This chapter deals with sexual offences which criminalise the accused’s invasion of the victim’s sexual—as opposed to simply physical—autonomy. Sexual offences are almost entirely codified within a single statute, the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (SOA 2003). The chapter first considers the relevant provisions of the SOA 2003 with respect to rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault, and causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent. It then turns to sexual offences against children under 13 and children under 16, as well as status-based and relationship-based sexual offences. The final sections of the chapter outline potential options for legal reform and the application of the offences within the SOA 2003 to problem facts. Relevant cases are highlighted throughout the chapter, with brief summaries of the main facts and judgments.
8. Sexual offences

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