
STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1978 No. 1045

Matrimonial Causes (Northern Ireland) Order 1978

PART II

DIVORCE, NULLITY AND OTHER MATRIMONIAL SUITS

Divorce

Supplemental provisions as to facts raising presumption of breakdown

4.—(1) One party to a marriage shall not be entitled to rely for the purposes of Article 3(2)(*a*) on adultery committed by the other if, after it became known to him that the other had committed that adultery, the parties have lived with each other for a period exceeding, or periods together exceeding, six months.

(2) Where in any proceedings for divorce the petitioner alleges that the respondent has committed adultery and the respondent proves that the adultery was committed with the connivance of the petitioner, the court may dismiss the petition notwithstanding that it is not satisfied (as mentioned in Article 3(5)) that the marriage has not broken down irretrievably.

(3) Where in any proceedings for divorce the petitioner alleges that the respondent has behaved in such a way that the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live with him, but the parties to the marriage have lived with each other for a period or periods after the date of the occurrence of the final incident relied on by the petitioner and held by the court to support his allegation, that fact shall be disregarded in determining for the purposes of Article 3(2)(*b*) whether the petitioner cannot reasonably be expected to live with the respondent if the length of that period or of those periods together was six months or less.

(4) For the purposes of Article 3(2)(*c*) the court may treat a period of desertion as having continued at a time when the deserting party was incapable of continuing the necessary intention if the evidence before the court is such that, had that party not been so incapable, the court would have inferred that his desertion continued at that time.

(5) In considering for the purposes of Article 3(2) whether the period for which the respondent has deserted the petitioner or the period for which the parties to a marriage have lived apart has been continuous, no account shall be taken of any one period (not exceeding six months) or of any two or more periods (not exceeding six months in all) during which the parties resumed living with each other, but no period during which the parties lived with each other shall count as part of the period of desertion or of the period for which the parties to the marriage lived apart, as the case may be.

(6) For the purposes of Article 3(2)(*d*) and (*e*) and this Article [^{F1}the parties to a marriage] shall be treated as living apart unless they are living with each other in the same household, and references in this Article to the parties to a marriage living with each other shall be construed as references to their living with each other in the same household.

(7) Provision shall be made by rules of court for the purpose of ensuring that where in pursuance of Article 3(2)(*d*) the petitioner alleges that the respondent consents to a decree being granted the respondent has been given such information as will enable him to understand the consequences to

Changes to legislation: *There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Matrimonial Causes (Northern Ireland) Order 1978, Section 4. (See end of Document for details)*

him of his consenting to a decree being granted and the steps which he must take to indicate that he consents to the grant of a decree.

F1 Words in art. 4(6) substituted (13.1.2020) by [The Marriage \(Same-sex Couples\) and Civil Partnership \(Opposite-sex Couples\) \(Northern Ireland\) Regulations 2019 \(S.I. 2019/1514\)](#), regs. 1(2), **35(4)** (with regs. 6-9)

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