [1989 c. 5, s. 1\(5\)](#) (as inserted (25.9.200) by [2000 c. 23](#), ss. 82, 83(2), **Sch. 4 para. 4(1)**)
- S. 81(5) applied (25.9.2000) by [1994 c. 13, s. 11\(1A\)](#) (as inserted (25.9.2000) by [2000 c. 23](#), ss. 82, 83(2), **Sch. 4 para. 6** (with s. 82(3)))
- C2** S. 81(5) applied (1.1.2006) by [Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 \(c. 15\)](#), ss. 42(3), 178; S.I. 2005/3495, **art. 2(1)(f)** (subject to art. 2(2))
- C3** S. 81(5) applied (24.12.2008) by [Counter-Terrorism Act 2008 \(c. 28\)](#), {ss. 21(4)}, 91, 100 (with s. 101(2)); S.I. 2008/3296, **art. 2**

#### Marginal Citations

- M1** [1994 c. 13](#).
- M2** [1996 c. 16](#).

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|-----------|---|
| <b>M3</b> | <a href="#">1998 c. 42.</a>               |
| <b>M4</b> | <a href="#">1978 c. 30.</a>               |
| <b>M5</b> | <a href="#">S.I. 1979/1573 (N.I. 12).</a> |
| <b>M6</b> | <a href="#">1971 c. 80.</a>               |

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

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

- s. 30(6A)-(6D) inserted by [2016 anaw 6 s. 187\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 16A and cross-heading inserted by [2016 anaw 6 s. 187\(3\)](#)
- Sch. 1 Pt. 1 para. 20H inserted by [2013 c. 32 Sch. 12 para. 74](#)