



# Mental Health Act 1983

## 1983 CHAPTER 20

### PART II

#### COMPULSORY ADMISSION TO HOSPITAL AND GUARDIANSHIP

##### *Position of patients subject to detention or guardianship*

#### **18 Return and readmission of patients absent without leave.**

- (1) Where a patient who is for the time being liable to be detained under this Part of this Act in a hospital—
- (a) absents himself from the hospital without leave granted under section 17 above; or
  - (b) fails to return to the hospital on any occasion on which, or at the expiration of any period for which, leave of absence was granted to him under that section, or upon being recalled under that section; or
  - (c) absents himself without permission from any place where he is required to reside in accordance with conditions imposed on the grant of leave of absence under that section,

he may, subject to the provisions of this section, be taken into custody and returned to the hospital or place by any [<sup>F1</sup>approved mental health professional], by any officer on the staff of the hospital, by any constable, or by any person authorised in writing by the managers of the hospital.

- (2) Where the place referred to in paragraph (c) of subsection (1) above is a hospital other than the one in which the patient is for the time being liable to be detained, the references in that subsection to an officer on the staff of the hospital and the managers of the hospital shall respectively include references to an officer on the staff of the first-mentioned hospital and the managers of that hospital.

- [<sup>F2</sup>(2A) Where a community patient is at any time absent from a hospital to which he is recalled under section 17E above, he may, subject to the provisions of this section, be taken into custody and returned to the hospital by any approved mental health professional, by

---

**Changes to legislation:** *Mental Health Act 1983, Section 18 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 15 November 2023. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

---

any officer on the staff of the hospital, by any constable, or by any person authorised in writing by the responsible clinician or the managers of the hospital.]

- (3) Where a patient who is for the time being subject to guardianship under this Part of this Act absents himself without the leave of the guardian from the place at which he is required by the guardian to reside, he may, subject to the provisions of this section, be taken into custody and returned to that place by any officer on the staff of a local social services authority, by any constable, or by any person authorised in writing by the guardian or a local social services authority.

- [<sup>F3</sup>(4) A patient shall not be taken into custody under this section after the later of—
- (a) the end of the period of six months beginning with the first day of his absence without leave; and
  - (b) the end of the period for which (apart from section 21 below) he is liable to be detained or subject to guardianship [<sup>F4</sup>or, in the case of a community patient, the community treatment order is in force] ;

[<sup>F5</sup> . . . ]

- [<sup>F6</sup>(4A) In determining for the purposes of subsection (4)(b) above or any other provision of this Act whether a person who is or has been absent without leave is at any time liable to be detained or subject to guardianship, a report furnished under section 20 or 21B below before the first day of his absence without leave shall not be taken to have renewed the authority for his detention or guardianship unless the period of renewal began before that day.

- (4B) Similarly, in determining for those purposes whether a community treatment order is at any time in force in respect of a person who is or has been absent without leave, a report furnished under section 20A or 21B below before the first day of his absence without leave shall not be taken to have extended the community treatment period unless the extension began before that day.]

- (5) A patient shall not be taken into custody under this section if the period for which he is liable to be detained is that specified in section 2(4), 4(4) or 5(2) or (4) above and that period has expired.

- (6) In this Act “absent without leave” means absent from any hospital or other place and liable to be taken into custody and returned under this section, and related expressions shall be construed accordingly.

- [<sup>F7</sup>(7) In relation to a patient who has yet to comply with a requirement imposed by virtue of this Act to be in a hospital or place, references in this Act to his liability to be returned to the hospital or place shall include his liability to be taken to that hospital or place; and related expressions shall be construed accordingly.]

---

#### **Extent Information**

**E1** For extent of s. 18 see 146, 147

---

#### **Textual Amendments**

**F1** Words in s. 18(1) substituted (3.11.2008) by [Mental Health Act 2007 \(c. 12\)](#), ss. 21, 56, [Sch. 2 para. 7\(a\)](#) (with [Sch. 10](#)); [S.I. 2008/1900](#), [art. 2\(d\)](#) (with [art. 3](#), [Sch.](#)); [S.I. 2008/2561](#), [art. 2\(b\)](#) (with [art. 3](#), [Sch.](#))

**F2** [S. 18\(2A\)](#) inserted (3.11.2008) by [Mental Health Act 2007 \(c. 12\)](#), ss. 32, 56, [Sch. 3 para. 3\(2\)](#) (with [Sch. 10](#)); [S.I. 2008/1900](#), [art. 2\(i\)](#) (with [art. 3](#), [Sch.](#))

---

**Changes to legislation:** *Mental Health Act 1983, Section 18 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 15 November 2023. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes*

---

- F3** S. 18(4) substituted (1.4.1996) by 1995 c. 52, **ss. 2(1)**, 7(2)
- F4** Words in s. 18(4)(b) inserted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 32, 56, **Sch. 3 para. 3(3)(a)** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(i)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F5** Words in s. 18(4) repealed (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 32, 55, 56, Sch. 3 para. 3(3)(b), **Sch. 11 Pt. 5** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1210, **art. 2(d)** (with art. 4)
- F6** S. 18(4A)(4B) inserted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 32, 56, **Sch. 3 para. 3(4)** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(i)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F7** S. 18(7) inserted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 32, 56, **Sch. 3 para. 3(5)** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(i)** (with art. 3, Sch.)

**Changes to legislation:**

Mental Health Act 1983, Section 18 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 15 November 2023. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations.

View outstanding changes

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

- Act applied by [1996 c. 46 Sch. 2 para. 9](#)(replacing [1968 c 20 s. 23](#)) (Act applied (prosp.) by [1968 c. 20, s. 23\(4\)](#) (as substituted (prosp.) by [1996 c. 46, ss. 8, 36\(2\), Sch. 2, para. 9](#) which said amending provision was repealed (31.3.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\), ss. 58\(2\), 60, Sch. 11; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3\(h\)\(i\)\(ix\)\)](#))
- Act applied by [1996 c. 46 Sch. 2 para. 4](#)(replacing [1957 c 53 s. 63](#)) (Act applied (prosp.) by [1957 c. 53, s. 63C\(6\)](#) (as substituted (prosp.) by [1996 c. 46, ss. 8, 36\(2\), Sch. 2, para. 4](#) which said amending provision was repealed (31.3.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\), ss. 58\(2\), 60, Sch. 11; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3\(h\)\(i\)\(ix\)\)](#))
- Act applied by [1996 c. 46 Sch. 2 para. 1](#)(replacing [1955 c 19 s. 116](#)) (Act applied (prosp.) by [1955 c. 19, s. 116C\(6\)](#) (as substituted (prosp.) by [1996 c. 46, ss. 8, 36\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 1](#) which said amending provision was repealed (31.3.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\), ss. 58\(2\), 60, Sch. 11; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3\(h\)\(i\)\(ix\)](#))
- Act applied by [1996 c. 46 Sch. 2 para. 1](#)(replacing [1955 c 18 s 116](#)) (Act applied (prosp.) by [1955 c. 18, s. 116C\(6\)](#) (as substituted (prosp.) by [1996 c. 46, ss. 8, 36\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 1](#) which said amending provision was repealed (31.3.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\), ss. 58\(2\), 60, Sch. 11; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3\(h\)\(i\)\(ix\)\)](#))
- Act power to applied by [1996 c. 46 Sch. 2 para. 4](#)(replacing [1957 c 53 s. 63](#)) (Act: Power to apply conferred (prosp.) by [1957 c. 53, s. 63B\(4\)\(c\)](#) (as substituted (prosp.) by [1996 c. 46, ss. 8, 36\(2\), Sch. 2, para. 4](#) which said amending provision was repealed (31.3.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\), ss. 58\(2\), 60, Sch. 11; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3\(h\)\(i\)\(ix\)\)](#))
- Act power to applied by [1996 c. 46 Sch. 2 para. 1](#)(replacing [1955 c 19 s. 116](#)) (Act: Power to apply conferred (prosp.) by [1955 c. 19, s. 116B\(4\)\(c\)](#) (as substituted (prosp.) by [1996 c. 46, ss. 8, 36\(2\), Sch. 2, para. 1](#) which said amending provision was repealed (31.3.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\), ss. 58\(2\), 60, Sch. 11; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3\(h\)\(i\)\(ix\)\)](#))
- Act power to applied by [1996 c. 46 Sch. 2 para. 1](#)(replacing [1955 c 18 s 116](#)) (Act: Power to apply conferred (prosp.) by [1955 c. 18, s. 116B\(4\)\(c\)](#) (as substituted (prosp.) by [1996 c. 46, ss. 8, 36\(2\), Sch. 2 para. 1](#) which said amending provision was repealed (31.3.2005) by [Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 \(c. 28\), ss. 58\(2\), 60, Sch. 11; S.I. 2005/579, art. 3\(h\)\(i\)\(ix\)\)](#))

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

- s. 74(8) inserted by [2015 c. 2 Sch. 3 para. 3\(3\)](#)