

*These notes refer to the Adoption and Children Act (Northern Ireland) 2022 (c.18) which received Royal Assent on 27 April 2022*

# Adoption and Children Act (Northern Ireland) 2022

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## EXPLANATORY NOTES

### COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS

#### Part 1 - Adoption

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

#### *Section 38: Recovery orders*

Section 38 makes provision for what is to happen where a child is removed, or there are reasonable grounds for believing that a person intends to remove a child, or a child is withheld and not returned, in breach of any of the preceding provisions of Chapter 3 (that is, sections 15 to 37). It also applies where a person has failed to comply with sections 28(4), 29(2), 30(2), 31(3) or 32(2).

In those circumstances an application may be made to the court and the court may by order –direct any person who is in a position to do so to produce the child,

- authorise the removal of the child by an authorised person,
- require anyone who has information as to the child's whereabouts to disclose that information to a constable or officer of the court, or
- authorise a constable to enter any premises specified in the order (if there are reasonable grounds for believing the child is there) and search for the child, using reasonable force if necessary.

Authorised persons are any person named by the court, any constable, or any person who is authorised to exercise any power under the order by an adoption agency which is authorised to place the child for adoption (*subsections (2) to (4)*).

If a person intentionally obstructs an authorised person exercising the power of removal that person commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (*subsection (5)*).

A person who is required to disclose information must disclose that information even though it might amount to evidence that they had committed an offence

(*subsection (6)*). However, in any criminal proceedings in which the person is charged with an offence (except one which is excluded in *subsection (8)*, that is, offences under Article 7 or 10 of the Perjury (Northern Ireland) Order 1979) the prosecution cannot adduce evidence relating to the information provided or ask questions about it, unless it is raised by or on behalf of that person (*subsection (7)*).