



2000 CHAPTER 4

PART IV

MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTAL

Miscellaneous

Declarations of status

66.—(1) Part V of the [Matrimonial and Family Proceedings \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989 \(NI 4\)](#) (declarations of status) shall be amended as follows.

(2) After Article 31A there shall be inserted—

“Declarations of parentage

31B.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Article, any person may apply to the High Court, a county court or a court of summary jurisdiction for a declaration as to whether or not a person named in the application is or was the parent of another person so named.

(2) A court shall have jurisdiction to entertain an application under paragraph (1) if, and only if, either of the persons named in it for the purposes of that paragraph—

- (a) is domiciled in Northern Ireland on the date of the application, or
- (b) has been habitually resident in Northern Ireland throughout the period of one year ending with that date, or
- (c) died before that date and either—
 - (i) was at death domiciled in Northern Ireland, or

(ii) had been habitually resident in Northern Ireland throughout the period of one year ending with the date of death.

(3) Except in a case falling within paragraph (4), the court shall refuse to hear an application under paragraph (1) unless it considers that the applicant has a sufficient personal interest in the determination of the application (but this is subject to Article 28 of the Child Support (Northern Ireland) Order 1991).

(4) The excepted cases are where the declaration sought is as to whether or not—

- (a) the applicant is the parent of a named person;
- (b) a named person is the parent of the applicant; or
- (c) a named person is the other parent of a named child of the applicant.

(5) Where an application under paragraph (1) is made and one of the persons named in it for the purposes of that paragraph is a child, the court may refuse to hear the application if it considers that the determination of the application would not be in the best interests of the child.

(6) Where a court refuses to hear an application under paragraph (1) it may order that the applicant may not apply again for the same declaration without leave of the court.

(7) Where a declaration is made by a court on an application under paragraph (1), the prescribed officer of the court shall notify the Registrar General, in such a manner and within such period as may be prescribed, of the making of that declaration.

(8) In this Article—

“prescribed” means prescribed by rules of court;

“Registrar General” has the same meaning as in the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976;

“rules of court” has the same meaning as in Article 36(5), but in relation to an application made to, or a declaration made by, a court of summary jurisdiction, means magistrates' courts rules.”.

(3) In Article 34(5) (prohibition of declarations of illegitimacy), subparagraph (b) shall cease to have effect.

(4) After Article 36(5) there shall be added—

“(6) An appeal shall lie to the county court against—

- (a) the making by a court of summary jurisdiction of a declaration under Article 31B,
- (b) any refusal by a court of summary jurisdiction to make such a declaration, or

(c) any order under paragraph (6) of that Article made on such a refusal.”.

(5) Schedule 8 (which makes amendments consequential on subsection (1)) shall have effect.

(6) Nothing in this Act shall affect any proceedings pursuant to an application under—

(a) Article 32(1)(a) of the [Matrimonial and Family Proceedings \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989 \(NI 4\)](#), or

(b) Article 28 of the Child Support Order,

which are pending immediately before the coming into operation of this section.