

EXTRACT FROM HOME OFFICE CIRCULAR 24/98 :

Prosecuting offences of ABH without medical reports

10. A number of offences where ABH is charged can be prosecuted without the need for a medical report. Such reports are costly and often cause significant delay. Guidance, agreed by the Trials Issues Group is being issued to all agencies on the need to question whether such a report is necessary. The guidance has been drawn to the notice of the Law Society and the Bar Council. The guidance also applies to cases of common assault where, under the *Offences Against the Persons Charging Standard*, the degree of harm envisaged is likely to be of a more minor nature.

11. A medical report may be unnecessary if the injury is, by any common sense judgement, of a minor nature, is apparently uncomplicated and likely to be temporary. It should be adequately described in a statement from the victim and, if practicable, a police officer. A quality coloured photograph should be provided wherever possible. If an officer has any remaining doubts, a guilty plea, or likely guilty plea, may tip the balance against ordering a medical report.

12. Otherwise a medical report is likely to be required and should be obtained as soon as possible. Nothing should be done to discourage a victim from obtaining proper medical treatment. This guidance is solely concerned as to whether a medical report is required for criminal proceedings.