
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2005 No. 498

FAMILY PROCEEDINGS

SUPREME COURT

COUNTY COURTS

The Family Proceedings (Civil Partnership: Staying of Proceedings) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2005

Made - - - - 7th November 2005

Coming into operation

To be laid before Parliament 5th December 2005

We, the Family Proceedings Rules Committee, in exercise of the powers conferred on us by Article 12 of the Family Law (Northern Ireland) Order 1993⁽¹⁾ as extended by section 231 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004⁽²⁾ hereby, with the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor, make the following Rules:

Citation, commencement and interpretation

1.—(1) These Rules may be cited as the Family Proceedings (Civil Partnership: Staying of Proceedings) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2005 and shall come into operation on the 5th December 2005.

(2) In these Rules—

- (a) “civil partnership proceedings” means proceedings under the Civil Partnership Act 2004 of a kind mentioned in sub-paragraph (b);
- (b) the proceedings referred to in sub-paragraph (a) are proceedings so far as they are they are for one or more of the following—
 - (i) a dissolution order,
 - (ii) a separation order,
 - (iii) a nullity order,
 - (iv) a declaration as to the validity of a civil partnership of the petitioner, or
 - (v) a declaration as to the subsistence of such a civil partnership;

(1) S.I.1993/1576 (N.I.6)

(2) 2004 c. 33

- (c) “another jurisdiction” means any country other than Northern Ireland;
- (d) “related jurisdiction” means England and Wales, Scotland, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man (the reference to Guernsey being treated as including Alderney and Sark);
- (e) references to the trial in any proceedings are, where there is more than one trial, references to the first trial in those proceedings, but do not include the separate trial of an issue as to jurisdiction only;
- (f) references to proceedings in another jurisdiction are references to proceedings in a court of that jurisdiction and to any proceedings which are instituted before a tribunal, or other authority having power under the law having effect there to determine questions of status;
- (g) references to proceedings which are continuing in another jurisdiction are references to proceedings which have been begun and have not been finally disposed of;
- (h) references to proceedings before the court which are continuing are references to proceedings which are pending and not stayed; and
- (i) proceedings are relevant proceedings if they are in respect of the same civil partnership or are capable of affecting its validity or subsistence.

Duty to furnish particulars of concurrent proceedings in another jurisdiction

2.—(1) Where civil partnership proceedings are pending before the court in respect of a civil partnership and the trial in those proceedings has not begun—

- (a) the petitioner, or
 - (b) a respondent who has included a prayer for relief in his answer, shall furnish to the court such particulars of any relevant proceedings which he knows to be continuing in another jurisdiction as are required by paragraph (2).
- (2) The particulars required by paragraph (1) are—
- (a) in the case of a petitioner, the particulars required by paragraph 1(*I*) of Appendix 2 to the Family Proceedings Rules (Northern Ireland) 1996(3); and
 - (b) in the case of a respondent, the particulars required by paragraph 1(*I*) of Appendix 2 to the Family Proceedings Rules (Northern Ireland) 1996 in so far as they have not been given by the petitioner.

Obligatory stays of civil partnership proceedings

3.—(1) Where, before the beginning of the trial in any proceedings before the court for a dissolution order which are continuing, it appears to the court on the application of a party to the civil partnership—

- (a) that, in respect of the same civil partnership, proceedings for the dissolution or annulment of the civil partnership are continuing in a related jurisdiction;
- (b) that the parties to the civil partnership have resided together after its formation;
- (c) that the place where they resided together—
 - (i) on the date when the proceedings before the court were begun, or
 - (ii) if they did not reside together at that date, where they last resided together before those proceedings were begun,is in that jurisdiction; and

- (d) that either of the said parties was habitually resident in that jurisdiction throughout the year ending with the date on which they last resided together before the date on which the proceedings in the court were begun,

the court shall order that the proceedings before it be stayed.

- (2) But paragraph (1) does not apply if rule 5(3) applies.

(3) References in paragraph (1) to proceedings before the court are, in the case of proceedings which are not only proceedings for a dissolution order, to the proceedings so far as they are proceedings for a dissolution order.

Discretionary stays of civil partnership proceedings

4.—(1) Paragraph (2) applies where, before the beginning of the trial in any civil partnership proceedings before the court which are continuing, it appears to the court—

- (a) that any relevant proceedings are continuing in another jurisdiction, and
- (b) that the balance of fairness (including convenience) as between the parties to the civil partnership is such that it is appropriate for the proceedings in that jurisdiction to be disposed of before further steps are taken—
 - (i) in the proceedings before the court, or
 - (ii) in those proceedings so far as they consist of a particular kind of civil partnership proceedings.

- (2) The court may, if it thinks fit, order that—

- (a) the proceedings before it, or
- (b) those proceedings so far as they consist of a particular kind of civil partnership proceedings,

be stayed.

(3) In considering the balance of fairness and convenience for the purposes of paragraph (1) (b), the court shall have regard to all factors appearing to be relevant, including the convenience of witnesses and any delay or expense which may result from the proceedings being stayed, or not being stayed.

(4) In the case of any proceedings so far as they are proceedings for a dissolution order, the court shall not exercise the power conferred on it by paragraph (2) when an application under rule 3 is pending in respect of the proceedings.

(5) Where, after the beginning of the trial in any civil partnership proceedings which are continuing before the court, the court makes an order under paragraph (6), paragraphs (1) and (2) of this rule have effect in relation to those proceedings, and to the other proceedings by reference to which that order is made, as if the words “before the beginning of the trial” in paragraph (1) were omitted.

(6) The order referred to in paragraph (5) is an order declaring that the court is satisfied that a person has failed to perform the duty imposed on him in respect of the proceedings by rule 2.

- (7) No action lies in respect of the failure of a person to comply with rule 2.

Discharge of orders

5.—(1) A party to proceedings which are stayed by an order made under rule 3 or 4 may apply to discharge that order.

(2) On such an application the court may discharge the order if it appears that the proceedings by reference to which the order was made are stayed or concluded, or that a party to those other proceedings has delayed unreasonably in prosecuting them.

(3) If the court discharges an order staying any proceedings under rule 3 the court shall not again stay those proceedings in pursuance of that rule.

Supplementary

6.—(1) Subject to rule 9, rules 7 and 8 apply where proceedings for a dissolution, separation or nullity order are stayed by reference to proceedings in a related jurisdiction for the dissolution or annulment of a civil partnership, or the legal separation of civil partners.

(2) In this rule and in rules 7 to 9—

(a) “lump sum order” means—

- (i) an order made under paragraph 1 of Schedule 15 to the Civil Partnership Act 2004 of a kind mentioned in paragraph 2(1)(f) of that Schedule (lump sum order for children), or
- (ii) an order made under Schedule 1 to the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995(4) of a kind mentioned in paragraph 2(2)(c) of that Schedule (lump sum order for children), if made in equivalent circumstances to an order of the kind mentioned in head (i);

(b) “the other proceedings”, in relation to any stayed proceedings, means the proceedings in the other jurisdiction by reference to which the stay was imposed;

(c) “relevant order” means—

- (i) an order under Part 7 of Schedule 15 to the Civil Partnership Act 2004 (maintenance pending outcome of dissolution, nullity or separation proceedings),
- (ii) an order made under paragraph 1 of Schedule 15 to the Civil Partnership Act 2004 of a kind mentioned in paragraph 2(1)(d) or (e) of that Schedule (periodical and secured periodical payments for children),
- (iii) an order made under Schedule 1 to the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 of a kind mentioned in paragraph 2 (2)(a) or (b) of that Schedule (periodical and secured periodical payments for children), if made in equivalent circumstances to an order of a kind mentioned in head (ii),
- (iv) an order under Article 8 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (Residence, contact and other orders with respect to children), or
- (v) except for the purposes of rule 8, any order restraining a person from removing a child out of Northern Ireland or out of the care of another person; and

(d) “stayed” means stayed in pursuance of these Rules.

(3) Nothing in rules 7 to 9 affects any power of the court—

- (a) to vary or discharge a relevant order which remains in force,
- (b) to enforce a relevant order in relation to any period when it is or was in force, or
- (c) to make a relevant order or a lump sum order in connection with proceedings which were, but are no longer, stayed.

7.—(1) Where proceedings to which this rule applies are stayed then—

- (a) the court shall not make a relevant order or a lump sum order in connection with the stayed proceedings except under paragraph (2); and
 - (b) except as provided by paragraph (4), any relevant order made in connection with the stayed proceedings ceases to have effect on the expiration of the period of three months beginning with the date on which the stay was imposed, unless before that date the stay is removed or the order discharged.
- (2) The court may exercise the powers referred to in paragraph (3) if it considers that—
- (a) there are circumstances which must be dealt with urgently, and
 - (b) it is necessary to exercise those powers whilst the stay is in force in order to deal with those circumstances.
- (3) The powers are—
- (a) the power to make a lump sum order or a relevant order in connection with the stayed proceedings; and
 - (b) the power to extend, or further extend, the duration of a relevant order made in connection with the stayed proceedings.
- (4) Where by virtue of paragraph (2) the court exercises any of the powers referred to in paragraph (3) in respect of a relevant order, paragraph (1)(b) does not apply to the order so made or extended.
- (5) This rule does not alter the effect of the stay except as provided by this rule.

8.—(1) Where—

- (a) any proceedings to which this rule applies are stayed, and
 - (b) an order (“the other order”) making provision of a kind referred to in paragraph (2) which was made in connection with the other proceedings—
 - (i) is in force at the time when the stay is imposed, or
 - (ii) comes into force subsequently,then paragraphs (3) to (6) apply.
- (2) The provision referred to in paragraph (1) is—
- (a) provision for periodical payments for a civil partner of the civil partnership in question;
 - (b) provision for periodical payments for a child; and
 - (c) any provision which could be made by an order under Article 8 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.
- (3) Any relevant order made in connection with the stayed proceedings ceases to have effect in so far as it makes any provision for a civil partner or child which (whether it makes the same or different provision) is of the same type as any provision for that civil partner or child made by the other order.
- (4) The court shall not make a relevant order in connection with the stayed proceedings containing provision for a civil partner or child in respect of any matter for which provision for that civil partner or child is made by the other order.
- (5) If the other order contains provision for periodical payments for a child, the court must not make a lump sum order for that child in connection with the stayed proceedings.
- (6) The provisions of paragraphs (3) to (5) have effect—
- (a) in the case where the other order is in force when the stay is imposed, from that date, and
 - (b) in any other case, from the date when the other order comes into force.

9.—(1) Where—

- (a) civil partnership proceedings are proceedings for more than one of the orders mentioned in rule 1(2)(b)(i) to (iii); and
 - (b) proceedings for some but not all of those orders are stayed,
- then rules 7 and 8 do not apply.
- (2) Where paragraph (1) applies the court shall not make a relevant order or a lump sum order in connection with the proceedings so far as they are stayed.
- (3) This rule does not affect the application of the stay except as provided by this rule.

Effect of stay apart from these Rules

10. These Rules do not affect any power of the court to stay proceedings apart from that provided by these Rules.

Transitional provision

11. Where—

- (a) there are proceedings before the court in respect of a civil partnership which are continuing;
- (b) that civil partnership is treated as having been formed by virtue of section 215(1) of the Civil Partnership Act 2004; and
- (c) the overseas relationship by reference to which the parties are treated as having formed the civil partnership was registered before 5th December 2005,

then rule 3 applies to those proceedings as though the reference to the parties having resided together after the formation of the civil partnership is a reference to their having resided together after the registration of the overseas relationship.

*Brian Kerr
Catherine Dixon
Hilary Keegan
Charles Redpath
Anne Marie Kelly
David Smyth
John Gillen*

Dated 7th November 2005

Signed by the authority of the Lord Chancellor
I concur.

Dated 10th November 2005

Bridget Prentice
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State,
Department for Constitutional Affairs

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Rules)

These Rules are made under Article 12(1) of the Family Law (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 as extended by section 231 of the Civil Partnership Act 2004 which allows for provision to be made in relation to civil partnerships corresponding to the provision made in respect of marriages by Schedule 1 to the Matrimonial Causes (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. That Schedule makes provision about the relationship between domestic proceedings for divorce, judicial separation, nullity of marriage and declarations as to the validity and subsistence of a marriage of the petitioner, and proceedings in another jurisdiction of a similar type, and provides for when those domestic proceedings shall or may be stayed.

These Rules make similar provision about the relationship between domestic proceedings for an order of dissolution, separation or nullity of civil partnership or for a declaration as to the validity or subsistence of a civil partnership, and proceedings in another jurisdiction of a similar type.

Rule 2 requires any party who is seeking an order in civil partnership proceedings to provide particulars of relevant overseas proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Family Proceedings Rules (Northern Ireland) 1996.

Rule 3 provides that where there are proceedings for a dissolution order before the court and the trial in those proceedings has not begun then, in certain circumstances, the court shall stay those proceedings if similar proceedings in respect of the said civil partnership are continuing in England and Wales, Scotland, Jersey, Guernsey (including Alderney and Sark) or the Isle of Man (“a related jurisdiction”). **Rule 11** modifies the application of this provision in respect of a civil partnership which is a recognised overseas relationship registered before the coming into operation of these Rules.

Rule 4 provides that where there are proceedings before the court and the trial in those proceedings has not begun then, if the balance of fairness makes it appropriate, the court can stay all or part of those proceedings if there are similar proceedings continuing in another jurisdiction. This rule also applies where the trial in the proceedings before the court has begun but one of the parties failed to inform the court about the proceedings in the other jurisdiction.

Rule 5 provides for the discharge of orders staying proceedings under rules 3 and 4.

Rule 7 makes provision about the court’s power to make certain ancillary relief orders where a stay is imposed under these Rules by reference to proceedings in a related jurisdiction. **Rule 8** makes provision about the effect of orders already made in civil partnership proceedings which have been stayed by reference to proceedings in a related jurisdiction. **Rule 6(3)** makes clear that these provisions do not affect the court’s power to deal with orders which remain in force, enforce orders in relation to any period when they were in force or make orders once proceedings are no longer stayed.

Rule 9 provides that where proceedings are for more than one of the following – an order for dissolution, nullity or separation – but the proceedings are stayed only in so far as they are for some of those orders, rules 7 and 8 do not apply but the court may not make a lump sum order or a relevant order in respect of the proceedings so far as they are stayed.

Rule 10 makes clear that these Rules do not affect any other power which the court might have to stay the proceedings.

Rule 1 and the remainder of **Rule 6** make provision consequential to that made by other Rules.

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