STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2026 No. 1080

NORTHERN IRELAND

The Northern Ireland Assembly (Minimum Period) (Amendment) Order 2026

Made - - - - at 11.08 a.m. on 13th October 2026

Laid before Parliament at 3.30 p.m. on 13th October 2026

Coming into force - - 3rd November 2026

The Secretary of State makes this Order in exercise of the power conferred by section 31 (6) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998(**a**).

Citation, commencement and extent

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Northern Ireland Assembly (Minimum Period) (Amendment) Order 2026.

(2) This Order comes into force on 3rd November 2026.

(3) This Order extends to Northern Ireland only.

Amendment of the Northern Ireland Assembly (Minimum Period) Order 2010

2. For article 2(1) of the Northern Ireland Assembly (Minimum Period) Order 2010(**b**) substitute—

"(1) The minimum period for the purpose of section 31 (6) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (date of elections and dissolutions) is—

(a) 26 days; or

(b) where paragraph (1A) applies, 30 days.

(1A) This paragraph applies where—

(a) the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland(**c**), in accordance with section 15 (3A) of the Representation of the People Act 1985 (combination of polls at Northern Ireland Assembly elections with polls at parliamentary and local elections)(**d**), has directed that the polls at an election of the Northern Ireland

(**a**) 1998 c. 47.
(**b**) S.I. 2010/2944.
(**c**) 1962 c. 14. Section 14 of the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962 makes provision for the appointment of the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland.
(**d**) 1985 c. 50. Subsection (3A) was inserted by Schedule 1, paragraph 15(2) of the Fixed-Term Parliaments Act 2011 (c. 14). That Act was repealed by section 1 of the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022 (c. 11), but by virtue of section 5(2) of that Act, the repeal does not affect the insertion of subsection (3A).

Assembly are to be taken together with the polls at any other election or elections; and

(b) that direction is given no later than 31 days before the date of the polls.".

Sarah Owen
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Northern Ireland Office

At 11.08 a.m. on 13th October 2026

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

By virtue of section 31 (1) of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 (c. 47), ordinary general elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly are held on the first Thursday in May every five years. The predecessor Assembly must be dissolved at the start of the minimum period which ends with the date of the poll for the election and that period is determined in accordance with an Order made by the Secretary of State.

This Order makes provision for the determination of the minimum period which is to be 26 days or 30 days, computed in accordance with rule 2 of the Assembly Elections Rules (which makes provision for days that are to be disregarded). The minimum period will only be 30 days if the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland has directed that the polls at an election of the Northern Ireland Assembly are to be taken together with the polls at one or more other elections. The Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland has this power under section 15(3A) of the Representation of the People Act 1985 (c. 50).

A full impact assessment has not been produced for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private, voluntary or public sector is foreseen.

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