STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

# 2025 No. 176 (C. 3)

# SOCIAL SECURITY

## The Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 18) (Abolition of Benefits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025

*Made - - - - 12th November 2025*

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**).

The powers are exercisable by the Department by virtue of Article 2 of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Cessation of Transitory Provision) Order 2020(**c**).

**Citation and interpretation**

**1.**—(1) This Order may be cited as the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 18) (Abolition of Benefits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025.

(2) In this Order—

"the 2007 Act" means the Welfare Reform Act (Northern Ireland) 2007(**d**);

"the 2015 Order" means the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015;

"the amending provisions" means the provisions referred to in Article 6(1)(a) to (c) of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional and Transitory Provisions) Order 2017(**e**);

"contributory allowance" and "income-related allowance" in relation to an award of old style ESA have the meaning given by section 1(7) of the 2007 Act;

"housing benefit" means housing benefit under section 129 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits (Northern Ireland) Act 1992(**f**);

"income support" means income support under section 123 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits (Northern Ireland) Act 1992;

"income-based jobseeker's allowance" has the same meaning as in the Jobseekers (Northern Ireland) Order 1995(**g**);

"income-related employment and support allowance" means an income-related allowance under Part 1 of the 2007 Act;

(**a**) See section 1(7) of the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (c. 5 (N.I.))
(**b**) S.I. 2015/2006 (N.I. 1)
(**c**) S.I. 2020/927
(**d**) 2007 c.2
(**e**) S.R. 2017 No. 190 (C. 11)
(**f**) 1992 c.7
(**g**) S.I. 1995/2705 (N.I. 15)

"old style ESA" means an employment and support allowance under Part 1 of the 2007 Act as it has effect apart from the amendments made by Schedule 3, and Part 1 of Schedule 12, to the 2015 Order that remove references to an income-related allowance and references to an award of old style ESA shall be construed accordingly;

"old style JSA" means a jobseeker's allowance under the Jobseekers (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 as it has effect apart from amendments made by Part 1 of Schedule 12 to the 2015 Order that remove references to an income-based jobseeker's allowance and references to an award of old style JSA shall be construed accordingly;

"the Transitional Regulations" means the Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016(**a**);

"two week run-on period" means the period referred to in regulation 6(2A)(**b**) or 47(1)(a)(**c**) of the Transitional Regulations or regulation 4(1) of the Universal Credit (Managed Migration and Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019(**d**).

**Conversion of contributory old style ESA**

**2.**—(1) 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 the claimant—

(a) is entitled to the contributory allowance but not the income-related allowance; or

(b) is entitled to both the contributory allowance and the income-related allowance and section 6(4) of the 2007 Act (allowance treated as attributable to entitlement to the contributary allowance where the amount payable does not exceed the personal rate) applies,

is as follows.

(2) In the case of an award where either of the conditions in paragraph (1)(a) or (b) applies on 1st December 2025, the day appointed is 1st December 2025.

(3) In any other case, the day appointed is the first day on which either of those conditions applies.

**Claimant commitment on conversion of contributory old style ESA**

**3.**—(1) Where the amending provisions come into operation in relation to an award of old style ESA in accordance with Article 2 (conversion of contributory old style ESA) the Department may, for so long as the Department considers necessary to protect the efficient administration of employment and support allowance, delay the preparation of a claimant commitment in accordance with section 11A(**e**) of the 2007 Act.

(2) Section 1(3)(aa)(**f**) of the 2007 Act (acceptance of claimant commitment to be a condition of entitlement to employment and support allowance) is not to apply during any period for which the preparation of a claimant commitment is delayed under paragraph (1).

**Abolition of income-based jobseeker's allowance**

**4.** The day appointed for the coming into operation of the amending provisions in the case of an award of old style JSA in respect of which those provisions—

(a) have not yet come into operation; and

(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,

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(**a**) S.R. 2016 No. 226
(**b**) Inserted by S.R. 2018 No. 92
(**c**) Inserted by S.R. 2019 No. 152
(**d**) S.R. 2019 No. 152
(**e**) Section 11A was inserted by Article 63 of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015
(**f**) Section 1(3)(aa) was inserted by Article 60 of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015

is 1st April 2026.

**Abolition of income support**

**5.** The day appointed for the coming into operation of Article 39(1)(c) of the 2015 Order (abolition of income support) in respect of an award of income support that—

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

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

is 1st April 2026.

**Abolition of housing benefit for working age claimants who cease to occupy temporary accommodation or specified accommodation**

**6.**—(1) The day appointed for the coming into operation of Article 39(1)(d) of the 2015 Order (abolition of housing benefit) in relation to an award of housing benefit where the claimant—

(a) is not entitled to universal credit, income support, an income-based jobseeker's allowance or an income-related employment and support allowance;

(b) does not fall within regulation 4A(3) to (5) of the Transitional Regulations(**a**) (exemption from restrictions on claims for housing benefit for persons over the qualifying age for state pension credit etc.); and

(c) is entitled to that award in respect of temporary accommodation or specified accommodation,

is any day falling on or after 14th November 2025 that is the day after the last day on which the claimant is entitled to housing benefit in respect of accommodation of that description.

(2) In this article "specified accommodation" and "temporary accommodation" have the same meaning as in the Transitional Regulations.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for Communities on 12th November 2025.

(L.S.)

*David Tarr*
A senior officer of the Department for Communities

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

## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Order)*

This Order is a further stage in the replacement of six benefits with universal credit ("UC").

The Order appoints the dates for ending future entitlement to income support and income-based jobseeker's allowance for all claimants and for ending future entitlement to income-related employment and support allowance in relation to claimants currently receiving only the contributory allowance in an award of old style ESA. It also ends awards of housing benefit where working age claimants cease to occupy temporary or supported accommodation.

The references in this order to "old style JSA" and "old style ESA" are to awards of jobseeker's allowance and employment and support allowance in respect of which the amending provisions have not yet come into operation. The amending provisions include Article 39(1)(a) and (b) (abolition of benefits) of the Welfare Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/2006 (N.I. 1)) ("the 2015 Order") and amendments to the Jobseekers (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (S.I. 1995/2705 (N.I. 15)) and Part 1 of the Welfare Reform Act (Northern Ireland) 2007 (c.2) that remove references to the income-related elements of those benefits.

The amending provisions are the mechanism for terminating awards of income-based jobseeker's allowance and income-related employment and support allowance. They come into operation when the claimant makes a claim for UC or forms a couple with a universal credit claimant. They are treated as coming into operation when a claimant who has been issued with a migration notice fails to make a claim for universal credit by the deadline.

Article 2 brings the amending provisions into operation on 1st December 2025 for awards of old style ESA where the amount the claimant receives is wholly attributable to the contributory allowance (including where they have entitlement to both the contributory and income-related allowance but the former is greater). This will prevent entitlement to the income-related allowance arising in future if the claimant's circumstances change. It will also convert the award to the "new style" employment and support allowance. Where an award of old style ESA is not wholly attributable to the contributory allowance on 1st December 2025 but is so on a subsequent day, for example if the claimant's income increases so that they no longer have the income-related entitlement, the amending provisions will come into operation on that day.

Article 3 deals with the obligation on the Department to prepare a claimant commitment where an award of old style ESA is converted to the new style allowance under Article 2. That obligation is delayed for such a period as is necessary to protect the efficient administration of the allowance.

Article 4 deals with old style JSA. The amending provisions come into operation for any remaining cases on 1st April 2026. This does not affect the two week run-on period in the case of a claimant who has made a claim for UC or been issued with a migration notice and failed to claim by the deadline.

Article 5 deals with income support. Article 39(1)(c) of the 2015 Order (which provides for abolition of income support) is brought into operation for any remaining cases, except those in a run-on period, on 1st April 2026.

Article 6 deals with housing benefit. Claimants who occupy temporary accommodation and certain types of supported accommodation (referred to in this Order as "specified accommodation") are not covered by the housing costs element in UC and may therefore claim housing benefit by virtue of regulation 4A of the Universal Credit (Transitional Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 (S.R. 2016 No. 226).

Where a claimant who is already entitled to UC moves from such accommodation into general accommodation, housing benefit will automatically cease and they may qualify for the housing costs element of UC. Article 6 provides the mechanism for ending housing benefit in a case where the claimant is not already entitled to UC and is not being moved to UC by managed migration. Where the move to general accommodation occurs on or after 14th November 2025, Article 39(1)(d) of the 2015 Order (which provides for abolition of housing benefit) is brought into

operation in relation to the existing award. This terminates the current award but does not prevent a new claim for housing benefit if the claimant subsequently qualifies under regulation 4A.

## 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)) were brought into operation by a Statutory Instrument or Statutory Rule which was made before this Order was made.

| *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 |
| 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 |
| 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 |

| *Provision* | *Date of Commencement* | *S.R. No.* |
|---|---|---|
| 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 |
| 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 |

| *Provision* | *Date of Commencement* | *S.R. No.* |
|---|---|---|
| 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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£8.90

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/nisr/2025/176

ISBN 978-0-33-802547-0

9 780338 025470