



Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953

1953 CHAPTER 18

ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

1 Functions of the Ministry in relation to prisons and prisoners.

- (1) The Ministry of Home Affairs^{F1} (in this Act referred to as “the Ministry”) shall be the authority responsible for providing and maintaining prisons and for the general regulation, direction and superintendence of prisons and prisoners.
- (2) Without prejudice to the foregoing sub-section, the Ministry shall continue to exercise and perform, subject to the provisions of this Act, all such powers, jurisdiction and duties as were heretofore exercised and performed by the Ministry in relation to prisons and prisoners.

F1 Functions transf. to S of S, SI 1973/2163

VALID FROM 12/04/2010

[^{F2}1A Powers of the Secretary of State

- (1) For purposes connected with any matter mentioned in subsection (2), the Secretary of State may continue to exercise the functions (except functions under prison rules) which the Secretary of State had by virtue of this Act immediately before the coming into force of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 (notwithstanding the transfer of those functions to the Department by virtue of that Order).
- (2) The matters are—

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- (a) activities regulated by, or otherwise relating to the subject matter of, Parts 1 to 3 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000^{F3}, including (in particular) in relation to information obtained through any such activities—
 - (i) the taking of decisions on the basis of the information;
 - (ii) the controlling of access to the information;
 - (iii) the holding and use of the information (so far as not covered by sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii));
- (b) where at any time the accommodation of prisoners in separated conditions on the grounds of security, safety or good order is provided for, decisions about whether a prisoner is to be so accommodated or is to cease to be so accommodated, including (in particular) the setting of any criteria upon which such decisions are to be based;
- (c) national security, including (in particular)—
 - (i) the taking of decisions on the basis of protected information;
 - (ii) the controlling of access to protected information;
 - (iii) the holding and use of protected information (so far as not covered by sub-paragraphs (i) and (ii)).

“Protected information” means information the disclosure of which may, in the opinion of the Secretary of State, be against the interests of national security.

- (3) In particular, the Secretary of State may continue to make prison rules.
- (4) The Department must exercise its functions subject to any thing done by the Secretary of State under subsection (1) and, in particular, prison rules made by the Department have effect subject to prison rules made by the Secretary of State.
- (5) Before making prison rules the Secretary of State or the Department (as the case may be) must consult the other.
- (6) Prison rules may, in particular, confer or impose functions on the Secretary of State.
- (7) The Secretary of State may from time to time, for purposes connected with any matter mentioned in subsection (2) and after consultation with the Department, give a direction setting out arrangements under which officers of the Department (including persons appointed under section 2(2)) who have duties in relation to prisons or prisoners are (so far as provided by, and in accordance with, the arrangements) to be treated as officers of the Secretary of State (rather than of the Department) and subject to his direction and control accordingly; and the officers covered by the direction are to act accordingly.
- (8) The arrangements may (in particular) provide for officers to exercise functions of the Secretary of State.]

F2 S. 1A inserted (12.4.2010) by [Northern Ireland Act 1998 \(Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/976\)](#), arts. 1(2), 6(1), **Sch. 4 para. 3** (with arts. 28-31); S.I. 2010/977, **art. 1(2)**

F3 2000 c. 23.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 S. 1A(7) modified by [Criminal Justice \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/1216 \(N.I. 1\)\)](#), art. 46(5) (as inserted (12.4.2010) by [Northern Ireland Act 1998 \(Devolution of Policing and Justice](#)

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- Functions) Order 2010 (S.I. 2010/976), arts. 1(2), 6(2), **Sch. 5 para. 29(3)** (with arts. 28-31); S.I. 2010/977, **art. 1(2)**
- C2** S. 1A(8) modified by Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (S.I. 2008/1216 (N.I. 1)), art. 46(5) (as inserted (12.4.2010) by Northern Ireland Act 1998 (Devolution of Policing and Justice Functions) Order 2010 (S.I. 2010/976), arts. 1(2), 6(2), **Sch. 5 para. 29(3)** (with arts. 28-31); S.I. 2010/977, **art. 1(2)**)

2 Administrative powers of the Ministry.

- (1) The Ministry shall have and may exercise all such powers as appear to it to be necessary for the proper administration and maintenance of any prison including the equipment, provisioning and supply thereof and the making of and giving effect to arrangements for the welfare, employment and training of prisoners.
- (2) The Ministry shall appoint the governors, medical officers and such other officers and staff as appear to it to be necessary.
- (3) The numbers, remuneration and conditions of service of persons so appointed shall be determined by the Ministry with the approval of the Ministry of Finance^{F4}.
- (4) The Ministry may, with the approval of the Ministry of Finance^{F5}, enlarge, rebuild, repair or alter any prison and build new prisons.
- (5) Where it appears to the Ministry to be necessary or expedient for the purpose of this Act that any land should be acquired, the Ministry may, with the approval of the Ministry of Finance^{F5}, acquire by agreement that land and any easement or right in or over any land adjacent thereto.
- (6) The Ministry, with the approval of the Ministry of Finance^{F5}, may use, appropriate or dispose of in whatsoever manner it may think fit any premises which have ceased to be used as a prison.

- F4** Now Minister for Civil Service, SI 1973/2163
F5 Now Treasury, SI 1973/2163

3^{F6} Lock-ups.

Where it appears to the Ministry to be necessary, the Ministry may provide and maintain suitable accommodation for the temporary detention of persons awaiting trial or sentence.

- F6** S of S is resp.auth. for Belfast and Londonderry, 1954 c.9 (NI)

4 Address of prison.

A writ, warrant or other legal instrument delivered to the governor of a prison and identifying that prison by its situation or by any other sufficient description shall not be invalidated by reason only that the prison is usually known by a different description.

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5 Annual report.

- (1) The Ministry shall prepare an annual report on the administration of this Act and the Minister of Home Affairs^{F7} (in this Act referred to as “the Minister”) shall lay the report before [^{F8} the Parliament of the United Kingdom].
- (2) Each annual report shall contain—
 - (a) a statement of the condition of prisons and prisoners;
 - (b) a statement of the accommodation of each prison and the daily average and the highest number of prisoners contained therein;
 - (c) such particulars of the work done by prisoners in each prison, including the kind and quantities of articles produced and the number of prisoners employed, as may in the opinion of the Minister give the best information to Parliament;
 - (d) a statement of the punishments inflicted in each prison and of the offences for which they were inflicted ...^{F9}

F7 Functions transf. to S of S, SI 1973/2163

F8 SI 1973/2163

F9 1976 NI 4

6 Duty of governor to deliver calendar of prisoners.

The governor of every prison in which persons committed for trial before [^{F10} the Crown Court] are confined shall deliver to that court a calendar of those persons.

F10 1978 c. 23

S. 7 rep. by 2005 c. 12

8 Powers of prison officers.

Every officer of a prison shall while acting as such have all the powers, authority, protection and privileges of a constable.

9 Religious ministrations.

- (1) Where in any prison the number of prisoners who belong to any religious denomination is such as in the opinion of the Minister to require the appointment of a minister of that denomination, the Minister may appoint such a minister to that prison.
- (2) The Ministry may allow a minister of any denomination to visit prisoners of his denomination in a prison to which no minister of that denomination has been appointed under this section.
- (3) No prisoner shall be visited against his will by a minister.
- (4) Every prisoner shall be allowed, in accordance with the arrangements in force in the prison in which he is confined, to attend religious services held therein or to be visited by a minister of his denomination appointed to or permitted to visit prisoners under this section.

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- (5) The governor of a prison shall on the reception of each prisoner record the religious denomination, if any, to which the prisoner declared himself to belong and shall give to any minister who is appointed or permitted to visit prisoners under this section a list of the prisoners who have declared themselves to belong to his denomination; and a minister shall not be permitted to visit any other prisoners except with the permission of the governor at the special request of the prisoner concerned.
- (6) There may be paid to ministers appointed to or permitted to visit prisons under this section such remuneration as the Ministry with the approval of the Ministry of Finance^{F11} may think reasonable.

F11 Now Minister for Civil Service, SI 1973/2163

[^{F12}10 **Independent monitoring boards**

- (1) The Secretary of State shall appoint a group of independent monitors (to be known as “the independent monitoring board”) for each prison, young offenders centre and remand centre.
- (2) In the case of a prison used as a women's prison, at least two of the monitors appointed shall be women.]

F12 2005 NI 15

S. 11 rep. by 1980 NI 10

12 Ejectment warrants in respect of official accommodation.

- (1) Where any living accommodation is provided for a prison officer or his family by virtue of his office, then, if he ceases to be a prison officer or is suspended from office or dies, he, or, as the case may be, his family, shall quit the accommodation when required to do so by notice of the Ministry.
- (2) Where a prison officer or the family of a prison officer refuses or neglects to quit the accommodation forty-eight hours after the giving of such a notice as aforesaid, any resident magistrate, on proof made to him of the facts authorising the giving of the notice and of the service of the notice and of the neglect or refusal to comply therewith may by warrant direct the under-sheriff for the county in which the accommodation is situated, within a period specified in the warrant, to enter, by force if necessary, into the accommodation and deliver possession of it to the Ministry or any person appointed by the Ministry.

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