

Administrative and Financial Provisions Act (Northern Ireland) 2026

CHAPTER 10

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CONTENTS

Powers

1. Strategic investment funding
2. Economic support
3. Higher education funding
4. Support in relation to employment and training
5. Classification or grading of tourist amenities
6. Support services for victims and survivors
7. Asylum and immigration integration support services
8. Public appointments: provision of development opportunities
9. Ending violence against women and girls
10. Section 9: supplementary
11. Training of teachers
12. Postgraduate qualifications in educational psychology
13. Investigation of housing association tenancy fraud
14. Setting of rate of basic allowance for councillors
15. Discretion as to a particular Commissioner's term of office

Fees

16. Northern Ireland Tourist Board
17. Marine licensing
18. Travel concession passes

Financial governance

19. Advances out of Consolidated Fund: increase in limit
20. Petroleum and minerals: removal of requirement for separate accounts

Final provisions

21. Interpretation
22. Commencement
23. Short title



Administrative and Financial Provisions Act (Northern Ireland) 2026

2026 CHAPTER 10

An Act to make further provision with respect to the administration and financing of public services in Northern Ireland, in particular, measures to provide powers to undertake certain activities, to enable charging for certain activities and to modify arrangements for financial governance.

[26th October 2026]

BE IT ENACTED by being passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly and assented to by His Majesty as follows:

Powers

Strategic investment funding

1.—(1) The Department of Finance may lend funds for investment by an investment entity in accordance with an investment strategy set by the Department.

(2) The investment strategy must describe the policy objectives that the investments are to seek to help to deliver.

(3) The Department may—

(a) attach conditions (including conditions as to repayment or the payment of interest) in respect of any loans made by it under subsection (1),

(b) make payments to the investment entity to meet administrative costs relating to the making of investments as mentioned in subsection (1).

(4) For the purposes of this section—

(a) an investment entity is a person who carries on an investment business,

(b) subject to any conditions attached by the Department, funds may be invested in the following ways—

(i) by the acquisition of loan or share capital in any company,

(ii) by the acquisition of any undertaking or assets,

(iii) by the making of a loan (secured or unsecured, and with or without interest).

Economic support

2.—(1) The Department for the Economy may, where it considers that to do so is likely to be in the interest of the economy of Northern Ireland (or part of Northern Ireland)—

(a) establish a company (whether by itself or jointly with any other person),

(b) promote or assist the establishment, maintenance or development of a company, or

(c) provide financial assistance to any person.

(2) Financial assistance under subsection (1)(c)—

(a) may be provided by way of grants, loans, guarantees or indemnities, the acquisition of a right or interest or in any other form,

(b) may be provided subject to conditions (which may include conditions about repayment with or without interest or other return),

(c) may be provided under a contract,

(d) may be provided to a person who carries on an investment business for onward investment or administrative costs relating to onward investment.

(3) The Department may prepare and issue a statement of its general approach to the exercise of the power conferred on it by subsection (1)(c).

(4) In exercising the power conferred by subsection (1)(c) the Department must have regard to any statement under subsection (3) in force at the time.

(5) The Department may make such arrangements for the provision and management of financial assistance under subsection (1)(c) as it considers appropriate; and may in particular arrange for another person (including a company or other body established by the Department for the purpose) to provide or manage financial assistance on its behalf.

(6) The power conferred by subsection (1)(c) is in addition to (and does not limit or replace) any other power of the Department to provide financial assistance.

Higher education funding

3.—(1) The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 is amended as follows.

(2) In Article 30(1), after "grants" insert ", loans or other payments".

Support in relation to employment and training

4. Section 1(1C) of the Employment and Training Act (Northern Ireland) 1950 is repealed.

Classification or grading of tourist amenities

5. After Article 29 of the Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992, insert—

"PART 4A

CLASSIFICATION OR GRADING OF TOURIST AMENITIES

Classification or grading of tourist amenities

29A.—(1) The Board may make, and may from time to time revise, a scheme for the classification or grading by the Board of tourist amenities.

(2) A scheme under this Article shall—

(a) set out the criteria to be applied by the Board in classifying or grading any tourist amenity under the scheme,

(b) provide a right of appeal to a body constituted in accordance with the scheme for any person aggrieved by a decision of the Board as to the classification or grading of any tourist amenity under the scheme,

(c) be published, as for the time being in force, by the Board.

(3) The Board may charge fees in respect of the reasonable costs incurred by it in connection with any activity undertaken by it under the scheme.

(4) Where a tourist amenity has been classified or graded under a scheme under this Article, the proprietor of that amenity shall not describe or hold out that amenity as being of a classification or grade other than that for the time being allotted to it under that scheme.

(5) The proprietor of a tourist amenity that has not been classified or graded under a scheme under this Article shall not describe or hold out that amenity as being of any classification or grade which could be allotted to an amenity under that scheme.

(6) A person who contravenes paragraph (4) or (5) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale.

(7) Article 26 applies to this Article as it applies to Part 4 of this Order.".

Support services for victims and survivors

6.—(1) The Executive Office may arrange or facilitate the provision of a relevant service to an individual who is a victim and survivor.

(2) A "relevant service" means a service designed—

(a) to help the individual to obtain information about any matter connected to their circumstances or experience as a victim and survivor,

(b) to support the individual in connection with any process to—

(i) inquire into the circumstances or experience of, or

(ii) provide financial redress for or in respect of,

victims and survivors of the description the individual is within (see subsection (3)),

(c) to improve the individual's physical or mental health,

(d) to help the individual to overcome an addiction,

(e) to provide the individual with counselling,

(f) to improve the individual's literacy or numeracy,

(g) to provide the individual with other education or training,

(h) to enable the individual to access opportunities for work, or

(i) to help the individual in relation to managing financial matters (including how to access financial support).

(3) An individual is a "victim and survivor" if the individual—

(a) is a victim and survivor for the purposes of Part 2 of the Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019,

(b) was a resident of a relevant institution within the meaning of section 4 of the Preservation of Documents (Historical Institutions) Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 in the period between 1922 and 1995 (both inclusive),

(c) is a child of someone within paragraph (b) who was born during the person's period of residence in the institution between those dates, or

(d) is within such other description as may be prescribed in regulations made by the Executive Office.

(4) A prescribed description must include—

(a) the individual having suffered a kind of abuse, or

(b) the individual having resided in an institution of some kind in a period that does not—

(i) begin before 1922, or

(ii) end after 1995.

(5) The following are abuse for the purposes of subsection (4)(a)—

(a) sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect or maltreatment,

(b) witnessing one or more other persons suffer one of those things, or

(c) otherwise being exposed to a harsh environment.

(6) Regulations under this section are subject to negative resolution.

(7) The Executive Office may—

(a) make payments to any person in pursuance of arrangements under subsection (1),

(b) facilitate something under subsection (1) by making payments towards the cost of providing it.

Asylum and immigration integration support services

7.—(1) The Executive Office may provide, or arrange or facilitate the provision of, a relevant service to an individual in Northern Ireland who—

(a) is an asylum-seeker or a dependant of an asylum-seeker, or

(b) has a qualifying immigration status for the purposes of this section.

(2) A "relevant service" means a service designed to assist the individual with integration in Northern Ireland.

(3) An individual has a qualifying immigration status for the purposes of this section if the individual—

(a) has humanitarian protection or refugee status granted under the immigration rules,

(b) has leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom granted—

(i) under a policy, programme or scheme of the United Kingdom government which is for the purpose of enabling persons who are not British citizens to be present in the United Kingdom because of adverse circumstances in another place, or

(ii) otherwise, outside the immigration rules, because of adverse circumstances in another place.

(4) The Executive Office may by regulations amend subsection (3) so as to add, remove or modify a description of circumstances in which a person has qualifying immigration status for the purpose of this section.

(5) Regulations under this section are subject to negative resolution.

(6) The Executive Office may—

(a) make payments to a service provider in pursuance of arrangements under subsection (1),

(b) facilitate something under subsection (1) by making payments towards the costs of providing it.

(7) In this section—

"asylum-seeker" and "dependant of an asylum-seeker" have the same meanings as in Part 2 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002,

"the immigration rules" means the rules made under section 3(2) of the Immigration Act 1971.

Public appointments: provision of development opportunities

8.—(1) The Executive Office may provide, or arrange or facilitate the provision of, opportunities for people to acquire the skills or experience required to hold public appointments.

(2) The Executive Office must exercise the function conferred by subsection (1) with a view to encouraging the diversity of people holding public appointments.

(3) The Executive Office may—

(a) make payments to any person in pursuance of arrangements under subsection (1),

(b) facilitate something under subsection (1) by making payments towards the costs of providing it.

Ending violence against women and girls

9.—(1) The Executive Office has power to do anything that it considers is appropriate for the purpose of furthering any of the aims (however described) in the Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls.

(2) The power under subsection (1) includes power to—

(a) incur expenditure,

(b) give financial assistance to any person,

(c) enter into arrangements or agreements with any person,

(d) co-operate with, or facilitate or co-ordinate the activities of, any person,

(e) provide staff, goods, materials, facilities, services or property to any person.

(3) The reference in subsection (1) to the Strategic Framework to End Violence against Women and Girls is—

(a) in relation to the period specified in it, to the strategic framework on the subject of ending violence against women and girls published by the Executive Office on 16 September 2024,

(b) in relation to any subsequent period, to any strategic framework on that subject published by the Executive Office in respect of that period.

(4) In subsection (3), a reference to a document is to the document as it may be supplemented or modified from time to time.

Section 9: supplementary

10.—(1) The power under section 9 does not enable the Executive Office to do anything that it is unable to do by virtue of a limiting provision.

(2) A "limiting provision" is a statutory provision that prohibits or prevents the Executive Office from doing something or limits its powers in that respect.

(3) The absence from a statutory provision of provision conferring any power does not of itself make that provision a limiting provision.

(4) The power under section 9 may not be exercised in a way that unreasonably duplicates anything that may or must be done in pursuance of a function, under any statutory provision (whenever passed or made), of another Northern Ireland department.

(5) Subsection (4) does not prevent the exercise of the power under section 9 in a way that duplicates anything of the kind mentioned in that subsection if the other Northern Ireland department consents to that exercise of the power.

(6) The power under section 9 does not enable the Executive Office to do anything for the purpose of enabling it to raise money by levying or imposing any form of tax or charge, by borrowing or otherwise.

(7) Subsection (6) does not prevent the Executive Office from imposing reasonable charges for anything done by it under section 9.

(8) The power under section 9 does not authorise a disclosure of information in breach of any restriction on the disclosure of the information (however imposed).

(9) In determining for the purposes of subsection (8) whether a disclosure would breach the data protection legislation, the powers conferred by section 9 are to be taken into account.

Training of teachers

11.—(1) The Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 is amended as follows.

(2) For Article 66(2)(b), substitute—

"(b) provide financial support (at such rate or for such amount and subject to such conditions as it may determine)—

(i) to students on a course of initial training of teachers,

(ii) to teachers on a course of education which is being undertaken for the purpose of further training.".

Postgraduate qualifications in educational psychology

12.—(1) The Department of Education, or the Education Authority with the permission of the Department of Education, may—

(a) give a grant to a governing body of a higher educational institution in Northern Ireland so as to enable it to meet costs arising in connection with the provision by it of a course leading to a post-graduate qualification in educational psychology (or a similar subject),

(b) provide, or give a grant to a governing body of a higher education institution in Northern Ireland so as to enable it to provide, financial support to students on such a course.

(2) Grants or financial support may be provided subject to conditions (which may include conditions about repayment with or without interest or other return).

(3) "Governing body" and "higher education institution in Northern Ireland" have the same meanings as in Article 30 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1993.

Investigation of housing association tenancy fraud

13.—(1) The Northern Ireland Housing Executive and a registered housing association may enter into arrangements by which the Executive investigates and reports to the association as to—

(a) whether any of the things mentioned in subsection (2) has occurred, and

(b) if so, whether any offence has been committed by any person in connection with that occurrence.

(2) Those things are—

(a) an application for a tenancy of housing accommodation provided by the association being false in a material respect,

(b) the tenant of housing accommodation provided by the association—

(i) ceasing to occupy the accommodation as the tenant's only or principal home, and

(ii) sub-letting or parting with possession of the whole of the accommodation, or part of the accommodation without the association's consent, in breach of an express or implied term of the tenancy,

(c) a claim to succeed to a tenancy of housing accommodation provided by the association on the death of a tenant being false in a material respect,

(d) an application for a right-to-buy discount in connection with the acquisition of housing accommodation provided by the association being false in a material respect.

(3) Arrangements under subsection (1) may include provision for or in connection with the meeting by the housing association of any expenditure incurred by the Executive—

(a) under the arrangements, or

(b) anything arising from them (such as the involvement of officers of the Executive in related court proceedings).

(4) In carrying out an investigation under arrangements under subsection (1), the Executive may make such enquiries as it considers appropriate for the purposes of the investigation.

(5) A housing association may disclose to the Executive any information that the association considers relevant for the purposes of the carrying out of an investigation under arrangements under subsection (1).

(6) A report under subsection (1) may include any information regarding the investigation that the Executive considers appropriate.

(7) Nothing in subsection (5) or (6) authorises a disclosure of information in breach of any restriction on the disclosure of the information (however imposed).

(8) In determining for the purposes of subsection (7) whether a disclosure would breach the data protection legislation, the powers conferred by subsections (5) and (6) are to be taken into account.

(9) In this section—

"housing accommodation" has the same meaning as in the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 (see Article 2 of that Order),

"housing association" and "registered" have the same meanings as in Part 2 of the Housing (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 (see Article 3 of that Order),

"right-to-buy discount" has the meaning given by section 8(2) of the Housing (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2020.

Setting of rate of basic allowance for councillors

14.—(1) The Local Government Finance Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 is amended as follows.

(2) In section 31—

(a) after subsection (1), insert—

"(1A) If the regulations prescribe a basic allowance (that is, an allowance of a standard amount payable to all members of councils for the carrying out of the duties of a councillor), the amount shall be such as may be determined by the Department.",

(b) in subsection (2), for "Payments" substitute "Other than a basic allowance as mentioned in subsection (1A), payments",

(c) in subsection (5), after paragraph (a), insert—

"(aa) subsection (1A);".

(3) The Local Government (Payments to Councillors) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 (S.R. 2019 No. 174) are amended as follows.

(4) In regulation 4, for paragraphs (1) and (2) substitute—

"(1) Each member of a council is to be paid by the council a basic allowance (that is, an allowance of a standard amount payable to all members of councils for the carrying out of the duties of a councillor).".

Discretion as to a particular Commissioner's term of office

15.—(1) Schedule 2 to the Historical Institutional Abuse (Northern Ireland) Act 2019 is amended as follows.

(2) In paragraph 3(2), for "for a term of" substitute "to be for a period not exceeding".

Fees

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

16.—(1) The Tourism (Northern Ireland) Order 1992 is amended as follows.

(2) In Article 4—

(a) paragraph (2)(h) is repealed,

(b) after that paragraph, insert—

"(2A) The Board may charge fees in respect of the reasonable costs incurred by it in connection with—

(a) the carrying out of any activity undertaken by it in pursuance of paragraph (1)(a) or (b), or

(b) any certificate or approval granted by it for the purposes of any statutory provision other than this Order.".

(3) In Article 20—

(a) at the beginning of paragraph (1), insert "Subject to paragraph (1A),",

(b) after paragraph (1), insert—

"(1A) Regulations may provide for or in connection with the reduction or repayment of fees where it appears to the Department that—

(a) there are exceptional circumstances, and

(b) without such a reduction or repayment a person would suffer hardship.

(1B) In paragraph (1A)—

"reduction" includes remission,

"repayment" means repayment in whole or in part.

(1C) Regulations under paragraph (1A) may—

(a) provide for a reduction or repayment to be of such amount as the Department may determine, having regard to any prescribed matters,

(b) require a person to satisfy prescribed conditions to be eligible for a reduction or repayment.",

(c) in paragraph 2—

(i) after "Article" insert "(other than regulations under paragraph (1A))",

(ii) after the second "shall" insert "(discounting the potential effect of provision made by virtue of paragraph (1A))".

Marine licensing

17.—(1) Part 4 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 is amended as follows.

(2) After section 67A, insert—

"67B Advice and other assistance from Northern Ireland department

(1) This section applies where the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland is the appropriate licensing authority.

(2) The licensing authority may provide advice or other assistance to any person who requests it in connection with—

(a) an application which the person proposes to make to the licensing authority for a marine licence, or

(b) any other matter in respect of which the licensing authority exercises functions under this Part.

(3) The licensing authority may charge fees in respect of the reasonable costs incurred by it in connection with the provision of advice or other assistance under subsection (2).".

(3) In section 72A—

(a) in the section title, after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Northern Ireland department",

(b) in subsection (1), after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland",

(c) in subsection (2)(c), after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland",

(d) in subsection (6)(a), after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland".

(4) In section 107A—

(a) in the section title, after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Northern Ireland department",

(b) in subsection (1), after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland".

(5) In section 107B—

(a) in the section title, after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Northern Ireland department",

(b) in subsection (1), after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland".

(6) In section 108(2A), after "Welsh Ministers" insert "or the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland".

Travel concession passes

18.—(1) The Transport (Northern Ireland) Order 1977 is amended as follows.

(2) In Article 5(2), for "sub-section (1)" substitute "paragraph (1)".

(3) After Article 5(2), insert—

"(3) The Department may by regulations provide for a fee to be payable for the issue of—

(a) a travel concession pass, or

(b) a duplicate of a travel concession pass in replacement of a lost, stolen, damaged or destroyed one.

(4) In paragraph (3), "travel concession pass" means, in relation to a concessionary fare under an agreement under paragraph (1), a document in any form issued by or on behalf of the Department that a passenger is required to present in order to receive the concessionary fare under the agreement.

(5) The regulations may set a fee at an amount that exceeds the cost of issuing the pass concerned.

(6) But in setting fees the Department must aim to ensure that the income from them in a given financial year does not exceed the costs arising from the issue of passes under the agreement in that financial year.

(7) The Department may not make regulations under paragraph (3) unless a draft of the regulations has been laid before, and approved by a resolution of, the Assembly.".

Financial governance

Advances out of Consolidated Fund: increase in limit

19.—(1) The Financial Provisions (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 is amended as follows.

(2) In Article 6(2), for "2" substitute "4".

Petroleum and minerals: removal of requirement for separate accounts

20. The following provisions are repealed—

(a) section 12 of the Petroleum (Production) Act (Northern Ireland) 1964,

(b) section 51 of the Mineral Development Act (Northern Ireland) 1969.

Final provisions

Interpretation

21. In this Act—

"data protection legislation" has the same meaning as in the Data Protection Act 2018 (see section 3 of that Act),

"statutory provision" has the meaning given by section 1(f) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954.

Commencement

22.—(1) The following sections come into operation on the day after Royal Assent—

(a) sections 2 to 5,

(b) sections 9 and 10,

(c) section 16,

(d) this section, and

(e) sections 21 and 23.

(2) The other provisions of this Act come into operation on such day or days as the Department of Finance may by order appoint.

(3) An order under subsection (2) may make any transitory or transitional provision, or savings, that the Department of Finance considers necessary or expedient.

Short title

23. This Act may be cited as the Administrative and Financial Provisions Act (Northern Ireland) 2026.

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