



# Sexual Offences Act 1956

## 1956 CHAPTER 69

### PART I

#### OFFENCES, AND THE PROSECUTION AND PUNISHMENT OF OFFENCES

##### *Assaults*

#### **14 Indecent assault on a woman**

- (1) It is an offence, subject to the exception mentioned in subsection (3) of this section, for a person to make an indecent assault on a woman.
- (2) A girl under the age of sixteen cannot in law give any consent which would prevent an act being an assault for the purposes of this section.
- (3) Where a marriage is invalid under section two of the Marriage Act, 1949, or section one of the Age of Marriage Act, 1929 (the wife being a girl under the age of sixteen), the invalidity does not make the husband guilty of any offence under this section by reason of her incapacity to consent while under that age, if he believes her to be his wife and has reasonable cause for the belief.
- (4) A woman who is a defective cannot in law give any consent which would prevent an act being an assault for the purposes of this section, but a person is only to be treated as guilty of an indecent assault on a defective by reason of that incapacity to consent, if that person knew or had reason to suspect her to be a defective.

#### **15 Indecent assault on a man**

- (1) It is an offence for a person to make an indecent assault on a man.
- (2) A boy under the age of sixteen cannot in law give any consent which would prevent an act being an assault for the purposes of this section.
- (3) A man who is a defective cannot in law give any consent which would prevent an act being an assault for the purposes of this section, but a person is only to be treated as

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*Status: This is the original version (as it was originally enacted).*

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guilty of an indecent assault on a defective by reason of that incapacity to consent, if that person knew or had reason to suspect him to be a defective.

- (4) Section thirty-nine of this Act (which relates to the competence as a witness of the wife or husband of the accused) does not apply in the case of this section, except on a charge of indecent assault on a boy under the age of seventeen.
- (5) For the purposes of the last foregoing subsection a person shall be presumed, unless the contrary is proved, to have been under the age of seventeen at the time of the offence charged if he is stated in the charge or indictment, and appears to the court, to have been so.

## **16 Assault with intent to commit buggery**

- (1) It is an offence for a person to assault another person with intent to commit buggery.
- (2) Section thirty-nine of this Act (which relates to the competence as a witness of the wife or husband of the accused) does not apply in the case of this section, except on a charge of an assault on a person under the age of seventeen.
- (3) For the purposes of the last foregoing subsection a person shall be presumed, unless the contrary is proved, to have been under the age of seventeen at the time of the offence charged if he is stated in the charge or indictment, and appears to the court, to have been so.