These notes refer to the Adoption and Children Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (c.18)

# **EXPLANATORY NOTES**

# ADOPTION AND CHILDREN ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2022

#### **INTRODUCTION**

## **BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES**

#### **Changes to the Adoption Service**

## **OVERVIEW**

## **COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS**

### **PART 1 - ADOPTION**

#### **Chapter 1 – Introductory**

Section 1: Considerations applying to the exercise of powers

### **Chapter 2 – The Adoption Service**

Section 2: Basic definitions

Section 3: Adoption authority

Section 4: The Adoption Service

Section 5: Assessments etc. for adoption support services

Section 6: Adoption Support services: duty to provide information

Section 7: Arrangements on cancellation of registration

Section 8: Inactive or defunct adoption societies, etc.

Section 9: General power to regulate adoption agencies

Section 10: Management, etc., of agencies

Section 11: Fees

Section 12: Independent review of qualifying determinations of adoption agencies

Section 13: Information concerning adoption

Section 14: Inspection of premises, etc.

### **Chapter 3 - Placement for Adoption and Adoption Orders**

Section 15: Placement for adoption by agencies

Section 16: Placing children with parental consent

Section 17: Advance consent to adoption

Section 18: Placement orders

Section 19: Applications for placement orders

Section 20: Varying placement orders

Section 21: Revoking placement orders

Section 22: Parental responsibility

Section 23: Contact

Section 24: Contact: supplementary

Section 25: Further consequences of placement

Section 26: Further consequences of placement orders

#### **Removal provisions**

Section 27: General prohibitions on removal

Section 28: Recovery by parent etc. where child not placed or is a baby

Section 29: Recovery by parent etc. where child placed and consent withdrawn

Section 30: Recovery by parent etc. where child placed and placement order refused

Section 31: Placement orders: prohibition on removal

Section 32: Return of child in other cases

Sections 33 to 37: Removal of children in non-agency cases
Section 33: Restrictions on removal
Section 34: Applications for adoption
Section 35: Authority foster parents
Section 36: Partners of parents
Section 37: Other non-agency cases
Section 38: Recovery orders
Section 39: Child to live with adopters before application
Section 40: Reports where child placed by agency
Section 41: Notice of intention to adopt
Section 42: Suitability of adopters
Section 43: Adoption orders
Section 44: Conditions for making adoption orders
Section 45: Restrictions on making adoption orders
Section 46: Applications for adoption
Section 47: Adoption by couple
Section 48: Adoption by one person
Section 49: Post-adoption contact
Section 50: Orders under section 49: supplementary
Section 51: Parental etc. consent
Section 52: Modification of Children Order in relation to adoption
Section 53: Disclosing information to prospective adopters
Section 54: Revocation of adoptions on legitimation
Sections 55 to 64: Disclosure of information about a person's adoption
Section 55: Information to be kept about a person's adoption

Section 56: Restrictions on disclosure of protected etc. information

Section 57: Disclosure of other information

Section 58: Offence

Section 59: Disclosing information to adopted adult

Section 60: Disclosing protected information about adults

Section 61: Disclosing protected information about children

Section 62: Counselling

Section 63: Other provision to be made by regulations

Section 64: Sections 55-64: Interpretation

### **Chapter 4 - Status of Adopted Children**

Section 65: Meaning of adoption in Chapter 4

Section 66: Status conferred by adoption

Section 67: Adoptive relatives

Section 68: Rules of interpretation for instruments concerning property

Section 69: Dispositions depending on date of birth

Section 70: Property devolving with peerages etc.

Section 71: Protection of trustees and personal representatives

Section 72: Meaning of disposition

Section 73: Miscellaneous

Section 74: Pensions

Section 75: Insurance

### **Chapter 5 – Registers**

Section 76: Adopted Children Register

Section 77: Searches and copies

Section 78: Connections between the register and birth records
Section 79: Adoption Contact Register
Section 80: Adoption Contact Register: supplementary
Section 81: Interpretation

## **Chapter 6 - Adoptions with a Foreign Element**

Section 82: Restriction on bringing children in

Section 83: Giving parental responsibility prior to adoption abroad

Section 84: Restriction on taking children out

Section 85: Power to modify sections 82 and 84

Section 86: Declaration of special restrictions on adoptions from abroad

Section 87: Review

Section 88: The special restrictions

Cause 89: Imposition of extra conditions in certain cases

Section 90: Overseas adoptions

Section 91: Modification of section 66 for Hague Convention adoptions

Section 92: Annulment etc. of overseas or Hague Convention adoptions

Section 93: Section 92: supplementary

Section 94: Overseas determinations and orders

Section 95: Power to charge

## **Chapter 7 - Miscellaneous**

Section 96: Restriction on arranging adoptions etc.

Section 97: Offence of breaching restrictions under section 96

Section 98: Restriction on reports

Section 99: Prohibition of certain payments

Section 100: Excepted payments

Section 101: Sections 96 to 100: interpretation

Section 102: Pre-commencement adoptions: information

Section 103: Proceedings for offences

Section 104: Appeals

Section 105: Privacy

Section 106: Children's court guardians

Section 107: Right of access to adoption agency records

Section 108: Evidence of consent

Section 109: Effect of certain Scottish orders and provisions

Section 110: Effect of certain orders made in England and Wales

Section 111: Use of adoption records from Great Britain, etc.

Section 112: Channel Islands and the Isle of Man

Section 113: Avoiding delay

Section 114: Service of notices etc.

Section 115: Jurisdiction of courts

## PART 2 - CHILDREN ORDER AMENDMENTS

Section 116: Definition of family proceedings

Section 117: Article 8 orders: authority foster parents

Section 118: Duration of residence orders

Section 119: Special guardianship

Section 120: Ascertainment of children's wishes

Section 121: Provision of services to children in need, etc.

Section 122: Duty of authorities to promote etc. achievement, learning and development, and to prevent disruption to education or training

Section 123 - Corporate parenting principles

Section 124: Placement of looked after children with prospective adopters

Section 125: Accommodation for children: requirements

Section 126: Authority foster parents

Section 127: Duty to ensure visits to and advice etc. for children

Section 128: Former relevant children: continuing functions

Section 129: Local offer for care leavers

Section 130: Inquiries into representations

Section 131: Review of cases of looked after children

Section 132: Independent advocacy services

Section 133: Definition of harm

Section 134: Care plans

Section 135: Contact: children in care of authority

Section 136: Persons authorised to act as children's court guardian

Section 137: Renaming of guardians ad litem

Section 138: Interests of children in proceedings

Section 139: Definition of privately fostered child

Section 140: Welfare of children who will be privately fostered

Section 141: Notification of fostering: public awareness

Section 142: Privacy for children in proceedings

Section 143: Report on the operation of the Children Order

# PART 3 - MISCELLANEOUS AND SUPPLEMENTARY

Section 144: Northern Ireland Adoption and Children Act Register Section 145: Use of an organisation to establish the register Section 146: Use of an organisation as an agency for payments Section 147: Supply of information for the register Section 148: Disclosure of information

Section 149: Search and inspection of the register by prospective adopters

Section 150: Search and inspection of the register by adoption agencies

Section 151: Supplementary

Section 152: Time limit within which proceedings may be brought

Section 153: Research and investigations

Section 154: Amendments, transitional and transitory provisions, savings and repeals

Section 155: Regulations and orders

Section 156: Rules of court

Section 157: Supplementary and consequential provision

Section 158: Review

Section 159: Interpretation

Section 160: Commencement

Section 161: Short title

# **SCHEDULES**

Schedule 1: Registration of Adoptions

Schedule 2: Disclosure of Birth Records by Registrar General

Schedule 3: Minor and consequential amendments

Schedule 4: Transitional and transitory provisions and savings

Schedule 5: Repeals

## HANSARD REPORTS