

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

Changes to legislation: The Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 13 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

1987 No. 2203 (N.I. 22)

The Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987

- - - - - 18th December 1987

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C1** Order power to modify conferred (1.10.2009) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008](#) (c. 22), [ss. 55, 68\(2\)](#); [S.I. 2009/2232](#), [art. 2\(q\)](#)

PART I INTRODUCTORY

Title and commencement

- 1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987.
(2) This Order shall come into operation on such day or days as the Head of the Department of Health and Social Services may by order appoint^{F1}.

F1 fully exercised by SR 1989/252

Interpretation

2.—(1) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954^{F2} 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—

Definition rep. by 1995 NI 2

“adoption agency” shall be construed in accordance with Article 3(3); and for the purposes of Articles 11^{F3}, 13, 17 to 22, 24 and 28 to 32] includes an adoption agency within the meaning of section 1 of the Adoption Act 1976^{F4} (adoption agencies in England and Wales) and section 1 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978^{F5} (adoption agencies in Scotland);

^{F6}“adoption order”

- (a) means an order under Article 12(1);
(b) in Articles 12(3) and (4), 17 to 20, 25(3), 28, 29 and 31 to 33 includes an order under section 12 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 12 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 (adoption orders in England and Wales and Scotland);

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- (c) in Articles 28, 29 and 31 to 33 includes an order under Article 57, section 55 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 49 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 (adoption by persons domiciled outside Northern Ireland or England and Wales or Scotland);]

“adoption society” means a body of persons whose functions consist of or include the making of arrangements for the adoption of children;

“adoption rules” means rules of court and county court rules;

“authorised court”, as respects an application for an order relating to a child, means—

- (a) in the case of an application for an adoption order or for an order freeing a child for adoption where the child is not in Northern Ireland when the application is made, the High Court;
- (b) in the case of an application under Article 30—
- (i) where there is pending in respect of the child an application for an adoption order or an order freeing him for adoption, the court in which that application is pending;
- (ii) in any other case, the High Court or the county court within whose division the applicant lives;
- (c) in any other case where the child is in Northern Ireland when the application is made—
- (i) the High Court;
- (ii) the county court within whose division the child is, and, in the case of an application for an order freeing a child for adoption, any county court within whose division a parent or guardian of the child is;
- (iii) any other county court prescribed by county court rules;

“Board” means a Health and Social Services Board established under Article 16 of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972^{F7};

“child”, except where used to express a relationship, means a person who has not attained the age of 18 years;

[^{F8}“the Convention” means the Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption, concluded at the Hague on 29th May 1993;

“Convention adoption” means an adoption effected under the law of a Convention country outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man and certified in pursuance of Article 23(1) of the Convention;

“Convention adoption order” means an adoption order made in accordance with Article 16A;

“Convention country” means any country or territory in which the Convention is in force;]

“the Department” means the Department of Health and Social Services;

“existing”, in relation to a statutory provision or other instrument, means one passed or made at any time before the commencement of Part V;

[^{F9}“guardian” has the same meaning as in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;]

[^{F10}“ [^{F11}HSC trust]” shall be construed in accordance with paragraph (2A);]

“notice” means a notice in writing;

[^{F12}“order freeing a child for adoption” means an order under Article 17(1) or 18(1) and in Articles 28(2) and 58A(1) includes an order under section 18 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 18 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978;]

[^{F8}“overseas adoption” means an adoption which is an overseas adoption for the purposes of the Adoption Act 1976 or the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978;]

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[^{F13}“parent” means, in relation to a child, any parent who has parental responsibility for the child under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;

“parental responsibility” and “parental responsibility agreement” have the same meaning as in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;]

Definition rep. by 1995 NI 2

[^{F14}“prescribed” in Articles 4, [^{F8} 16A, 58ZA] 33 and 59 means prescribed by regulations made by the Department, in [^{F15} Articles 53(3B) and (3D), 54] and 54A means prescribed by regulations made by the Department of Finance and Personnel and elsewhere means prescribed by adoption rules;]

“registered adoption society” means an adoption society which is registered under Article 4, and does not include an adoption society registered under Part V of the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967^{F16} unless it is re-registered under Article 4; and “registration” in relation to an adoption society shall be construed accordingly;

“registration district” means the local government district or, where a birth took place before the 1st October 1973, the district of the Superintendent Registrar and Registrar of Births and Deaths within the meaning of the Births and Deaths Registration Act (Northern Ireland) 1967^{F17};

Definition rep. by SR 1993/494

“relative” in relation to a child means a grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, whether of the full blood or half-blood or by [^{F18} marriage or civil partnership] and includes, ^{F19} . . . any person who would be a relative within the meaning of this definition if [^{F19} Article 155 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 applied to this definition];

“statutory provision” has the meaning given by section 1(f) of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954^{F20};

[^{F21}“upbringing” has the same meaning as in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;]

“voluntary organisation” means a body other than a public or local authority the activities of which are not carried on for profit.

[^{F10}(2A) A reference to any provision of this Order to an “ [^{F11}HSC trust]” is a reference to a [^{F22}Health and Social Care trust] by which functions under that provision are exercisable by virtue of an authorisation for the time being in operation under Article 3(1) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1994.

(2B) In paragraph (2A) “ [^{F22}Health and Social Care trust]” means a body established under Article 10(1) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

(2C) A reference in this Order to the area of an [^{F11}HSC trust] is a reference to the operational area of that trust as defined in Article 2(2) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972

(2D) For the purposes of any provision of this Order a person shall not be taken to be, or to reside or have his home, within the area of a Health and Social Services Board if he is, or (as the case may be) resides or has his home, within the area of an [^{F11}HSC trust] by which functions under that provision are exercisable by an [^{F11}HSC trust] by virtue of an authorisation mentioned in paragraph (2A).]

(3) For the purposes of this Order, a person shall be deemed to make arrangements for the adoption of a child or to take part in arrangements for [^{F23} placing a child with] a person if—

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- (a) he enters into or makes any agreement or arrangement for, or for facilitating, the adoption of the child by any other person, whether the adoption is effected, or is intended to be effected, in pursuance of an adoption order, an order under Article 57 or otherwise; or
- (b) he enters into or makes any agreement or arrangement for, or facilitates, the^{F24} placing of the child with] that other person;

or if he initiates or takes part in any negotiations of which the purpose or effect is the conclusion of any agreement or the making of any arrangement therefor, or if he causes another person to do so.

^{F8}(3A) In this Order, in relation to the proposed adoption of a child resident outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, references to arrangements for the adoption of a child include references to arrangements for an assessment for the purpose of indicating whether a person is suitable to adopt a child or not.

(3B) In this Order, in relation to—

- (a) an adoption proposed to be effected by a Convention adoption order; or
- (b) an adoption of a child habitually resident outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man which is proposed to be effected by an adoption order other than a Convention adoption order,

references to a child placed with any persons by an adoption agency include references to a child who, in pursuance of arrangements made by such an agency, has been adopted by or placed with those persons under the law of a country or territory outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.]

^{F25}(4) In this Order, in determining what person, or where, a child has his home, any absence of the child at a hospital or at a school providing accommodation for him and any other temporary absence shall be disregarded.

(5) In this Order references to a child who is in the care of or looked after by a Board or ^{F11}HSC trust] have the same meaning as in the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.]

F2	1954 c. 33 (NI)
F3	1995 NI 2
F4	1976 c. 36
F5	1978 c. 28
F6	1995 NI 2
F7	1972 NI 14
F8	2001 c. 11 (NI)
F9	1995 NI 2
F10	1994 NI 2
F11	Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 (c. 1) , ss. 32, 34(3), Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(d) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, art. 2
F12	1995 NI 2
F13	1995 NI 2
F14	1995 NI 2
F15	2002 c. 38
F16	1967 c. 35 (NI)
F17	1967 c. 25 (NI)
F18	2004 c.33
F19	1995 NI 2
F20	1954 c. 33 (NI)
F21	1995 NI 2
F22	Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 (c. 1) , ss. 32, 34(3), Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(c) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, art. 2

- F23** 1995 NI 2
- F24** 1995 NI 2
- F25** 1995 NI 2

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C2** Art. 2(1)-(2D) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**
- C3** Art. 2(4) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

PART II

ARRANGEMENTS FOR ADOPTION

The Adoption Service

The Adoption Service

3.—(1) [^{F26}It shall be the duty of—

(aa) an [^{F27}HSC trust] in relation to its area;

(bb) a Board in relation to so much of its area as does not fall within the area of an [^{F27}HSC trust],

to establish and maintain] a service designed to meet the needs, in relation to adoption, of—

- (a) children who have been or may be adopted;
- (b) parents and guardians of such children; and
- (c) persons who have adopted or may adopt a child,

and for that purpose [^{F26} to provide] the requisite facilities, or secure that they are provided by registered adoption societies.

(2) The facilities to be provided as part of the service maintained under paragraph (1) include—

- (a) temporary board and lodging where needed by pregnant women, mothers or children;
- (b) arrangements for assessing children and prospective adopters, and placing children for adoption;
- (c) counselling for persons with problems relating to adoption.

[^{F28}(2A) In this Part references to adoption are to the adoption of children, wherever they may be habitually resident, effected under the law of any country or territory, whether within or outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.]

(3) The service maintained^{F29} . . . under paragraph (1) may be collectively referred to as “the Adoption Service”, and a Board [^{F26}, an [^{F27}HSC trust]] or a registered adoption society may be referred to as an adoption agency.

- F26** 1994 NI 2
- F27** Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), ss. 32, 34(3), **Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(d)** (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, **art. 2**
- F28** 2001 c. 11 (NI)
- F29** 1994 NI 2

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Adoption societies

Registration of adoption societies

4.—(1) A body which is a voluntary organisation and desires to act, or to continue to act, as an adoption society may apply to the Department in the prescribed manner for registration under this Article paying such fee, if any, as may be prescribed.

(2) In considering the application, the Department shall have regard, in relation to the period for which registration is sought, to—

- (a) the applicant's adoption programme, including, in particular, its ability to make provision (either directly or by arrangement with any other body, including a Board^[F30] or ^[F31]HSC trust^{]]}) for children who are free for adoption (including such children who are not placed for adoption);
- (b) the number and qualifications of its staff;
- (c) the availability to it of competent medical, legal and social work advice;
- (d) its financial resources; and
- (e) the organisation and control of its operations.

(3) After taking into account, in relation to the applicant, the matters specified in paragraph (2) and any other relevant considerations, the Department—

- (a) if satisfied that the applicant is likely to make, or if the applicant is an adoption society registered under Part V of the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967^{F32}, is making an effective contribution to the Adoption Service, may register the applicant^[F33] so it may act either—
 - (i) in relation to facilities provided in respect of adoptions other than those mentioned in paragraph (3A); or
 - (ii) in relation to facilities provided in respect of any adoptions, including those mentioned in paragraph (3A)]
- ; or
- (b) may refuse to register it.

^[F33](3A) The adoptions referred to in paragraph (3)(a)(i) and (ii) are—

- (a) a Convention adoption;
- (b) an adoption effected by a Convention adoption order;
- (c) an overseas adoption;
- (d) an adoption of a child habitually resident in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which is not a Convention adoption and is effected under the law of a country or territory outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man; and
- (e) an adoption of a child habitually resident outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man which is effected by an adoption order other than a Convention adoption order.]

(4) Registration of an adoption society on an application under paragraph (1), unless cancelled earlier under Article 5, shall last for a period of 3 years from the date of registration and shall then expire or, in the case of a registered adoption society whose further application for registration is pending at that time, shall expire on the date when that application is granted or, as the case may be, refused.

F30 1994 NI 2

F31 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), ss. 32, 34(3), [Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with [Sch. 6 para. 1\(3\)](#)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

F32 1967 c. 35 (NI)

F33 2001 c. 11 (NI)

Cancellation of registration

5.—^{F34}(1) The Department may at any time cancel the registration of a registered adoption society—

- (a) if the Department is of the opinion that, taking account of the matters and considerations mentioned in Article 4(3), the society is not making an effective contribution to the Adoption Service; or
- (b) if the society fails to provide the Department with information required by it for the purpose of carrying out its functions under sub-paragraph (a), or fails to verify such information in the manner required by the Department; or
- (c) if the society is no longer a voluntary organisation.

(2) ^{F35}Where registration is cancelled under paragraph (1) or expires, the Department may direct the body^{F34} concerned to make such arrangements as to children who are in its care and other transitional matters as seem to the Department expedient.

F34 prosp. rep. by [2003 NI 9](#)

F35 prosp. subst. by [2003 NI 9](#)

^{F36}Procedure and right of appeal where registration refused or cancelled

6.—(1) Where the Department proposes (otherwise than in a case where it has already complied with this paragraph and, where appropriate, paragraph (2))—

- (a) to refuse an application under Article 4 for registration of a body as an adoption society, or
- (b) to cancel the registration of an adoption society under Article 5,

the Department shall serve on the body or, as the case may be, the society a notice—

- (i) setting out the reasons why the Department proposes to refuse the application or, as the case may be, to cancel the registration;
- (ii) informing the body or society that it may make representations in writing to the Department within 28 days of the date of service of the notice.

(2) If any representations are made by the body or society in accordance with paragraph (1) (ii), the Department shall give further consideration to the application or, as the case may be, the cancellation of the registration, taking into account those representations.

(3) If the Department, after complying with paragraph (1) and, where appropriate, paragraph (2), decides to refuse the application for registration or to cancel the registration, as the case may be, it shall give to the body or society notice of its decision.

(4) Any body aggrieved by the refusal of an application for registration, or any adoption society aggrieved by the cancellation of its registration, by the Department, may appeal to an Appeal Tribunal constituted in accordance with Schedule 1 and that Tribunal may determine any such appeal; and the Tribunal's determination shall be final and conclusive.

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(5) An appeal under this Article shall be brought by notice served on the Department requiring it to refer the refusal or cancellation to an Appeal Tribunal.

(6) The Department shall pay to any member of an Appeal Tribunal such remuneration, if any, and such travelling or other allowances as may be approved by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

(7) An Appeal Tribunal may by summons require any person to attend, at such time and place as is set forth in the summons, to give evidence or to produce any documents or articles in his custody or under his control which relate to any appeal or other matter pending before the Tribunal, and may hear, receive and examine evidence on oath and for that purpose may administer oaths, or may, instead of administering an oath, require the person examined to make and subscribe a declaration of the truth of the matter respecting which he is examined; and the Tribunal may also exercise the powers conferred by Schedule 1.

(8) Every person who refuses or wilfully neglects to attend in obedience to a summons issued under paragraph (7), or to give evidence, or who wilfully alters, suppresses, cancels, destroys or refuses to produce any document or article which he may be required to produce by virtue of that paragraph, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or to both.

(9) Any person entitled to appeal to an Appeal Tribunal may appear and be heard on any such appeal either in person or by counsel or solicitor.

(10) Where the registration of an adoption society is cancelled or its re-registration on the expiry of a period of registration is refused by the Department, the adoption society shall, for the purposes of this Order, be deemed to be registered under this Order during the period within which an appeal against the cancellation or refusal may be brought under this Article, and, if such an appeal is brought, until the determination or abandonment of the appeal.

(11) For the purposes of paragraph (10), regulations may prescribe when an appeal is to be treated as abandoned.

F36 prosp. rep. by [2003 NI 9](#)

^{F37} **Inspection of books, etc., of registered adoption societies**

7.—(1) The Department may at any time serve a notice on any registered adoption society, or on any officer of such a society, requiring that society or officer to produce to the Department or a specified officer of the Department such books, accounts and other documents of the society relating to the performance by the society of its function in connection with the adoption of children as the Department may consider necessary for its information.

(2) Any such notice may contain a requirement that any information to be furnished in accordance with the notice shall be verified in a manner specified in the notice.

(3) Any person who fails to comply with the requirements of a notice under this Article shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 months or to both.

F37 prosp. rep. by [2003 NI 9](#)

Inactive or defunct adoption societies

8.—(1) If it appears to the Department that a registered adoption society, or a society whose registration has expired under Article 4(4) or has been cancelled under Article 5, is inactive or defunct, the Department may, in relation to any child who is or was in the care of the society, direct

a Board^{F38} or [^{F39}HSC trust]] to take such action as might have been taken by the society or by the society jointly with some other body (including a Board^{F38} or [^{F39}HSC trust]]).

(2) Before giving a direction under paragraph (1), the Department shall, if practicable, consult both the society and the Board^{F38} or [^{F39}HSC trust]].

F38 1994 NI 2

F39 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009](#) (c. 1), ss. 32, 34(3), **Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(d)** (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, **art. 2**

Welfare of children

Duty to promote welfare of child

9. In deciding on any course of action in relation to the adoption of a child, a court or adoption agency shall regard the welfare of the child as the most important consideration and shall—

- (a) have regard to all the circumstances, full consideration being given to—
 - (i) the need to be satisfied that adoption, or adoption by a particular person or persons, will be in the best interests of the child; and
 - (ii) the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child throughout his childhood; and
 - (iii) the importance of providing the child with a stable and harmonious home; and
- (b) so far as practicable, first ascertain the wishes and feelings of the child regarding the decision and give due consideration to them, having regard to his age and understanding.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C4 [Art. 9](#) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010](#) (S.I. 2010/985), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Supplemental

Regulation of adoption agencies

10.—(1) Regulations may make provision for any purpose relating to the exercise by adoption agencies of their functions in connection with the adoption of children.

^{F40}(2) Regulations may make the contravention of any regulation an offence punishable on summary conviction by a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.

F40 prosp. insertion by [2003 NI 9](#)

Restriction on arranging adoptions and placing children

11.—(1) A person other than an adoption agency shall not make arrangements for the adoption of a child, or place a child for adoption, unless—

- (a) he is a parent of the child and the proposed adopter, or one of the proposed adopters, is a relative of the child; or

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(b) he is acting in pursuance of an order of the High Court.

(2) An adoption society^{F41} approved as respects England and Wales^{F42} under section 3 of the Adoption Act 1976 or as respects Scotland under section 3 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978^{F43}, but which is not^{F44} registered under Article 4, shall not act as an adoption society in Northern Ireland except to the extent that the society considers it necessary to do so in the interests of a person mentioned in section 1 of that Act of 1976 or, as the case may be, section 1 of that Act of 1978.

(3) A person who—

- (a) takes part in the management or control of a body of persons which exists wholly or partly for the purpose of making arrangements for the adoption of children and^{F44} which is not an adoption agency; or
- (b) contravenes paragraph (1); or
- (c) receives a child placed with him in contravention of paragraph (1);

shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

(4) In any proceedings for an offence under paragraph (2)(a) proof of things done or of words written, spoken, or published (whether or not in the presence of any party to the proceedings) by any person taking part in the management or control of a body of persons, or in making arrangements for the adoption of children on behalf of the body, shall be admissible as evidence of the purpose for which that body exists.

Para. (5) rep by 1995 NI 2

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| <p>F41 prosp. subst. 2000 c. 14</p> <p>F42 1976 c 36</p> <p>F43 1978 c 28</p> <p>F44 prosp. subst. by 2003 NI 9</p> |
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PART III

ADOPTION ORDERS

The making of adoption orders

Adoption orders

12^{F45}.—^{F46}(1) An adoption order is an order giving parental responsibility for a child to the adopters, and such an order may be made by an authorised court on the application of the adopters.

(2) The order does not affect parental responsibility so far as it relates to any period before the making of the order.

(3) The making of an adoption order operates to extinguish—

- (a) the parental responsibility which any person has for the child immediately before the making of the order;
- (b) any order of a court under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;
- (c) any duty arising by virtue of an agreement or the order of a court to make payments, so far as the payments are in respect of the child's maintenance or upbringing for any period after the making of the order.]

- (4) Paragraph^{F47} (3)(c) does not apply to a duty arising by virtue of an agreement—
- (a) which constitutes a trust, or
 - (b) which expressly provides that the duty is not to be extinguished by the making of an adoption order.
- (5) An adoption order may not be made in relation to a child who is or has been married^{F48} or who is or has been a civil partner].
- (6) An adoption order may contain such terms and conditions as the court thinks fit.
- (7) An adoption order may be made notwithstanding that the child is already an adopted child.

F45 mod. by SR 2003/16

F46 1995 NI 2

F47 1995 NI 2

F48 2004 c.33

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C5 Art. 12(1)-(4) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Child to live with adopters before order made

13.—(1) Where—

- (a) the applicant, or one of the applicants, is a parent, step-parent or relative of the child, or
- (b) the child was placed with the applicants by an adoption agency or in pursuance of an order of the High Court,

an adoption order shall not be made unless the child is at least 19 weeks old and at all times during the preceding 13 weeks had his home with the applicants or one of them.

(2) Where paragraph (1) does not apply, an adoption order shall not be made unless the child is at least 12 months old and at all times during the preceding 12 months had his home with the applicants or one of them.

(3) An adoption order shall not be made unless the court is satisfied that sufficient opportunities to see the child with the applicant or, in the case of an application by a married couple, both applicants together in the home environment have been afforded—

- (a) where the child was placed with the applicant by an adoption agency, to that agency, or
- (b) in any other case, to the Board^{F49} or [^{F50}HSC trust]] within whose area the home is.

^{F51}(4) In relation to—

- (a) an adoption proposed to be effected by a Convention adoption order; or
- (b) an adoption of a child habitually resident outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man which is proposed to be effected by an adoption order other than a Convention adoption order,

paragraph (1) shall have effect as if the reference to the preceding 13 weeks were a reference to the preceding 6 months.]

F49 1994 NI 2

F50 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), ss. 32, 34(3), **Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(d)** (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, **art. 2**

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

Changes to legislation: The Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 13 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

F51 2001 c. 11 (NI)

^{F52}Adoption by married couple

14.—(1) An adoption order shall not be made on the application of more than one person except in the circumstances specified in paragraphs (2) and (3).

(2) An adoption order may be made on the application of a married couple where both the husband and the wife have attained the age of 21 years.

(3) An adoption order may be made on the application of a married couple where—

- (a) the husband or the wife—
 - (i) is the father or mother of the child; and
 - (ii) has attained the age of 18 years;
- and
- (b) his or her spouse has attained the age of 21 years.

(4) An adoption order shall not be made on the application of a married couple unless at least one of them is domiciled in a part of the United Kingdom, or in any of the Channel Islands or in the Isle of Man.]

F52 1995 NI 2

Adoption by one person

15.—(1) An adoption order may be made on the application of one person where he has attained the age of 21 years and—

- (a) is not married^{F53} or a civil partner], or
- (b) is married and the court is satisfied that—
 - (i) his spouse cannot be found, or
 - (ii) the spouses have separated and are living apart, and the separation is likely to be permanent, or
 - (ii) his spouse is by reason of ill-health, whether physical or mental, incapable of making an application for an adoption order.

(2) An adoption order shall not be made on the application of one person unless he is domiciled in a part of the United Kingdom, or in any of the Channel Islands or in the Isle of Man.

(3) An adoption order shall not be made on the application of the mother or father of the child alone unless the court is satisfied that—

- (a) the other natural parent is dead or cannot be found^{F54} or, by virtue of the provisions specified in paragraph (3A), there is no other parent], or
- (b) there is some other reason justifying the exclusion of the other natural parent,

and where such an order is made the reason justifying the exclusion of the other natural parent shall be recorded by the court.

^{F55}(3A) The provisions referred to in paragraph (3)(a) are—

- (a) section 28 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 (disregarding subsections (5A) to (5I) of that section), or

- (b) sections 34 to 47 of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 (disregarding sections 39, 40 and 46 of that Act).]

Para. (4) rep. by 1995 NI 2

F53 2004 c.33

F54 Words in art. 15(3)(a) substituted (6.4.2009 for certain purposes, otherwise 1.9.2009) by Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 (c. 22), ss. 56, 68(2), **Sch. 6 para. 68(2)**; S.I. 2009/479, art. 6(1)(e)(f)(2) (with art. 7(1), Sch. 1) (as amended by S.I. 2009/2232, art. 3)

F55 Art. 15(3A) inserted (6.4.2009 for certain purposes, otherwise 1.9.2009) by Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 (c. 22), ss. 56, 68(2), **Sch. 6 para. 68(3)**; S.I. 2009/479, art. 6(1)(e)(f)(2) (with art. 7(1), Sch. 1) (as amended by S.I. 2009/2232, art. 3)

Parental agreement

16^{F56}.—(1) An adoption order shall not be made unless—

- (a) the child is free for adoption by virtue of an order made in Northern Ireland under Article 17(1) or 18(1), made in England and Wales under section 18 of the Adoption Act 1976^{F57} (freeing children for adoption in England and Wales) or made in Scotland under section 18 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978^{F58} (freeing children for adoption in Scotland); or

- (b) in the case of each parent or guardian of the child the court is satisfied that—

(i) he freely, and with full understanding of what is involved, agrees—

(aa) either generally in respect of the adoption of the child or only in respect of the adoption of the child by a specified person, and

(ab) either unconditionally or subject only to a condition with respect to the religious persuasion in which the child is to be brought up,

to the making of an adoption order; or

(ii) his agreement to the making of the adoption order should be dispensed with on a ground specified in paragraph (2).

(2) The grounds mentioned in paragraph (1)(b)(ii) are that the parent or guardian—

- (a) cannot be found or is incapable of giving agreement;
- (b) is withholding his agreement unreasonably;
- (c) has persistently failed without reasonable cause to discharge^{F59} his parental responsibility for] the child;
- (d) has abandoned or neglected the child;
- (e) has persistently ill-treated the child;
- (f) has seriously ill-treated the child (subject to paragraph (4)).

(3) Agreement by the mother of the child is ineffective for the purposes of paragraph (2)(b)(i) if given less than 6 weeks after the child's birth.

(4) Paragraph (2)(f) does not apply unless (because of the ill-treatment or for other reasons) the rehabilitation of the child within the household of the parent or guardian is unlikely.

(5) The reference in paragraph (1)(b) to a parent of a child does not include a reference to any person having^{F60} parental responsibility for] the child by virtue of—

^{F61}(a) Article 53 of the Criminal Justice (Children) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (which relates to parental responsibility for children ordered to be sent to juvenile justice centres);]

Sub#para. (b) rep. by 1995 NI 2

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

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F56 mod. by SR 2003/16
F57 1976 c. 36
F58 1978 c. 28
F59 1995 NI 2
F60 1995 NI 2
F61 1998 NI 9

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C6 Art. 16(1)(a) modified (temp. from 2.11.2010 to 2.7.2011) by Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 (Consequential Provisions) Order 2010 (S.I. 2010/2469), arts. 5(b), 6

[^{F62}Convention adoption orders

- 16A.** An adoption order shall be made as a Convention adoption order if—
- (a) the application is for a Convention adoption order; and
 - (b) any prescribed requirements are complied with.]

F62 2001 c. 11 (NI)

Freeing for adoption

Freeing child for adoption with parental agreement

17.—^{F63}(1) Subject to paragraph (2), where, on the joint application of the parents or guardian of the child and an adoption agency, an authorised court is satisfied in the case of each parent or guardian that he freely, and with full understanding of what is involved, agrees—

- (a) generally, and
- (b) either unconditionally or subject only to a condition with respect to the religious persuasion in which the child is to be brought up,

to the making of an adoption order, the court shall make an order declaring the child free for adoption.]

(2) Where, on an application for an order under paragraph (1) in relation to a child, the mother of the child satisfies the court that her spouse is not the father of the child, the court may make the order on the joint application of the mother and the adoption agency.

^{F64}(3) On the making of an order under paragraph (1), parental responsibility for the child is given to the adoption agency, and paragraphs (2) to (4) of Article 12 shall apply as if the order were an adoption order and the agency were the adopters.]

(4) Agreement by the mother of the child is ineffective for the purposes of this Article if given less than 6 weeks after the child's birth.

(5) Before making an order under paragraph (1), the court shall satisfy itself, in relation to each parent or guardian of the child who can be found, that he has been given an opportunity of making, if he so wishes, a declaration that he prefers not to be involved in future questions concerning the adoption of the child; and any such declaration shall be recorded by the court.

^{F65}(6) Before making an adoption order or an order under paragraph (1) in the case of a child whose father does not have parental responsibility for him, the court shall satisfy itself in relation to any person claiming to be the father that—

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- (a) he has no intention of applying for—
 - (i) an order under Article 7(1) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, or
 - (ii) a residence order under Article 10 of that Order, or
- (b) if he did make any such application, it would be likely to be refused.

(7) Paragraphs (5) and (7) of Article 12 shall apply in relation to the making of an order under this Article as they apply in relation to the making of an order under Article 12.]

F63 1995 NI 2

F64 1995 NI 2

F65 1995 NI 2

Freeing child for adoption without parental agreement

18.—(1) Where, on an application by an adoption agency, an authorised court is satisfied in the case of each parent or guardian of a child that his agreement to the making of an adoption order should be dispensed with on a ground specified in Article 16(2) the court shall make an order declaring the child free for adoption.

- (2) No application shall be made under paragraph (1) unless—
 - (a) the child is in the care of the adoption agency; and
 - (b) the child is already placed for adoption or the court is satisfied that it is likely that the child will be placed for adoption.

[^{F66}(2A) For the purposes of paragraph (2) a child is in the care of an adoption agency if the adoption agency is a Board or [^{F67}HSC trust] and he is in its care.]

(3) Paragraphs (3), [^{F66} and (5) to (7)] of Article 17 shall apply to an order made by a court under paragraph (1) as they apply to an order made by a court under Article 17(1).

F66 1995 NI 2

F67 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), ss. 32, 34(3), [Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with [Sch. 6 para. 1\(3\)](#)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

Progress reports to former parent

19.—(1) This Article and Article 20 apply to any person (“the former parent”) who was required to be given an opportunity of making a declaration under Article 17(5) or by virtue of Article 18(3) but did not do so.

(2) If at any time the former parent by notice makes a declaration to the adoption agency that he prefers not to be involved in future questions concerning the adoption of the child—

- (a) the agency shall secure that the declaration is recorded by the court which made the order freeing the child for adoption, and
- (b) paragraphs (3) and (4) and Article 20 shall not apply as respects that former parent.

(3) Within the 14 days following the date 12 months after the making of the order freeing the child for adoption the adoption agency [^{F68} to which parental responsibility was given] on the making of the order, unless it has previously by notice to the former parent informed him that an adoption order has been made in respect of the child, shall by notice to the former parent inform him—

- (a) whether an adoption order has been made in respect of the child, and (if not)
- (b) whether the child has his home with a person with whom he has been placed for adoption.

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

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(4) If at the time when the former parent is given notice under paragraph (3) an adoption order has not been made in respect of the child, the adoption agency shall give notice to the former parent of the making of an adoption order (if and when made), and meanwhile shall give the former parent notice whenever the child is placed for adoption or ceases to have his home with a person with whom he has been placed for adoption.

F68 1995 NI 2

Revocation of order freeing child for adoption

20.—(1) The former parent, at any time more than 12 months after the making of the order freeing the child for adoption when—

- (a) no adoption order has been made in respect of the child, and
- (b) the child does not have his home with a person with whom he has been placed for adoption,

may apply to the court which made the order for a further order revoking it on the ground that he wishes to resume^[F69] parental responsibility for the child].

(2) While the application is pending the adoption agency having^[F69] parental responsibility] shall not place the child for adoption without the leave of the court.

^[F69](3) The revocation of an order under Article 17(1) or 18(1) (“a freeing order”) operates—

- (a) to extinguish the parental responsibility given to the adoption agency under the freeing order;
- (b) to give parental responsibility for the child to—
 - (i) the child's mother; and
 - (ii) where the child's father and mother were married to each other at the time of his birth, the father; and
- (c) to revive—
 - (i) any parental responsibility agreement,
 - (ii) any order under Article 7(1) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995, and
 - (iii) any appointment of a guardian in respect of the child (whether made by a court or otherwise),

extinguished by the making of a freeing order.

(3A) Subject to paragraph (3)(c), the revocation does not—

- (a) operate to revive—
 - (i) any order under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995,
- or

(ii) any duty referred to in Article 12(3)(c),
extinguished by the making of the freeing order; or

- (b) affect any person's parental responsibility so far as it relates to the period between the making of the freeing order and the date of revocation of that order.]

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), if the application is dismissed on the ground that to allow it would contravene the principle embodied in Article 9—

- (a) the former parent who made the application shall not be entitled to make any further application under paragraph (1) in respect of the child, and

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(b) the adoption agency is released from the duty of complying further with Article 19(3) as respects that parent.

(5) Paragraph (4)(a) shall not apply where the court which dismissed the application gives leave to the former parent to make a further application under paragraph (1), but such leave shall not be given unless it appears to the court that because of a change in circumstances or for any other reason it is proper to allow the application to be made.

F69 1995 NI 2

[^{F70}Variation of order under Article 17(1) or 18(1) so as to substitute one adoption agency for another

21.—(1) On an application to which this Article applies, an authorised court may vary an order under Article 17(1) or 18(1) so as to give parental responsibility for the child to another adoption agency (“the substitute agency”) in place of the agency for the time being having parental responsibility for the child under the order (“the existing agency”).

(2) This Article applies to any application made jointly by—

- (a) the existing agency; and
- (b) the would#be substitute agency.

(3) Where an order under Article 17(1) or 18(1) is varied under this Article, Article 19 shall apply as if the substitute agency had been given responsibility for the child on the making of the order.]

F70 1995 NI 2

Supplemental

Notification to Board of adoption application, where child not placed by adoption agency

22 ^{F71}.—(1) An adoption order shall not be made in respect of a child who was not placed with the applicant by an adoption agency unless the applicant has, at least 3 months before the date of the order, served notice on the Board[^{F72} or [^{F73}HSC trust]] within whose area he has his home of his intention to apply for the adoption order.

[^{F74}(1A) An application for such an adoption order shall not be made unless the person wishing to make the application has, within the period of two years preceding the making of the application, given notice as mentioned in paragraph (1).

(1B) In paragraphs (1) and (1A) the references to the area in which the applicant or person has his home are references to the area in which he has his home at the time of giving the notice.]

(2) On receipt of such a notice the Board[^{F72} or [^{F73}HSC trust]] shall investigate the matter and submit to the court a report of its investigation and shall assist the court in any manner the court may direct.

(3) Under paragraph (2), the Board[^{F72} or [^{F73}HSC trust]] shall in particular investigate,—

- (a) so far as is practicable, the suitability of the applicant, and any other matters relevant to the operation of Article 9 in relation to the application; and
- (b) whether the child was placed with the applicant in contravention of Article 11.

(4) A Board which receives notice under paragraph (1) in respect of a child whom the Board knows to be[^{F74} looked after by] another Board[^{F72} or of an [^{F73}HSC trust]] shall, not more than 7

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days after the receipt of the notice, inform that other Board^[F72] or that trust] in writing, that it has received the notice.

^[F72](5) An ^[F73]HSC trust] which receives notice under paragraph (1) in respect of a child whom the trust knows to be^[F74] looked after by] another ^[F73]HSC trust] or of a Board shall, not more than 7 days after the receipt of the notice, inform that other ^[F73]HSC trust] or that Board in writing, that it has received the notice.]

F71 mod. by SR 2003/16

F72 1994 NI 2

F73 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\), ss. 32, 34\(3\), Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

F74 1995 NI 2

Enquiries to be made of Board, where child is to be placed by registered adoption society

23. Where a registered adoption society is considering the placement of a child with any person for adoption, the society shall make enquiries of the Board^[F75] or ^[F76]HSC trust]] in whose area that person's place of residence is situated so that the Board^[F75] or ^[F76]HSC trust]] may inform the society whether or not there is any reason to believe that the proposed adoption would be detrimental to the child.

F75 1994 NI 2

F76 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\), ss. 32, 34\(3\), Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

Reports to court where child placed by agency

24.—(1) Where an application for an adoption order relates to a child placed by an adoption agency, the agency shall submit to the court a report on the suitability of the applicants and any other matters relevant to the operation of Article 9 and shall assist the court in any manner the court may direct.

(2) Arrangements may be made by an adoption agency which has placed a child for its functions in relation to that child with respect to the report on the suitability of the applicants for adoption and any other matters relevant to the operation of Article 9 to be discharged by another adoption agency where unforeseen and exceptional circumstances make such an arrangement necessary.

Restrictions on making adoption orders

25.—(1) The court shall not proceed to hear an application for an adoption order in relation to a child where a previous application for a British adoption order made in relation to the child by the same persons was refused by any court unless—

- (a) in refusing the previous application the court directed that this paragraph should not apply, or
- (b) it appears to the court that because of a change in circumstances or for any other reason it is proper to proceed with the application.

(2) The court shall not make an adoption order in relation to a child unless it is satisfied that the applicants have not, as respects the child, contravened Article 59.

^[F77](3) In this Article “British adoption order” means—

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- (a) an adoption order or an order under the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967; or
- (b) an order under any provision for the adoption of a child effected under the law of any of the following countries, that is to say, the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and a colony, which is a British territory for the purposes of section 24 of the Adoption Act 1976.]

F77 1995 NI 2

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C7 Art. 25(1) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Interim orders

26.—(1) Where on an application for an adoption order the requirements of Articles 16(1) and 22(1) are complied with, the court may postpone the determination of the application and make an order^{F78} giving parental responsibility for the child to] the applicants for a probationary period not exceeding 2 years upon such terms for the maintenance of the child and otherwise as the court thinks fit.

(2) Where the probationary period specified in an order under paragraph (1) is less than 2 years, the court may by a further order extend the period to a duration not exceeding 2 years in all.

F78 1995 NI 2

Art. 27. rep. by 1995 NI 2

PART IV

CARE AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AWAITING ADOPTION

Restrictions on removal of children

Restrictions on removal where adoption agreed or application made under Article 17(1) or 18(1)

28^{F79}.—(1) While an application for an adoption order is pending—

- (a) where a parent or guardian of the child has agreed to the making of the adoption order (whether or not he knows the identity of the applicant), the parent or guardian;
- (b) any person or body, other than a parent or guardian;

is not entitled, against the will of the person with whom the child has his home, to remove the child from the^{F80} home] of that person except with the leave of the court.

(2) While an application is pending for an order freeing a child for adoption and—

- (a) the child is in the care of the adoption agency making the application, and
- (b) the application was not made with the consent of each parent or guardian of the child,

no parent or guardian of the child is entitled, against the will of the person with whom the child has his home, to remove the child from the^{F80} home] of that person except with the leave of the court.

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[^{F80}(2A) For the purposes of paragraph (2) a child is in the care of an adoption agency if the adoption agency is a Board or [^{F81}HSC trust] and he is in its care.]

(3) Any person who contravenes paragraph (1) or (2) shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

F79 mod. by SR 2003/16

F80 1995 NI 2

F81 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\), ss. 32, 34\(3\), Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C8 [Art. 28\(1\)](#) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\), reg. 3, Sch. 2](#)

C9 [Art. 28\(3\)](#) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\), reg. 3, Sch. 2](#)

Restrictions on removal where applicant has provided home for 5 years

29.—(1) While an application for an adoption order in respect of a child made by the person with whom the child has had his home for the 5 years preceding the application is pending, no person is entitled, against the will of the applicant, to remove the child from the applicant's [^{F82} home] except with the leave of the court or under authority conferred by any enactment or on the arrest of the child.

(2) Where a person (“the prospective adopter”) gives notice to the Board [^{F83} or [^{F84}HSC trust]] within whose area he has his home that he intends to apply for an adoption order in respect of a child who for the preceding 5 years has had his home with the prospective adopter, no person is entitled, against the will of the prospective adopter, to remove the child from the prospective adopter's [^{F82} home], except with the leave of a court or under authority conferred by any enactment or on the arrest of the child, before—

- (a) the prospective adopter applies for the adoption order, or
- (b) the period of 3 months from the receipt of the notice by the Board [^{F83} or [^{F84}HSC trust]] expires,

whichever occurs first.

[^{F82}(2A) In paragraphs (1) and (2) “any enactment” does not include Article 22(2) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.]

[^{F82}(3) In any case where paragraph (1) or (2) applies and—

- (a) the child was being looked after by a Board or [^{F84}HSC trust] before he began to have his home with the applicant or, as the case may be, the prospective adopter, and
- (b) the child is still being looked after by the Board or [^{F84}HSC trust],

the Board or [^{F84}HSC trust] shall not remove him from the home of the applicant or the prospective adopter except in accordance with Article 31 or 32 or with the leave of a court.]

(4) In paragraphs (2) and (3) “a court” means a court with jurisdiction to make adoption orders.

(5) A Board which receives such notice as is mentioned in paragraph (2) in respect of a child whom the Board knows to be [^{F82} looked after by another Board or an [^{F84}HSC trust] or to be provided with accommodation by a voluntary organisation] shall, not more than 7 days after the receipt of

the notice, inform that other Board or^{F85} the [F84HSC trust] or] the organisation, in writing, that it has received the notice.

[F83(5A) An [F84HSC trust] which receives such notice as is mentioned in paragraph (2) in respect of a child whom the [F84HSC trust] knows to be^{F82} looked after by another [F84HSC trust] or a Board or to be provided with accommodation by a voluntary organisation] shall, not more than 7 days after the receipt of the notice, inform that other [F84HSC trust] or that Board or organisation, in writing, that it has received the notice.]

(6) Paragraph (2) does not apply to any further notice served by the prospective adopter on any Board^{F85} or [F84HSC trust]] in respect of the same child during the period referred to in subparagraph (b) of that paragraph or within 28 days after its expiry.

(7) Any person who contravenes paragraph (1) or (2) shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

(8) The Department may by order made subject to affirmative resolution amend paragraph (1) or (2) to substitute for the period of 5 years mentioned in that paragraph such other period as may be specified in the order.

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| F82 | 1995 NI 2 |
| F83 | 1994 NI 2 |
| F84 | Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by Health and Social Care (Reform) Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 (c. 1) , ss. 32, 34(3), Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(d) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, art. 2 |
| F85 | 1994 NI 2 |

Return of child taken away in breach of Article 28 or 29

30.—[F86(1) An authorised court may, on the application of a person from whose home a child has been removed in breach of—

- (a) Article 28 or 29;
- (b) section 27 or 28 of the Adoption Act 1976; or
- (c) section 27 or 28 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978,

order the person who has so removed the child to return the child to the applicant.

(2) An authorised court may, on the application of a person who has reasonable grounds for believing that another person is intending to remove a child from his home in breach of—

- (a) Article 28 or 29;
- (b) section 27 or 28 of the Adoption Act 1976; or
- (c) section 27 or 28 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978,

by order direct that other person not to remove the child from the applicant's home in breach of any of those provisions.]

(3) If, in the case of an order made by the High Court under paragraph (1), the High Court or, in the case of an order made by a county court under paragraph (1), a county court is satisfied that the child has not been returned to the applicant, the court may make an order authorising a constable to search such premises as may be specified in the order for the child and, if a constable acting in pursuance of the order finds the child, to return the child to the applicant.

(4) If a justice of the peace is satisfied by complaint on oath that there are reasonable grounds for believing that a child to whom an order under paragraph (1) relates is in premises specified in the complaint, he may issue a search warrant authorising a constable to search the premises for the

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child, and if a constable acting in pursuance of the warrant finds the child, he shall return the child to the person on whose application the order under paragraph (1) was made.

(5) An order under paragraph (3) may be enforced in like manner as a warrant of commitment.

F86 1995 NI 2

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C10 Art. 30 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Return of children placed for adoption by adoption agencies

31^{F87}.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2), at any time after a child has been^{F88} placed with] any person in pursuance of arrangements made by an adoption agency for the adoption of the child by that person, and before an adoption order has been made on the application of that person in respect of the child,—

- (a) that person may serve notice on the agency of his intention not to^{F88} give the child a home]; or
- (b) the agency may cause notice to be served on that person of their intention not to allow the child to remain in his^{F88} home].

(2) A notice under paragraph (1)(b) shall not be served in respect of a child in relation to whom an application has been made for an adoption order except with the leave of the court to which the application has been made.

(3) Where a notice is served on an adoption agency by any person or by an adoption agency on any person under paragraph (1), or where an application for an adoption order made by any person in respect of a child placed^{F88} with him] by an adoption agency is refused by the court or withdrawn, that person shall, within 7 days after the date on which notice was served or the application refused or withdrawn, as the case may be, cause the child to be returned to the agency, who shall receive the child.

(4) Where the period specified in an interim order made under Article 26 (whether as originally made or as extended under paragraph (2) of that Article) expires without an adoption order having been made in respect of the child, paragraph (3) shall apply as if the application for an adoption order upon which the interim order was made, had been refused at the expiration of that period.

(5) It shall be sufficient compliance with the requirements of paragraph (3) if the child is delivered to, and is received by, a suitable person nominated for the purpose by the adoption agency.

(6) Where an application for an adoption order is refused the court may, if it thinks fit at any time before the expiry of the period of 7 days mentioned in paragraph (3), order that period to be extended to a duration, not exceeding 6 weeks, specified in the order.

(7) Any person who contravenes the provisions of this Article shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both; and the court by which the offender is convicted may order the child in respect of whom the offence is committed to be returned to his parent or guardian or to the adoption agency which made the arrangements referred to in paragraph (1).

F87 mod. by SR 2003/16

F88 1995 NI 2

[^{F89}Application of Article 31 where child not placed for adoption

32 ^{F90}.—(1) Where a person serves a notice in pursuance of Article 22(1) on the Board or [^{F91}HSC trust] within whose area he has his home of his intention to apply for an adoption order in respect of a child—

- (a) who is (when the notice is given) being looked after by a Board or [^{F91}HSC trust]; but
- (b) who was placed with that person otherwise than in pursuance of such arrangements as are mentioned in Article 31(1),

Article 31 shall apply as if the child had been placed in pursuance of such arrangements, except that where the application is refused by the court or withdrawn the child need not be returned to the Board or [^{F91}HSC trust] in whose care he is unless the Board or [^{F91}HSC trust] so requires.

(2) Where notice of intention is served as described in paragraph (1) in respect of any child who is (when the notice is given) being looked after by a Board or [^{F91}HSC trust] then, until the application for an adoption order has been made and disposed of, any right of the Board or [^{F91}HSC trust] to require the child to be returned to it otherwise than in pursuance of Article 31 shall be suspended.

(3) While the child has his home with the person by whom the notice is served no contribution shall be payable (whether under a contribution order or otherwise) in respect of the child by any person liable under Articles 38 to 43 of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 to make contributions in respect of him (but without prejudice to the recovery of any sum due at the time the notice is served), unless 12 weeks have elapsed since the service of the notice without the application being made or the application has been refused by the court or withdrawn.

(4) Nothing in this Article affects the right of any person who has parental responsibility for a child to remove him under Article 22(2) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995.]

F89 1995 NI 2

F90 mod. by SR 2003/16

F91 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), ss. 32, 34(3), [Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with [Sch. 6 para. 1\(3\)](#)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

Protected children

Meaning of “protected child”

33.—(1) Where a person gives notice in pursuance of Article 22(1) to the Board[^{F92} or [^{F93}HSC trust]] within whose area he lives of his intention to apply for an adoption order in respect of a child, the child is for the purposes of this Part a protected child while he has his home with that person.

[^{F94}(1A) A child shall be deemed to be a protected child for the purposes of this Part if he is a protected child within the meaning of—

- (a) section 32 of the Adoption Act 1976; or
- (b) section 32 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978.]

(2) A child is not a protected child by reason of any such notice as is mentioned in paragraph (1) while—

- (a) he is in the care of any person in—
 - [^{F94}(i) any school in which he is receiving full#time education;

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- (ii) any^{F95} children's home in respect of which a person is registered under Part III of the Health and Personal Social Services (Quality, Improvement and Regulation) (Northern Ireland) Order 2003];
 - (iii) any hospital;
 - (iv) any home or institution not specified in heads (i) to (iii) but provided by the Secretary of State, a government department or a prescribed public body; or]
 - (b) he is resident in a residential home for persons suffering from mental disorder within the meaning of Article 3(1) of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986^{F96}; or
 - (c) he is liable to be detained or is subject to guardianship under that Order of 1986.
- [^{F94}(2A) Paragraph (2)(a) shall be construed in accordance with Article 2(2) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (interpretation).]
- [^{F94}(3) A protected child ceases to be a protected child—
- (a) on the grant or refusal of the application for an adoption order;
 - (b) on the notification to the Board or [^{F93}HSC trust] for the area where the child has his home that the application for an adoption order has been withdrawn;
 - (c) in a case where no application is made for an adoption order, on the expiry of the period of two years from the giving of the notice;
 - (d) on the making of a residence order, a care order or a supervision order under the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 in respect of the child;
 - (e) on the appointment of a guardian for him under that Order;
 - (f) on his attaining the age of 18 years; or
 - (g) on his marriage^{F97} or forming a civil partnership],
- whichever first occurs.
- (4) In paragraph (3)(d) the references to a care order and a supervision order do not include references to an interim care order or interim supervision order.]

F92 1994 NI 2

F93 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\), ss. 32, 34\(3\), Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

F94 1995 NI 2

F95 2003 NI 9

F96 1986 NI 4

F97 2004 c.33

Duty of Boards to secure well-being of protected children

34.—(1) Every Board^{F98} or [^{F99}HSC trust]] shall secure that protected children within its area are visited from time to time by officers of the Board^{F98} or [^{F99}HSC trust]], who shall satisfy themselves as to the well-being of the children and give such advice as to their care and maintenance as may appear to be needed.

(2) Any officer of a Board^{F98} or [^{F99}HSC trust]] authorised to visit protected children may, after producing, if asked to do so, some duly authenticated document showing that he is so authorised, inspect any premises in the area of the Board^{F98} or [^{F99}HSC trust]] in which such children are to be or are being kept.

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F98 1994 NI 2

F99 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\), ss. 32, 34\(3\), Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

Art. 35 rep. with saving by 1995 NI 2

Notices and information to be given to Boards

36.—(1) Where a person^{[F100} with whom a protected child has his home] changes his permanent address he shall not less than 2 weeks before the change, or, if the change is made in an emergency, not later than 1 week after the change, serve a notice specifying the new address on the Board^{[F101} or ^{[F102}HSC trust]] in whose area his permanent address is before the change, and if the new address is in the area of another Board^{[F101} or ^{[F102}HSC trust]]], the Board^{[F101} or ^{[F102}HSC trust]] on whom the notice is served shall inform that other Board^{[F101} or ^{[F102}HSC trust]] and give it such of the following particulars as are known to it, that is to say—

- (a) the name, sex and date and place of birth of the child;
- (b) the name and address of every person who is a parent or guardian or acts as a guardian of the child or from whom the child was received.

(2) If a protected child dies, the person^{[F100} with whom he had his home] at his death shall within 48 hours serve notice of the child's death on the Board^{[F101} or ^{[F102}HSC trust]] .

F100 1995 NI 2

F101 1994 NI 2

F102 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\), ss. 32, 34\(3\), Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

Offences relating to protected children

37.—(1) A person shall be guilty of an offence if—

- (a) being required, under Article 36 to serve any notice or give any information, he fails to serve the notice within the time specified in that provision or fails to give the information within a reasonable time, or knowingly makes or causes or procures another person to make any false or misleading statement in the notice or information;
- (b) he refuses to allow the visiting of a protected child by a duly authorised officer of a Board^{[F103} or ^{[F104}HSC trust]] or the inspection, under the power conferred by Article 34(2) of any premises;

Sub#para. (c) rep. by 1995 NI 2

(2) A person guilty of an offence under this Article shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

F103 1994 NI 2

F104 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\), ss. 32, 34\(3\), Sch. 6 para. 1\(1\)\(d\)](#) (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, [art. 2](#)

Miscellaneous provisions relating to protected children

Para. (1) rep. 1995 NI 2

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(2) A person who maintains a protected child shall be deemed for the purposes of the Life Assurance Act 1774^{F105} as extended by the Life Insurance (Ireland) Act 1866^{F106} to have no interest in the life of the child.

Para. (3) rep. 1995 NI 2

F105 1774 c. 48

F106 1866 c. 42

PART V

STATUS OF ADOPTED CHILDREN

Meaning of “adoption” in Part V

39.—(1) In this Part “adoption” means adoption—

- (a) by an adoption order;
- (b) by an order made under the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967^{F107}, the Adoption of Children Act (Northern Ireland) 1950^{F108} or the Adoption of Children Act (Northern Ireland) 1929^{F109};
- (c) by an order made in England and Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man or in any of the Channel Islands,^{F110} . . .

[^{F110}(cc) which is a Convention adoption; or]

- (d) which is an adoption recognised by the law of Northern Ireland and effected under the law of any other country,

and cognate expressions shall be construed accordingly.

(2) The definition of adoption includes, where the context admits, an adoption effected before the commencement of this Part, and the date of an adoption effected by an order is the date of the making of the order.

F107 1967 c. 35 (NI)

F108 1950 c. 6 (NI)

F109 1929 c. 15 (NI)

F110 2001 c. 11 (NI)

Status conferred by adoption

40.—(1) An adopted child shall be treated in law—

- (a) where the adopters are a married couple, as if he had been born as a child of the marriage (whether or not he was in fact born after the marriage was solemnized);
- (b) in any other case, as if he had been born to the adopter in wedlock (but not as a child of any actual marriage of the adopter).

(2) An adopted child shall, subject to^{F111} paragraphs (3) and (3A)], be treated in law as if he were not the child of any person other than the adopters or adopter.

(3) Paragraph (2)—

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- (a) does not apply for the purposes of the Table in Article 18(1) of the Family Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1984^{F112}[^{F113} or for the purposes of Schedule 12 to the Civil Partnership Act 2004] (prohibited degrees of relationship); and
- (b) in the case of a child adopted by one of its natural parents as sole adoptive parent, has no effect as respects entitlement to property depending on relationship to that parent, or as respects anything else depending on that relationship.

[^{F111}(3A) Where, in the case of a Convention adoption, the High Court is satisfied, on an application under this paragraph—

- (a) that under the law of the country in which the adoption was effected the adoption is not a full adoption;
- (b) that the consents referred to in Article 4(c) and (d) of the Convention have not been given for a full adoption, or that the United Kingdom is not the receiving State (within the meaning of Article 2 of the Convention); and
- (c) that it would be more favourable to the adopted child for a direction to be given under this paragraph,

the High Court may direct that paragraph (2) shall not apply, or shall not apply to such extent as may be specified in the direction.

(3B) In paragraph (3A) “full adoption” means an adoption by virtue of which the adopted child falls to be treated in law as if he were not the child of any person other than the adopters or adopter.

(3C) The following provisions of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (NI 4)—

- (a) Article 35 (provisions relating to the Attorney-General); and
- (b) Article 36 (supplementary provisions as to declarations),

shall apply in relation to, and to an application for, a direction under paragraph (3A) as they apply in relation to, and to an application for, a declaration under Part V of that Order.]

- (4) It is hereby declared that this Article prevents an adopted child from being illegitimate.
- (5) This Article has effect—
 - (a) in the case of an adoption before the commencement of this Part from that time, and
 - (b) in the case of any other adoption, from the date of the adoption.
- (6) Subject to the provisions of this Part, this Article—
 - (a) applies for the construction of statutory provisions or instruments passed or made before the adoption or later, and so applies subject to any contrary indication; and
 - (b) has effect as respects things done, or events occurring, after the adoption, or after the commencement of this Part, whichever is the later.

F111 2001 c. 11 (NI)

F112 1984 NI 14

F113 2004 c.33

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C11 Art. 40(1)(a) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

C12 Art. 40(2)(3)(4) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

C13 Art. 40(6) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

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Adoptive relatives

41. A relationship existing by virtue of Article 40 may be referred to as an adoptive relationship, and

- (a) a male adopter may be referred to as the adoptive father;
- (b) a female adopter may be referred to as the adoptive mother;
- (c) any other relative of any degree under an adoptive relationship may be referred to as an adoptive relative of that degree,

but this Article does not prevent the term “parent”, or any other term not qualified by the word “adoptive”, being treated as including an adoptive relative.

Rules of construction for instruments concerning property

42.—(1) Subject to any contrary indication, the rules of construction contained in this Article apply to any instrument, other than an existing instrument, so far as it contains a disposition of property.

(2) In applying Article 40(1) to a disposition which depends on the date of birth of a child or children of the adoptive parent or parents, the disposition shall be construed as if—

- (a) the adopted child had been born on the date of adoption,
- (b) two or more children adopted on the same date had been born on that date in the order of their actual births,

but this does not affect any reference to the age of a child.

(3) Examples of phrases in wills on which paragraph (2) can operate are—

- (1) Children of A “living at my death or born afterwards”.
- (2) Children of A “living at my death or born afterwards before any one of such children for the time being in existence attains a vested interest and who attain the age of 21 years”.
- (3) As in example 1 or 2, but referring to grandchildren of A instead of children of A.
- (4) A for life “until he has a child”, and then to his child or children.

Note. Paragraph (2) will not affect the reference to the age of 21 years in example 2.

(4) Article 40(2) does not prejudice any interest vested in possession in the adopted child before the adoption, or any interest expectant (whether immediately or not) upon an interest so vested.

(5) Where it is necessary to determine for the purposes of a disposition of property effected by an instrument whether a woman can have a child, it shall be presumed that once a woman has attained the age of 55 years she will not adopt a child after execution of the instrument, and, notwithstanding Article 40, if she does so that child shall not be treated as her child or as the child of her spouse (if any) for the purposes of the instrument.

(6) In this Article, “instrument” includes a private Act or Measure settling property, but not any other statutory provision.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C14** Art. 42 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Dispositions depending on date of birth

43.—(1) Where a disposition depends on the date of birth of a child who was born illegitimate and who is adopted by one of the natural parents as sole adoptive parent, Article 42(2) does not affect entitlement under Part II of the Family Law Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1977^{F114}[^{F115} or Article 22 of the Wills and Administration Proceedings (Northern Ireland) Order 1994] (illegitimate children).

(2) Paragraph (1) applies for example where—

- (a) a testator dies in 1986 bequeathing a legacy to his eldest grandchild living at a specified time,
- (b) his daughter has an illegitimate child in 1987 who is the first grandchild,
- (c) his married son has a child in 1988,
- (d) subsequently the illegitimate child is adopted by the mother as sole adoptive parent,

and in all those cases the daughter's child remains the eldest grandchild of the testator throughout.

F114 1977 NI 17

F115 1994 NI 13

Property devolving with peerages, etc.

44.—(1) An adoption does not affect the descent of any peerage or dignity or title of honour.

(2) An adoption shall not affect the devolution of any property limited (expressly or not) to devolve (as nearly as the law permits) along with any peerage or dignity or title of honour.

(3) Paragraph (2) applies only if and so far as a contrary intention is not expressed in the instrument, and shall have effect subject to the terms of the instrument.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C15 Art. 44 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Protection of trustees and personal representatives

45.—(1) A trustee or personal representative is not under a duty, by virtue of the law relating to trusts or the administration of estates, to enquire, before conveying or distributing any property, whether any adoption has been effected or revoked if that fact could affect entitlement to the property.

(2) A trustee or personal representative shall not be liable to any person by reason of a conveyance or distribution of the property made without regard to any such fact if he has not received notice of the fact before the conveyance or distribution.

(3) This Article does not prejudice the right of a person to follow the property, or any property representing it, into the hands of another person, other than a purchaser, who has received it.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C16 Art. 45 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

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Meaning of “disposition”

46.—(1) In this Part, unless the context otherwise requires,—

“disposition” includes the conferring of a power of appointment and any other disposition of an interest in or right over property;

“power of appointment” includes any discretionary power to transfer a beneficial interest in property without the furnishing of valuable consideration.

(2) This Part applies to an oral disposition as if contained in an instrument made when the disposition was made.

(3) For the purposes of this Part, the death of the testator is the date at which a will or codicil is to be regarded as made.

(4) For the purposes of this Part, provisions of the law of intestate succession applicable to the estate of a deceased person shall be treated as if contained in an instrument executed by him (while of full capacity) immediately before his death.

(5) It is hereby declared that references in this Part to dispositions of property include references to a disposition by the creation of an entailed interest.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C17 Art. 46 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, [Sch. 2](#)

Miscellaneous

47.—(1) Article 40 does not apply for the purposes of [^{F116}Articles 68 and 69 of the Sexual Offences (Northern Ireland) Order 2008 (sex with an adult relative); but nothing in this paragraph is to be read as preventing the application of Article 40 for the purposes of Article 68(3)(a) or (b) or 69(3)(a) or (b) of that Order] (incest).

(2) Article 40 does not apply for any purpose relating to nationality or immigration.

Para. (3) rep. 1988 NI 2

(4) The revocation of an adoption order under Article 55 does not affect any right to property under an instrument executed before the date of revocation.

F116 Words in art. 47(1) substituted (2.2.2009) by [Sexual Offences \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2008 \(S.I. 2008/1769 \(N.I. 2\)\)](#), arts. 1(3), 81, [Sch. 1 para. 19](#); S.R. 2008/510, [art. 2](#)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C18 Art. 47(1)(2) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, [Sch. 2](#)

Pensions

48. Article 40(2) does not affect entitlement to a pension which is payable to or for the benefit of a child and is in payment at the time of his adoption.

Insurance

49. Where a child is adopted whose natural parent has effected an insurance with a friendly society or a collecting society or an industrial insurance company for the payment on the death of

the child of money for funeral expenses, the rights and liabilities under the policy shall by virtue of the adoption be transferred to the adoptive parents who shall for the purposes of the enactments relating to such societies and companies be treated as the person who took out the policy.

PART VI ^{F117}

REGISTRATION, AMENDMENT AND REVOCATION OF ADOPTION ORDERS

F117 functions transf. by SR 1993/494

The Adopted Children Register

Adopted Children Register

- 50.**—(1) The Registrar General for Northern Ireland (“the Registrar General”) shall—
- (a) maintain at the General Register Office a register to be called the Adopted Children Register, in which^{F118} such entries as may be—
 - (i) directed to be made in it by adoption orders, or
 - (ii) required to be made under Article 53,and no other entries, shall be made];
 - (b) cause an index of the Adopted Children Register to be made and kept in the General Register Office; and
 - (c) keep such other registers and books, and make such entries therein, as may be necessary to record and make traceable the connection between any entry in the Register of Births which has been marked “Adopted” pursuant to Article 51 or any statutory provision at the time in force, and any corresponding entry in the Adopted Children Register.
- (2) Every person shall be entitled to search the index mentioned in paragraph (1)(b) and to have a certified copy of any entry in the Adopted Children Register in all respects upon and subject to the same terms, conditions and regulations as to payment of fees and otherwise as are applicable under the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976^{F119} in respect of searches in other indexes kept in the General Register Office and in respect of the supply from that Office of certified copies of entries in the Registers of Births and Deaths.
- (3) The Registers and books kept under paragraph (1)(c) shall not be, nor shall any index thereof be, open to public inspection or search, and the Registrar General shall not furnish any person with any information contained in or with any copy or extract from any such registers or books except in accordance with Article 54 or under an order of any of the following courts, that is to say—
- (a) the High Court;
 - (b) the court by which an adoption order was made in respect of the person to whom the information, copy or extract relates; and
 - (c) any prescribed county court.

F118 2001 c. 11 (NI)

F119 1976 NI 14

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C19 Art. 50 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Registration of adoption orders

51.—(1) Every adoption order shall contain a direction to the Registrar General to make in the Adopted Children Register an entry in the form set out in Schedule 2, and (subject to paragraph (2)) shall specify the particulars to be entered under the headings in columns 2 to 6 of that Schedule.

(2) For the purposes of compliance with the requirements of paragraph (1)—

- (a) where the precise date of the child's birth is not proved to the satisfaction of the court, the court shall determine the probable date of his birth and the date so determined shall be specified in the order as the date of his birth;
- (b) where the country of birth of the child is not proved to the satisfaction of the court, then, if it appears probable that the child was born within the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man, he shall be treated as having been born in Northern Ireland, and in any other case the particulars of the country of birth may be omitted from the order and from the entry in the Adopted Children Register; and
- (c) the names to be specified in the order as the name and surname of the child shall be the name or names and surname stated in that behalf in the application for the adoption order, or, if no name or surname is so stated, the original name or names of the child and the surname of the applicant.

(3) The particulars to be entered in the Adopted Children Register under the heading in column 2 of Schedule 2 shall include—

- (a) in the case of a child born in Northern Ireland, the registration district in which the birth took place; and
- (b) where the child was born in Northern Ireland but the registration district in which the birth took place is not proved to the satisfaction of the court, or where the child is treated by virtue of paragraph (2)(b) as born in Northern Ireland, he shall be treated for the purposes of this paragraph as born in the registration district in which the court sits.

(4) Where upon any application for an adoption order in respect of a child born in Northern Ireland (not being a child who has previously been the subject of an adoption order made by a court in Northern Ireland under this Order or any statutory provision at the time in force) there is proved to the satisfaction of the court the identity of the child with a child to whom an entry in the Register of Births relates, any adoption order made in pursuance of the application shall contain a direction to the Registrar General to cause the entry in the Register of Births to be marked with the word “Adopted”.

(5) Where an adoption order is made in respect of a child who has previously been the subject of an adoption order made by a court in Northern Ireland under this Order or any statutory provision at the time in force, the order shall contain a direction to the Registrar General to cause the previous entry in the Adopted Children Register to be marked with the word “Re-adopted”.

(6) The prescribed officer of the court which made an adoption order shall cause the adoption order to be communicated in the prescribed manner to the Registrar General, and upon receipt of the communication the Registrar General shall cause compliance to be made with the directions contained in the order.

(7) Where an adoption order is communicated to the Registrar General in accordance with paragraph (6), and the country of birth of the child or the country in which the child was previously adopted is shown therein as being England or Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man or any of the Channel Islands, the Registrar General shall cause a notification giving particulars of the entry to be marked

and a statement that an adoption order has been granted in respect of the child, to be transmitted to the authority maintaining the Register of Births or the Adopted Children Register or any corresponding register of adoptions, as the case may be, in that country.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

- C20** Art. 51(1) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**
- C21** Art. 51(3)(4) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**
- C22** Art. 51(6)(7) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Amendment of orders and rectification of Registers

52.—(1) The court by which an adoption order has been made (or, where that court was a county court, a county court held for the same division) may, on the application of the adopter or of the adopted person, amend the order by the correction of any error in the particulars contained therein, and may—

- (a) if satisfied on the application of the adopter or of the adopted person that within 1 year beginning with the date of the order any new name or names has or have been given to the adopted person (whether in baptism or otherwise), or taken by him, either in lieu of or in addition to a name or names specified in the particulars required to be entered in the Adopted Children Register in pursuance of the order, amend the order by substituting or adding that name or names in those particulars, as the case may require;
- (b) if satisfied on the application of any person concerned that a direction for the marking of an entry in the Register of Births or the Adopted Children Register included in the order in pursuance of Article 51(4) or (5) was wrongly so included, revoke that direction.

(2) Where an adoption order is amended or a direction revoked under paragraph (1), the prescribed officer of the court shall cause the amendment to be communicated in the prescribed manner to the Registrar General who shall, as the case may require,—

- (a) cause the entry in the Adopted Children Register to be amended accordingly; or
- (b) cause the marking of the entry in the Register of Births or the Adopted Children Register to be cancelled.

(3) Where an adoption order is quashed or an appeal against an adoption order is allowed by any court, the court shall give direction to the Registrar General to cancel any entry in the Adopted Children Register and any marking of an entry in that Register or the Register of Births which was effected in pursuance of the order.

(4) Where an adoption order has been amended, any certified copy of the relevant entry in the Adopted Children Register which may be issued pursuant to Article 50(2) shall be a copy of the entry as amended, without the reproduction of any note or marking relating to the amendment or of any matter cancelled pursuant thereto; and a copy or extract of an entry in any register, being an entry the marking of which has been cancelled, shall be deemed to be an accurate copy if and only if both the marking and the cancellation are omitted therefrom.

(5) Without prejudice to Article 55 where, after an entry in the Register of Births has been marked with the word “Adopted”, the birth is re-registered under Article 19 of the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976^{F120} (which provides for the re-registration of the birth of legitimated persons) the entry made on the re-registration shall be marked in the like manner.

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

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(6) Where the Registrar General has, in accordance with Article 51(7), caused a notification of any particulars to be transmitted to any authority maintaining a Register of Births or an Adopted Children Register or any corresponding register of adoptions in England and Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man or any of the Channel Islands, and any of those particulars are amended, revoked or cancelled under this Article, the Registrar General shall cause a notification of such amendment, revocation or cancellation to be transmitted to that authority.

F120 1976 NI 14

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C23 Art. 52(1)-(4) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

C24 Art. 52(6) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Registration of adoptions made outside Northern Ireland

53.—(1) Where the Registrar General is notified by the authority maintaining a register of adoptions in England or Wales, Scotland, the Isle of Man or any of the Channel Islands that an order has been made in that country authorising the adoption of a child to whom an entry in the Register of Births or the Adopted Children Register relates, he shall cause the entry to be marked with the word “Adopted” or “Re-adopted” as the case may require, followed by the name, in brackets, of the country in which the order was made.

(2) Where, after an entry has been so marked, the Registrar General is notified as aforesaid that the order has been quashed, that an appeal against the order has been allowed or that the order has been revoked, he shall cause the marking to be cancelled; and a copy or extract of an entry in any register, being an entry the marking of which is cancelled under this paragraph, shall be deemed to be an accurate copy if and only if both the marking and the cancellation are omitted therefrom.

(3) The preceding provisions of this Article shall apply in relation to orders corresponding to orders under Article 57 as they apply in relation to orders authorising the adoption of a child; but any marking of any entry required by virtue of this paragraph shall consist of the words “Proposed foreign adoption” or as the case may require, “Proposed foreign re-adoption” followed by the name in brackets of the country in which the order was made.

[^{F121}(3A) If the Registrar General is satisfied, on an application under this paragraph, that he has sufficient particulars relating to a child adopted under a registrable foreign adoption to enable an entry in the form set out in Schedule 2 to be made in the Adopted Children Register for the child—

- (a) he shall make the entry accordingly; and
- (b) if he is also satisfied that an entry in the Register of Births relates to the child, he shall mark the entry “Adopted” or “Re-adopted”, as the case may be, followed by the name in brackets of the country in which the adoption was effected.

(3B) An application under paragraph (3A) shall be made, in the prescribed manner, by a prescribed person and give the prescribed particulars.

(3C) If the Registrar General is satisfied—

- (a) that a Convention adoption, a Convention adoption order or an overseas adoption has ceased to have effect, whether on annulment or otherwise; or
- (b) that any entry or mark was erroneously made in pursuance of paragraph (3A) in any register mentioned in that paragraph,

he may cause such alterations to be made in any such register as he considers are required in consequence of the cesser or to correct the error; and where an entry in such a register is amended in

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pursuance of this paragraph, any copy or extract of the entry shall be deemed to be accurate if and only if it shows the entry as amended but without indicating that it has been amended.

(3D) In this Article “registrable foreign adoption” means a Convention or overseas adoption which satisfies prescribed requirements.]

(4) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2)[^{F121}, (3) and (3C)] or Article 55, where after an entry in the Register of Births has been marked in accordance with this Article the birth is re-registered under Article 19 of the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976, the entry made on the re-registration shall be marked in the like manner.

F121 2001 c. 11 (NI)

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C25 Art. 53(1)(2) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Disclosure of records

Disclosure of birth records of adopted children

54.—(1) Subject to [^{F122} the provisions of this Article], the Registrar General shall, on an application made in the prescribed manner by an adopted person a record of whose birth is kept by the Registrar General and who has attained the age of 18 years, supply to that person on payment of the prescribed fee (if any) such information as is necessary to enable that person to obtain a certified copy of the record of his birth.

(2) On an application made in the prescribed manner by an adopted person under the age of 18 years, a record of whose birth is kept by the Registrar General and who is intending to be married [^{F123} or to form a civil partnership], and on payment of the prescribed fee (if any), the Registrar General shall inform the applicant whether or not it appears from information contained in the registers of live births or other records that the applicant and [^{F123} the intended spouse or civil partner] may be within the prohibited degrees of relationship for the purposes of Article 18(1) of the Family Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Northern Ireland) Order 1984^{F124} [^{F123} or Schedule 12 to the Civil Partnership Act 2004].

[^{F122}(3) Before supplying any information to an applicant under paragraph (1), the Registrar General shall inform the applicant that counselling services are available to him—

- (a) if he is in Northern Ireland—
 - (i) from the Board or [^{F125}HSC trust] in whose area he is living;
 - (ii) where the adoption order relating to him was made in Northern Ireland, from the Board or [^{F125}HSC trust] in whose area the court which made the order sat; or
 - (iii) from any other Board or [^{F125}HSC trust];
- (b) if he is in England and Wales—
 - (i) at the General Register Office;
 - (ii) from the local authority in whose area he is living;
 - (iii) where the adoption order relating to him was made in England and Wales, from the local authority in whose area the court which made the order sat; or
 - (iv) from any other local authority;
- (c) if he is in Scotland—

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- (i) from the regional or islands council in whose area he is living;
- (ii) where the adoption order relating to him was made in Scotland, from the council in whose area the court which made the order sat; or
- (iii) from any other regional or islands council;
- (d) if he is in the United Kingdom and his adoption was arranged by an adoption society—
 - (i) registered under Article 4; or
 - (ii) approved under section 3 of the Adoption Act 1976; or
 - (iii) approved under section 3 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978, from that society.
- (4) Where an adopted person who is in Northern Ireland—
 - (a) applies for information under—
 - (i) paragraph (1), or
 - (ii) section 51 of the Adoption Act 1976, or
 - (b) is supplied with information under section 45 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978,
 it shall be the duty of any body mentioned in paragraph (5) to provide counselling for him if asked by him to do so.
- (5) The bodies are—
 - (a) any Board or [^{F125}HSC trust]; and
 - (b) any adoption society falling within paragraph (3)(d) in so far as it is acting as an adoption society in Northern Ireland.
- (6) If the applicant chooses to receive counselling from a body falling within paragraph (3), the Registrar General shall send to the body the information to which the applicant is entitled under paragraph (1).
- (7) Where a person—
 - (a) was adopted before 18th December 1987, and
 - (b) applies for information under paragraph (1),
 the Registrar General shall not supply the information to him unless he has attended an interview with a counsellor arranged by a body from whom counselling services are available as mentioned in paragraph (3).
- (8) Where the Registrar General is prevented by paragraph (7) from supplying information to a person who is not living in the United Kingdom, he may supply the information to any body which—
 - (a) the Registrar General is satisfied is suitable to provide counselling to that person, and
 - (b) has notified the Registrar General that it is prepared to provide such counselling.]

F122 1995 NI 2

F123 2004 c.33

F124 1984 NI 14

F125 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), ss. 32, 34(3), **Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(d)** (with [Sch. 6 para. 1\(3\)](#)); S.R. 2009/114, **art. 2**

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C26 [Art. 54\(1\)\(2\)](#) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

C27 Art. 54(4)(5) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

[^{F126}Adoption Contact Register

54A.—(1) The Registrar General shall maintain at the General Register Office a register to be called the Adoption Contact Register.

(2) The register shall be in two parts—

- (a) Part I: Adopted Persons; and
- (b) Part II; Relatives.

(3) The Registrar General shall, on payment of such fee as may be prescribed, enter in Part I of the register the name and address of any adopted person who fulfils the conditions in paragraph (4) and who gives notice that he wishes to contact any relative of his.

(4) The conditions are that—

- (a) a record of the adopted person's birth is kept by the Registrar General; and
- (b) the adopted person has attained the age of 18 years and—
 - (i) has been supplied by the Registrar General with information under Article 54; or
 - (ii) has satisfied the Registrar General that he has such information as is necessary to enable him to obtain a certified copy of the record of his birth.

(5) The Registrar General shall, on payment of such fee as may be prescribed, enter in Part II of the register the name and address of any person who fulfils the conditions in paragraph (6) and who gives notice that he wishes to contact an adopted person.

(6) The conditions are—

- (a) that a record of the adopted person's birth is kept by the Registrar General; and
- (b) that the person giving notice under paragraph (5) has attained the age of 18 years and has satisfied the Registrar General that—
 - (i) he is a relative of the adopted person; and
 - (ii) he has such information as is necessary to enable him to obtain a certified copy of the record of the adopted person's birth.

(7) The Registrar General shall, on receiving notice from any person named in an entry in the register that he wishes the entry to be cancelled, cancel the entry.

(8) Any notice given under this Article must be in such a form as may be determined by the Registrar General.

(9) The Registrar General shall transmit to an adopted person whose name is entered in Part I of the register the name and address of any relative in respect of whom there is an entry in Part II of the register.

(10) Any entry cancelled under paragraph (7) ceases from the time of cancellation to be an entry for the purposes of paragraph (9).

(11) The register shall not be open to public inspection or search and the Registrar General shall not supply any person with information entered in the register (whether in an uncancelled or a cancelled entry) except in accordance with this Article.

(12) The register may be kept by means of a computer.

(13) In this Article—

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- (a) “relative” means any person (other than an adoptive relative) who is related to the adopted person by blood (including half#blood)^{F127}, marriage or civil partnership]; and
- (b) “address” includes any address at or through which the person concerned may be contacted.]

F126 1995 NI 2

F127 2004 c.33

Revocation of certain adoptions

Revocation of adoptions on legitimation

55.—(1) Where any person adopted by his father or mother alone has subsequently become a legitimated person on the marriage of his father and mother, the court by which the adoption order was made may, on the application of any of the parties concerned, revoke that order.

(2) Where any person legitimated by virtue of section 1 of the Legitimacy Act (Northern Ireland) 1961^{F128} had been adopted by his father and mother before 1st September 1961, the court by which the adoption order was made may, on the application of any of the parties concerned, revoke that order.

(3) In relation to an adoption order made by a county court, the reference in paragraphs (1) and (2) to the court by which the order was made includes a reference to a court held for the same division.

(4) Where an adoption order is revoked under paragraph (1) or (2) the prescribed officer of the court shall cause the revocation to be communicated in the prescribed manner to the Registrar General who shall cause to be cancelled—

- (a) the entry in the Adopted Children Register relating to the adopted person; and
- (b) the marking with the word “Adopted” of any entry relating to him in the Register of Births;

and a copy or extract of an entry in any register, being an entry the marking of which is cancelled under this paragraph, shall be deemed to be an accurate copy if and only if both the marking and the cancellation are omitted therefrom.

F128 1961 c. 5 (NI)

[^{F129}Annulment etc. of overseas adoptions

55A.—(1) The High Court may, on an application under this paragraph, by order annul a Convention adoption or a Convention adoption order on the ground that the adoption or order is contrary to public policy.

(2) The High Court may, on an application under this paragraph—

- (a) order that an overseas adoption or a determination shall cease to be valid in Northern Ireland on the ground that the adoption or determination is contrary to public policy or that the authority which purported to authorise the adoption or make the determination was not competent to entertain the case;
- (b) decide the extent, if any, to which a determination has been affected by a subsequent determination.

(3) Except as provided by this Article the validity of a Convention adoption, a Convention adoption order, an overseas adoption or a determination shall not be impugned in proceedings in any court in Northern Ireland.]

F129 2001 c. 11 (NI)

Provisions supplementary to Article 55A

55B.—(1) Any application for an order under Article 55A or a decision under paragraph (2)(b) of that Article shall be made in the prescribed manner and within such period, if any, as may be prescribed.

(2) No application shall be made under Article 55A(1) unless immediately before the application is made the person adopted or the adopter habitually resides in Northern Ireland or, as the case may be, both adopters habitually reside there.

(3) In deciding in pursuance of Article 55A whether such an authority as is mentioned in Article 58ZB was competent to entertain a particular case, the court shall be bound by any finding of fact made by the authority and stated by the authority to be so made for the purpose of determining whether the authority was competent to entertain the case.

(4) In Article 55A “determination” means such a determination as is mentioned in Article 58ZB.

Regulations

Regulations for purposes of Part VI

56. Regulations made under the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976^{F130} may make provision about the duties to be performed by registrars of births and deaths in the execution of this Part.

F130 1976 NI 14

PART VII

MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTAL

Miscellaneous provisions

Adoption by persons domiciled outside Northern Ireland

57.—^{F131}(1) Where on an application made in respect of a child by a person who is not domiciled in Northern Ireland or England and Wales or Scotland an authorised court is satisfied that he intends to adopt the child under the law of or within the country in which the applicant is domiciled, the court may, subject to the provisions of this Article, make an order giving him parental responsibility for the child.]

(2) The provisions of Part III relating to adoption orders, except Articles 12(1),^{F131} 14(4)], 15(2), 17 to 21 and 26, shall apply in relation to an order under this Article as they apply in relation to adoption orders subject to the modification that in Article 13(1) for “19” and “13” there are substituted “ 32 ” and “ 26 ” respectively.

(3) Articles 50, 51(1), 53(1) and 54 shall apply in relation to an order under this Article, except that any entry in the Register of Births or in the Adopted Children Register which is required to be marked in consequence of the making of an order under this Article shall, in lieu of being marked

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with the word “Adopted” or “Re-adopted” be marked with the words “ Proposed foreign adoption ” or “ Proposed foreign re-adoption ”, as the case may require.

Para. (4) rep. by 1995 NI 2

F131 1995 NI 2

Restriction on removal of children for adoption outside Northern Ireland

58.—(1) Except under the authority of an order under Article 57^[F132], section 55 of the Adoption Act 1976 or section 49 of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978] it shall not be lawful for any person to take or send a child who is a British subject or a citizen of the Republic of Ireland out of Northern Ireland to any place outside the British Islands with a view to the adoption of the child by any person not being a parent or guardian or relative of the child; and any person who takes or sends a child out of Northern Ireland to any place in contravention of this paragraph, or makes or takes part in any arrangements for^[F132] placing a child with] any person for that purpose, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

(2) In any proceedings under this Article, a report by a British consular officer or a deposition made before a British consular officer and authenticated under the signature of that officer shall, upon proof that the officer or the deponent cannot be found in the United Kingdom, be admissible as evidence of the matters stated therein, and it shall not be necessary to prove the signature or official character of the person who appears to have signed any such report or deposition.

(3) In this Article “the British Islands” means the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.

F132 1995 NI 2

[^{F133} Restriction on bringing children into the United Kingdom for adoption

58ZA.—(1) A person habitually resident in the British Islands who at any time brings into the United Kingdom for the purpose of adoption a child who is habitually resident outside those Islands shall be guilty of an offence unless such requirements as may be prescribed are satisfied either—

- (a) before that time; or
- (b) within such period beginning with that time as may be prescribed.

(2) Paragraph (1) does not apply where the child is brought into the United Kingdom for the purpose of adoption by a parent, guardian or relative.

(3) A person guilty of an offence under this Article shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both.

(4) Proceedings for an offence under this Article may be brought within a period of 6 months from the date on which evidence sufficient in the opinion of the prosecution to warrant the proceedings came to its knowledge; but no such proceedings shall be brought by virtue of this paragraph more than 3 years after the commission of the offence.

(5) In this Article “the British Islands” means the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man.]

F133 2001 c. 11 (NI)

[^{F134}**Effect of determinations in Convention countries, etc.**

58ZB. Where—

- (a) an authority of a Convention country (other than the United Kingdom) having power under the law of that country—
 - (i) to authorise, or review the authorisation of, a Convention adoption; or
 - (ii) to give or review a decision revoking or annulling such an adoption or a Convention adoption order; or
- (b) an authority of any of the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man or any colony having power under the law of that territory—
 - (i) to authorise, or review the authorisation of, a Convention adoption or an adoption effected in that territory; or
 - (ii) to give or review a decision revoking or annulling such an adoption or a Convention adoption order,

makes a determination in the exercise of that power, then, subject to Article 55A and any subsequent determination having effect under this Article, the determination shall have effect in Northern Ireland for the purpose of effecting, confirming or terminating the adoption in question or confirming its termination as the case may be.]

F134 2001 c. 11 (NI)

[^{F135}**Orders made in adoption proceedings outside Northern Ireland**

58A.—(1) Paragraphs (2) to (4) of Article 12 shall apply in relation to an order freeing a child for adoption (other than an order under Article 17(1) or 18 (1)) as if it were an adoption order; and, on the revocation in England and Wales or Scotland of an order freeing a child for adoption, paragraphs (3) and (3A) of Article 20 shall apply as if the order had been revoked under that Article.

(2) Articles 12(3) and (4) and 49 shall apply in relation to a child who is the subject to an order which is similar to an order under Article 57 and is made in any part of Great Britain or the Channel Islands or in the Isle of Man, as they apply in relation to a child who is the subject of an adoption order.]

F135 1995 NI 2

Prohibition on certain payments

59.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this Article[^{F136} and Article 59A] it shall not be lawful for any person to make or give any payment or reward whatsoever in consideration of or in connection with the adoption of any child.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to—

- (a) any payment made to or received by an adoption agency in connection with the adoption of a child being a payment in respect of expenses reasonably incurred by the agency in connection with the adoption of the child;
- (b) any payment or reward the receipt or making of which is authorised by the court to which an application is made for an adoption order in respect of a child, or pursuant to any agreement, whether entered into before or after the making of the application, with respect to the receipt or making of any such payment or reward as may be so authorised;

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- (c) any payment made by or on behalf of a registered adoption society in respect of the maintenance of a child who has been placed at the disposition of the society;
- (d) any payment made to a registered adoption society by the parent or guardian of a child or by any other person in respect of the maintenance of the child so long as the child is not^[F136] with] an adopter, being a payment made weekly and at a rate not exceeding such rate as may be prescribed.

(3) Any person who makes or gives, or agrees or offers to make or give, any payment or reward prohibited by this Article, or who receives or agrees to receive or attempts to obtain any such payment or reward, shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 6 months or to both;^{F136} . . .

Paras. (4)#(11) rep. by 1995 NI 2

F136 1995 NI 2

^[F137] Permitted allowances

59A.—(1) The Department may make regulations for the purpose of enabling adoption agencies to pay allowances to persons who have adopted, or intend to adopt, children in pursuance of arrangements made by the agencies.

(2) Article 59(1) shall not apply to any payment made by an adoption agency in accordance with the regulations.

(3) The regulations may, in particular, make provision as to—

- (a) the procedure to be followed by an agency in determining whether a person should be paid an allowance;
- (b) the circumstances in which an allowance may be paid;
- (c) the factors to be taken into account in determining the amount of an allowance;
- (d) the procedure for review, variation and termination of allowances; and
- (e) the information about allowances to be supplied by an agency to any person who is intending to adopt a child.

(4) Any scheme approved under Article 59(4) shall be revoked as from the commencement of this Article.

(5) Article 59(1) shall not apply in relation to any payment made—

- (a) in accordance with a scheme revoked under paragraph (4) or Article 59(5)(b); and
- (b) to a person to whom such payments were made before the revocation of the scheme.

(6) Paragraph (5) shall not apply where any person to whom any payments may lawfully be made by virtue of paragraph (5) agrees to receive (instead of such payments) payments complying with regulations made under this Article.]

F137 1995 NI 2

Restriction on advertisements

60.—(1) It shall not be lawful for any advertisement to be published indicating—

- (a) that the parent or guardian of a child desires to cause a child to be adopted; or
- (b) that a person desires to adopt a child; or

(c) that any person (not being an adoption agency) is willing to make arrangements for the adoption of a child.

(2) Any person who causes to be published or knowingly publishes an advertisement in contravention of the provisions of this Article shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 5 on the standard scale.

Prohibition of wrongful disclosure of information

61. Any person who, being or having been—

- (a) a member of, or of a committee of, an adoption agency, or
- (b) employed by, or by a committee of, an adoption agency,

publishes or communicates whether directly or indirectly, otherwise than in the ordinary course of duty, to any person without lawful authority any information obtained in the course of his membership or employment relating to the adoption or intended or proposed adoption of any child shall (without prejudice to any right of any such body to dismiss on the ground of misconduct such a person who makes such publication or communication while in their employment) be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale.

Evidence and procedure

Evidence of agreement and consent

62.—(1) Any agreement or consent which is required by this Order to be given to the making of an order or application for an order may be given in writing, and, if the document signifying the agreement or consent is witnessed in accordance with adoption rules, it shall be admissible in evidence without further proof of the signature of the person by whom it was executed.

(2) A document signifying such agreement or consent which purports to be witnessed in accordance with adoption rules shall be presumed to be so witnessed, and to have been executed and witnessed on the date and at the place specified in the document, unless the contrary is proved.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C28 Art. 62(1) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, [Sch. 2](#)

Evidence of adoptions, etc.

63.—(1) A certified copy of any entry in the Adopted Children Register, if purporting to be sealed or stamped with the seal of the General Register Office, shall—

- (a) without any further or other proof of that entry, be received as evidence of the adoption to which it relates; and
- (b) where the entry contains a record of the date of the birth of the adopted person or of the country or the registration district in which he was born, be also received as evidence of that date or country or district.

(2) Any document which under section 50(2) of the Adoption Act 1976^{F138} or section 45(2) of the Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978^{F139} or any corresponding provision of any other Act is receivable as evidence of any matter in any part of Great Britain shall also be so receivable in Northern Ireland.

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

Changes to legislation: The Adoption (Northern Ireland) Order 1987 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 13 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details)

(3) An adoption, other than one to which paragraph (1) or (2) relates, may be proved by the production of any document which is receivable as evidence of the adoption in the country under whose law the adoption was made.

F138 1976 c. 36

F139 1978 c. 28

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C29 Art. 63(1)(2) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Removal of proceedings and appeals

64.—(1) ^{F140} . . . where any application is made under this Order to a county court, the High Court may, at the instance of any party to the application, order the application to be removed to the High Court and there proceeded with on such terms as to costs as it thinks proper.

(2) ^{F140} . . . where an application is made under this Order to a county court and the court considers that the matter is one which would more conveniently be dealt with by the High Court, the county court shall refuse to make an order, and in that case no appeal shall lie under paragraph (3).

(3) Subject to [^{F140} paragraph (2)] and without prejudice to Articles 61 and 65 of the County Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1980^{F141} any person aggrieved with a decision of a county court on an application made to it under this Order may appeal from that decision as if the decision had been made in exercise of the jurisdiction conferred by Part III of the County Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1980 and the appeal were brought under Article 60 of that Order.

Para. (4) rep. by 1995 NI 2

F140 1995 NI 2

F141 1980 NI 3

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C30 Art. 64(3) applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Proceedings to be in private

65. Proceedings under Part III, Article 30 and Article 57—

- (a) in the High Court, may be disposed of in chambers;
- (b) in a county court, shall be heard and determined in chambers.

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C31 Art. 65 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

[^{F142}Guardians ad litem

66.—(1) For the purpose of any application for an adoption order or an order freeing a child for adoption or an order under Article 20 or 57, an authorised court shall appoint a guardian ad litem for the child concerned.

- (2) The guardian ad litem—
- (a) shall be appointed in accordance with adoption rules; and
 - (b) shall be under a duty to safeguard the interests of the child in the prescribed manner.]

F142 1995 NI 2

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C32 Art. 66 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, [Sch. 2](#)

Panels for selection of guardians ad litem

66A.—(1) The Department may by regulations provide for the establishment of panels of persons from whom guardians ad litem appointed under Article 66 must be selected.

- (2) The regulations may, in particular, make provision—
- (a) for the constitution, administration and procedures of panels and for the appointment of panel managers;
 - (b) for the defrayment of expenses and for the payment of fees and allowances;
 - (c) as to the qualifications for appointment as a guardian ad litem;
 - (d) as to the training to be given to guardians ad litem or to persons with a view to their appointment as guardians ad litem; and
 - (e) for monitoring the work of guardians ad litem.

(3) Adoption rules may make provision as to the assistance which any guardian ad litem may be required by the court to give to it.

(4) The Department may, with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel, make such grants as the Department considers appropriate with respect to expenditure incurred under regulations made under this Article.

Adoption rules

- 67.**—(1) In the case of—
- (a) an application for an adoption order in relation to a child who is not free for adoption;
 - (b) an application for an order freeing a child for adoption;

rules shall require every person who can be found and whose agreement or consent to the making of the order is required under this order to be notified of a date and place where he will be heard on the application and of the fact that, unless he wishes or the court requires, he need not attend.

(2) In the case of an application under Article 57, rules shall require every parent and guardian of the child who can be found to be notified as aforesaid.

Supplemental

Regulations

68. Regulations^{F143} under this Order] shall be subject to negative resolution.

F143 SR 1993/494

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

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Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C33 Art. 68 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

Art. 69 rep. by 2005 c. 12

Power of Department to conduct or assist research

70. The Department with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel may conduct or promote or assist (by grants or otherwise) any person in conducting research or investigations into any matter connected with the functions of the Department or of any Board^[F144] or ^[F145]HSC trust]] under this Order or any matter connected with the adoption of children.

F144 1994 NI 2

F145 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), ss. 32, 34(3), **Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(d)** (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, **art. 2**

Inspection

71.—(1) The Department may appoint or designate an officer or other person (an “inspector”) to inspect and report to the Department concerning any institution, premises or other place whatsoever where any child is kept in respect of whom—

- (a) an application has been made under Article 17(1) or 18(1) for an order declaring him free for adoption;
- (b) notice of an intended application for his adoption has been served on a Board^[F146] or ^[F147]HSC trust]] under Article 22;
- (c) enquiries have been made of a Board^[F146] or ^[F147]HSC trust]] under Article 23;
- (d) an interim order is in force under Article 26; or
- (e) an application has been made under Article 57.

(2) An inspector (on production, if so required, of his credentials) may—

- (a) at any time enter any institution, premises or place which by virtue of paragraph (1) he is authorised or required to inspect; and
- (b) require the person who at that time has control or management of any place to be inspected to furnish such information as the inspector may reasonably require.

(3) The Department may pay to an inspector who is not an officer of the Department such sum by way of salary or fees and such sum for expenses as it may determine with the approval of the Department of Finance and Personnel.

F146 1994 NI 2

F147 Words in Order substituted (1.4.2009) by [Health and Social Care \(Reform\) Act \(Northern Ireland\) 2009 \(c. 1\)](#), ss. 32, 34(3), **Sch. 6 para. 1(1)(d)** (with Sch. 6 para. 1(3)); S.R. 2009/114, **art. 2**

Transitional provisions, savings, amendments and repeals

72.—(1) The transitional and saving provisions contained in Schedule 3 shall have effect.

Para. (2)—Amendments

Para. (3)—Repeals

SCHEDULES

^{F148}SCHEDULE 1

Article 6(4).

APPEAL TRIBUNALS

F148 prosp. rep. by [2003 NI 9](#)

Constitution

1. An Appeal Tribunal shall consist of the following members, that is to say—
 - a chairman, who shall be a practising barrister-at-law^{F149} or solicitor] of not less than 7 years' standing, appointed by the^{F149} Lord Chancellor];
 - a member appearing to the Department to be a suitably qualified person with experience in children's welfare work, appointed by the Department;
 - a member with experience in the administration of a voluntary organisation concerned with the welfare of children, appointed by the Department.

F149 [1995 NI 2](#)

2. An officer of a government department shall not be appointed a member of an Appeal Tribunal.
3. Any decision of an Appeal Tribunal shall be made by the chairman after consultation with the other members.
4. The Department may nominate one of its officers to act as clerk of an Appeal Tribunal.

Procedure

5. An Appeal Tribunal may give directions with respect to the practice and procedure to be followed in any proceedings before the Tribunal and any thing incidental to or consequential on such proceedings.

Costs

6. An Appeal Tribunal may make orders as to the costs incurred by the Department and the appellant and as to the parties by whom the costs are to be paid; and any costs of the Department which are so ordered to be paid by the appellant shall be a debt recoverable summarily by the Department from the appellant.

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

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SCHEDULE 2

Article 51.

FORM OF ENTRY IN ADOPTED CHILDREN REGISTER

Modifications etc. (not altering text)

C34 Sch. 2 applied (with modifications) (6.4.2010) by [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Parental Orders\) Regulations 2010 \(S.I. 2010/985\)](#), reg. 3, **Sch. 2**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<i>No. of entry</i>	<i>Date and country of birth of child</i>	<i>Name and surname of child</i>	<i>Sex of child</i>	<i>Name and surname, address and occupation of adopter or adopters</i>	<i>Date of adoption order and description of court by which made</i>	<i>Date of entry</i>	<i>Signature of officer deputed by Registrar General to attest the entry</i>

SCHEDULE 3

Article 72(1).

TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS AND SAVINGS

1. Where any period of time specified in a statutory provision repealed by this Order is current at the commencement date, this Order shall have effect as if the corresponding provision thereof had been in force when that period began to run.

Sub#para. (1) rep. 1995 NI 2

(2) Paragraphs (1) and (2) of Article 52, shall apply in relation to an adoption order made before the commencement date as if the order had been made under Article 12, but as if, in sub-paragraph (b) of the said paragraph (1), there were substituted for the reference to Article 51(4) or (5) a reference to section 14(4) or (5) of the Adoption of Children Act (Northern Ireland) 1950^{F150} or, as the case requires, section 24(4) or (5) of the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967.

(3) The power of the court under Article 52(1) to amend an order includes power, in relation to an order made before 1st December 1969, to make on the application of the adopter or adopted person any such amendment of the particulars contained in the order as appears to be required to bring the order into the form in which it would have been made if Article 52 had applied to the order.

(4) Paragraphs (1) and (4) of Article 55 shall apply in relation to an adoption order made under a statutory provision at any time before the commencement date as they apply in relation to an adoption order made under this Order.

F150 1950 c. 6 (NI)

3. Any register, or index to a register, kept under the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, or any register or index deemed to be part of such a register, shall be deemed to be part of the register kept under Article 50.

Status: Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

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4.—(1) Article 40—

- (a) does not apply to an existing instrument or statutory provision in so far as it contains a disposition of property, and
- (b) does not apply to any public general Act or Measure in its application to any disposition of property in an existing instrument or statutory provision.

(2) Sections 18 and 19 of the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967^{F151}, and provisions containing references to those sections shall continue to apply in relation to dispositions of property effected by existing instruments notwithstanding the repeal of those sections and such provisions.

(3) Article 46 shall apply in relation to this paragraph as if it were contained in Part V.

F151 1967 c. 35 (NI)

5. The reference in Article 58(1) to an order under Article 57 includes an order under section 38 of the Adoption Act (Northern Ireland) 1967.

6. The provisions of this Schedule shall have effect without prejudice to sections 28 and 29 of the Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954^{F152}.

F152 1954 c. 33 (NI)

7. In this Schedule “commencement date” for the purpose of any provision of this Schedule, means the day appointed under Article 1(2) for the coming into operation of that provision.

SCHEDULE 4—Amendments

SCHEDULE 5—Repeals

Status:

Point in time view as at 06/04/2009.

Changes to legislation:

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