

Colm Gildernew MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Communities
Room 430
Parliament Buildings
Belfast
BT4 3XX

The Social Security (Income and Capital Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026.

Dear

I am writing to you in accordance with paragraphs 19 and 20 of the Guidance for Departments on Delegated Legislation (SL1 Pre-Introductory Stage) (November 2025) ('the Guidance') to request that the Committee consider the SL1 for The Social Security (Income and Capital Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 in a shortened timeframe.

My officials are working to develop the required Statutory Rule, informed by DWP drafting of the corresponding Statutory Instrument. DWP has advised that its draft Statutory Instrument is currently undergoing final checks and they intend to make it on 9 October 2026, to come into force on 1 November 2026.

As the DWP legislation has not yet been finalised it is not possible to share a draft of the Rule and Explanatory Memorandum with the Committee alongside the SL1 as envisaged under the Guidance. However, it is not anticipated that the draft Rule will diverge from the policy proposals as detailed in the SL1. Should last-minute changes be made to the Rule which necessitates revision of the SL1, a revised SL1 will be provided to the Committee as quickly as possible to highlight any policy changes.

The proposed Rule is a parity social security measure. To align with the timescale for the corresponding Statutory Instrument being brought forward by the DWP, the normal timelines and processes under the Guidance cannot be applied.

As detailed in the SL1, the Rule will have a positive impact in that it will ensure any payments made by the Church of England Redress Scheme to recipients' resident in Northern Ireland are disregarded indefinitely for the purposes of calculating entitlement to means-tested benefits. On that basis, I am satisfied that ensuring the orderly making of this parity social security legislation in line with DWP timeframes gives rise to exceptional circumstances which require deviation from the normal process and timeframes set out in the Guidance.

I would be grateful if the Committee would agree to approve the SL1 in the requested shortened timeframe in light of these exceptional circumstances. It is my intention to make the Rule to align as closely as possible with the DWP timing for the corresponding Statutory Instrument.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Lyons', with a stylized flourish at the end.

GORDON LYONS MLA

Minister for Communities