STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2006 No. 463

HOUSING; RATES

The Housing Benefit (Electronic Communications) Order (Northern Ireland) 2006

Made - - - -	*21st November 2006*
Coming into operation	*20th December 2006*

The Department for Social Development makes the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 1 and 2 of the Electronic Communications Act (Northern Ireland) 2001(**1**).

In accordance with section 1(3) of that Act it considers that the authorisation of the use of electronic communications by this Order for any purpose is such that the extent (if any) to which records of things done for that purpose will be available will be no less satisfactory in cases where use is made of electronic communications than in other cases.

Citation and commencement

1. This Order may be cited as the Housing Benefit (Electronic Communications) Order (Northern Ireland) 2006 and shall come into operation on 20th December 2006.

Amendment of the Housing Benefit Regulations

2.—(1) The Housing Benefit Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006(**2**) shall be amended in accordance with paragraphs (2) to (5).

(2) In regulation 2(1) (interpretation)—

(a) after the definition of "the Children Order" insert—

> ""the Electronic Communications Act" means the Electronic Communications Act (Northern Ireland) 2001;"; and

(b) after the definition of "the Eileen Trust" insert—

> ""electronic communication" has the same meaning as in section 4(1) of the Electronic Communications Act;".

(3) After regulation 81 (time and manner in which claims are to be made) insert—

(**1**) 2001 c. 9 (N.I.)
(**2**) S.R. 2006 No. 405

"**Electronic claims for benefit**

81A. A claim for housing benefit may be made by means of an electronic communication in accordance with Schedule 11.".

(4) After regulation 84 (duty to notify change of circumstances) insert—

"**Notice of change of circumstances given electronically**

84A. A person may give notice of a change of circumstances required to be notified under regulation 84 by means of an electronic communication in accordance with Schedule 11.".

(5) After Schedule 10 (matters to be included in decision notice) add as Schedule 11 the Schedule set out in the Schedule to this Order.

Amendment of the Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations

3.—(1) The Housing Benefit (Persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006(**3**) shall be amended in accordance with paragraphs (2) to (5).

(2) In regulation 2(1) (interpretation)—

(a) after the definition of "the Children Order" insert—

""the Electronic Communications Act" means the Electronic Communications Act (Northern Ireland) 2001;"; and

(b) after the definition of "the Eileen Trust" insert—

""electronic communication" has the same meaning as in section 4(1) of the Electronic Communications Act;".

(3) After regulation 62 (time and manner in which claims are to be made) insert—

"**Electronic claims for benefit**

62A. A claim for housing benefit may be made by means of an electronic communication in accordance with Schedule 10.".

(4) After regulation 65 (duty to notify change of circumstances) insert—

"**Notice of change of circumstances given electronically**

65A. A person may give notice of a change of circumstances required to be notified under regulation 65 by means of an electronic communication in accordance with Schedule 10.".

(5) After Schedule 9 (matters to be included in decision notice) add as Schedule 10 the Schedule set out in the Schedule to this Order.

(**3**) S.R. 2006 No. 406

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for Social Development on 21st November 2006

L.S.

John O'Neill
A senior officer of the Department for Social Development