



Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1966

1966 CHAPTER 20

An Act to make certain provision with respect to responsibility for offences and with respect to homicide and suicide; to provide for an appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal against a verdict of not guilty on the ground of insanity and to empower that Court to order a new trial; and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid or any of them. [7th July 1966]

PART I

PROVISIONS AS TO CRIMINAL RESPONSIBILITY

1 Meaning of certain expressions used in this Act.

In this Act—

Definition rep. by 1986 NI 4

“mental abnormality” means an abnormality of mind which arises from a condition of arrested or retarded development of mind or any inherent causes or is induced by disease or injury;

“insane person” means a person who suffers from mental abnormality which prevents him—

- (a) from appreciating what he is doing; or
- (b) from appreciating that what he is doing is either wrong or contrary to law;
or
- (c) from controlling his own conduct; and

“insanity” shall be construed accordingly.

Status: Point in time view as at 01/01/2006. This version of this Act contains provisions that are not valid for this point in time.

*Changes to legislation: There are currently no known outstanding effects for the
 Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1966. (See end of Document for details)*

2 Presumption against insanity and rebuttal thereof.

- (1) Subject to the succeeding provisions of this Part, every person charged with an offence shall, until the contrary is proved, be presumed not to have been insane at the time the offence is alleged to have been committed.
- (2) The presumption mentioned in subsection (1) may be rebutted by satisfying the jury (or, in the case of a summary trial, the court) that, on the balance of probabilities, the presumption is not correct.
- (3) On a charge for an offence, the prosecution, with the leave of the court, may assume the burden of proving that the person charged was an insane person and may proceed accordingly subject to any directions which may be given by the court as to the stage of the proceedings at which the prosecution may adduce or elicit evidence tending to such proof.

3 Effect of insanity etc., on criminal liability.

- (1) Subject to section 6, if a person charged with the commission of an offence is found to have been, at the time the offence is alleged to have been committed, an insane person within the meaning of this Act, he shall not be convicted of that offence.

Subs.(2), (3) rep. by 1986 NI 4

- (4) This section shall have effect in place of any rule of the common law inconsistent with this section.
- (5) Nothing in this section shall prejudice any powers exercisable^{F1} . . . by a magistrates, court under^{F2} Article 51 of the Magistrates' Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981].

F1 [1986 NI 4](#)

F2 [1981 NI 26](#)

4 Inference, from conduct, of knowledge or state of mind.

- (1) Where on a charge for an offence it is necessary to determine the knowledge or state of mind of a person at any time the jury or, in the case of a summary trial, the court, may infer that that person at that time—
 - (a) had knowledge of his conduct and of the natural and probable consequences of that conduct; and
 - (b) either intended those consequences, or, if he did not intend them, was reckless as to whether or not they would ensue from that conduct.
- (2) The jury, or in the case of a summary trial, the court, shall not be bound to make an inference mentioned in subsection (1) or to disregard any other inference or evidence relevant to the knowledge or state of mind of any person whose knowledge or state of mind is in issue.
- (3) Subsection (1) shall not be taken to affect any rule of law governing the decision of questions as to a person's capacity or any special provision made by or under any enactment (including this Act).

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PART II

HOMICIDE AND SUICIDE

5 Effect, in cases of homicide, of impaired mental responsibility.

- (1) Where a person charged with murder has killed or was a party to the killing of another, and it appears to the jury that he was suffering from mental abnormality which substantially impaired his mental responsibility for his acts and omissions in doing or being a party to the killing, the jury shall find him not guilty of murder but shall find him guilty (whether as principal or accessory) of manslaughter.
- (2) Where a person is found guilty of manslaughter under subsection (1), the powers of the court to make a hospital order^{F3} Article 44 of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 may be exercised as if the condition mentioned in paragraph (2)(a) of that Article were fully satisfied and as if in paragraph (7) of that Article the words “upon the evidence taken into account under that sub-paragraph” and the words from “and no such order” to the end were omitted; and where any such hospital order is made, the court shall make a restriction order under Article 47 in respect of that person], but nothing in this section shall restrict the powers of the court to sentence that person for the offence of manslaughter of which he is found guilty.
- (3) On a charge of murder, it shall be for the defence to prove that the person charged is by virtue of this section not liable to be convicted of murder; but the prosecution, with the leave of the court, may assume the burden of such proof and proceed accordingly subject to any directions which may be given by the court as to the stage of the proceedings at which the prosecution may adduce or elicit evidence tending to such proof.
- (4) Proof shall be sufficient to reduce, under this section, a verdict of murder to one of manslaughter if it satisfies the jury that, on the balance of probabilities, the accused was suffering from mental abnormality of the kind referred to in subsection (1).
- (5) Where on a charge of murder the jury reject the plea that the person charged was an insane person, they may find him to be a person suffering from mental abnormality of the kind referred to in subsection (1).
- (6) The fact that one party to a killing is by virtue of this section not liable to be convicted of murder shall not affect the question whether the killing amounted to murder in the case of any other party to it.

F3 1986 NI 4

6 Unlawful killing while under voluntary intoxication.

Where on a charge of murder the jury find that the person charged killed or was a party to the unlawful killing of another but are satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, he was, at the time of such killing, an insane person whose mental abnormality was of a temporary nature and attributable solely to his own voluntary conduct in taking intoxicating liquor or drugs, he shall be convicted of manslaughter:

Provided, however, that if the jury are satisfied beyond reasonable doubt that, immediately before he took such liquor or drugs, he had the intention to kill or cause serious bodily harm to the person killed, he shall be convicted of murder.

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7 Provocation in cases of homicide.

- (1) Where on a charge of murder there is evidence on which the jury can find that the person charged was provoked (whether by things done or by things said or both together) to lose his self-control the question whether the provocation was enough to make a reasonable man do as he did shall be left to be determined by the jury; and in determining that question the jury shall take into account everything both done and said according to the effect which, in their opinion, it would have on a reasonable man.
- (2) The fact that one party to a killing is by virtue of this section not liable to be convicted of murder shall not affect the question whether the killing amounted to murder in the case of any other party to it.

8 Abolition of “constructive malice” in killings in course or furtherance of other offences.

Where a person kills another—

- (a) in the course or furtherance of some other offence; or
- (b) in the course or for the purpose of resisting an officer of justice, or of resisting or avoiding or preventing a lawful arrest, or of effecting or assisting an escape or rescue from legal custody;

the killing shall not be murder unless done with the same malice aforethought (express or implied) as is required for a killing to amount to murder in other cases.

S. 9 rep. by 1968 c. 34 (NI); 1973 c. 53

Ss. 10, 11 rep. by 1973 c. 53

12 Suicide to cease to be a crime.

Notwithstanding any rule of law to the contrary (but without prejudice to sections 13 and 14) it shall no longer be an offence for a person to commit suicide.

13 Criminal liability for complicity in another's suicide.

- (1) A person who aids, abets, counsels or procures the suicide of another, or an attempt by another to commit suicide, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for a term not exceeding fourteen years.
- (2) If on the trial of an indictment for murder or manslaughter it is proved that the person charged aided, abetted, counselled or procured the suicide of the person alleged to have been killed, the jury may find the person charged guilty of an offence under subsection (1).

Subs. (3) rep. by 1968 c. 34 (NI)

Subs. (4) amends s. 18 of 1959 c. 15 (NI)

- (5) If any person is charged before a magistrates' court with an offence under this section ...^{F4} further proceedings shall not be instituted or continued against him except by or with the consent of the Attorney-General.

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VALID FROM 01/02/2010

^{F5}
^{F5}**13A** **Acts capable of encouraging or assisting**

- (1) If D arranges for a person (“D2”) to do an act that is capable of encouraging or assisting the suicide or attempted suicide of another person and D2 does that act, D is also to be treated for the purposes of section 13 as having done it.
- (2) Where the facts are such that an act is not capable of encouraging or assisting suicide or attempted suicide, for the purposes of section 13 and this section it is to be treated as so capable if the act would have been so capable had the facts been as D believed them to be at the time of the act or had subsequent events happened in the manner D believed they would happen (or both).
- (3) A reference in section 13 or this section to a person (“P”) doing an act that is capable of encouraging the suicide or attempted suicide of another person includes a reference to P doing so by threatening another person or otherwise putting pressure on another person to commit or attempt suicide.]

F5 Ss. 13A, 13B inserted (1.2.2010) by [Coroners and Justice Act 2009 \(c. 25\)](#), [ss. 60\(4\)](#), 182(5) (with savings in [s. 180](#) and transitional, transitory and savings provisions in [Sch. 22](#)); [S.I. 2010/145](#), [art. 2\(2\)](#), [Sch. para. 3](#)

VALID FROM 01/02/2010

13B **Course of conduct**

A reference in section 13 or 13A to an act includes a reference to a course of conduct, and a reference to doing an act is to be read accordingly.]

F5 Ss. 13A, 13B inserted (1.2.2010) by [Coroners and Justice Act 2009 \(c. 25\)](#), [ss. 60\(4\)](#), 182(5) (with savings in [s. 180](#) and transitional, transitory and savings provisions in [Sch. 22](#)); [S.I. 2010/145](#), [art. 2\(2\)](#), [Sch. para. 3](#)

14 **Suicide pacts.**

- (1) It shall be manslaughter, and shall not be murder, for a person acting in pursuance of a suicide pact between him and another to kill the other or be a party to the other being killed by a third person.
- (2) Where it is shown that a person charged with the murder of another killed the other or was a party to his being killed, it shall be for the defence to prove that the person charged was acting in pursuance of a suicide pact between him and the other: and the standard of proof required for the purpose shall be that of proof beyond a reasonable doubt.
- (3) For the purposes of this section “suicide pact” means a common agreement between two or more persons having for its object the death of all of them, whether or not each is to take his own life, but nothing done by a person who enters into a suicide pact

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shall be treated as done by him in pursuance of the pact unless it is done while he has the settled intention of dying in pursuance of the pact.

Part III (ss. 15#22) rep. by 1967 c. 80; 1968 c. 21; 1980 c. 47

PART IV

GENERAL

23 Short title.

(1) This Act may be cited as the Criminal Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 1966.

Subs. (2) rep. by SLR 1973

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Schedule 1 rep. by 1968 c. 21

Schedule 2 rep. by 1969 c. 15 (NI); 1980 c. 47

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