

*These notes refer to the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (c.42)
which received Royal Assent on 20 November 2003*

SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT 2003

EXPLANATORY NOTES

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

Part 1: Sexual Offences

Section 13: Child sex offences committed by children or young persons

22. **Section 13** makes it an offence for a person aged under 18 to do anything that would be an offence under any of sections 9 to 12 if he were aged 18 or over. The purpose of this section is to provide a lower penalty where the offender is aged under 18. In practice (although there is no provision about this in the Act) decisions on whether persons under 18 should be charged with child sex offences will be made by Crown Prosecutors in accordance with the principles set out in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. In deciding whether it is in the public interest to prosecute these offences, where there is enough evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction, prosecutors may take into consideration factors such as the ages of the parties; the emotional maturity of the parties; whether they entered into a sexual relationship willingly; any coercion or corruption by a person; and the relationship between the parties and whether there was any existence of a duty of care or breach of trust.