

From: The Minister

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

**The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Levy Ceiling)
Order (Northern Ireland) 2026**

The Guaranteed Minimum Pension Increase Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

**The Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (Northern Ireland)
2026**

Dear Colm

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 SL1s for these three Routine Orders in a shortened timeframe.

In addition, the final version of the DWP Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order is not yet in the public domain. As such, it is not possible to share a draft of the corresponding NI Order and Explanatory Memorandum with the Committee alongside the SL1 as envisaged under the Guidance.

These routine Orders are technical parity pensions legislation that are completed annually. To align with the timescale for the corresponding Orders being brought forward by the DWP, the normal timelines and processes under the Guidance cannot be met.

The Pension Protection Fund and Occupational Pension Schemes (Levy Ceiling) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 is due to come into operation on 31 March 2026. The Guaranteed Minimum Pension Increase Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 and the Social Security Revaluation of Earnings Factors Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 are due to come into operation on 6 April 2026. When the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions makes one of these routine Orders, the Department is empowered to make a corresponding Order. The Department has no powers to set different amounts/percentages for Northern Ireland.

My officials are working to develop the NI Orders, informed by DWP drafting of the corresponding Orders. It is not anticipated that the final draft Orders will diverge from the policy proposals as detailed in the SL1s. However, should there be any significant last-minute changes, revised SL1s will be provided to the Committee.

I am satisfied that ensuring the orderly making of this parity pensions 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 three SL1s in the requested shortened timeframe in light of these exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Lyons', written in a cursive style.

Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities