

Banning protests outside politicians' homes - section 162

It is an offence for a person (alone or in a group) to protest outside, or in the vicinity of, a politician's home, or the dwelling of a public office-holder.

A protest is defined as being for the purpose of representing to, or persuading, the public office-holder that they -

- (i) should or should not do something, or
- (ii) should or should not have done something.

It applies to both group protests and single person actions.

A "public office holder" means UK government ministers, Welsh ministers, members of the House of Lords, the House of Commons, the Senedd, local councillors, mayors, Police and Crime Commissioners, or a candidate in an election.

It does **not** apply to "official residences", such as 10 Downing Street.

Section 162(11) lists the official residences as:

- 10, 11 and 12 Downing Street, London;
- Admiralty House, Whitehall, London;
- 1 Carlton Gardens, London (Residence of the Foreign Secretary);
- the Palace of Westminster, London (AKA. The Houses of Parliament);
- Chequers, Missenden Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire (The Prime Minister's Country House);
- Dorneywood, Dorneywood Road, Burnham, Buckinghamshire;
- Chevening House, Chevening, Sevenoaks, Kent.

Sentence: up to 6 months in prison or a fine not exceeding £2,500 (level 4 on the standard scale) or both.

Crime and Policing Act 2026

Notes on how it might affect protest

GBC and ACAB, August 2026

The act came into force in June 2026. We take a brief look at the sections that might impact on how protest is policed and prosecuted. At the time of writing there is little or no experience from the ground.

Concealing identity at protests - section 157

The police have new powers to designate an area where it will be an offence to use an item (e.g. a mask) to conceal your identity or that of another person. Punishable by up to one month in prison or a fine of up to £1,000 (a level 3 fine).

A police officer of the rank of inspector or above may designate an area for up to 24 hours if they "reasonably believe that":

- (a) a public assembly or procession, which constitutes a protest may take place or is taking place in the area,
- (b) the protest is likely to involve or has involved the commission of offences, and
- (c) it is expedient, in order to prevent or limit the commission of offences, to designate the area under this section.

The designation must be in writing and specify the grounds on which it is made. Alternatively, where it is not possible for a designation to be made in writing, an oral designation may be made. The police officer making the designation still must state the reasons for the designation and record it in writing as soon as reasonably practicable. There is a requirement to notify the public of the terms of the designation.

Amendments to S.12 and S.14 restrictions on protests

The act specifies additional considerations that the police can use when imposing restrictions on a protest, which amend S.12 and S.14 (and s14 (z) (a)) of the Public Order Act 1986

Restrictions on protests near places of worship - section 164

Conditions may be imposed on a protest if it is in "the vicinity of a place of worship" and "may intimidate persons of reasonable firmness" being deterred from accessing the place of worship, or carrying out religious activities at the place of worship.

Cumulative disruption - section 165

The police may take into account any disruption caused by previous protests, regardless of who they were organised by, when deciding whether to impose restrictions on a protest.

A senior police officer must take into account "any relevant cumulative disruption" resulting from protests when imposing conditions on them. "Relevant cumulative disruption" means the "cumulative disruption to the life of the community" resulting from any assembly or procession held in the past in the same area. It does not matter if they are organised by the same person, attended by the same people, or intended to be held at the same time.

An "area" is broadly defined "as such area the senior police officer considers appropriate, having regard to the nature and extent of the disruption that may result from the procession or assembly."

Climbing on a Memorial - section 161

It is an offence to climb on a 'specified memorial', or part of it, such as the statue of Sir Winston Churchill, punishable by up to three months in prison and/or a fine up to £1,000 (level 3 fine).

The Home Secretary will create a schedule of specified memorials on which it will be an offence to climb. There must be "significant public interest" in adding the memorial to the list.

A memorial is defined as a building, structure, or any other thing erected or installed on land (or in a building) which has the purpose to commemorate individuals, animals, or events.

Schedule 17 of the Act contains a list of "specified memorials", the majority of which are war memorials (see below). The Home Secretary may amend this list to add or remove memorials.

Banning Pyrotechnics at Protests - section 160

It is an offence to have in your possession a "pyrotechnic article", such as a flare, when taking part in

- (a) a public procession which constitutes a protest,
- (b) a public assembly which constitutes a protest, or
- (c) a one-person protest.

Pyrotechnics are 'an article that contains explosive substances, or an explosive mixture of substances, designed to produce heat, light, sound, gas or smoke, or a combination of such effects, through self-sustained exothermic chemical reactions'.

Matches are not considered pyrotechnics. The Home Secretary can also draw up a list of articles which will not be considered pyrotechnics.

Punishable by a fine not exceeding £1,000 (a Level 3 fine).