

# NORTHERN IRELAND ACT 2006

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

#### *Schedule 1 – The Assembly*

23. [Schedule 1](#) establishes and confers functions on the Assembly for the purposes of the Act. Paragraph 1 provides that the Assembly members are the existing members of the Northern Ireland Assembly.
24. [Paragraph 2](#) provides for the Secretary of State to direct when and where meetings are to be held (it is intended they will all be held in Parliament Buildings, Belfast).
25. [Paragraph 3\(1\)\(a\)](#) provides for the Secretary of State to appoint a presiding officer and no more than 3 deputies; alternatively, under paragraph 3(1)(b) he may authorise the Assembly members themselves to elect a presiding officer (and again no more than 3 deputies). Under paragraph 3(2) an appointment under paragraph 3(1)(a) may be followed by an authorisation to elect under paragraph 3(1)(b). Under paragraph 3(3), the Secretary of State may appoint, or authorise the Assembly to elect, a presiding or deputy presiding officer if the office is vacant or if he believes that the incumbent is unable, unfit or unwilling to perform the functions of the post.
26. [Paragraph 4](#) provides for proceedings to be conducted in accordance with directions given by the Secretary of State. It is intended that the directions will provide for standing orders, which will be similar to the standing orders that were in operation during full devolution, but with some differences to reflect the particular duties mentioned in this Act.
27. [Paragraph 5](#) provides that the Secretary of State must ensure the provision of staff, premises and other facilities, with sub-paragraph (2) providing for the cost of this to be paid out of the Consolidated Fund of Northern Ireland.
28. [Paragraph 6](#) provides for any statement made by a member for the purposes of the Assembly to be privileged from action for defamation, unless proved to have been motivated by malice.