



# Acquisition of Land Act 1981

## 1981 CHAPTER 67

### PART I

#### GENERAL

##### *Interpretation*

## 7 Interpretation.

(1) In this Act, except where the context otherwise requires—

“acquiring authority”, in relation to a compulsory purchase, means the Minister, local authority or other person who may be authorised to purchase the land compulsorily,

[<sup>F1</sup>“appropriate website”, in relation to a notice about a proposed compulsory purchase, means a website which members of the public could reasonably be expected to find on searching on the internet for information about the scheme or project that underlies the proposed purchase,]

“compulsory purchase order” means an order under section 2(1) above,

“confirming authority”, in relation to a compulsory purchase, means, where the acquiring authority is not a Minister, the Minister having power to authorise the acquiring authority to purchase the land compulsorily,

“land”—

- (a) includes messuages, tenements and hereditaments, and
  - (b) in relation to compulsory purchase under any enactment, includes anything falling within any definition of the expression in that enactment,
- “local authority” means—

<sup>F2</sup>(a) a billing authority or a precepting authority, as defined in section 69 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;

(a1) [<sup>F3</sup>the London Fire Commissioner;]

(aa) [<sup>F4</sup>a fire and rescue authority in Wales constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies;]

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- (b) a levying body within the meaning of section 74 of <sup>F5</sup>the Local Government Finance Act 1988 ;
- (c) a body as regards which section 75 of that Act applies;
- (d) any joint board or joint committee if all the constituent authorities are such authorities as are described in paragraphs (a) to (c); and
- (e) the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple or the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple,

“National Trust” means the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty incorporated by the <sup>M1</sup>National Trust Act 1907,

“owner” in relation to any land, means a person, other than a mortgagee not in possession, who is for the time being entitled to dispose of the fee simple of the land, whether in possession or in reversion, and includes also a person holding or entitled to the rents and profits of the land under a lease or agreement, the unexpired term whereof exceeds three years <sup>F6</sup>and a person who would have power to sell and convey or release the land to the acquiring authority if a compulsory purchase order were operative],

“prescribed”: see subsection (2) below.

<sup>F7</sup>“universal service provider” has the same meaning as in <sup>F8</sup>Part 3 of the Postal Services Act 2011] ; and references to the provision of a universal postal service shall be construed in accordance with <sup>F9</sup>that Part] .]

- (2) Anything which, by Part II or III of this Act, or Schedule 1 or 3 of this Act, is required or authorised to be prescribed shall be prescribed by regulations made by the Secretary of State by statutory instrument.
- <sup>F10</sup>(3) But an instrument containing regulations made for the purposes of section 13A or paragraph 4A of Schedule 1 is subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament.]

#### Subordinate Legislation Made

P1 s. 7 power exercised by [S.I. 1982/6](#), 1990/613

#### Textual Amendments

- F1 Words in s. 7(1) inserted (31.1.2024 for specified purposes) by [Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 \(c. 55\)](#), **ss. 181(2), 255(7)** (with s. 247); [S.I. 2024/92](#), [reg. 2\(j\)](#)
- F2 S. 7(1): in definition of “local authority” paras. (a)(aa) substituted (2.11.1992) for para. (a) by [Local Government Finance Act 1992 \(c. 14\)](#), s. 117(1), **Sch. 13 para. 52**; [S.I. 1992/2454](#), **art. 2**
- F3 Words in s. 7(1) substituted (31.1.2017 for specified purposes, 1.4.2018 in so far as not already in force) by [Policing and Crime Act 2017 \(c. 3\)](#), s. 183(1)(5)(e), **Sch. 2 para. 63**; [S.I. 2018/227](#), **reg. 4(c)**
- F4 Words in s. 7(1) substituted (1.10.2004 except in relation to W., 10.11.2004 for W.) by [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 \(c. 21\)](#), s. 61, **Sch. 1 para. 53(1)(2)**; [S.I. 2004/2304](#), **art. 2**; [S.I. 2004/2917](#), **art. 2**
- F5 Words in s. 7(1) substituted (1.10.2004 except in relation to W., 10.11.2004 for W.) by [Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 \(c. 21\)](#), s. 61, **Sch. 1 para. 53(1)(3)**; [S.I. 2004/2304](#), **art. 2**; [S.I. 2004/2917](#), **art. 2**
- F6 Words in s. 7 (definition of “owner”) inserted (25.9.1991) by [Planning and Compensation Act 1991 \(c. 34, SIF 28:1\)](#), s. 70, **Sch. 15 para. 9**; [S.I. 1991/2067](#), **art. 3**
- F7 S. 7(1): definition of “universal service provider” inserted (26.3.2001 subject to art. 1(3) of the amending S.I.) by [S.I. 2001/1149](#), **arts. 1, 54(2)**
- F8 Words in s. 7(1) substituted (1.10.2011) by [Postal Services Act 2011 \(c. 5\)](#), s. 93(2)(3), **Sch. 12 para. 110(a)**; [S.I. 2011/2329](#), **art. 3**

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- F9** Words in s. 7(1) substituted (1.10.2011) by [Postal Services Act 2011 \(c. 5\), s. 93\(2\)\(3\), Sch. 12 para. 110\(b\)](#); S.I. 2011/2329, art. 3
- F10** S. 7(3) added (6.8.2004 for specified purposes, 31.10.2004 in so far as not already in force) by [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 \(c. 5\), s. 100\(3\)](#) (with s. 100(8)); S.I. 2004/2097, art. 2; S.I. 2004/2593, art. 2(a)

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**Marginal Citations**

- M1** 1907 c. cxxxvi

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**Changes and effects yet to be applied to :**

- s. 7(3) words inserted by [2023 c. 55 s. 190\(1\)\(a\)](#)
- s. 7(3) words inserted by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 18 para. 3\(2\)\(a\)\(i\)](#)
- s. 7(3) words inserted by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 18 para. 3\(2\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#)

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

- Act applied by [2023 asc 3 s. 43\(2\)](#)
- Act applied by [2023 asc 3 s. 50\(13\)](#)
- Act applied by [2023 asc 3 s. 137\(6\)](#)

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

- s. 7(4) inserted by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 18 para. 3\(2\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 13A(1A)-(1I) substituted for s. 13A(2)-(6) by [2023 c. 55 s. 182\(2\)](#)
- s. 13BA inserted by [2023 c. 55 s. 183\(2\)](#)
- s. 14A(2A) inserted by [2023 c. 55 s. 190\(1\)\(b\)](#)
- s. 15(4)(ba) inserted by [2023 c. 55 s. 183\(3\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 15(4B)-(4F) inserted by [2023 c. 55 s. 183\(3\)\(d\)](#)
- s. 15A and cross-heading inserted by [2023 c. 55 s. 190\(1\)\(c\)](#)
- s. 26(1A)-(3) substituted for s. 26(1)(2) by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 18 para. 3\(3\)](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 4AA inserted by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 19 para. 3\(2\)](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 6(4)(ba) inserted by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 19 para. 3\(3\)\(c\)](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 6(4B)-(4D) inserted by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 19 para. 3\(3\)\(d\)](#)
- Sch. 1 para. 4A(1A)-(1J) substituted for Sch. 1 para. 4A(2)-(8) by [2023 c. 55 Sch. 19 para. 2\(2\)](#)
- Sch. 2A inserted by [2023 c. 55 s. 190\(1\)\(d\)](#)