

United Kingdom

EXECUTION OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS' JUDGMENTS

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS IN MEMBER STATES

The present survey presents short summaries¹ of a selection of the main reforms and achievements reported in final resolutions since the Convention system was amended in 1998 by Protocol No. 11, with a clear focus on recent reforms referring, however, also to important earlier developments.

In view of the wealth of cases closed, the selection concentrates on those which have led to changes of legislation or government regulations or the adoption of new policies or general guidelines from superior courts. As a rule, the survey does not cover information on measures aiming at providing individual redress to applicants.

The presentation is organised country-by-country and reforms are, in principle, presented in the order corresponding to the thematic domains used in the Council of Europe's specialised database HUDOC EXEC and the Committee of Ministers' Annual Reports on the Supervision of the Execution of the European Court of Human Rights' judgments.

Many reforms address issues which appear to be on-going challenges in the member State. The effects of reforms adopted at one point in time may thus need to be monitored and possibly re-evaluated as conditions change.²

¹ The summaries are the sole responsibility of the Department for the execution of the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.

² The presentation is limited to the information provided at the time of the adoption of the final resolution. It is recalled in this context that the Committee of Ministers has issued [Recommendation \(2004\)5](#) on the verification of the compatibility of draft laws, existing laws and administrative practice with standards laid down in the European Convention on Human Rights.

► Actions of security forces and effective investigations

The case concerns the absence of an effective remedy whereby the applicant might seek compensation for non-pecuniary damages following the death of her brother, who was mistakenly shot by the police. Section 7 of the Human Rights Act 1998 created a cause of action, which can serve as the basis of a claim for relief, including damages, against a public authority which has acted unlawfully, in breach of Convention rights

Bubbins (50196/99)
[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2007\)101](#)

To ensure effective and independent investigations into allegations of unlawful killings and possible abuse of Iraqi civilians by UK armed forces in Iraq between 2003 and 2009, the Iraq Historic Allegations Team was created as a special unit in 2010 and the Iraq Fatality Investigations in 2014. In addition, a judge of the High Court was designated to oversee the progress of the investigative process and to hear all public and private law claims arising from UK military operations in Iraq.

Al-Skeini and Others (55721/07)
[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2016\)298](#)

Al-Jedda (27021/08)
[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2014\)271](#)

► Protection against ill-treatment by private individuals

The practice of inflicting birching as a corporal punishment in the Isle of Man was abandoned after 1978.

Tyrer (5856/72)
[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(78\)39](#)

In the Children Act 2004, the defence of “reasonable chastisement” was removed and replaced with one of “reasonable punishment”. This defence has been limited to cases charged as “common assault”, i.e. cases where the injury suffered by the child is transient or trifling. The defence may no longer be invoked in cases where the physical punishment amounts to assault occasioning actual bodily harm to children, cruelty or more serious assault offences.

A. (25599/94)
[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2009\)75](#)

To enhance the local authorities’ competence and capacities to protect minor children from serious, long-term neglect and abuse by their parents, legislative and awareness-raising measures were taken as from 1993. Furthermore, according to the Human Rights Act 1998, local authorities are obliged to act in accordance with the Convention. If they were not to do so, their acts would be unlawful and the injured party could bring proceedings and a court may grant whatever remedies it considers just and appropriate, including damages.

Keenan and Others (27229/95+)
[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2011\)290](#)

► Risk of ill-treatment in case of expulsion

The Special Immigration Appeals Commission Act was amended in 1998 and a Special Immigration Appeals Commission was established, which may decide on appeals against deportation orders in the interest of national security. When a decision affecting a person’s entry or residence in the UK is based on grounds other than national security, the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 created a new right of appeal on human rights grounds to an adjudicator or the Immigration Appeal Tribunal. Moreover, the Human Rights Act entered into force in 2000 enabling tribunals to provide remedies in relation to an act of a public authority which is unlawful. Proceedings for *habeas corpus* and for judicial review of the decision to detain a person pending their deportation are subject to the provisions of the Human Rights Act.

Chahal (22414/93)
[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2001\)119](#)

► Protection against domestic servitude

Legislation adopted in 2010 in England, Wales and in Scotland, criminalised the holding of a person in slavery or servitude or requiring the person to perform forced or

C.N. (4239/08)
[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2014\)34](#)

compulsory labour. The legislation made it clear that the references to holding a person in slavery or servitude or requiring a person to perform forced or compulsory labour are to be construed in accordance with Article 4 of the ECHR.

➡ *Right to liberty and security*

▢ Lawfulness of detention

As a result of amendments to the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the Parole Board is now competent to rule on the release of all mandatory life sentence prisoners; the Secretary of State is no longer free to depart from its decisions. In 2012, the Indeterminate Sentence for Public Protection (IPP) was abolished by the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act and replaced by a new regime of determinate sentences. On the basis of a personalised sentence plan established by prison and probation staff analysing the offender's risks and needs, the prisoner may demonstrate to the Parole Board that they may be effectively and safely managed in the community. The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is organising additional evidence-based programmes, focusing on prisoners with medium or higher risks of offending.

The scope of the Secretary of State's powers to release prisoners serving whole life sentences was clarified in 2014 by the Court of Appeal for England and Wales - refusals must explain the penological reasons for continued detention and are subject to judicial review.

▢ Detention in psychiatric institutions

The 2007 Mental Health Act introduced in England and Wales a series of additional procedural safeguards for the placement and detention of legally incapacitated persons in psychiatric facilities. A respective code of practice was published in 2008. No amendments to the Scottish legislation were required. With regard to Northern Ireland, in 2010, the Health and Social Board, which commissions all health and social care services, issued guidance, the application of which it monitors through bi-annual reports. Judicial review is available to challenge any failure to apply the guidance by public authorities. Furthermore, independent mental health advocates were established in England and Wales. In Scotland, the 2003 Mental Health Care and Treatment Act guaranteed access to the Mental Health Tribunal for the revocation of a short-term detention certificate while in Northern Ireland the referral to the Mental Health Review Tribunal was provided for by the 2016 Mental Capacity Bill.

Stafford (46295/99)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2011\)179](#)

*James, Wells and Lee
(25119/09+)*

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2014\)132](#)

*Vinter and Others
(66069/09+)*

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2017\)178](#)

H.L. (45508/99)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2014\)133](#)

M.H. (11577/06)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2015\)53](#)

➡ *Functioning of justice*

▢ Fairness of proceedings and access to a court

The rules on non-permissible inferences from silence of suspects prior to their access to legal advice were reformed in 2003 strengthening the right to remain silent.

In 2004, the House of Lords delivered a judgment in a case in which it considered the question of whether the procedures for dealing with claims for public-interest immunity made on behalf of the prosecution in criminal proceedings complied with the Convention. The House of Lords took into

John Murray (18731/91)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2010\)120](#)

*Edwards and Lewis
(39647/98)*

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2011\)289](#)

consideration the European Court's case-law and stated that derogation from full disclosure "may be justified but such derogation must always be the minimum derogation necessary to protect the public interest and must never imperil the overall fairness of the trial". A number of general guiding principles on disclosure and the procedure which must be followed when a court is faced with an application to withhold sensitive material from the defence were set out in the decision. These principles were included in the 2004 Guidance issued by the Director of Public Prosecutions and in the 2005 Crown Prosecution Service's Disclosure Manual. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 amended the disclosure regime in the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 giving statutory force to the prosecution's duty of disclosure.

► Protection of private and family life

▢ Parental authority and public care of children

Statutory guidance was provided in 2010 to prevent children from being treated at public hospitals without parental consent, to improve the care services offered by local authorities to families and to avoid unnecessary relocations to family centres or placement in foster care.

M.A.K. and R.K. (45901/05 and 40146/06)
[Final Resolution CM/ResDH\(2012\)65](#)
A.D. and O.D. (28680/06)
[Final Resolution CM/ResDH\(2012\)66](#)

▢ Protection of domestic violence victims

The relevant legislation was amended (entry into force in October 2021) to introduce an exemption for victims of domestic violence who are part of a special Sanctuary Scheme from reduction in housing benefits. This exemption applies also to claimants who adjusted their home under the Sanctuary scheme, due to an individual in their household being subject to domestic violence.

J.D. and A (32949/17)
[Final Resolution CM/ResDH\(2022\)19](#)

▢ Protection of home

Amendments introduced by the Housing Act 2004 enabled courts to suspend, for up to twelve months at a time, the enforcement of a possession order made by a local authority concerning Gypsy/Traveller sites. Moreover, Gypsies and Travellers who reside on local authority sites were also afforded greater security of tenure by the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.

Connors (66746/01)
[Final Resolution CM/ResDH\(2013\)174](#)
Buckland (40060/08)
[Final Resolution CM/ResDH\(2013\)237](#)

▢ Protection of journalistic sources

In 1997, domestic case-law changed to protect journalists from being obliged to disclose the identity of their sources.

Goodwin (17488/90)
[Final Resolution \(97\)507](#)

▢ Access to public records

The Data Protection Act was adopted in 1998, attaching conditions to data processing, including obtaining and recording data, regulating the right to be informed about their processing and to obtain copies of data, and providing for administrative and judicial remedies.

Gaskin (10454/83)
[Final Resolution CM/ResDH\(2000\)106](#)

▢ Disclosure of pictures taken by surveillance cameras

Specific provisions were included in the Data Protection Act 1998 and supplemented by the Information Commissioners CCTV Code in 2008 to limit the retention of images and to restrict their disclosure to third parties.

Peck (44647/98)
[Final Resolution CM/ResDH\(2011\)177](#)

➤ Police registers with DNA profiles

The Protection of Freedoms of 2013 requires the destruction of the DNA profiles and fingerprints of the vast majority of those who have not been convicted.

Goggins and Others
(30089/04+)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2014\)91](#)

➤ Police stop and search orders

The broad powers of the police were limited by 2012 legislation, allowing stop and searches of people and vehicles without special suspicion only in exceptional circumstances (where a senior police officer reasonably suspects that an act of terrorism will take place and the measure is necessary to prevent the act).

Gillan and Quinton
(4158/05)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2013\)52](#)

➤ Secret surveillance

The Interception of Communications Act 1986 established a comprehensive statutory framework governing interceptions on the public postal and telecommunications systems, setting out requirements for obtaining an authorisation and declaring unauthorised interceptions a criminal offence.

The Security Service Act 1989 placed the Security Service on a statutory basis, defining the purposes of its activities and establishing a Security Service Commissioner and an independent tribunal for the investigation of complaints about this service. In 2000, legislation was enacted providing a regulatory framework for interceptions on private telecommunication networks and more detailed and foreseeable regulation of interceptions of other electronic communications.

Malone (8691/79)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(86\)1](#)

Hewitt, Harman and N.
(12175/86+)

[Final Resolution](#)

Halford (20605/92)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2007\)15](#)

Liberty and Others
(58243/00)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2011\)83](#)

➤ Secret surveillance (bulk interception – acquisition communication data)

The European Court found shortcomings in the old legislative regime (Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000). That legislation was replaced by the Investigatory Powers Act (IPA) 2016. The IPA introduced a 'double lock' which requires warrants for the use of these powers to be authorised by a Secretary of State and approved by a senior judge in the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office prior to being issued. The IPA also requires that applications for a bulk interception warrant must specify all the operational purposes for which any material obtained under that warrant may be selected for examination. Beyond the IPA, operational procedures have been amended which now require that when an analyst intends to target strong selectors referable to an identifiable individual who has not previously been approved, their targeting must be confirmed by an 'approver' to verify that the targeting is necessary and proportionate.

Big Brother Watch and Others (58170/13)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2024\)429](#)

In addition, the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (Remedial) Order 2024 strengthened the existing safeguards for journalists and journalistic material in the IPA, which ensured that the regime is compliant with Article 10 of the Convention.

The Data Retention and Acquisition Regulations 2018 further strengthened the safeguards for the IPA's communications data regime by amending the IPA to introduce a serious crime threshold and independent authorisation of relevant communications data requests.

➤ Decriminalisation of homosexuality

The provisions of the Homosexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 1982 decriminalised sexual acts between two consenting male adults in private. In the Sexual Offences Act of 2003, which underlined the importance of consent, there are no specific offences for any homosexual activity in private between consenting adults.

Dudgeon (7525/76)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(83\)13](#)

A.D.T. (35765/97)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2010\)118](#)

➤ Homosexuality in the military

The ban on homosexuals serving in the military was removed following the introduction of the 2000 Armed Forces Code of Social Conduct Policy Statement.

*Smith and Grady
(33985/96)*

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2002\)35](#)

➤ Legal recognition of transgender persons

Legal recognition of transgender persons who had taken decisive steps to live fully and permanently in their acquired gender was ensured by the adoption of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 which came into force in 2005, including recognition in regard to social security benefits and state pension.

*I. and Christine Goodwin
(25680/94 and 28957/95)*

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2011\)175](#)

Grant (32570/03)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2011\)173](#)

➤ **Freedom of expression**

The concept of contempt of court was revised through legislation in 1981.

Sunday Times (6538/74)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(81\)2](#)

The legal aid system in defamation proceedings was revised in 2000, authorising the granting of legal aid subject to an “exceptional cases test”.

Steel and Morris (68416/01)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2011\)284](#)

In 2006, the amended Consolidated Criminal Practice Direction specified that courts should no longer bind an individual “to be of good behaviour” in general terms but should identify the specific conduct or activity from which the individual should refrain. As from April 2019, the media defendant is no longer liable to pay the winning party’s success fee in defamation proceedings following Conditional Fee Agreements concluded after that date.

*Hashman and Harrup
(25594/94)*

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2011\)180](#)

MGN Limited (39401/04)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2019\)307](#)

➤ **Freedom of association**

Provisions of the Employment Act 1980, re-enacted and strengthened in 1982, relating to the “closed shop” system, determined that the dismissal of an employee due to his objection to joining a trade union is to be regarded as an unfair dismissal against which a remedy is available.

*Young, James and Webster
(7601/76+)*

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(83\)3](#)

➤ **Right to marry**

In the 1980s, practice with regard to the marriage of prisoners was changed and subsequently respective laws were amended allowing prisoners to be married in prison without restrictions and delays. As part of a review of family law in Scotland in 2005, remaining restrictions on marriage between a person and the parent of their former spouse were removed. The impugned provisions have since been repealed also in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Hamer (7114/75)

[Final Resolution](#)

Draper (8186/78)

[Final Resolution](#)

B. and L. (36536/02)

[Final Resolution
CM/ResDH\(2010\)187](#)

➤ **Protection against discrimination**

➤ on the ground of sex

Widows and widowers were granted the same right to social security benefits as from 2001.

The Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999 granted equal treatment to widows and widowers in respect of social security benefits as from 2001. An amendment of the Finance Act 1999 abolished the Widow's Bereavement Tax Allowance in relation to deaths occurring on or after 06/04/2000.

on the ground of sexual orientation

The Civil Partnership Act 2004 provided that same sex relationships are considered in an equivalent way to relationships between persons of the opposite sex.

Fielding (36940/97)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2002\)97](#)

Blackgrove (2895/07+)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2010\)135](#)

J.M. (37060/06)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(2012\)231](#)

Right to education

The Education Act 1986 abolished corporal punishment in state schools.

Campbell and Cosans (7511/76)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(87\)9](#)

Warwick (9471/81)

[Final Resolution](#)
[CM/ResDH\(89\)5](#)