

# **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS ACT 2000**

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## **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

### **COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS**

#### **Part I Cryptography Service Providers**

##### ***Section 1: Register of approved providers***

21. This section places a duty on the Secretary of State to establish and maintain a register of approved providers of cryptography support services, and specifies what information is to be contained in the register. The section also requires the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the public to have access to the register and for any changes to the information in the register to be publicised.
  - *cryptography support services* are defined in section 6.
22. The main purpose of the register is to ensure that providers on the register have been independently assessed against particular standards of quality, in order to encourage the use of their services, and hence the development of electronic commerce and electronic communication with Government.
23. Where two people are communicating electronically, it may be necessary for one person to rely on the services provided to the other: for example, where the first person receives a communication which purports to have been signed electronically by the other.
  - a definition of *electronic signature* is given in section 7(2).
24. The register is voluntary: no provider is obliged to apply for approval and a provider who is not on the register is at liberty to provide cryptography services.