

Magistrates' Court Act

This version is out of date

Principal Act

Act. No. 1961-23	<i>Commencement</i>	1.1.1962
	<i>Assent</i>	21.12.1961

Amending enactment	Relevant current provisions	Commencement date
Act. 1963-02	—	
1966-12	ss. 15, 62 (1)	
1967-04	—	
1967-14	—	
Regs of 28.5.1970	—	
Act. 1971-19	—	
1972-04	—	
1972-05	—	
1972-15	—	
1973-18	—	
1975-15	s. 6(4)	
LN. 1977/012	—	
Act. 1978-06	—	
1980-04	s. 9(4)	
1983-12	—	
1983-48	—	
1988-35	s. 68A	15.12.1988
1993-16	ss. 44(1), 65	1.9.1993
1993-29	s. 45(d)-(e)	5.11.1998
2004-11	s. 26	1.9.2004
2005-09	s. 45(a), (e)	9.2.2005
2007-25	ss. 4, 6(1), (3)-(4), 7-8, 9(1), (4) 12(2), 14	28.6.2007
2010-13	ss. 2(1), 18, 20(2), 45, 46(1)-(4), 47(1), 48(1), 49, 50(1), 70	6.5.2010
2012-06	s. 9(4)(a)	19.7.2012
LN. 2018/267	s. 45(e)-(f)	22.11.2018
2023/116	s. 45(a)	4.5.2023

Rules of court made under s.69 and other powers appear under the title Supreme Court.

English sources:

Justice of the Peace Act 1949 (12, 13, & 14 Geo.6c101)

Magistrates' Court Act 1952 (15 & 16 Geo.6 and 1 Eliz.2 c.55)

Maintenance Orders Act 1958 (6 & 7 Eliz.2c.39)

ARRANGEMENT OF SECTIONS

Section

1. Short title.
2. Interpretation.

**PART I.—ESTABLISHMENT OF AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE COURT AND
CONSTITUTION OF BENCHES.**

The Court

3. Establishment of the court.
4. Seal.
5. Court house.

Appointments

6. Appointment of stipendiary magistrate.
7. Appointment of justices of the peace.
8. Roll of justices.
9. Supplemental list.
10. Chairman and deputy chairman of the justices.
11. Resignation and absence.
12. Restriction on right to practice.
13. Effect of death, etc.
14. Appointment of clerk of the court.
15. Indemnification of justices and clerk.

Constitution of benches

16. Constitution of benches generally.
17. Examining justices.
18. Family proceedings.
19. Juvenile courts.
20. Saving for stipendiary magistrate.

PART II.—JURISDICTION

Criminal

21. General criminal jurisdiction.

- 22. Summary and indictable offences.
- 23. Extradition.

Civil

- 24. General civil jurisdiction.
- 25. Complaints.
- 26. *Revoked.*

PART III.–WITNESSES AND EVIDENCE

- 27. Evidence to be on oath.
- 28. Recalcitrant witnesses.
- 29. Evidence of non-payment of sums ad judged.
- 30. Evidence of payment of wages.
- 31. Onus of proving exceptions.
- 32. False statements.

PART IV.–PROCEDURE AND POWERS IN CIVIL CASES.

- 33. Practice and procedure generally.

Complaints

- 34. Issue of summons on complaint.
- 35. Non-appearance of complainant.
- 36. Non-appearance of defendant.
- 37. Non-appearance of either party.
- 38. Procedure at hearing.
- 39. Adjournments.
- 40. Civil debts.
- 41. Periodical payments.
- 42. Revocation, revival and variation of orders.
- 43. Orders other than for payment of money.
- 44. Costs.

Domestic proceedings

- 45. Meaning of “family proceedings”.
- 46. Arrangements for and attendance at hearings.
- 47. Reports on attempts at conciliation.
- 48. Reports on means of parties.

49. Examination of witnesses by court.
50. Restriction on newspaper reports.

PART V.—ENFORCEMENT OF ORDERS

General provisions

51. Power to allow time for payment.
52. Enforcement by distress or committal.
53. Restriction on committal for civil debt.
54. Postponement of issue of warrants.
55. Defects and irregularities.
56. Release, etc., on payment.

Maintenance orders

57. Special provisions applying in case of default.
58. Money found on defaulter.
59. Effect of committal on accrual of arrears.
60. Power to remit arrears.

Non-payment of rates

61. Social provisions in proceedings for non-payment.

PART VI.—CASES STATED

62. Right to apply for statement of case.
63. Recognizances and fees on cases stated.
64. Enforcement of decisions.

PART VII.—MISCELLANEOUS

65. Limitation.
66. Legal representation.
67. Defects in processes.
68. Remission of fees.
- 68A. Offences of contempt of Magistrates' Court.
69. Rules of court.
70. Savings and transitional provisions.

AN ACT TO CONSOLIDATE THE LAW GOVERNING THE MAGISTRATES' COURT AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, POWERS, JURISDICTION AND PROCEDURE OF THE MAGISTRATES' COURT, FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF JUSTICES OF THE PEACE, AND FOR MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH.

Short title.

1. This Act may be cited as the Magistrates' Court Act.

Interpretation.

- 2.(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

“clerk of the court” and “clerk of the magistrates’ court” mean the person appointed to be clerk of the magistrates’ court under section 14;

“commit to custody” means commit to prison or, where any law authorizes or requires committal to some other place of detention instead of committal to prison to that other place;

“court house” means any building or place appointed to be a court house under the provisions of section 5;

“family proceedings” has the meaning assigned to it by section 45;

“guardianship order” means any order made under any law governing the guardianship of children;

“children” has the meaning given by the provisions of the Children Act 2009;

“impose imprisonment” means pass a sentence of imprisonment or fix a term of imprisonment for failure to pay any sum of money, or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy any sum of money, or for failure to do or abstain from doing anything required to be done or left undone;

“indictable offence” means an offence which, if committed by an adult, is triable on indictment, (whether or not it is also triable by the magistrates’ court) except an offence otherwise triable only by the magistrates’ court which, under section 108 of

the Criminal Procedure Act¹ or any other law, is required to be tried on indictment at the instance of the accused or the prosecutor;

“justice” or “justice of the peace” means any justice of the peace appointed in accordance with the provisions of this Act and includes the stipendiary magistrate;

“magistrates’ court” and “court” mean the magistrates’ court constituted by this Act;

“maintenance order” means any order for the payment of monies made by a court under the Maintenance Act;

“stipendiary magistrate” means the stipendiary magistrate appointed under section 6;

“sum enforceable as a civil debt” means –

- (a) any sum recoverable summarily as a civil debt which is adjudged to be paid by the order of the magistrates’ court;
- (b) any other sum expressed by this Act or any other law to be so enforceable;

“summary offence” means an offence which, if committed by an adult, is triable by the magistrates’ court (whether or not it is also triable on indictment) except an offence triable by the magistrates’ court under section 105 of the Criminal Procedure Act¹.

(2) Except where the contrary is expressed or implied, anything required or authorized by this Act or any other law to be done by justices may, where two or more justices are present, be done by one of them on behalf of others.

(3) Any reference in this Act to a sum adjudged to be paid by a conviction or order of the magistrates’ court shall be construed as including a reference to any costs, damages or compensation adjudged to be paid by the conviction or order of which the amount is ascertained by the conviction or order.

(4) Where the age of any person at any time is material for the purposes of any provision of this Act regulating the powers of the magistrates’ court, his age at the material time shall be deemed to be or to have been that which appears to the court after considering any available evidence to be or to have been his age at that time.

¹ 1961-24

(5) Except where the context otherwise requires, any reference in this Act to an offence shall be construed as including a reference to an alleged offence; and any reference in this Act to an offence committed, completed or begun anywhere shall be construed as including a reference to an offence alleged to have been committed, completed or begun there.

**PART I.—ESTABLISHMENT OF AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE COURT AND
CONSTITUTION OF BENCHES.**

The court

Establishment of the court.

3. There is hereby established a court subordinate to the Supreme Court to be called the magistrates' court.

Seal.

4. The court shall use a seal of such pattern as the Governor acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission may, by notice in the Gazette, direct.

Court house.

5. The Chief Justice may appoint any building or place as a court house for the sitting of the magistrates' court either generally or for any particular case or class of cases.

Appointments.

Appointment of stipendiary magistrate.

6.(1) The Governor acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission may appoint a legally qualified person to be the stipendiary magistrate.

(2) The stipendiary magistrate shall be ex officio a justice of the peace.

(3) In the case of the death, retirement, suspension or removal from office, or absence from Gibraltar of the stipendiary magistrate, the Governor acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission may appoint any legally qualified person to act as stipendiary magistrate.

(4) If for any reason the stipendiary magistrate is unable to perform the functions of his office or if it appears to the Governor acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission, that the business to be dealt with by the stipendiary magistrate so requires, the Governor acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission may appoint any legally qualified person as

an additional stipendiary magistrate and any person so appointed shall have all the powers, privileges and duties of the stipendiary magistrate:

Provided that no appointment shall be made under this subsection if the business to be dealt with by the additional stipendiary magistrate can be dealt with by justices of the peace.

(5) For the purposes of this section “legally qualified person” means a person qualified to practice as an advocate or as a solicitor in any court of unlimited jurisdiction in either civil or criminal matters in any part of Her Majesty’s dominions or the Republic of Ireland.

Appointment of justices of the peace.

7.(1) The Governor, acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission, may appoint by a commission under his hand and the public seal, as occasion may require, any British subject resident in Gibraltar to be a justice of the peace for Gibraltar.

(2) The Governor shall, on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission, revoke any commission.

Roll of justices.

8.(1) The Minister for Justice shall, in January of each year, prepare a roll to contain all justices appointed under this Act whose commissions are of full force and effect on the date of preparation of the roll, and shall cause the roll to be published in the Gazette.

(2) The roll shall be divided into two parts, Part II of which shall be the supplemental list.

Supplemental list.

9.(1) The Minister for Justice shall keep a list for the purposes of this section (in this Part called “the supplemental list”), in which supplemental list the name of any such person appointed a justice as is hereinafter mentioned shall be entered.

(2) A person who is appointed justice of the peace, but whose name is for the time being entered in the supplemental list, shall not by virtue of that appointment be qualified as a justice to do any act, except as mentioned in subsection (3).

(3) Subsection (2) shall not preclude a justice from doing all or any of the following acts as a justice, that is to say, –

(a) signing any document for the purpose of authenticating another person’s signature;

- (b) taking and authenticating by his signature any written declaration not made on oath;
 - (c) giving a certificate of facts within his knowledge or of his opinion as to any matter; and
 - (d) performing any of the duties of a commissioner for oaths.
- (4) There shall be entered in the supplemental list the name of any justice –
- (a) who is of the age of seventy-two years or over; or
 - (b) who applies to have his name entered therein; or
 - (c) in respect of whom the Governor acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission is satisfied either that –
 - (i) by reason of that justice's age or infirmity or other like cause it is expedient he should cease to exercise judicial functions as a justice; or
 - (ii) that justice declines or neglects to take proper part in the exercise of those functions.

Chairman and deputy chairman of the justices.

10.(1) There shall be a chairman and deputy chairman of the justices chosen by the justices by secret ballot from amongst themselves.

(2) Subject to subsection (3), the chairman or deputy chairman shall preside, if present.

(3) Subsection (2) shall not confer on the chairman or deputy chairman any right to preside at meetings when the stipendiary magistrate is engaged as such in administering justice.

Restriction on right to practice.

11. It shall not be lawful for any solicitor or barrister who is a justice, nor for any partner of his, to act in connection with any proceedings before any court of law, as solicitor or barrister of any person concerned in those proceedings, unless his name is entered in the supplemental list of justices.

Resignation and absence.

12.(1) Every justice may, if and when he so desires, resign his appointment without showing any reason therefor, by so notifying the Chief Justice in writing for the information of the Governor; and his commission shall thereupon stand revoked from the date of his resignation.

(2) If any justice shall be absent from Gibraltar for a period of more than one year at any one time, his commission shall stand revoked, unless the Governor acting on the advice of the Judicial Service Commission, directs otherwise.

(3) Notice of every appointment, resignation and revocation shall be published in the Gazette.

Effect of death, etc.

13. A warrant or summons issued by a justice of the peace shall not cease to have effect by reason of his death or his ceasing to be a justice.

Appointment of clerk of the court.

14. The Minister with responsibility for Justice may designate a public officer to be clerk of the magistrates' court.

Indemnification of justices and clerk.

15.(1) Subject to the provisions of this section, a justice of the peace or the clerk of the court may be indemnified out of the Consolidated Fund in respect of –

- (a) any costs reasonably incurred by him in or in connection with proceedings against him in respect of anything done or omitted in the exercise or purported exercise of the duty of his office (including proceedings for an order of judicial review, or in taking steps to dispute any claim which might be made in such proceedings;
- (b) any damages awarded against him or costs ordered to be paid by him in any such proceedings;
- (c) any sums payable by him in connection with a reasonable settlement of any such proceedings or claim;

and shall be entitled to be so indemnified if, in respect of the matters giving rise to the proceedings or claim, he acted reasonably and in good faith.

(2) Any question whether or to what extent a person is to be indemnified under this section shall be determined by the Chief Justice; and a determination under this subsection with respect

to any such costs or sums as are mentioned in paragraph (a) or paragraph (c) of subsection (1) may, if the person claiming to be indemnified so requests, be made in advance before those costs are incurred or the settlement made, as the case may be :

Provided that any such determination in advance for indemnity in respect of costs to be incurred shall be subject to such limitations, if any, as the Chief Justice thinks proper and to the subsequent determination of the amount of the costs reasonably incurred, and shall not affect any other determination which may fall to be made in connection with the proceedings or claim in question.

Constitution of benches.

Constitution of benches generally.

16. Subject to the provisions of this Act and of any other law the court shall consist of and be held before either –

- (a) at least two justices; or
- (b) the stipendiary magistrate, sitting either alone or together with any justice or justices.

Examining justices.

17. The functions of examining justices may be discharged by a single justice.

Family proceedings.

18. The magistrates' court when hearing family proceedings shall be composed of not more than three justices of the peace.

Juvenile courts.

19. The provisions of this Act relating to the constitution, place of sitting and procedure of the magistrates' court shall, in their application to juvenile courts, have effect subject to any provision regulating the constitution, place of sitting or procedure of juvenile courts.

Saving for stipendiary magistrate.

20.(1) Nothing in this Act or any other law requiring the magistrates' court to be composed of two or more justices or limiting the powers of the magistrates' court when composed of a

Extradition.

23. All powers vested in and acts authorized or required to be done by a police or stipendiary magistrates or any justice in relation to the surrender of fugitive criminals in the United Kingdom, under the Extradition Acts, 1870 to 1935, are hereby vested in, and may in Gibraltar be exercised and done by the magistrates' court in relation to the surrender of fugitive criminals under those Acts.

Civil.

General civil jurisdiction.

24. The court shall have such jurisdiction in civil matters and other matters not specified in section 21 as may be conferred upon it by this Act or by any other law.

Complaints.

25. The magistrates' court shall have jurisdiction to hear a complaint if the complaint relates to anything done within Gibraltar or anything left undone that ought to have been done in Gibraltar, or ought to have been done either in Gibraltar or elsewhere, or relates to any other matter arising within Gibraltar.

Debt and breach of contract.

26. *Revoked.*

PART III.—WITNESSES AND EVIDENCE.

Evidence to be on oath.

27. Subject to the provisions of any law authorizing the reception of unsworn evidence, evidence given before the magistrates' court shall be given on oath.

Recalcitrant witnesses.

28.(1) Where a justice of the peace is satisfied that any person in Gibraltar is likely to be able to give material evidence, or produce any document or thing likely to be material evidence, at an inquiry into an indictable offence by the magistrates' court or at the summary trial of an information or hearing of a complaint by the court and that that person will not voluntarily attend as a witness or will not voluntarily produce the document or thing, the justice shall issue a summons directed to that person requiring him to attend before the court at the time and place appointed in the summons to give evidence or to produce the document or thing.

(2) If a justice of the peace is satisfied by evidence on oath of the matters mentioned in subsection (1) and also that it is probable that a summons under subsection (1) would not procure the attendance of the person in question, the justice may, instead of issuing a summons, issue a warrant to arrest that person and bring him before the court at a time and place specified in the warrant :

Provided that a warrant shall not be issued under this subsection where the attendance is required for the hearing of a complaint.

(3) On the failure of any person to attend before the magistrates' court in answer to a summons under this section, if—

- (a) the court is satisfied by evidence on oath that he is likely to be able to give material evidence or produce any document or thing likely to be material evidence in the proceedings; and
- (b) it is proved on oath, or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that he has been duly served with the summons, and that a reasonable sum has been paid or tendered to him for costs and expenses; and
- (c) it appears to the court that there is no just excuse for failure,

the court may issue a warrant to arrest him and bring him before the court at a time and place specified in the warrant.

(4) If any person attending or brought before the magistrates' court refuses without just excuse to be sworn or give evidence, or to produce any document or thing, the court may commit him to custody until the expiration of such period not exceeding seven days as may be specified in the warrant or until he sooner gives evidence or produces the document or thing or may impose upon him a fine of £25.

(5) If such person, upon being brought before the court at or before the expiration of the period specified in the warrant, again refuses to do what is required of him, the court may, if it sees fit, further commit him to custody for such period not exceeding seven days as may be specified in the warrant and so again from time to time until such person consents to do what is so required of him.

(6) Without prejudice to any other powers conferred upon the magistrates' court by this section or by any other law, any person who, without just excuse,—

- (a) fails to attend before the court as required by a summons issued by a justice; or

- (d) the decision of the court, and any observations made by the court in giving it.
- (2) A person who contravenes this section is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for four months and to a fine of £100.
- (3) No prosecution for an offence under this section shall be begun without the consent of the Attorney-General.
- (4) Nothing in this section shall prohibit the printing or publishing of any matter in a newspaper or periodical of a technical character bona fide intended for circulation among members of the legal or medical professions.

PART V.—ENFORCEMENT OF ORDERS

General provisions

Power to allow time for payment.

- 51.(1) The court when it adjudges a sum to be paid may, instead of requiring immediate payment, allow time for payment, or order payment by instalments.
- (2) Where the court has allowed time for payment, the court may, on application by or on behalf of the person liable to make the payment, allow further time or order payment by instalments.
- (3) Where a court has ordered payment by instalments and default is made in the payment of any one instalment, proceedings may be taken as if the default had been made in the payment of all the instalments then unpaid.

Enforcement by distress or committal.

- 52.(1) Subject to the following provisions of this Part and to section 168 of the Criminal Procedure Act, where default is made in paying a sum adjudged to be paid by order of the magistrates' court, the court may issue a warrant of distress for the purpose of levying the sum or issue a warrant committing the defaulter to prison.
- (2) A warrant of commitment may be issued either—
- (a) where it appears on the return to a warrant of distress that the money and goods of the defaulter are insufficient to satisfy the sum with the costs and charges of levying the sum; or

(b) instead of a warrant of distress.

(3) The period for which a person may be committed to prison under such a warrant as aforesaid shall not, subject to the provisions of any other law, exceed the period applicable to the case under Schedule 5 to the Criminal Procedure Act.

Restriction on committal for civil debt.

53.(1) The court shall not commit any person to prison or other detention in default of payment of a sum enforceable as a civil debt or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum except by an order made on complaint and on proof to the satisfaction of the court that that person has, or has had since the date on which the sum was adjudged to be paid, the means to pay the sum or any instalment of it on which he has defaulted, and refuses or neglects or, as the case may be, has refused or neglected to pay it.

(2) A complaint under this section may be made at any time notwithstanding anything in this Act or any other law.

(3) Where on any such complaint the defendant is committed to custody, such costs incurred by the complainant in proceedings for the enforcement of the sum as the court may direct shall be included in the sum on payment of which the defendant may be released from custody.

Postponement of issue of a warrant.

54. (1) Where the court has power to issue a warrant of distress under this Part, it may, if it thinks it expedient to do so, postpone the issue of the warrant until such time and on such conditions, if any, as the court thinks just.

(2) Where the court has power to issue a warrant of commitment under this Part, it may, if it thinks it expedient to do so, fix a term of imprisonment and postpone the issue of the warrant until such time and on such conditions, if any, as the court thinks just.

Defects and irregularities.

55.(1) A warrant of distress issued for the purpose of levying a sum adjudged to be paid by the conviction or order of the court shall not, if it states that the sum has been so adjudged to be paid, be held void by reason of any defect in the warrant.

(2) A person acting under a warrant of distress shall not be deemed to be a trespasser from the beginning by reason only of any irregularity in the execution of the warrant.

(3) Nothing in this section shall prejudice the claim of any person for special damages in respect of any loss caused by a defect in the warrant or irregularity in its execution.

(4) A person who removes any goods marked as articles impounded in the execution of a warrant of distress, or defaces or removes any such mark, is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of £5.

(5) A person charged with the execution of a warrant of distress who wilfully retains from the proceeds of a sale of the goods on which distress is levied, or otherwise exacts any greater costs and charges than those properly payable, or makes any improper charge, is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine of £5.

Release, etc., on payment.

56.(1) Where imprisonment or other detention has been imposed on any person by the order of the court in default of payment of any sum adjudged to be paid by the order of the court or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum, then, on the payment of the sum, together with the costs and charges, if any, of the commitment and distress, the order shall cease to have effect; and if the person has been committed to custody he shall be released unless he is in custody for some other cause.

(2) Where, after a period of imprisonment or other detention has been imposed on any person in default of payment of any sum adjudged to be paid by the order of the court or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum, payment is made of part of the sum, the period of detention shall be reduced by such number of days as bears to the total number of days in that period less one day the same proportion as the amount so paid bears to so much of the said sum, and the costs and charges of any distress levied to satisfy that sum, as was due at the time the period of detention was imposed.

(3) In calculating the reduction required under subsection (2) any fraction of a day shall be left out of account.

Maintenance orders

Special provisions applying in case of default.

57.(1) Where default is made in paying a sum ordered to be paid by a maintenance order, the court shall not enforce payment of the sum under section 52 except by an order made on complaint.

(2) A complaint under this section shall be made not earlier than the fifteenth day after the making of the order for the enforcement of which it is made; but subject to this such a complaint may be made at any time notwithstanding anything in this Act or any other law.

(3) In relation to complaints under this section, section 36 shall not apply and section 35 shall have effect as if the words “if evidence has been received on a previous occasion” were omitted.

(4) Where at the time and place appointed for the hearing or adjourned hearing of a complaint under this section the complainant appears but the defendant does not, the court may proceed in his absence:

Provided that the court shall not begin to hear the complaint in the absence of the defendant unless either it is proved to the satisfaction of the court, on oath, or in such other manner as may be prescribed, that the summons was served on him within what appears to the court to be a reasonable time before the hearing or adjourned hearing or the defendant has appeared on a previous occasion to answer the complaint.

(5) If a complaint under this section is substantiated on oath, any justice of the peace may issue a warrant for the defendant's arrest, whether or not a summons has been previously issued.

(6) The magistrates' court shall not impose imprisonment in respect of a default to which a complaint under this section relates unless the court has inquired in the presence of the defendant whether the default was due to the defendant's wilful refusal or culpable neglect, and shall not impose imprisonment if it is of opinion that the default was not so due; and, without prejudice to the foregoing provisions of this subsection, the court shall not impose imprisonment—

- (a) in a case in which the court has power to make an attachment of earnings order under the Maintenance Act unless the court is of opinion that it is inappropriate to make such an order;
- (b) in any case, in the absence of the defendant.

(7) Notwithstanding anything in section 52(3), the period for which a defendant may be committed to prison under a warrant of commitment issued in pursuance of a complaint under this section shall not exceed six weeks.

(8) Be imprisonment or other detention of a defendant under a warrant of commitment issued as aforesaid shall not operate to discharge the defendant from his liability to pay the sum in respect of which the warrant was issued.

Money found on defaulter.

58.(1) Where the Court has Ordered the enforcement of a sum due from a person under a maintenance order, the court may order him to be searched.

(2) Any money found on the arrest of a person ordered to pay such a sum, or on a search or on his being taken to a prison or other place of detention in default of payment of such a sum or for want of sufficient distress to satisfy such a sum, may, unless the court otherwise directs, be applied towards payment of the said sum; and the balance, if any, shall be returned to him.

(3) The court shall not allow the application of any money found on a person if it is satisfied that the money does not belong to him or that the loss of the money would be more injurious to his family than would be his detention.

Effect of committal on arrears.

59. Where a person is committed to custody under this Part for failure to pay a sum due under a maintenance order, then, unless the court otherwise directs, no arrears shall accrue under the order while he is in custody.

Power to remit arrears.

60. On the hearing of a complaint for the enforcement, revocation, revival, variation or discharge of a maintenance order, the court may remit the whole or any part of the sum due under the order.

*Non-payment of rates***Special provisions in proceedings for non-payment.**

61.(1) Justices may state a case under this Act when called upon to issue a warrant of distress for a rate.

(2) Sections 27 and 56(2) shall apply to proceedings for the non-payment of a rate as they apply to proceedings for the non-payment of a sum adjudged to be paid by the court.

(3) Except as provided in the preceding provisions of this section, the power of justices to issue a warrant of distress for a rate, the form and execution of such a warrant and the committal of persons for want of sufficient distress to satisfy a rate shall not be subject to the provisions of this Act.

PART VI.-CASES STATED

Right to apply for statement of case.

62.(1) Any person who was a party to any proceeding before the court or is aggrieved by the order, determination or other proceeding of the court may question the proceeding on the ground that it is wrong in law or is in excess of jurisdiction by applying to the justices composing the court to state a case for the opinion of the Supreme Court on the question of law or jurisdiction involved:

Provided that a person shall not make an application under this section in respect of a decision which by virtue of any law is final.

(2) An application under subsection (1) shall be made within fourteen days after the day on which the decision of the magistrates' court was given.

(3) On the making of an application under this section in respect of a decision any right of the applicant to appeal against the decision to the Supreme Court shall cease.

(4) If the justices are of opinion that an application under this section is frivolous, they may refuse to state a case, and, if the applicant so requires, shall give him a certificate stating that the application has been refused :

Provided that the justices shall not refuse to state a case if the application is made by or under the direction of the Attorney-General.

(5) Where justices refuse to state a case, the Supreme Court may, on the application of the person who applied for the case to be stated, make an order of mandamus requiring the justices to state a case.

Recognizances and fees on case stated.

63. Justices to whom application has been made to state a case for the opinion of the Supreme Court on any proceeding of the court shall not be required to state the case until the applicant has entered into a recognizance, with or without sureties, before the court, conditioned to prosecute the appeal without delay and to submit to the judgment of the Supreme Court and pay such costs as that court may award; and the clerk of the magistrates' court shall not be required to deliver the case to the applicant until the applicant has paid him the fees.

Enforcement of decisions.

64. Any order, determination or other proceeding of the court varied by the Supreme Court on an appeal by case stated, and any judgment or order of the Supreme Court on such an appeal, may be enforced as if it were a decision of the court.

PART VII.—MISCELLANEOUS

Limitation.

65. Except as otherwise expressly provided by any law, the magistrates' court shall not hear a complaint unless it was made within six months from the time when the matter of complaint arose;

Provided that this section shall not apply to a complaint made under section 57 in respect of default in paying a sum ordered to be paid by the magistrates' court under the Maintenance Act.

Legal representation.

66. A party to any proceedings before the court may be represented by a barrister or solicitor; and an absent party so represented shall be deemed not to be absent:

Provided that appearance of a party by a barrister or solicitor shall not satisfy any provision in any law or any condition of a recognizance expressly requiring his presence.

Defects in processes.

67.(1) No objection shall be allowed to any information or complaint, or to any summons or warrant to procure the presence of the defendant, for any defect in it in substance or in form, or for any variance between it and the evidence adduced on behalf of the prosecutor or complainant at the hearing of the information or complaint.

(2) If it appears to the court that any variance between a summons or warrant and the evidence adduced on behalf of the prosecutor or complainant is such that the defendant has been misled by the variance, the court shall, on the application of the defendant, adjourn the hearing.

Remission of fees.

68.(1) The court may, on the ground of poverty or for other reasonable cause, remit in whole or in part any fee payable in proceedings before the court.

(2) Where the court adjudges an offender to pay a fine it shall, if the fine does not exceed £1, remit all fees payable by the prosecutor and direct all fees already paid by him to be repaid to him, unless in either case there is some special ground for not doing so.

Offences of contempt of Magistrates' Court.

68A.(1) The court has jurisdiction under this section to deal with any person who—

- (a) wilfully insults the justice or justices, any witness before or officer of the court or any solicitor or counsel having business in the court, during his or their sitting or attendance in court or in going to or returning from the court; or
- (b) wilfully interrupts the proceedings of the court or otherwise misbehaves in court.

(2) In any such case the court may order any officer of the court, or any police officer, to take the offender into custody and detain him until the rising of the court or the court may, if it thinks fit, commit the offender to custody for a specified period not exceeding one month or impose on him a fine not exceeding £ 1000 or both.

(3) The court may at any time revoke an order of committal made under subsection (2) and, if the offender is in custody, order his discharge.

(4) A person against whom an order has been made under this section may appeal against that order to the Supreme Court in the like manner as a person may appeal against conviction or sentence in accordance with the provisions of Part XIII of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance.

Rules of court.

69. The Chief Justice may make rules of court for the carrying out of the purposes of this Act and in particular, but without prejudice thereto, may make such rules providing for—

- (a) the practice and procedure of justices in exercising functions preliminary or incidental to proceedings before the court;
- (b) the service and execution of process issued by or for the purposes of the court;
- (c) the practice and procedure to be followed in proceedings under section 26;
- (d) the keeping of records of proceedings before the court and the manner in which things done in the course of, or as preliminary or incidental to, any such

proceedings, or any proceedings on appeal from the court to the Supreme Court, may be proved in any legal proceedings;

- (e) the forms to be used and matters connected therewith;
- (f) the court fees to be paid;
- (g) the amount of the costs and expenses to be paid to prosecutors, complainants, parties and witnesses in proceedings before the court;
- (h) the functions of the Registrar for the purposes of securing the attendance of persons bound over conditionally by examining justices to attend a trial on indictment;
- (i) the furnishing by any person having custody of the depositions or copies thereof, and of copies of the information if it is in writing, to a person committed for trial;
- (j) the matters additional to those specified in section 38 on complaint for which the court shall have power to make an order with the consent of the defendant without hearing evidence;
- (k) prescribing anything which is to be, or may be, prescribed by this Act.

Savings and transitional provisions.

70.(1) Any case dealt with by the magistrates' court or any order made by such court on any complaint or application or any domestic or other proceedings commenced in the magistrates' court in accordance with the provisions of the Magistrates' Court Act prior to the coming into operation of this Act, shall be deemed to have been validly made, commenced or continued.

(2) Upon coming into operation of this Act, any case, complaint, application or proceedings referred to in subsection (1) which has not been disposed of, the magistrate's court may, if it appears to the court convenient to do so refer those matters forthwith to the Family Judge for hearing and disposal.

(3) In this section, "this Act" means the Magistrates' Court (Amendment) Act 2010.