



Senior Courts Act 1981

1981 CHAPTER 54

PART II

JURISDICTION

THE HIGH COURT

Other particular fields of jurisdiction

25 Probate jurisdiction of High Court.

- (1) Subject to the provisions of Part V, the High Court shall, in accordance with section 19(2), have the following probate jurisdiction, that is to say all such jurisdiction in relation to probates and letters of administration as it had immediately before the commencement of this Act, and in particular all such contentious and non-contentious jurisdiction as it then had in relation to—
- (a) testamentary causes or matters;
 - (b) the grant, amendment or revocation of probates and letters of administration; and
 - (c) the real and personal estate of deceased persons.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of Part V, the High Court shall, in the exercise of its probate jurisdiction, perform all such duties with respect to the estates of deceased persons as fell to be performed by it immediately before the commencement of this Act.

26 Matrimonial jurisdiction of High Court.

The High Court shall, in accordance with section 19(2), have all such jurisdiction in relation to matrimonial causes and matters as was immediately before the commencement of the ^{M1}Matrimonial Causes Act 1857 vested in or exercisable by any ecclesiastical court or person in England or Wales in respect of—

- (a) divorce a mensa et thoro (renamed judicial separation by that Act);
- (b) nullity of marriage . . . ^{F1}; and

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- (c) any matrimonial cause or matter except marriage licences.

Textual Amendments

F1 Words repealed by [Family Law Act 1986 \(c. 55, SIF 49:3\)](#), s. 68(1)(2), [Sch. 1 para. 25](#), [Sch. 2](#)

Marginal Citations

M1 [1857 c. 85](#).

27 Prize jurisdiction of High Court.

The High Court shall, in accordance with section 19(2), have as a prize court—

- (a) all such jurisdiction as is conferred on it by the Prize Acts 1864 to 1944 (in which references to the High Court of Admiralty are by virtue of paragraph 1 of Schedule 4 to this Act to be construed as references to the High Court); and
- (b) all such other jurisdiction on the high seas and elsewhere as it had as a prize court immediately before the commencement of this Act.

28 Appeals from Crown Court and inferior courts.

(1) Subject to subsection (2), any order, judgment or other decision of the Crown Court may be questioned by any party to the proceedings, on the ground that it is wrong in law or is in excess of jurisdiction, by applying to the Crown Court to have a case stated by that court for the opinion of the High Court.

(2) Subsection (1) shall not apply to—

- (a) a judgment or other decision of the Crown Court relating to trial on indictment; or
- (b) any decision of that court under ^{F2} . . . ^{F3} . . . ^{F2}^{F4} . . . or the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982] which, by any provision of any of those Acts, is to be final.

(3) Subject to the provisions of this Act and to rules of court, the High Court shall, in accordance with section 19(2), have jurisdiction to hear and determine—

- (a) any application, or any appeal (whether by way of case stated or otherwise), which it has power to hear and determine under or by virtue of this or any other Act; and
- (b) all such other appeals as it had jurisdiction to hear and determine immediately before the commencement of this Act.

^{F5}(4) In subsection (2)(a) the reference to a decision of the Crown Court relating to trial on indictment does not include a decision relating to ^{F6}a requirement to make a payment under regulations under section 23 or 24 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 [.]

Textual Amendments

F2 Words in s. 28(2)(b) repealed (1.9.2007) by [Gambling Act 2005 \(c. 19\)](#), ss. 356, 358, [Sch. 17](#); S.I. 2006/3272, [art. 2\(4\)](#) (with [Sch. 4](#))

F3 Words in s. 28(2)(b) repealed (24.11.2005) by [Licensing Act 2003 \(c. 17\)](#), ss. 199, 201(2), [Sch. 7](#) (with ss. 2(3), 15(2), 195); S.I. 2005/3056, [art. 2\(2\)](#)

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- F4** Words substituted by Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 (c. 30, SIF 81:1), s. 2, **Sch. 3 para. 27(6)**
- F5** S. 28(4) inserted (2.4.2001) by 1999 c. 22, s. 24, **Sch. 4 para. 22** (with Sch. 14 para. 7(2)); S.I. 2001/916, **art. 3(a)(ii)** (with Sch. 2 para. 2)
- F6** Words in s. 28(4) substituted (1.4.2013) by Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 (c. 10), s. 151(1), **Sch. 5 para. 20**; S.I. 2013/453, **art. 3(h)** (with savings and transitional provisions in S.I. 2013/534, art. 6)

[^{F7}28A Proceedings on case stated by magistrates' court or Crown Court.

- (1) This section applies where a case is stated for the opinion of the High Court—
 - (a) by a magistrates' court under section 111 of the ^{M2}Magistrates' Courts Act 1980; or
 - (b) by the Crown Court under section 28(1) of this Act.
- (2) The High Court may, if it thinks fit, cause the case to be sent back for amendment and, where it does so, the case shall be amended accordingly.
- (3) The High Court shall hear and determine the question arising on the case (or the case as amended) and shall—
 - (a) reverse, affirm or amend the determination in respect of which the case has been stated; or
 - (b) remit the matter to the magistrates' court, or the Crown Court, with the opinion of the High Court,and may make such other order in relation to the matter (including as to costs) as it thinks fit.
- (4) Except as provided by the ^{M3}Administration of Justice Act 1960 (right of appeal to [^{F8}Supreme Court] in criminal cases), a decision of the High Court under this section is final.]

Textual Amendments

- F7** S. 28A substituted (27.9.1999) by 1999 c. 22, **ss. 61, 108(3)(b)** (with Sch. 14 para. 7(2))
- F8** Words in s. 28A(4) substituted (1.10.2009) by Constitutional Reform Act 2005 (c. 4), **ss. 40, 148(1), Sch. 9 para. 36(4)**; S.I. 2009/1604, **art. 2(d)**

Marginal Citations

- M2** 1980 c.43.
- M3** 1960 c.65.

29 [^{F9}Mandatory, prohibiting and quashing orders]

- [^{F10}(1) The orders of mandamus, prohibition and certiorari shall be known instead as mandatory, prohibiting and quashing orders respectively.
- (1A) The High Court shall have jurisdiction to make mandatory, prohibiting and quashing orders in those classes of case in which, immediately before 1st May 2004, it had jurisdiction to make orders of mandamus, prohibition and certiorari respectively.]
 - (2) Every such order shall be final, subject to any right of appeal therefrom.

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- (3) In relation to the jurisdiction of the Crown Court, other than its jurisdiction in matters relating to trial on indictment, the High Court shall have all such jurisdiction to make [^{F11}mandatory, prohibiting or quashing orders] as the High Court possesses in relation to the jurisdiction of an inferior court.
- [^{F12}(3A) The High Court shall have no jurisdiction to make mandatory, prohibiting or quashing orders in relation to the jurisdiction of the Court Martial in matters relating to—
- (a) trial by the Court Martial for an offence; or
 - (b) appeals from the Service Civilian Court.]
- (4) The power of the High Court under any enactment to require justices of the peace or a judge or officer of [^{F13}the county court] to do any act relating to the duties of their respective offices, or to require a magistrates' court to state a case for the opinion of the High Court, in any case where the High Court formerly had by virtue of any enactment jurisdiction to make a rule absolute, or an order, for any of those purposes, shall be exercisable by [^{F14}mandatory order].
- [^{F15}(5) In any statutory provision—
- (a) references to mandamus or to a writ or order of mandamus shall be read as references to a mandatory order;
 - (b) references to prohibition or to a writ or order of prohibition shall be read as references to a prohibiting order;
 - (c) references to certiorari or to a writ or order of certiorari shall be read as references to a quashing order; and
 - (d) references to the issue or award of a writ of mandamus, prohibition or certiorari shall be read as references to the making of the corresponding mandatory, prohibiting or quashing order.]
- [^{F16}(6) In subsection (3) the reference to the Crown Court's jurisdiction in matters relating to trial on indictment does not include its jurisdiction relating to [^{F17}requirements to make payments under regulations under section 23 or 24 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012] .]

Textual Amendments

- F9** S. 29 sidenote substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Civil Procedure \(Modification of Supreme Court Act 1981\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1033\)](#), [art. 3\(e\)](#)
- F10** S. 29(1)(1A) substituted (1.5.2004) for s. 29(1) by [The Civil Procedure \(Modification of Supreme Court Act 1981\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1033\)](#), [art. 3\(a\)](#)
- F11** Words in s. 29(3)(3A) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Civil Procedure \(Modification of Supreme Court Act 1981\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1033\)](#), [art. 3\(b\)](#)
- F12** S. 29(3A) substituted (28.3.2009 for certain purposes and otherwise 31.10.2009) by [Armed Forces Act 2006 \(c. 52\)](#), ss. 378, 383, [Sch. 16 para. 93](#); S.I. 2009/812, [art. 3](#); S.I. 2009/1167, [art. 4](#)
- F13** Words in s. 29(4) substituted (22.4.2014) by [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\)](#), s. 61(3), [Sch. 9 para. 52](#); S.I. 2014/954, [art. 2\(c\)](#) (with [art. 3](#)) (with transitional provisions and savings in S.I. 2014/956, arts. 3-11)
- F14** Words in s. 29(4) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Civil Procedure \(Modification of Supreme Court Act 1981\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1033\)](#), [art. 3\(c\)](#)
- F15** S. 29(5) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Civil Procedure \(Modification of Supreme Court Act 1981\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1033\)](#), [art. 3\(d\)](#)
- F16** S. 29(6) inserted (2.4.2001) by [1999 c. 22](#), s. 24, [Sch. 4 para. 23](#) (with [Sch. 14 para. 7\(2\)](#)); S.I. 2001/916, [art. 3\(a\)\(ii\)](#)

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F17 Words in s. 29(6) substituted (1.4.2013) by [Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 \(c. 10\), s. 151\(1\), Sch. 5 para. 21](#); S.I. 2013/453, art. 3(h) (with savings and transitional provisions in S.I. 2013/534, art. 6)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C1 S. 29(3A) modified (31.10.2009) by [The Armed Forces Act 2006 \(Transitional Provisions etc\) Order 2009 \(S.I. 2009/1059\), arts. 1\(3\)\(b\), 205, Sch. 1 para. 21](#)

[^{F18}29A Further provision in connection with quashing orders

- (1) A quashing order may include provision—
 - (a) for the quashing not to take effect until a date specified in the order, or
 - (b) removing or limiting any retrospective effect of the quashing.
- (2) Provision included in a quashing order under subsection (1) may be made subject to conditions.
- (3) If a quashing order includes provision under subsection (1)(a), the impugned act is (subject to any conditions under subsection (2)) upheld until the quashing takes effect.
- (4) If a quashing order includes provision under subsection (1)(b), the impugned act is (subject to any conditions under subsection (2)) upheld in any respect in which the provision under subsection (1)(b) prevents it from being quashed.
- (5) Where (and to the extent that) an impugned act is upheld by virtue of subsection (3) or (4), it is to be treated for all purposes as if its validity and force were, and always had been, unimpaired by the relevant defect.
- (6) Provision under subsection (1)(a) does not limit any retrospective effect of a quashing order once the quashing takes effect (including in relation to the period between the making of the order and the taking effect of the quashing); and subsections (3) and (5) are to be read accordingly.
- (7) Section 29(2) does not prevent the court from varying a date specified under subsection (1)(a).
- (8) In deciding whether to exercise a power in subsection (1), the court must have regard to—
 - (a) the nature and circumstances of the relevant defect;
 - (b) any detriment to good administration that would result from exercising or failing to exercise the power;
 - (c) the interests or expectations of persons who would benefit from the quashing of the impugned act;
 - (d) the interests or expectations of persons who have relied on the impugned act;
 - (e) so far as appears to the court to be relevant, any action taken or proposed to be taken, or undertaking given, by a person with responsibility in connection with the impugned act;
 - (f) any other matter that appears to the court to be relevant.
- (9) In this section—

“impugned act” means the thing (or purported thing) being quashed by the quashing order;

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“relevant defect” means the defect, failure or other matter on the ground of which the court is making the quashing order.]

Textual Amendments

F18 S. 29A inserted (14.7.2022) by [Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 \(c. 35\)](#), **ss. 1(1)**, 51(4) (with s. 1(4)); S.I. 2022/816, [regs. 1\(2\)](#), 3(a)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C2 S. 29A applied (14.7.2022) by 2007 c. 15, s. 17(A1) (as inserted by [Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 \(c. 35\)](#)), **ss. 1(3)(a)**, 51(4); S.I. 2022/816, [regs. 1\(2\)](#), 3(a)

30 Injunctions to restrain persons from acting in offices in which they are not entitled to act.

- (1) Where a person not entitled to do so acts in an office to which this section applies, the High Court may—
 - (a) grant an injunction restraining him from so acting; and
 - (b) if the case so requires, declare the office to be vacant.
- (2) This section applies to any substantive office of a public nature and permanent character which is held under the Crown or which has been created by any statutory provision or royal charter.

31 Application for judicial review.

- (1) An application to the High Court for one or more of the following forms of relief, namely—
 - [^{F19}(a) a mandatory, prohibiting or quashing order;]
 - (b) a declaration or injunction under subsection (2); or
 - (c) an injunction under section 30 restraining a person not entitled to do so from acting in an office to which that section applies,
 shall be made in accordance with rules of court by a procedure to be known as an application for judicial review.
- (2) A declaration may be made or an injunction granted under this subsection in any case where an application for judicial review, seeking that relief, has been made and the High Court considers that, having regard to—
 - (a) the nature of the matters in respect of which relief may be granted by [^{F20}mandatory, prohibiting or quashing orders];
 - (b) the nature of the persons and bodies against whom relief may be granted by such orders; and
 - (c) all the circumstances of the case,
 it would be just and convenient for the declaration to be made or the injunction to be granted, as the case may be.

[^{F21}(2A) The High Court—

- (a) must refuse to grant relief on an application for judicial review, and
- (b) may not make an award under subsection (4) on such an application,

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- if it appears to the court to be highly likely that the outcome for the applicant would not have been substantially different if the conduct complained of had not occurred.
- (2B) The court may disregard the requirements in subsection (2A)(a) and (b) if it considers that it is appropriate to do so for reasons of exceptional public interest.
- (2C) If the court grants relief or makes an award in reliance on subsection (2B), the court must certify that the condition in subsection (2B) is satisfied.]
- (3) No application for judicial review shall be made unless the leave of the High Court has been obtained in accordance with rules of court; and the court shall not grant leave to make such an application unless it considers that the applicant has a sufficient interest in the matter to which the application relates.
- [^{F22}(3C) When considering whether to grant leave to make an application for judicial review, the High Court—
- (a) may of its own motion consider whether the outcome for the applicant would have been substantially different if the conduct complained of had not occurred, and
 - (b) must consider that question if the defendant asks it to do so.
- (3D) If, on considering that question, it appears to the High Court to be highly likely that the outcome for the applicant would not have been substantially different, the court must refuse to grant leave.
- (3E) The court may disregard the requirement in subsection (3D) if it considers that it is appropriate to do so for reasons of exceptional public interest.
- (3F) If the court grants leave in reliance on subsection (3E), the court must certify that the condition in subsection (3E) is satisfied.]
- [^{F23}(4) On an application for judicial review the High Court may award to the applicant damages, restitution or the recovery of a sum due if—
- (a) the application includes a claim for such an award arising from any matter to which the application relates; and
 - (b) the court is satisfied that such an award would have been made if the claim had been made in an action begun by the applicant at the time of making the application.]

[^{F24}(5) If, on an application for judicial review, the High Court [^{F25}makes a quashing order in respect of] the decision to which the application relates, it may in addition—

 - (a) remit the matter to the court, tribunal or authority which made the decision, with a direction to reconsider the matter and reach a decision in accordance with the findings of the High Court, or
 - (b) substitute its own decision for the decision in question.

(5A) But the power conferred by subsection (5)(b) is exercisable only if—

 - (a) the decision in question was made by a court or tribunal,
 - (b) the [^{F26}quashing order is made] on the ground that there has been an error of law, and
 - (c) without the error, there would have been only one decision which the court or tribunal could have reached.

(5B) Unless the High Court otherwise directs, a decision substituted by it under subsection (5)(b) has effect as if it were a decision of the relevant court or tribunal.]

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- (6) Where the High Court considers that there has been undue delay in making an application for judicial review, the court may refuse to grant—
- (a) leave for the making of the application; or
 - (b) any relief sought on the application,
- if it considers that the granting of the relief sought would be likely to cause substantial hardship to, or substantially prejudice the rights of, any person or would be detrimental to good administration.
- (7) Subsection (6) is without prejudice to any enactment or rule of court which has the effect of limiting the time within which an application for judicial review may be made.
- [^{F27}(8) In this section “the conduct complained of”, in relation to an application for judicial review, means the conduct (or alleged conduct) of the defendant that the applicant claims justifies the High Court in granting relief.]

Textual Amendments

- F19** S. 31(1)(a) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Civil Procedure \(Modification of Supreme Court Act 1981\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1033\)](#), [art. 4\(a\)](#)
- F20** Words in s. 31(2)(a) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Civil Procedure \(Modification of Supreme Court Act 1981\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1033\)](#), [art. 4\(b\)](#)
- F21** S. 31(2A)-(2C) inserted (13.4.2015) by [Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 \(c. 2\)](#), [ss. 84\(1\)](#), 95(1); [S.I. 2015/778](#), [art. 3](#), [Sch. 1 para. 69](#) (with [Sch. 2 para. 6](#))
- F22** S. 31(3C)-(3F) inserted (13.4.2015) by [Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 \(c. 2\)](#), [ss. 84\(2\)](#), 95(1); [S.I. 2015/778](#), [art. 3](#), [Sch. 1 para. 69](#) (with [Sch. 2 para. 6](#))
- F23** S. 31(4) substituted (1.5.2004) by [The Civil Procedure \(Modification of Supreme Court Act 1981\) Order 2004 \(S.I. 2004/1033\)](#), [art. 4\(c\)](#)
- F24** S. 31(5)-(5B) substituted (6.4.2008) for s. 31(5) by [Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 \(c. 15\)](#), [ss. 141](#), 148; [S.I. 2008/749](#), [art. 2](#)
- F25** Words in s. 31(5) substituted (14.7.2022) by [Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 \(c. 35\)](#), [ss. 1\(2\)\(a\)](#), 51(4) (with s. 1(4)); [S.I. 2022/816](#), [regs. 1\(2\)](#), 3(a)
- F26** Words in s. 31(5A)(b) substituted (14.7.2022) by [Judicial Review and Courts Act 2022 \(c. 35\)](#), [ss. 1\(2\)\(b\)](#), 51(4) (with s. 1(4)); [S.I. 2022/816](#), [regs. 1\(2\)](#), 3(a)
- F27** S. 31(8) inserted (13.4.2015) by [Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 \(c. 2\)](#), [ss. 84\(3\)](#), 95(1); [S.I. 2015/778](#), [art. 3](#), [Sch. 1 para. 69](#) (with [Sch. 2 para. 6](#))

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C3** S. 31 excluded in part (24.1.2022) by [Environment Act 2021 \(c. 30\)](#), [ss. 39\(3\)](#), 147(3) (with s. 144); [S.I. 2022/48](#), [reg. 2\(g\)](#)
- C4** S. 31 applied (with modifications) (25.12.2023) by [The Public Service Obligations in Transport Regulations 2023 \(S.I. 2023/1369\)](#), [regs. 1\(1\)](#), [24\(4\)](#)
- C5** S. 31(2A)(2B) applied by [2007 c. 15](#), [s. 16\(6A\)](#) (as inserted (8.8.2016) by [Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 \(c. 2\)](#), [ss. 84\(6\)](#), 95(1); [S.I. 2016/717](#), [art. 3\(c\)](#) (with [art. 6](#)))
- C6** S. 31(2A)(2B) applied by [2007 c. 15](#), [s. 15\(5A\)\(5B\)](#) (as inserted (8.8.2016) by [Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015 \(c. 2\)](#), [ss. 84\(4\)](#), 95(1); [S.I. 2016/717](#), [art. 3\(c\)](#) (with [art. 6](#)))
- C7** S. 31(2A)(2B) applied (4.1.2023) by [Subsidy Control Act 2022 \(c. 23\)](#), [ss. 72\(9\)](#), 91(2); [S.I. 2022/1359](#), [reg. 2](#)

[^{F28}31A Transfer of judicial review applications to Upper Tribunal

- (1) This section applies where an application is made to the High Court—

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- (a) for judicial review, or
 - (b) for permission to apply for judicial review.
- (2) If Conditions 1, 2 [^{F29} and 3] are met, the High Court must by order transfer the application to the Upper Tribunal.
- ^{F30}(2A)
- (3) If Conditions 1 [^{F31} and 2] are met, but Condition 3 is not, the High Court may by order transfer the application to the Upper Tribunal if it appears to the High Court to be just and convenient to do so.
- (4) Condition 1 is that the application does not seek anything other than—
- (a) relief under section 31(1)(a) and (b);
 - (b) permission to apply for relief under section 31(1)(a) and (b);
 - (c) an award under section 31(4);
 - (d) interest;
 - (e) costs.
- (5) Condition 2 is that the application does not call into question anything done by the Crown Court.
- (6) Condition 3 is that the application falls within a class specified under section 18(6) of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007.
- ^{F32}(7)
- ^{F32}(8)]

Textual Amendments

- F28** S. 31A inserted (3.11.2008) by [Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 \(c. 15\)](#), **ss. 19**, 148; [S.I. 2008/2696](#), **art. 5(a)** (with arts. 3, 4)
- F29** Words in s. 31A(2) substituted (1.11.2013) by [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\)](#), **ss. 22(1)(a)**, 61(3); [S.I. 2013/2200](#), **art. 5**
- F30** S. 31A(2A) omitted (1.11.2013) by virtue of [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\)](#), **ss. 22(1)(b)**, 61(3); [S.I. 2013/2200](#), **art. 5**
- F31** Words in s. 31A(3) substituted (1.11.2013) by [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\)](#), **ss. 22(1)(c)**, 61(3); [S.I. 2013/2200](#), **art. 5**
- F32** S. 31A(7)(8) omitted (1.11.2013) by virtue of [Crime and Courts Act 2013 \(c. 22\)](#), **ss. 22(1)(d)**, 61(3); [S.I. 2013/2200](#), **art. 5**; [S.I. 2013/2200](#), **art. 5**

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 31(3)(a) word inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 85\(1\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 31(3)(a) word inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 85\(1\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 31(3)(b) and word inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 85\(1\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 31(3)(b) and word inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 85\(1\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 31(3A)(3B) inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 85\(2\)](#)
- s. 31(3A)(3B) inserted by [2015 c. 2 s. 85\(2\)](#)