EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO THE HEALTHY START SCHEME AND DAY CARE FOOD SCHEME (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2010

2010 No. 98

1. Introduction

1.1 This explanatory memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

2. Description

2.1 The Regulations uprate the income threshold for families qualifying for Healthy Start through receipt of Child Tax Credit to £16,190 in the Healthy Start and Day Care Food Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006 (S.R 2006 No. 478).

2.2 The Regulations are subject to negative procedure.

3. Legislative Background

3.1 This is a routine amendment that ensures that the qualifying criteria for Healthy Start keeps pace with increases in the income thresholds for tax credits.

4. Extent

4.1 These Regulations apply to Northern Ireland.

5. European Convention on Human Rights

5.1 As the regulation is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

6. Policy Background

6.1 The Regulations increase the income threshold for families qualifying for the Healthy Start Scheme through receipt of Child Tax Credit from £16,040 to £16,190. This increase will ensure that the Scheme continues to support all families getting Child Tax Credit at the highest rate (but not Working Tax Credit unless the run-on only is in payment) when the relevant tax credit thresholds are increased on 6th April 2010.

7. Consultation Outcome

7.1 We have not consulted on these amendments. Proposals for establishing a new welfare food scheme, to be called Healthy Start, were consulted on in Autumn 2002.

8. Guidance

8.1 No new guidance is required to explain how the Regulations will operate.

8.2 Application leaflets and other communication materials for Healthy Start Scheme beneficiaries and health professionals are routinely updated in March annually to reflect changes to the income threshold in the new financial year.

9. Impact

9.1 A Regulatory Impact Assessment is not required as the impact of these Regulations on the private or voluntary sector is expected to be negligible.

10. Regulating Small Business

10.1 The change will have no impact on small business.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 The purpose of increasing the income threshold is to ensure that the Scheme continues to be available to all those pregnant women and children under 4 years old in families getting Child Tax Credit (without Working Tax Credit) at the highest rate. Keeping Healthy Start thresholds in line with relevant tax credit threshold guarantees this without the need for additional monitoring.

12. Contact

Janet Moore at the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Telephone 02890 520772 or email: janet.moore@dhsspsni.gov.uk can answer any queries regarding the Statutory Rule.