

Northern  
Ireland  
Office

# Consultation on the proposal for a draft Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2007

## Easy Read Version

Criminal Justice Reform & Delivery Division

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November 2007

## **The Northern Ireland Office (NIO)**

The NIO is the government body in Northern Ireland which looks after anything to do with law and order.

We would like to make some changes to the jail sentences people will get if they break the law.

We plan to do this in 2008 by asking Parliament to agree to the plans we have set out in the draft Criminal Justice (NI) Order 2007.

Under section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 all government policies, including NIO policies, should aim to promote equality between people of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation. We also aim to promote equality between men and women generally, people with a disability and people without and people with dependents or without dependents.

If you believe that any of the policies in the draft Order will have a different impact on any of the groups of people we have named above please let us know.

## The Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2007

We plan to change the law for very dangerous criminals so that they may spend more time in jail.



This will mean that if anyone is found guilty of serious sexual or violent crime and the court thinks they are dangerous they will now receive a sentence called a Public Protection Sentence.

We believe these new sentences will help to protect the public from the risk they face from dangerous or violent offenders in Northern Ireland.



These new sentences are for everyone – for adults and young offenders who are convicted by the court.

And when these offenders are being released, the police, probation, prison service and others will have to work together to protect the public by managing the risk from serious sexual and violent offenders who live in the community.

## What is a Serious Offence?



Serious Offences include

**Violence against the person**

**Sexual offences**

**Armed Robbery & Hijacking**



### Other changes in sentences

- ✓ Early release for some low risk offenders but with some conditions like curfew and electronic monitoring.
- ✓ Electronic tagging and curfews as a condition of bail for people on 'remand' i.e. waiting for their trial to take place
- ✓ Work in the community for people who fail to pay their fines

Other things we plan to do:-

## Road Traffic Offences



New offences for:-

Causing death or grievous bodily injury

- By careless or inconsiderate driving
- While unlicensed
- While disqualified
- While uninsured



Increasing the penalty for:-

- Not stopping
- Furious driving



Drink Driving

- Powers to take a breath specimen at the roadside or at a hospital
- New alcohol ignition interlock programmes



Taking vehicles causing alarm or distress

- The police will be able to take mini motor bikes and scooters etc if they are being used to race around public streets.



## Test purchase of Alcohol

- The Order provides Police with a power to test for sales of alcohol to young people. They will do this by asking young people (with the consent of their parents) to take part in test purchases from off licences etc.



## Drinking in public places

- Anyone drinking and causing disorder in certain public places may now receive a fixed penalty notice from a police officer.



## Changes in Prisons

The Order will make some changes in Prisons.



- There are some changes to make Prisons more secure.
- There will be longer sentences for helping a prisoner escape and also for bringing banned things like alcohol, mobile phones or drugs etc into a prison.



## Live Links

We plan to use video cameras so that defendants do not always need to be in the courtroom. They will be able to see what is happening from the prison.



## Legal Aid

Legal aid may be needed by people in court to get the help of a lawyer. This will make some small technical changes about legal aid in a number of specific cases.

## PACE

We want to make some changes to the Police and Criminal Evidence (NI) Order 1989. These changes are about:-

- Giving the police power to impose bail conditions on a person before being charged with an offence; and
- Increasing the range of offences for which police can enter and search premises to arrest a person.

## Sentence for having knives etc



We want to increase the sentence for anyone charged with having a knife, crossbow etc – if anyone is found carrying a knife or other offensive weapon they could now face 4 years in jail.



## Arrest warrants

This change will allow the police to prove an arrest warrant in the county court division in which a person is arrested or in a neighbouring county court division. It means that they will no longer need to travel around lots of courts to prove multiple arrest warrants for the same person.



## Youth Justice



There will be a changes made to youth justice law

- To make sure children under the age of 18 are placed in the Juvenile Justice Centre or Hydebank Young Offenders Centre rather than in an adult prison
- To make rehabilitation periods for youth conference orders, reparation orders and community responsibility orders the same
- To make sure Care Orders for children stay in place while they are in a juvenile justice centre

### How you can have your say?

Your views are important to us. We are asking everyone in Northern Ireland what they think of our plans.

So please contact us before 31 January 2008 and let us know.



Phone Criminal Justice Law Branch on  
028 9052 7142

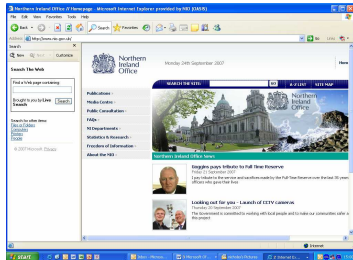


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