



Mental Health Act 1983

1983 CHAPTER 20

PART II

COMPULSORY ADMISSION TO HOSPITAL AND GUARDIANSHIP

[^{F1}Duration of authority and discharge]

20 Duration of authority.

- (1) Subject to the following provisions of this Part of this Act, a patient admitted to hospital in pursuance of an application for admission for treatment, and a patient placed under guardianship in pursuance of a guardianship application, may be detained in a hospital or kept under guardianship for a period not exceeding six months beginning with the day on which he was so admitted, or the day on which the guardianship application was accepted, as the case may be, but shall not be so detained or kept for any longer period unless the authority for his detention or guardianship is renewed under this section.
- (2) Authority for the detention or guardianship of a patient may, unless the patient has previously been discharged [^{F1}under section 23 below], be renewed—
 - (a) from the expiration of the period referred to in subsection (1) above, for a further period of six months;
 - (b) from the expiration of any period of renewal under paragraph (a) above, for a further period of one year,and so on for periods of one year at a time.
- (3) Within the period of two months ending on the day on which a patient who is liable to be detained in pursuance of an application for admission for treatment would cease under this section to be so liable in default of the renewal of the authority for his detention, it shall be the duty of the [^{F2}responsible clinician]—
 - (a) to examine the patient; and

Changes to legislation: Mental Health Act 1983, Section 20 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 01 December 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

- (b) if it appears to him that the conditions set out in subsection (4) below are satisfied, to furnish to the managers of the hospital where the patient is detained a report to that effect in the prescribed form;

and where such a report is furnished in respect of a patient the managers shall, unless they discharge the patient [^{F3}under section 23 below] , cause him to be informed.

- (4) The conditions referred to in subsection (3) above are that—

- (a) the patient is suffering from [^{F4}mental disorder] of a nature or degree which makes it appropriate for him to receive medical treatment in a hospital; and
- (b) ^{F5}
- (c) it is necessary for the health or safety of the patient or for the protection of other persons that he should receive such treatment and that it cannot be provided unless he continues to be detained; [^{F6} and
- (d) appropriate medical treatment is available for him.]

^{F7} ...

- (5) Before furnishing a report under subsection (3) above the [^{F2}responsible clinician] shall consult one or more other persons who have been professionally concerned with the patient's medical treatment.

- [^{F8}(5A) But the responsible clinician may not furnish a report under subsection (3) above unless a person—

- (a) who has been professionally concerned with the patient's medical treatment; but
- (b) who belongs to a profession other than that to which the responsible clinician belongs,

states in writing that he agrees that the conditions set out in subsection (4) above are satisfied.]

- (6) Within the period of two months ending with the day on which a patient who is subject to guardianship under this Part of this Act would cease under this section to be so liable in default of the renewal of the authority for his guardianship, it shall be the duty of the [^{F9}appropriate practitioner]—

- (a) to examine the patient; and
- (b) if it appears to him that the conditions set out in subsection (7) below are satisfied, to furnish to the guardian and, where the guardian is a person other than a local social services authority, to the responsible local social services authority a report to that effect in the prescribed form;

and where such a report is furnished in respect of a patient, the local social services authority shall, unless they discharge the patient [^{F3}under section 23 below] , cause him to be informed.

- (7) The conditions referred to in subsection (6) above are that—

- (a) the patient is suffering from [^{F10}mental disorder] of a nature or degree which warrants his reception into guardianship; and
- (b) it is necessary in the interests of the welfare of the patient or for the protection of other persons that the patient should remain under guardianship.

- (8) Where a report is duly furnished under subsection (3) or (6) above, the authority for the detention or guardianship of the patient shall be thereby renewed for the period prescribed in that case by subsection (2) above.

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(9) ^{F11}

(10) ^{F12}

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 20(2) inserted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 32, 56, **Sch. 3 para. 5(a)** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(i)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F2** Words in s. 20(3)(5) substituted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), **ss. 9(4)(a)**, 56 (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(b)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F3** Words in s. 20(3)(6) inserted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 32, 56, **Sch. 3 para. 5(b)** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(i)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F4** Words in s. 20(4)(a) substituted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 1, 56, **Sch. 1 para. 4(a)** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(a)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F5** S. 20(4)(b) and word "and" at the end of that paragraph repealed (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 4(4)(a), 55, 56, **Sch. 11 Pt. 2** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(b)(p)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F6** S. 20(4)(d) and preceding word inserted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), **ss. 4(4)(b)**, 56 (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(b)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F7** Words in s. 20(4) repealed (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 4(4)(c), 55, 56, **Sch. 11 Pt. 2** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(b)(p)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F8** S. 20(5A) inserted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), **ss. 9(4)(b)**, 56 (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(b)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F9** Words in s. 20(6) substituted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), **ss. 9(4)(c)**, 56 (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(b)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F10** Words in s. 20(7)(a) substituted (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 1, 56, **Sch. 1 para. 4(b)** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(a)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F11** S. 20(9) repealed (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 55, 56, **Sch. 11 Pt. 1** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(p)** (with art. 3, Sch.)
- F12** S. 20(10) repealed (3.11.2008) by Mental Health Act 2007 (c. 12), ss. 9(4)(d), 55, 56, **Sch. 11 Pt. 3** (with Sch. 10); S.I. 2008/1900, **art. 2(b)(p)** (with art. 3, Sch.)

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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\(3\)](#)