STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 115 (C. 4)

SOCIAL SECURITY

The Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 18) (Abolition of Benefits) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - - 17th June 2026

The Department for Communities(**a**) makes the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 2(2) and (4) of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015(**b**).

Citation

1. This Order may be cited as the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 18) (Abolition of Benefits) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026.

Amendment of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 18) (Abolition of Benefits) Order (Northern Ireland)

2.—(1) The Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 18) (Abolition of Benefits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025(**c**) is amended in accordance with paragraphs (2) to (6).

(2) In Article 1(2) (citation and interpretation) insert at the appropriate place—

""specified accommodation" has the same meaning as in the Transitional Regulations;

"temporary accommodation" has the same meaning as in the Transitional Regulations;".

(3) In Article 2(3) (conversion of contributory old style ESA) after "the day appointed is" insert "any day falling before 1st October 2026 which is".

(4) After Article 3 (claimant commitment on conversion of contributory old style ESA) insert—

"Abolition of income-related employment and support allowance

3A.—(1) Subject to the saving in paragraph (2), the day appointed for the coming into operation of the amending provisions in the case of an award of old style ESA in respect of which those provisions—

(a) have not yet come into operation, and

(**a**) See section 1(7) of the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (c. 5 (N.I.))
(**b**) S.I. 2015/2006 (N.I. 1); see Article 2 of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Cessation of Transitory Provision) Order 2020 (S.I. 2020/927)
(**c**) S.R. 2025 No. 176 (C. 3)

(b) are not due to come into operation, or to be treated as coming into operation, at the end of a two week run-on period,

is 1st October 2026.

(2) Where the amending provisions would otherwise come into operation on 1st October 2026 by virtue of paragraph (1), they are to be treated as if they had not come into operation in the case of an award where—

(a) immediately before that date, a person is appointed under regulation 52 of the Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Jobseeker's Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance (Claims and Payments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (persons unable to act)(**a**), or

(b) at any time within the period of 6 months ending with that date, the Department determined that it was likely that such a person would need to be appointed (whether or not an appointment was made).

(3) The saving in paragraph (2) does not prevent the amending provisions from coming into operation as a consequence of a claim for universal credit or from being treated as coming into operation in accordance with regulation 47(1)(a) of the Transitional Regulations (termination of existing benefits if no claim before the deadline).".

(5) In Article 6 (abolition of housing benefit for working age claimants who cease to occupy temporary accommodation or specified accommodation)—

(a) for the heading substitute "Housing benefit – claimants moving from temporary or specified accommodation on or after 14th November 2025 and before 1st October 2026",

(b) in paragraph (1) after "any day falling on or after 14th November 2025" insert "and before 1st October 2026";

(c) omit paragraph (2).

(6) After Article 6 insert—

"Abolition of housing benefit for working age claimants who are not in temporary accommodation or specified accommodation

7.—(1) Subject to the savings in paragraph (4), the day appointed for the coming into operation of Article 39(1)(d) of the Order (abolition of housing benefit) in the case of an award of housing benefit that—

(a) has not yet been terminated by virtue of regulations 5(2), 6(2A) or 47(1)(a) of the Transitional Regulations(**b**), and

(b) is not due to terminate at the end of a two week run-on period,

is the day specified in paragraph (2) or (3).

(2) In the case of an award where, immediately before 1st October 2026, the claimant is prevented from claiming universal credit by regulation 19(1)(b) or (c) of the Universal Credit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (restrictions on entitlement – prisoners etc.)(**c**), the day appointed is the day after the last day on which that regulation applies in relation to the claimant.

(3) In any other case, the day appointed is 1st October 2026.

(4) Where Article 39(1)(d) of the Order would otherwise come into operation on 1st October 2026 by virtue of paragraph (3), it is to be treated as if it had not come into operation in a case where—

(**a**) S.R. 2016 No. 220

(**b**) Regulation 6(2A) was inserted by S.R. 2018 No.92 and amended by S.R. 2019 No. 152. Regulation 47 was inserted, and paragraph (1)(a) of that regulation was amended, by S.R. 2019 No. 152

(**c**) S.R. 2016 No. 216

(a) the claimant's circumstances fall within regulation 4A(2) to (5) of the Transitional Regulations (exemption from restrictions on claims for housing benefit for persons who are over the qualifying age for state pension credit, occupying temporary or specified accommodation etc.)(**a**), or

(b) immediately before 1st October 2026, the claimant is entitled to an award of income-related employment and support allowance and the saving in Article 3A(2) (abolition of income-related employment and support allowance) applies.".

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for Communities on 17th June 2026.

(L.S.)

David Tarr
A senior officer of the Department for Communities

(**a**) Regulation 4A was inserted by S.R. 2022 No. 194

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order amends the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 18) (Abolition of Benefits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025 (S.R. 2025 No. 176 (C. 3) ("the No. 18 Order").

The No. 18 Order appointed 1st April 2026 for ending future entitlement to income support and income-based jobseeker's allowance. This Order inserts new Articles 3A and 7 which make corresponding provision in relation to income-related employment and support allowance and housing benefit.

Income-related employment and support allowance is the income-related element of the "old style" allowance. The "amending provisions" (as defined in the No. 18 Order) are the mechanism for abolishing entitlement to that element and converting any entitlement to the contributory element into the "new style" allowance.

Article 2 of the No. 18 Order brought the amending provisions into force in relation to awards of old style employment and support allowance where the claimant was receiving only the contributory element. New Article 3A appoints 1st October 2026 for the coming into operation of those provisions in relation to any remaining awards. This is subject to a saving provision for cases where either the claimant has an appointee or the Department determined within the previous 6 months that an appointee was likely to be needed. The saving provision does not prevent the award from being terminated as a consequence of a claim for universal credit or a failure to claim universal credit by the deadline specified in a migration notice.

Article 6 of the No. 18 Order brought the abolition of housing benefit into force from 14th November 2025 in cases where working age claimants who were receiving only that benefit moved from temporary or specified accommodation.

New Article 7 appoints 1st October 2026 for the general abolition of housing benefit (except certain prisoners for whom the abolition takes effect on their release). The abolition is subject to a general saving provision for any claimant who is exempt from the restrictions on new claims for housing benefit. These exemptions include claimants who are over state pension age and claimants who are under that age and occupying temporary or specified accommodation. Where the saving provision in new Article 3A(2) applies to a claimant with an award of income-related employment and support allowance, it also applies to their housing benefit award.

NOTE AS TO EARLIER COMMENCEMENT ORDERS

(This note is not part of the Order)

The following provisions of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/2006 (N.I. 1)) have been brought into operation by commencement orders made before the date of this Order-

Provision	*Date of Commencement*	*S.R. No.*
Article 6 (partially)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Article 6 (partially)	15th November 2017	2017 No. 216
Article 6 (partially)	13th December 2017	2017 No. 216
Article 6 (partially)	17th January 2018	2018 No. 1
Article 6 (partially)	7th February 2018	2018 No. 1
Article 6 (partially)	21st February 2018	2018 No. 1
Article 6 (partially)	7th March 2018	2018 No. 1
Article 6 (partially)	16th May 2018	2018 No. 97
Article 6 (partially)	30th May 2018	2018 No. 97
Article 6 (partially)	13th June 2018	2018 No. 97
Article 6 (partially)	27th June 2018	2018 No. 197
Article 6 (partially)	5th September 2018	2018 No. 138
Article 6 (partially)	19th September 2018	2018 No. 138
Article 6 (partially)	3rd October 2018	2018 No. 138
Article 6 (partially)	17th October 2018	2018 No. 138
Article 6 (partially)	31st October 2018	2018 No. 138
Article 6 (partially)	14th November 2018	2018 No. 138
Article 6 (partially)	5th December 2018	2018 No. 138
Article 6 (partially)	1st February 2019	2019 No. 7
Articles 6 to 29 (remaining)	30th March 2022	2022 No. 132
Article 7 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 7 to 29 (partially)	As Article 6	As Article 6
Articles 9 to 17 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 no. 215
Articles 18 to 27 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 29 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 30 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 31 and 32 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 no. 215
Articles 31 and 32 (partially)	As Article 6	As Article 6
Articles 31 and 32 (remaining)	30th March 2022	2022 No. 132
Article 33	2nd May 2016	2016 no. 215
Article 34 and 35	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Articles 36 to 38	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 37	15th May 2019	2019 No. 4
Article 39 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 39 (partially)	As Article 6	As Article 6
Article 39(1)(a) and (b), (2) and (3) (partially)	1st December 2025	2025 No. 176
Article 39(1)(a) and (b), (2) and (3)	1st April 2026	2025 No. 176
Article 39(1)(c) (partially)	1st April 2026	2025 No. 176
Article 39(1)(d)	14th November 2025	2025 No. 176
Articles 41 and 42	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 43 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 43 (remaining)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Article 44	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Articles 45 to 47 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215

Provision	*Date of Commencement*	*S.R. No.*
Articles 45 and 46 (remaining)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Articles 48 and 49	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 50 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 50 (partially)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Articles 51 and 52 (partially)	1st June 2016	2016 No. 234
Articles 51 and 52 (remaining)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Article 53	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 54	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 55 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 55 (partially)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Article 56	17th February 2017	2016 No. 46
Article 57 (partially)	17th March 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 57 (remaining)	28th November 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 58	28th November 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 59	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 60 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 60 (partially)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Article 61	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Article 62	1st June 2016	2016 No. 234
Article 63 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 63 (partially)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Article 64	16th January 2017	2016 No. 46
Article 70 (partially)	1st June 2016	2016 No. 234
Article 70 (remaining)	31st October 2016	2016 No. 234
Article 71	31st October 2016	2016 No. 234
Article 72 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 72 (partially)	1st June 2016	2016 No. 234
Articles 73 and 74	31st October 2016	2016 No. 234
Article 75	9th September 2016	2016 No. 325
Article 76 (partially)	31st March 2017	2016 No. 411
Article 76 (partially)	28th November 2016	2016 No. 411
Articles 77 to 79	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Articles 82 to 84 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 82 to 84 (remaining)	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 85 and 86	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 87	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 88 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 88 (remaining)	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 88 to 91	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 92 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 92 (remaining)	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 93 and 94	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 96 to 99	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 100 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 100 (remaining)	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 101 and 102	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Articles 103 to 106	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 107 (partially)	17th March 2016	2016 No. 166
Article 108	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 109 (partially)	4th April 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 109 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 109 (partially)	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215

Provision	*Date of Commencement*	*S.R. No.*
Article 109 (remaining)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Article 110 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Article 110 (remaining)	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 111 to 113	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Articles 115 and 116	4th April 2016	2016 No. 46
Articles 117 and 118 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Articles 117 and 118 (remaining)	9th September 2016	2016 No. 325
Articles 120 to 125	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 127 (partially)	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 127 (remaining)	19th July 2023	2023 No. 118
Articles 129 to 133	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Article 134	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Articles 135 to 140	17th February 2016	2016 No. 146
Schedule 1 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 2 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 2 (partially)	10th July 2017	2017 No. 118
Schedule 2 (partially)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Schedule 2 (partially)	15th May 2019	2019 No. 4
Schedule 2 (partially)	18th August 2021	2021 No. 239
Schedule 3 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 3 (partially)	As Article 6	As Article 6
Schedule 5 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 6	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 7 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 7 (partially)	1st June 2016	2016 No. 234
Schedule 7 (partially)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Schedule 8 (partially)	28th November 2016	2016 No. 411
Schedule 8 (partially)	31st March 2017	2016 No. 411
Schedule 8 (remaining)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Schedule 9 (partially)	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 9 (partially)	20th June 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 10	2nd May 2016	2016 No. 215
Schedule 11 (partially)	17th March 2016	2016 No. 166
Schedule 12 (partially)	28th November 2016	2016 No. 411
Schedule 12 (partially)	31st March 2017	2016 No. 411
Schedule 12 (partially)	17th February 2016	2016 No. 46
Schedule 12 (partially)	31st October 2016	2016 No. 234
Schedule 12 (partially)	27th September 2017	2017 No. 190
Schedule 12 (partially)	As Article 6	As Article 6

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