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STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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1979 No. 926 (N.I. 10)

NORTHERN IRELAND

**The Tattooing of Minors  
(Northern Ireland) Order 1979**

*Laid before Parliament in draft*

*Made* 26th July 1979

*Coming into Operation* 27th August 1979

At the Court of Saint James, the 26th day of July 1979

Present,

The Counsellors of State in Council

Whereas Her Majesty, in pursuance of the Regency Acts 1937 to 1953, was pleased, by Letters Patent dated the 16th day of July 1979, to delegate to the six Counsellors of State therein named or any two or more of them full power and authority during the period of Her Majesty's absence from the United Kingdom to summon and hold on Her Majesty's behalf Her Privy Council and to signify thereat Her Majesty's approval for anything for which Her Majesty's approval in Council is required:

And whereas a draft of this Order has been approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament:

Now, therefore, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother and His Royal Highness The Prince Charles, Prince of Wales, being authorised thereto by the said Letters Patent, and in exercise of the powers conferred by paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 to the Northern Ireland Act 1974 (a), and of all other powers enabling Her Majesty in that behalf, and by and with the advice of Her Majesty's Privy Council, do on Her Majesty's behalf order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:—

*Title and commencement*

1. This Order may be cited as the Tattooing of Minors (Northern Ireland) Order 1979 and shall come into operation on the expiration of the period of one month from the day on which it is made.

*Interpretation*

2.—(1) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954 (b) shall apply to Article 1 and the following provisions of this Order as it applies to a Measure of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

(2) In this Order—

“medical practitioner” means a fully registered person within the meaning of section 54 (1) of the Medical Act 1956 (c);

“minor” means a person under the age of 18;

“tattoo” means the insertion into the skin of any colouring material designed to leave a permanent mark.

*Prohibition of tattooing of minors*

3.—(1) Subject to Article 4, any person who tattoos a minor shall be guilty of an offence.

(2) A person guilty of an offence under paragraph (1) shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £400.

*Defences*

4. A person shall not be guilty of an offence under Article 3 —

- (a) if he reasonably believes that the minor is not under the age of 18; or
- (b) if, being a medical practitioner or working under the direction of a medical practitioner, he performs the tattoo for medical reasons.

*N. E. Leigh,*

Clerk of the Privy Council.

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This Note is not part of the Order.)*

This Order makes it an offence in Northern Ireland to tattoo a person under the age of 18 unless the tattoo is performed for medical reasons by a medical practitioner or a person working under the direction of a medical practitioner. A reasonable belief that the minor was not under 18 is also a defence under the Order.