STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2001 No. 152

SOCIAL SECURITY

The Social Security (Work-focused Interviews for Lone Parents) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001

Made - - - -	*3rd April 2001*
Approved by resolution of the Assembly on - - - -	*21st May 2001*
Coming into operation	*30th April 2001*

The Department for Social Development, in exercise of the powers conferred on it by sections 2A(1), (3)(*c*) to (*f*), (4), (5)(*a*) and (*b*), (6), (7) and (8) and 2B(2), (6) and (7) and 165(4) to (6) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992(**1**), and now vested in it, and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby makes the following Regulations:

Citation, commencement and interpretation

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Social Security (Work-focused Interviews for Lone Parents) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2001 and shall come into operation—

(a) on 30th April 2001 in respect of lone parents who on that date—

(i) are not entitled to income support, or

(ii) are entitled to income support and are not—

(aa) responsible for, and

(bb) living in the same household as,

a child under the age of 13;

(b) subject to the preceding sub-paragraph, come into operation on 1st April 2002 in respect of lone parents who on that date are entitled to income support and are not—

(i) responsible for, and

(ii) living in the same household as,

a child under the age of 9;

(c) subject to the preceding sub-paragraphs, where a lone parent—

(**1**) 1992 c. 8; sections 2A and 2B were inserted by Article 54 of the Welfare Reform and Pensions (Northern Ireland) Order 1999 (S.I. 1999/3147) (N.I. 11))

(i) is responsible for and living in the same household as a child whose 13th birthday occurs in the period beginning on 1st May 2001 and ending on 31st March 2002, and

(ii) is not on the date of the 13th birthday responsible for and living in the same household as a younger child,

come into operation in respect of that lone parent on the date of that child's 13th birthday;

(d) subject to the preceding sub-paragraphs, where a lone parent—

(i) is responsible for and living in the same household as a child whose 9th birthday occurs in the period beginning on 2nd April 2002 and ending on 6th April 2003, and

(ii) is not on the date of the 9th birthday responsible for and living in the same household as a younger child,

come into operation in respect of that lone parent on the date of that child's 9th birthday;

(e) subject to the preceding sub-paragraphs, come into operation on 7th April 2003.

(2) In these Regulations—

"the 1998 Order" means the Social Security (Northern Ireland) Order 1998(**2**);

"benefit week" means any period of 7 days corresponding to the week in respect of which income support is due to be paid;

"lone parent" has the meaning it bears in regulation 2(1) of the Income Support (General) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987(**3**);

"interview" means a work-focused interview with a lone parent conducted for any or all of the following purposes—

(a) assessing that person's prospects for existing or future employment (whether paid or voluntary);

(b) assisting or encouraging that person to enhance his prospects of such employment;

(c) identifying activities which that person may undertake to strengthen his existing or future prospects of employment;

(d) identifying current or future employment or training opportunities suitable to that person's needs, and

(e) identifying educational opportunities connected with the existing or future employment prospects or needs of that person;

"officer" means an officer of the Department or of the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment.

(3) The Interpretation Act (Northern Ireland) 1954(**4**) shall apply to these Regulations as it applies to an Act of the Assembly.

Requirement for lone parents claiming or entitled to income support to take part in an interview

2.—(1) Subject to paragraph (2) and regulations 4 to 6, a lone parent who—

(a) makes a claim for income support in respect of himself is required to take part in an interview, or

(b) is entitled to income support, and—

(i) has not—

(**2**) S.I. 1998/1506 (N.I. 10)
(**3**) S.R. 1987 No. 459
(**4**) 1954 c. 33 (N.I.)

(aa) previously taken part, or

(bb) failed to take part in an interview,

is required to take part in an interview, or

(ii) has previously taken part or failed to take part in an interview is required to take part in an interview after the expiry of one year from the date on which—

(aa) he last took part in an interview;

(bb) a determination was last made under regulation 6(2) that he is to be treated as having taken part in that interview, or, as the case may be,

(cc) he last failed to take part in an interview,

whichever is latest.

(2) Subject to paragraph (3), an officer shall inform the lone parent of the place and time of the interview and the time of the interview shall in a case to which paragraph (1)(*a*) or (*b*)(ii) applies be as soon as is reasonably practicable after the date on which the requirement to take part in an interview arises.

(3) An officer may determine that an interview is to take place in the home of a lone parent where it would in the opinion of the officer be unreasonable to expect that person to attend elsewhere because that person's personal circumstances are such that attending elsewhere would cause him undue inconvenience or endanger his health.

Taking part in an interview

3.—(1) An officer shall determine whether a lone parent has taken part in an interview.

(2) Subject to regulations 5(2) and 6(2), for the purposes of these Regulations, a lone parent shall be regarded as having taken part in an interview if and only if—

(a) he attends for the interview at the place and time notified to him by an officer, and

(b) he provides answers (where asked) to questions and appropriate information about—

(i) the level to which he has pursued any educational qualifications;

(ii) his employment history;

(iii) any vocational training he has undertaken;

(iv) any skills he has acquired which fit him for employment;

(v) any paid or unpaid employment he is engaged in;

(vi) any medical condition which, in the opinion of that person, puts him at a disadvantage in obtaining employment; and

(vii) any caring or childcare responsibilities he has.

Circumstances where requirement to take part in an interview does not apply

4. Regulation 2 shall not apply where the lone parent—

(a) is responsible for and living in the same household as a child who has not attained the age of 5 years and 3 months;

(b) has attained the age of 60;

(c) has not attained the age of 18.