Limitation Act 1980

1980 CHAPTER 58

PART I

ORDINARY TIME LIMITS FOR DIFFERENT CLASSES OF ACTION

Time limits under Part I subject to extension or exclusion under Part II

1 Time limits under Part I subject to extension or exclusion under Part II.

(1) This Part of this Act gives the ordinary time limits for bringing actions of the various classes mentioned in the following provisions of this Part.

(2) The ordinary time limits given in this Part of this Act are subject to extension or exclusion in accordance with the provisions of Part II of this Act.

Actions founded on tort

2 Time limit for actions founded on tort.

An action founded on tort shall not be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the cause of action accrued.

3 Time limit in case of successive conversions and extinction of title of owner of converted goods.

(1) Where any cause of action in respect of the conversion of a chattel has accrued to any person and, before he recovers possession of the chattel, a further conversion takes place, no action shall be brought in respect of the further conversion after the expiration of six years from the accrual of the cause of action in respect of the original conversion.

(2) Where any such cause of action has accrued to any person and the period prescribed for bringing that action has expired and he has not during that period recovered possession of the chattel, the title of that person to the chattel shall be extinguished.

Status: *Point in time view as at 31/12/2020.*
Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Limitation Act 1980, Part I. (See end of Document for details)*

4 Special time limit in case of theft.

(1) The right of any person from whom a chattel is stolen to bring an action in respect of the theft shall not be subject to the time limits under sections 2 and 3(1) of this Act, but if his title to the chattel is extinguished under section 3(2) of this Act he may not bring an action in respect of a theft preceding the loss of his title, unless the theft in question preceded the conversion from which time began to run for the purposes of section 3(2).

(2) Subsection (1) above shall apply to any conversion related to the theft of a chattel as it applies to the theft of a chattel; and, except as provided below, every conversion following the theft of a chattel before the person from whom it is stolen recovers possession of it shall be regarded for the purposes of this section as related to the theft.

If anyone purchases the stolen chattel in good faith neither the purchase nor any conversion following it shall be regarded as related to the theft.

(3) Any cause of action accruing in respect of the theft or any conversion related to the theft of a chattel to any person from whom the chattel is stolen shall be disregarded for the purpose of applying section 3(1) or (2) of this Act to his case.

(4) Where in any action brought in respect of the conversion of a chattel it is proved that the chattel was stolen from the plaintiff or anyone through whom he claims it shall be presumed that any conversion following the theft is related to the theft unless the contrary is shown.

(5) In this section "theft" includes—

(a) any conduct outside England and Wales which would be theft if committed in England and Wales; and

[[F1](b) obtaining any chattel (in England and Wales or elsewhere) by—

(i) blackmail (within the meaning of section 21 of the Theft Act 1968), or

(ii) fraud (within the meaning of the Fraud Act 2006);**]**

and references in this section to a chattel being "stolen" shall be construed accordingly.

Textual Amendments

F1 S. 4(5)(b) substituted (15.1.2007) by Fraud Act 2006 (c. 35), ss. 14(1), 15(1), **Sch. 1 para. 18** (with Sch. 2 para. 8); S.I. 2006/3200, **art. 2**

[[F2]4A Time limit for actions for defamation or malicious falsehood.

The time limit under section 2 of this Act shall not apply to an action for—

(a) libel or slander, or

(b) slander of title, slander of goods or other malicious falsehood,

but no such action shall be brought after the expiration of one year from the date on which the cause of action accrued.**]**

Textual Amendments

F2 S. 4A (which was inserted by 1985 c. 61, ss. 57(2), 69(5), **Sch. 9 para. 14**) substituted (4.9.1996) by 1996 c. 31, **ss. 5(2)(6)**, 19 (with s. 20(2))

Actions founded on simple contract

5 Time limit for actions founded on simple contract.

An action founded on simple contract shall not be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the cause of action accrued.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 S. 5 extended (11.11.1999 with effect as mentioned in s. 10(2)(3) of the amending Act) by 1999 c. 31, **ss. 7(3)**, 10(2)(3)

[F3 5A Additional time limit for actions for damages for late payment of insurance claims

(1) An action in respect of breach of the term implied into a contract of insurance by section 13A of the Insurance Act 2015 (late payment of claims) may not be brought after the expiration of one year from the date on which the insurer has paid all the sums referred to in subsection (1) of that section.

(2) Any payment which extinguishes an insurer's liability to pay a sum referred to in section 13A of the Insurance Act 2015 is to be treated for the purposes of this section as payment of that sum.**]**

Textual Amendments

F3 S. 5A inserted (4.5.2017) by Enterprise Act 2016 (c. 12), **ss. 30**, 44(3) (with s. 44(3))

6 Special time limit for actions in respect of certain loans.

(1) Subject to subsection (3) below, section 5 of this Act shall not bar the right of action on a contract of loan to which this section applies.

(2) This section applies to any contract of loan which—

(a) does not provide for repayment of the debt on or before a fixed or determinable date; and

(b) does not effectively (whether or not it purports to do so) make the obligation to repay the debt conditional on a demand for repayment made by or on behalf of the creditor or on any other matter;

except where in connection with taking the loan the debtor enters into any collateral obligation to pay the amount of the debt or any part of it (as, for example, by delivering a promissory note as security for the debt) on terms which would exclude the application of this section to the contract of loan if they applied directly to repayment of the debt.

(3) Where a demand in writing for repayment of the debt under a contract of loan to which this section applies is made by or on behalf of the creditor (or, where there are joint creditors, by or on behalf of any one of them) section 5 of this Act shall thereupon apply as if the cause of action to recover the debt had accrued on the date on which the demand was made.

(4) In this section "promissory note" has the same meaning as in the [M1]Bills of Exchange Act 1882.

Marginal Citations

M1 1882 c. 61**(13)**

7 Time limit for actions to enforce certain awards.

An action to enforce an award, where the submission is not by an instrument under seal, shall not be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the cause of action accrued.

General rule for actions on a specialty

8 Time limit for actions on a specialty.

(1) An action upon a specialty shall not be brought after the expiration of twelve years from the date on which the cause of action accrued.

(2) Subsection (1) above shall not affect any action for which a shorter period of limitation is prescribed by any other provision of this Act.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C2 S. 8 extended (11.11.1999 with effect as mentioned in s. 10(2)(3) of the amending Act) by 1999 c. 31, **ss. 7(3)**, 10(2)(3)

Actions for sums recoverable by statute

9 Time limit for actions for sums recoverable by statute.

(1) An action to recover any sum recoverable by virtue of any enactment shall not be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the cause of action accrued.

(2) Subsection (1) above shall not affect any action to which section 10 of this Act applies.

10 Special time limit for claiming contribution.

(1) Where under section 1 of the [M2]Civil Liability (Contribution) Act 1978 any person becomes entitled to a right to recover contribution in respect of any damage from any other person, no action to recover contribution by virtue of that right shall be brought after the expiration of two years from the date on which that right accrued.

(2) For the purposes of this section the date on which a right to recover contribution in respect of any damage accrues to any person (referred to below in this section as "the relevant date") shall be ascertained as provided in subsections (3) and (4) below.

(3) If the person in question is held liable in respect of that damage—

(a) by a judgment given in any civil proceedings; or
(b) by an award made on any arbitration;

the relevant date shall be the date on which the judgment is given, or the date of the award (as the case may be).

For the purposes of this subsection no account shall be taken of any judgment or award given or made on appeal in so far as it varies the amount of damages awarded against the person in question.

(4) If, in any case not within subsection (3) above, the person in question makes or agrees to make any payment to one or more persons in compensation for that damage (whether he admits any liability in respect of the damage or not), the relevant date shall be the earliest date on which the amount to be paid by him is agreed between him (or his representative) and the person (or each of the persons, as the case may be) to whom the payment is to be made.

(5) An action to recover contribution shall be one to which sections 28, 32[F4]... and 35 of this Act apply, but otherwise Parts II and III of this Act (except sections 34, 37 and 38) shall not apply for the purposes of this section.

Textual Amendments

F4 Word in s. 10(5) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The Cross-Border Mediation (EU Directive) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/469), reg. 1(1), **Sch. 1 para. 7(2)** (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2020/1493, regs. 1(1), 4(5)(6)); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)

Marginal Citations

M2 1978 c. 47**(122:3)**

Actions in respect of wrongs causing personal injuries or death

11 Special time limit for actions in respect of personal injuries.

(1) This section applies to any action for damages for negligence, nuisance or breach of duty (whether the duty exists by virtue of a contract or of provision made by or under a statute or independently of any contract or any such provision) where the damages claimed by the plaintiff for the negligence, nuisance or breach of duty consist of or include damages in respect of personal injuries to the plaintiff or any other person.

[[F5](1A) This section does not apply to any action brought for damages under section 3 of the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.**]**

(2) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act shall apply to an action to which this section applies.

(3) An action to which this section applies shall not be brought after the expiration of the period applicable in accordance with subsection (4) or (5) below.

(4) Except where subsection (5) below applies, the period applicable is three years from—
(a) the date on which the cause of action accrued; or
(b) the date of knowledge (if later) of the person injured.

(5) If the person injured dies before the expiration of the period mentioned in subsection (4) above, the period applicable as respects the cause of action surviving for the benefit of his estate by virtue of section 1 of the [M3]Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1934 shall be three years from—

(a) the date of death; or

(b) the date of the personal representative's knowledge;

whichever is the later.

(6) For the purposes of this section "personal representative" includes any person who is or has been a personal representative of the deceased, including an executor who has not proved the will (whether or not he has renounced probate) but not anyone appointed only as a special personal representative in relation to settled land; and regard shall be had to any knowledge acquired by any such person while a personal representative or previously.

(7) If there is more than one personal representative, and their dates of knowledge are different, subsection (5)(b) above shall be read as referring to the earliest of those dates.

Textual Amendments

F5 S. 11(1A) inserted (16.6.1997) by 1997 c. 40, **s.6**; S.I. 1997/1498, **art.2**

Marginal Citations

M3 1934 c. 41**(122:3)**

[[F6]11A Actions in respect of defective products.

(1) This section shall apply to an action for damages by virtue of any provision of Part I of the [M4]Consumer Protection Act 1987.

(2) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act shall apply to an action to which this section applies.

(3) An action to which this section applies shall not be brought after the expiration of the period of ten years from the relevant time, within the meaning of section 4 of the said Act of 1987; and this subsection shall operate to extinguish a right of action and shall do so whether or not that right of action had accrued, or time under the following provisions of this Act had begun to run, at the end of the said period of ten years.

(4) Subject to subsection (5) below, an action to which this section applies in which the damages claimed by the plaintiff consist of or include damages in respect of personal injuries to the plaintiff or any other person or loss of or damage to any property, shall not be brought after the expiration of the period of three years from whichever is the later of—

(a) the date on which the cause of action accrued; and

(b) the date of knowledge of the injured person or, in the case of loss of or damage to property, the date of knowledge of the plaintiff or (if earlier) of any person in whom his cause of action was previously vested.

(5) If in a case where the damages claimed by the plaintiff consist of or include damages in respect of personal injuries to the plaintiff or any other person the injured person died

before the expiration of the period mentioned in subsection (4) above, that subsection shall have effect as respects the cause of action surviving for the benefit of his estate by virtue of section 1 of the [M5]Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1934 as if for the reference to that period there were substituted a reference to the period of three years from whichever is the later of—

(a) the date of death; and

(b) the date of the personal representative's knowledge.

(6) For the purposes of this section "personal representative" includes any person who is or has been a personal representative of the deceased, including an executor who has not proved the will (whether or not he has renounced probate) but not anyone appointed only as a special personal representative in relation to settled land; and regard shall be had to any knowledge acquired by any such person while a personal representative or previously.

(7) If there is more than one personal representative and their dates of knowledge are different, subsection (5)(b) above shall be read as referring to the earliest of those dates.

(8) Expressions used in this section or section 14 of this Act and in Part I of the [M6]Consumer Protection Act 1987 have the same meanings in this section or that section as in that Part; and section 1(1) of that Act (Part I to be construed as enacted for the purpose of complying with the product liability Directive) shall apply for the purpose of construing this section and the following provisions of this Act so far as they relate to an action by virtue of any provision of that Part as it applies for the purpose of construing that Part.**]**

Textual Amendments

F6 S. 11A inserted (1.3.1988) by Consumer Protection Act 1987 (c. 43, SIF 109:1), ss. 6(6), 50(2), **Sch. 1 para. 1**

Marginal Citations

M4 1987 c. 43**(109:1)**

M5 1934 c. 41**(122:3)**

M6 1987 c. 43**(109:1)**

12 Special time limit for actions under Fatal Accidents legislation.

(1) An action under the [M7]Fatal Accidents Act 1976 shall not be brought if the death occurred when the person injured could no longer maintain an action and recover damages in respect of the injury (whether because of a time limit in this Act or in any other Act, or for any other reason).

Where any such action by the injured person would have been barred by the time limit in section 11 **[**[F7]or 11A**]** of this Act, no account shall be taken of the possibility of that time limit being overridden under section 33 of this Act.

(2) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act shall apply to an action under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976, but no such action shall be brought after the expiration of three years from—

(a) the date of death; or

(b) the date of knowledge of the person for whose benefit the action is brought;

whichever is the later.

(3) An action under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976 shall be one to which sections 28, 33 [F8]...[[F9], 33B] and 35 of this Act apply, and the application to any such action of the time limit under subsection (2) above shall be subject to section 39; but otherwise Parts II and III of this Act shall not apply to any such action.

Textual Amendments

F7 Words inserted (1.3.1988) by Consumer Protection Act 1987 (c. 43, SIF 109:1), ss. 6(6), 50(2), **Sch. 1 para. 2**

F8 Word in s. 12(3) omitted (31.12.2020) by virtue of The Cross-Border Mediation (EU Directive) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (S.I. 2019/469), reg. 1(1), **Sch. 1 para. 7(3)** (with reg. 5) (as amended by S.I. 2020/1493, regs. 1(1), 4(5)(6)); 2020 c. 1, Sch. 5 para. 1(1)

F9 Words in s. 12(3) inserted (9.7.2015) by The Alternative Dispute Resolution for Consumer Disputes (Amendment) Regulations 2015 (S.I. 2015/1392), regs. 1(2), **4(2)** (with reg. 1(3))

Marginal Citations

M7 1976 c. 30**(122:3)**

13 Operation of time limit under section 12 in relation to different dependants.

(1) Where there is more than one person for whose benefit an action under the Fatal Accidents Act 1976 is brought, section 12(2)(b) of this Act shall be applied separately to each of them.

(2) Subject to subsection (3) below, if by virtue of subsection (1) above the action would be outside the time limit given by section 12(2) as regards one or more, but not all, of the persons for whose benefit it is brought, the court shall direct that any person as regards whom the action would be outside that limit shall be excluded from those for whom the action is brought.

(3) The court shall not give such a direction if it is shown that if the action were brought exclusively for the benefit of the person in question it would not be defeated by a defence of limitation (whether in consequence of section 28 of this Act or an agreement between the parties not to raise the defence, or otherwise).

14 Definition of date of knowledge for purposes of sections 11 and 12.

(1) [[F10]Subject to subsection (1A) below,] in sections 11 and 12 of this Act references to a person's date of knowledge are references to the date on which he first had knowledge of the following facts—

(a) that the injury in question was significant; and

(b) that the injury was attributable in whole or in part to the act or omission which is alleged to constitute negligence, nuisance or breach of duty; and

(c) the identity of the defendant; and

(d) if it is alleged that the act or omission was that of a person other than the defendant, the identity of that person and the additional facts supporting the bringing of an action against the defendant;

and knowledge that any acts or omissions did or did not, as a matter of law, involve negligence, nuisance or breach of duty is irrelevant.

[[F11](1A) In section 11A of this Act and in section 12 of this Act so far as that section applies to an action by virtue of section 6(1)(a) of the Consumer Protection Act 1987 (death caused by defective product) references to a person's date of knowledge are references to the date on which he first had knowledge of the following facts—

(a) such facts about the damage caused by the defect as would lead a reasonable person who had suffered such damage to consider it sufficiently serious to justify his instituting proceedings for damages against a defendant who did not dispute liability and was able to satisfy a judgment; and

(b) that the damage was wholly or partly attributable to the facts and circumstances alleged to constitute the defect; and

(c) the identity of the defendant;

but, in determining the date on which a person first had such knowledge there shall be disregarded both the extent (if any) of that person's knowledge on any date of whether particular facts or circumstances would or would not, as a matter of law, constitute a defect and, in a case relating to loss of or damage to property, any knowledge which that person had on a date on which he had no right of action by virtue of Part I of that Act in respect of the loss or damage.**]**

(2) For the purposes of this section an injury is significant if the person whose date of knowledge is in question would reasonably have considered it sufficiently serious to justify his instituting proceedings for damages against a defendant who did not dispute liability and was able to satisfy a judgment.

(3) For the purposes of this section a person's knowledge includes knowledge which he might reasonably have been expected to acquire—

(a) from facts observable or ascertainable by him; or

(b) from facts ascertainable by him with the help of medical or other appropriate expert advice which it is reasonable for him to seek;

but a person shall not be fixed under this subsection with knowledge of a fact ascertainable only with the help of expert advice so long as he has taken all reasonable steps to obtain (and, where appropriate, to act on) that advice.

Textual Amendments

F10 Words inserted (1.3.1988) by Consumer Protection Act 1987 (c. 43, SIF 109:1), ss. 6(6), 50(2), **Sch. 1 para. 3**

F11 S. 14(1A) inserted (1.3.1988) by Consumer Protection Act 1987 (c. 43, SIF 109:1), ss. 6(6), 50(2), **Sch. 1 para. 3**

[[F12] *Actions in respect of latent damage not involving personal injuries*

Textual Amendments

F12 Ss. 14A, 14B inserted with saving by Latent Damage Act 1986 (c. 37, SIF 79), **ss. 1**, 4(1)(2)

Status: *Point in time view as at 31/12/2020.*
Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Limitation Act 1980, Part I. (See end of Document for details)*

14A Special time limit for negligence actions where facts relevant to cause of action are not known at date of accrual.

(1) This section applies to any action for damages for negligence, other than one to which section 11 of this Act applies, where the starting date for reckoning the period of limitation under subsection (4)(b) below falls after the date on which the cause of action accrued.

(2) Section 2 of this Act shall not apply to an action to which this section applies.

(3) An action to which this section applies shall not be brought after the expiration of the period applicable in accordance with subsection (4) below.

(4) That period is either—
- (a) six years from the date on which the cause of action accrued; or
- (b) three years from the starting date as defined by subsection (5) below, if that period expires later than the period mentioned in paragraph (a) above.

(5) For the purposes of this section, the starting date for reckoning the period of limitation under subsection (4)(b) above is the earliest date on which the plaintiff or any person in whom the cause of action was vested before him first had both the knowledge required for bringing an action for damages in respect of the relevant damage and a right to bring such an action.

(6) In subsection (5) above "the knowledge required for bringing an action for damages in respect of the relevant damage" means knowledge both—
- (a) of the material facts about the damage in respect of which damages are claimed; and
- (b) of the other facts relevant to the current action mentioned in subsection (8) below.

(7) For the purposes of subsection (6)(a) above, the material facts about the damage are such facts about the damage as would lead a reasonable person who had suffered such damage to consider it sufficiently serious to justify his instituting proceedings for damages against a defendant who did not dispute liability and was able to satisfy a judgment.

(8) The other facts referred to in subsection (6)(b) above are—
- (a) that the damage was attributable in whole or in part to the act or omission which is alleged to constitute negligence; and
- (b) the identity of the defendant; and
- (c) if it is alleged that the act or omission was that of a person other than the defendant, the identity of that person and the additional facts supporting the bringing of an action against the defendant.

(9) Knowledge that any acts or omissions did or did not, as a matter of law, involve negligence is irrelevant for the purposes of subsection (5) above.

(10) For the purposes of this section a person's knowledge includes knowledge which he might reasonably have been expected to acquire—
- (a) from facts observable or ascertainable by him; or
- (b) from facts ascertainable by him with the help of appropriate expert advice which it is reasonable for him to seek;

but a person shall not be taken by virtue of this subsection to have knowledge of a fact ascertainable only with the help of expert advice so long as he has taken all reasonable steps to obtain (and, where appropriate, to act on) that advice.

14B Overriding time limit for negligence actions not involving personal injuries.

(1) An action for damages for negligence, other than one to which section 11 of this Act applies, shall not be brought after the expiration of fifteen years from the date (or, if more than one, from the last of the dates) on which there occurred any act or omission—

(a) which is alleged to constitute negligence; and

(b) to which the damage in respect of which damages are claimed is alleged to be attributable (in whole or in part).

(2) This section bars the right of action in a case to which subsection (1) above applies notwithstanding that—

(a) the cause of action has not yet accrued; or

(b) where section 14A of this Act applies to the action, the date which is for the purposes of that section the starting date for reckoning the period mentioned in subsection (4)(b) of that section has not yet occurred;

before the end of the period of limitation prescribed by this section.**]**

Actions to recover land and rent

15 Time limit for actions to recover land.

(1) No action shall be brought by any person to recover any land after the expiration of twelve years from the date on which the right of action accrued to him or, if it first accrued to some person through whom he claims, to that person.

(2) Subject to the following provisions of this section, where—

(a) the estate or interest claimed was an estate or interest in reversion or remainder or any other future estate or interest and the right of action to recover the land accrued on the date on which the estate or interest fell into possession by the determination of the preceding estate or interest; and

(b) the person entitled to the preceding estate or interest (not being a term of years absolute) was not in possession of the land on that date;

no action shall be brought by the person entitled to the succeeding estate or interest after the expiration of twelve years from the date on which the right of action accrued to the person entitled to the preceding estate or interest or six years from the date on which the right of action accrued to the person entitled to the succeeding estate or interest, whichever period last expires.

(3) Subsection (2) above shall not apply to any estate or interest which falls into possession on the determination of an entailed interest and which might have been barred by the person entitled to the entailed interest.

(4) No person shall bring an action to recover any estate or interest in land under an assurance taking effect after the right of action to recover the land had accrued to the person by whom the assurance was made or some person through whom he claimed or some person entitled to a preceding estate or interest, unless the action is brought

within the period during which the person by whom the assurance was made could have brought such an action.

(5) Where any person is entitled to any estate or interest in land in possession and, while so entitled, is also entitled to any future estate or interest in that land, and his right to recover the estate or interest in possession is barred under this Act, no action shall be brought by that person, or by any person claiming through him, in respect of the future estate or interest, unless in the meantime possession of the land has been recovered by a person entitled to an intermediate estate or interest.

(6) Part I of Schedule 1 to this Act contains provisions for determining the date of accrual of rights of action to recover land in the cases there mentioned.

(7) Part II of that Schedule contains provisions modifying the provisions of this section in their application to actions brought by, or by a person claiming through, the Crown or any spiritual or eleemosynary corporation sole.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C3 S. 15 restricted (31.10.1994) by 1994 c. 21, **ss. 10(2)(a)(4)**, 68(2)(a); S.I. 1994/2553, **art. 2**
S. 15 excluded (13.10.2003) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (c. 9), ss. 96(1), 136(2) (with s. 129); S.I. 2003/1725, **art. 2**

16 Time limit for redemption actions.

When a mortgagee of land has been in possession of any of the mortgaged land for a period of twelve years, no action to redeem the land of which the mortgagee has been so in possession shall be brought after the end of that period by the mortgagor or any person claiming through him.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C4 S. 16 excluded (13.10.2003) by 2002 c. 9, ss. 96(2), 136(2) (with s. 129); S.I. 2003/1725, **art. 2**

17 Extinction of title to land after expiration of time limit.

Subject to—

(a) section 18 of this Act;[F13]. . .

(b) [F13]. . . . . .

at the expiration of the period prescribed by this Act for any person to bring an action to recover land (including a redemption action) the title of that person to the land shall be extinguished.

Textual Amendments

F13 S. 17(b) and the word immediately preceding repealed (13.10.2003) by 2002 c. 9, ss. 135, 136(2), Sch. 13 (with s. 129, Sch. 12 para. 1); by S.I. 2003/1725, **art. 2**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C5 S. 17 restricted (31.10.1994) by 1994 c. 21, **ss. 10(2)(a)(4)**, 68(2)(a); S.I. 1994/2553, **art. 2**

S. 17 excluded (13.10.2003) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (c. 9), **ss. 96(3)**, 136(2) (with s. 129); S.I. 2003/1725 {art. 2}

18 Settled land and land held on trust.

(1) Subject to section 21(1) and (2) of this Act, the provisions of this Act shall apply to equitable interests in land [F14]. . . as they apply to legal estates.

Accordingly a right of action to recover the land shall, for the purposes of this Act but not otherwise, be treated as accruing to a person entitled in possession to such an equitable interest in the like manner and circumstances, and on the same date, as it would accrue if his interest were a legal estate in the land (and any relevant provision of Part I of Schedule 1 to this Act shall apply in any such case accordingly).

(2) Where the period prescribed by this Act has expired for the bringing of an action to recover land by a tenant for life or a statutory owner of settled land—

(a) his legal estate shall not be extinguished if and so long as the right of action to recover the land of any person entitled to a beneficial interest in the land either has not accrued or has not been barred by this Act; and

(b) the legal estate shall accordingly remain vested in the tenant for life or statutory owner and shall devolve in accordance with the [M8]Settled Land Act 1925;

but if and when every such right of action has been barred by this Act, his legal estate shall be extinguished.

(3) Where any land is held upon trust [F14]. . . and the period prescribed by this Act has expired for the bringing of an action to recover the land by the trustees, the estate of the trustees shall not be extinguished if and so long as the right of action to recover the land of any person entitled to a beneficial interest in the land [F14]. . . either has not accrued or has not been barred by this Act; but if and when every such right of action has been so barred the estate of the trustees shall be extinguished.

(4) Where—

(a) any settled land is vested in a statutory owner; or

(b) any land is held upon trust [F14]. . .;

an action to recover the land may be brought by the statutory owner or trustees on behalf of any person entitled to a beneficial interest in possession in the land [F14]. . . whose right of action has not been barred by this Act, notwithstanding that the right of action of the statutory owner or trustees would apart from this provision have been barred by this Act.

Textual Amendments

F14 Words in s. 18(1)(3)(4) repealed (1.1.1997) by 1996 c. 47, s. 25(2), **Sch. 4** (with ss. 24(2), 25(4)(5)); S.I. 1996/2974, **art.2**

Marginal Citations

M8 1925 c. 18**(98:3)**

19 Time limit for actions to recover rent.

No action shall be brought, **[**[F15]and the power conferred by section 72(1) of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 shall not be exercisable**]**, to recover arrears of rent, or damages in respect of arrears of rent, after the expiration of six years from the date on which the arrears became due.

Textual Amendments

F15 Words in s. 19 substituted (6.4.2014) by Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 (c. 15), s. 148, **Sch. 14 para. 36** (with s. 89); S.I. 2014/768, art. 2(1)(b)

[[F16]*Commonhold]*

Textual Amendments

F16 S. 19A and cross-heading inserted (27.9.2004) by 2002 c. 15, ss. 68, 181(1), Sch. 5 para. 4; S.I. 2004/1832, **art. 2**

[[F17]19A Actions for breach of commonhold duty

An action in respect of a right or duty of a kind referred to in section 37(1) of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002 (enforcement) shall not be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the cause of action accrued.**]**

Textual Amendments

F17 S. 19A and cross heading inserted (27.9.2004) by 2002 c. 15, ss. 68, 181(1), Sch. 5 para. 4; S.I. 2004/1832, **art. 2**

Actions to recover money secured by a mortgage or charge or to recover proceeds of the sale of land

20 Time limit for actions to recover money secured by a mortgage or charge or to recover proceeds of the sale of land.

(1) No action shall be brought to recover—

(a) any principal sum of money secured by a mortgage or other charge on property (whether real or personal); or

(b) proceeds of the sale of land;

after the expiration of twelve years from the date on which the right to receive the money accrued.

(2) No foreclosure action in respect of mortgaged personal property shall be brought after the expiration of twelve years from the date on which the right to foreclose accrued.

But if the mortgagee was in possession of the mortgaged property after that date, the right to foreclose on the property which was in his possession shall not be treated

as having accrued for the purposes of this subsection until the date on which his possession discontinued.

(3) The right to receive any principal sum of money secured by a mortgage or other charge and the right to foreclose on the property subject to the mortgage or charge shall not be treated as accruing so long as that property comprises any future interest or any life insurance policy which has not matured or been determined.

(4) Nothing in this section shall apply to a foreclosure action in respect of mortgaged land, but the provisions of this Act relating to actions to recover land shall apply to such an action.

(5) Subject to subsections (6) and (7) below, no action to recover arrears of interest payable in respect of any sum of money secured by a mortgage or other charge or payable in respect of proceeds of the sale of land, or to recover damages in respect of such arrears shall be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the interest became due.

(6) Where—

(a) a prior mortgagee or other incumbrancer has been in possession of the property charged; and

(b) an action is brought within one year of the discontinuance of that possession by the subsequent incumbrancer;

the subsequent incumbrancer may recover by that action all the arrears of interest which fell due during the period of possession by the prior incumbrancer or damages in respect of those arrears, notwithstanding that the period exceeded six years.

(7) Where—

(a) the property subject to the mortgage or charge comprises any future interest or life insurance policy; and

(b) it is a term of the mortgage or charge that arrears of interest shall be treated as part of the principal sum of money secured by the mortgage or charge;

interest shall not be treated as becoming due before the right to recover the principal sum of money has accrued or is treated as having accrued.

Actions in respect of trust property or the personal estate of deceased persons

21 Time limit for actions in respect of trust property.

(1) No period of limitation prescribed by this Act shall apply to an action by a beneficiary under a trust, being an action—

(a) in respect of any fraud or fraudulent breach of trust to which the trustee was a party or privy; or

(b) to recover from the trustee trust property or the proceeds of trust property in the possession of the trustee, or previously received by the trustee and converted to his use.

(2) Where a trustee who is also a beneficiary under the trust receives or retains trust property or its proceeds as his share on a distribution of trust property under the trust, his liability in any action brought by virtue of subsection (1)(b) above to recover that property or its proceeds after the expiration of the period of limitation prescribed by this Act for bringing an action to recover trust property shall be limited to the excess over his proper share.

Status: *Point in time view as at 31/12/2020.*
Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Limitation Act 1980, Part I. (See end of Document for details)*

This subsection only applies if the trustee acted honestly and reasonably in making the distribution

(3) Subject to the preceding provisions of this section, an action by a beneficiary to recover trust property or in respect of any breach of trust, not being an action for which a period of limitation is prescribed by any other provision of this Act, shall not be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the right of action accrued.

For the purposes of this subsection, the right of action shall not be treated as having accrued to any beneficiary entitled to a future interest in the trust property until the interest fell into possession.

(4) No beneficiary as against whom there would be a good defence under this Act shall derive any greater or other benefit from a judgment or order obtained by any other beneficiary than he could have obtained if he had brought the action and this Act had been pleaded in defence.

22 Time limit for actions claiming personal estate of a deceased person.

Subject to section 21(1) and (2) of this Act—

(a) no action in respect of any claim to the personal estate of a deceased person or to any share or interest in any such estate (whether under a will or on intestacy) shall be brought after the expiration of twelve years from the date on which the right to receive the share or interest accrued; and

(b) no action to recover arrears of interest in respect of any legacy, or damages in respect of such arrears, shall be brought after the expiration of six years from the date on which the interest became due.

Actions for an account

23 Time limit in respect of actions for an account.

An action for an account shall not be brought after the expiration of any time limit under this Act which is applicable to the claim which is the basis of the duty to account.

Miscellaneous and supplemental

24 Time limit for actions to enforce judgments.

(1) An action shall not be brought upon any judgment after the expiration of six years from the date on which the judgment became enforceable.

(2) No arrears of interest in respect of any judgment debt shall be recovered after the expiration of six years from the date on which the interest became due.

[F18]25 Time limit for actions to enforce advowsons and extinction of title to advowsons.

(1) No person shall bring an action to enforce a right to present to or bestow any ecclesiastical benefice as patron of that benefice after the expiration of whichever of the following periods last expires, that is to say—

(a) a period during which three clerks in succession have held the benefice adversely to the right of presentation or gift of the person in question (or of some person through whom he claims); or

(b) a period of sixty years during which the benefice has been held adversely to that right;

and in no case after the expiration of a period of one hundred years during which the benefice has been held adversely to that right or to the right of some person entitled to a preceding estate or interest or an undivided share or alternate right of presentation or gift held or derived under the same title.

This subsection shall apply to the Crown or a bishop claiming a right to present to or bestow any ecclesiastical benefice as patron, but shall not affect the right of the Crown or a bishop to present or collate to any ecclesiastical benefice by reason of a lapse.

(2) Where any benefice becomes void after being held adversely to the right of presentation or gift of the patron of the benefice and a clerk is presented or collated to the benefice by Her Majesty or the ordinary—

(a) the possession of that clerk shall be treated as adverse; but

(b) where the benefice is avoided in consequence of the incumbent being made a bishop, the incumbency of the new clerk shall, for the purpose of subsection (1)(a) above, be treated as a continuation of the prior incumbency.

(3) Subject to section 75 of the [M9]Land Registration Act 1925, at the expiration of the period prescribed by this Act for any person to bring an action to enforce an advowson the title of that person to the advowson shall be extinguished. [F18]

Textual Amendments

F18 S. 25 repealed (provinces of Canterbury and York) (1.1.1989) by Patronage (Benefices) Measure 1986 (No. 3, SIF 21:4), **ss. 1(2)**, 4(3), 42(2)

Marginal Citations

M9 1925 c. 21**(98:2)**

26 Administration to date back to death.

For the purposes of the provisions of this Act relating to actions for the recovery of land and advowsons an administrator of the estate of a deceased person shall be treated as claiming as if there had been no interval of time between the death of the deceased person and the grant of the letters of administration.

27 Cure of defective disentailing assurance.

(1) This section applies where—

(a) a person entitled in remainder to an entailed interest in any land makes an assurance of his interest which fails to bar the issue in tail or the estates and interests taking effect on the determination of the entailed interest, or fails to bar those estates and interests only; and

(b) any person takes possession of the land by virtue of the assurance.

(2) If the person taking possession of the land by virtue of the assurance, or any other person whatsoever (other than a person entitled to possession by virtue of

Status: *Point in time view as at 31/12/2020.*
Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Limitation Act 1980, Part I. (See end of Document for details)*

the settlement) is in possession of the land for a period of twelve years from the commencement of the time when the assurance could have operated as an effective bar, the assurance shall thereupon operate, and be treated as having always operated, to bar the issue in tail and the estates and interests taking effect on the determination of the entailed interest.

(3) The reference in subsection (2) above to the time when the assurance could have operated as an effective bar is a reference to the time at which the assurance, if it had then been executed by the person entitled to the entailed interest, would have operated, without the consent of any other person, to bar the issue in tail and the estates and interests taking effect on the determination of the entailed interest.

[F19 27A Actions for recovery of property obtained through unlawful conduct etc.

(1) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act applies to any proceedings under Chapter 2 of Part 5 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (civil recovery of proceeds of unlawful conduct).

(2) Proceedings under that Chapter for a recovery order in respect of any recoverable property shall not be brought after the expiration of the period of **[**F20 20 years**]** from the date on which the **[**F21 relevant person's**]** cause of action accrued.

(3) Proceedings under that Chapter are brought when—

(a) a claim form is issued, or

F22 **[** (aa) an application is made for a property freezing order, or**]**

(b) an application is made for an interim receiving order,

whichever is the **[**F23 earliest**]**.

(4) The **[**F24 relevant person's**]** cause of action accrues in respect of any recoverable property—

(a) in the case of proceedings for a recovery order in respect of property obtained through unlawful conduct, when the property is so obtained,

(b) in the case of proceedings for a recovery order in respect of any other recoverable property, when the property obtained through unlawful conduct which it represents is so obtained.

F25 **[** (4A) Subsection (4) is subject to section 13(5) of the Criminal Finances Act 2017 (which provides that, in the case of property obtained through unlawful conduct relating to a gross human rights abuse or violation, proceedings cannot be brought after the end of the period of 20 years from the date on which the conduct constituting the commission of the abuse or violation occurs).**]**

(5) If—

(a) a person would (but for the preceding provisions of this Act) have a cause of action in respect of the conversion of a chattel, and

(b) proceedings are started under that Chapter for a recovery order in respect of the chattel,

section 3(2) of this Act does not prevent his asserting on an application under section 281 of that Act that the property belongs to him, or the court making a declaration in his favour under that section.

(6) If the court makes such a declaration, his title to the chattel is to be treated as not having been extinguished by section 3(2) of this Act.

(7) Expressions used in this section and Part 5 of that Act have the same meaning in this section as in that Part.

[In this section " relevant person " means—

F26(8)**[**F27(a) the National Crime Agency,**]**

(b) the Director of Public Prosecutions,

F28(c) . . . . . .

(d) the Director of the Serious Fraud Office.

[Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, or

F29(e)

(f) the Financial Conduct Authority.**]]]**

Textual Amendments

F19 S. 27A inserted (24.2.2003) by Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (c. 29), **ss. 288(1)**, 458(1); S.I. 2003/120, **art. 2(1)**, Sch. (subject to arts. 3-7) (as amended by S.I. 2003/333, art. 14)

F20 Words in s. 27A(2) substituted (25.1.2010) by Policing and Crime Act 2009 (c. 26), **ss. 62**, 116(1); S.I. 2009/3096, art. 3(h)

F21 Words in s. 27A(2) substituted (1.4.2008) by Serious Crime Act 2007 (c. 27), ss. 74(2), 94, **Sch. 8 para. 147(2)**; S.I. 2008/755, **art. 2(1)(a)** (subject to arts. 3-14)

F22 S. 27A(3)(aa) inserted (1.1.2006) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), ss. 109, 178, **Sch. 6 para. 2(a)**; S.I. 2005/3136, **art. 3**

F23 Word in s. 27A(3) substituted (1.1.2006) by Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 (c. 15), ss. 109, 178, **Sch. 6 para. 2(b)**; S.I. 2005/3136, **art. 3**

F24 Words in s. 27A(4) substituted (1.4.2008) by Serious Crime Act 2007 (c. 27), ss. 74(2), 94, **Sch. 8 para. 147(3)**; S.I. 2008/755, **art. 2(1)(a)** (subject to arts. 3-14)

F25 S. 27A(4A) inserted (27.4.2017 for specified purposes, 31.1.2018 in so far as not already in force) by Criminal Finances Act 2017 (c. 22), s. 58(5)(6), **Sch. 5 para. 2(2)**; S.I. 2018/78, reg. 5(1)(a)

F26 S. 27A(8) inserted (1.4.2008) by Serious Crime Act 2007 (c. 27), ss. 74(2), 94, **Sch. 8 para. 147(4)**; S.I. 2008/755, **art. 2(1)(a)** (subject to arts. 3-14)

F27 S. 27A(8)(a) substituted (7.10.2013) by Crime and Courts Act 2013 (c. 22), s. 61(2), **Sch. 8 para. 28(1)**; S.I. 2013/1682, art. 3(v)

F28 S. 27A(8)(c) omitted (27.3.2014) by virtue of The Public Bodies (Merger of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Director of Revenue and Customs Prosecutions) Order 2014 (S.I. 2014/834), art. 1(1), **Sch. 2 para. 4**

F29 S. 27A(8)(e)(f) inserted (27.4.2017 for specified purposes, 31.1.2018 in so far as not already in force) by Criminal Finances Act 2017 (c. 22), s. 58(5)(6), **Sch. 5 para. 2(3)**; S.I. 2018/78, reg. 5(1)(a)

[F30 27AB Actions to prohibit dealing with property subject to an external request

(1) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act applies to any proceedings under Part 4A of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) Order 2005 (giving effect to external request by means of civil proceedings).

(2) Proceedings under that Part for a prohibition order in respect of relevant property shall not be brought after the expiration of the period of 20 years from the date on which the relevant person's cause of action accrued.

(3) Proceedings under that Part are brought when an application is made for a prohibition order.

(4) The relevant person's cause of action accrues in respect of relevant property when the property is obtained (or when it is believed to have been obtained) as a result of or in connection with criminal conduct.

(5) In this section—

(a) "criminal conduct" is to be construed in accordance with section 447(8) of the Act,

(b) expressions used in this section and Part 4A of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) Order 2005 have the same meaning in this section as in that Part.

(6) In this section "relevant person" means—

(a) the National Crime Agency,

(b) the Director of Public Prosecutions,

[F31](c) . . . . . .

(d) the Director of the Serious Fraud Office.**]**

Textual Amendments

F30 S. 27AB inserted (11.11.2013) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) (Amendment) Order 2013 (S.I. 2013/2604), arts. 1(1), **4(2)**

F31 S. 27AB(6)(c) omitted (27.3.2014) by virtue of The Public Bodies (Merger of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Director of Revenue and Customs Prosecutions) Order 2014 (S.I. 2014/834), art. 1(1), **Sch. 2 para. 5**

[[F32]27B Actions for recovery of property for purposes of an external order

(1) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act applies to any proceedings under Chapter 2 of Part 5 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) Order 2005 (civil proceedings for the realisation of property to give effect to an external order).

(2) Proceedings under that Chapter for a recovery order in respect of any recoverable property shall not be brought after the expiration of the period of **[**[F33]20 years**]** from the date on which the **[**[F34]relevant person's**]** cause of action accrued.

(3) Proceedings under that Chapter are brought when—

(a) a claim form is issued, or

(b) an application is made for a property freezing order, or

(c) an application is made for an interim receiving order,

whichever is earliest.

[F35](3A) **[** If, before an event mentioned in subsection (3) occurs, an application is made for a prohibition order under Part 4A of the Order, the proceedings under Chapter 2 of Part 5 of the Order are to be treated as having been brought when that application is made.**]**

(4) The **[**[F34]relevant person's**]** cause of action accrues in respect of any recoverable property—

(a) in the case of proceedings for a recovery order in respect of property obtained, or believed to have been obtained, as a result of or in connection with criminal conduct, when the property is so obtained,

(b) in the case of proceedings for a recovery order in respect of any other recoverable property, when the property obtained, or believed to have been obtained, as a result of or in connection with criminal conduct which it represents is so obtained.

(5) If—

(a) a person would (but for the preceding provisions of this Act) have a cause of action in respect of the conversion of a chattel, and

(b) proceedings are started under that Chapter for a recovery order in respect of the chattel,

(c) section 3(2) of this Act does not prevent his asserting on an application under article 192 of that Order that the property belongs to him, or the court making a declaration in his favour under that article.

(6) If the court makes such a declaration, his title to the chattel is to be treated as not having been extinguished by section 3(2) of this Act.

(7) In this section—

(a) " criminal conduct " is to be construed in accordance with section 447(8) of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and

(b) expressions used in this section which are also used in Part 5 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) Order 2005 have the same meaning in this section as in that Part.

[In this section " relevant person " means—

[F36](8)**[**[F37](a) the National Crime Agency,**]**

(b) the Director of Public Prosecutions,

[F38](c) . . . . . .

(d) the Director of the Serious Fraud Office.**]]**

Textual Amendments

F32 S. 27B inserted (1.1.2006) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/3181), **art. 201(1)**

F33 Words in s. 27B(2) substituted (25.1.2010) by Policing and Crime Act 2009 (c. 26), **ss. 62**, 116(1); S.I. 2009/3096, art. 3(h)

F34 Words in s. 27B(2)(4) substituted (1.4.2008) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) (Amendment) Order 2008 (S.I. 2008/302), art. 1(1), **4(2)**

F35 S. 27B(3A) inserted (11.11.2013) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) (Amendment) Order 2013 (S.I. 2013/2604), arts. 1(1), **4(3)**

F36 S. 27(B)(8) inserted (1.4.2008) by The Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (External Requests and Orders) (Amendment) Order 2008 (S.I. 2008/302), arts. 1(1), **4(3)**

F37 S. 27B(8)(a) substituted (7.10.2013) by Crime and Courts Act 2013 (c. 22), s. 61(2), **Sch. 8 para. 28(2)**; S.I. 2013/1682, art. 3(v)

F38 S. 27B(8)(c) omitted (27.3.2014) by virtue of The Public Bodies (Merger of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Director of Revenue and Customs Prosecutions) Order 2014 (S.I. 2014/834), art. 1(1), **Sch. 2 para. 6**

[F39 27C Actions for exploitation proceeds orders

(1) None of the time limits given in the preceding provisions of this Act applies to proceedings under Part 7 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (criminal memoirs etc) for an exploitation proceeds order.

(2) Proceedings under that Part for such an order are not to be brought after the expiration of 6 years from the date on which the enforcement authority's cause of action accrued.

(3) Proceedings under that Part for such an order are brought when an application is made for the order.

(4) Where exploitation proceeds have been obtained by a person from a relevant offence, an enforcement authority's cause of action under that Part in respect of those proceeds accrues when the enforcement authority has actual knowledge that the proceeds have been obtained.

(5) Expressions used in this section and that Part have the same meaning in this section as in that Part.]

Textual Amendments

F39 S. 27C inserted (6.4.2010) by Coroners and Justice Act 2009 (c. 25), **ss. 171(1)**, 182(5) (with s. 180); S.I. 2010/816, art. 2, Sch. para. 11

Status:
Point in time view as at 31/12/2020.

Changes to legislation:
There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Limitation Act 1980, Part I.