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STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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**1996 No. 455**

**CHILDREN**

**The Children (Parental Responsibility Agreement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996**

<i>Made</i>	- - - -	<i>23rd September</i>
		<i>1996</i>
<i>Coming into operation</i>		<i>4th November 1996</i>

The Department of Finance and Personnel, in exercise of the powers vested in it by Articles 7(2) and (3) and 183(1) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995(1) and of all other powers enabling it in that behalf, hereby makes the following Regulations:

**Citation and commencement**

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Children (Parental Responsibility Agreement) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 and shall come into operation on 4th November 1996.

**Form of parental responsibility agreement**

2. A parental responsibility agreement shall be in the form set out in the Schedule.

**Recording of parental responsibility agreement**

3.—(1) A parental responsibility agreement shall be recorded by filing the agreement, together with two copies, in the Office of Care and Protection.

(2) Upon the filing of the agreement and the two copies in the Office of Care and Protection, the Office shall seal the copies and send one to the child's mother and the other to the child's father.

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**Status:** *This is the original version (as it was originally made). This item of legislation is currently only available in its original format.*

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Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department of Finance and Personnel on 23rd September 1996.

L.S.

*James McKeown*  
Assistant Secretary



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**IMPORTANT NOTES ABOUT THE PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AGREEMENT:  
READ THESE NOTES BEFORE YOU MAKE THE AGREEMENT**

**About the Parental Responsibility Agreement**

The making of this Agreement will **affect the legal position of the mother or father**. You should **both obtain legal advice independently of each other from different solicitors**. You may be eligible for legal aid.

**Completing the Form of Parental Responsibility Agreement**

Please use black ink (the Agreement will be copied). Put the name of one child only on the form — a separate form of Parental Responsibility Agreement must be completed for each child if the father is to have parental responsibility for more than one child. **Do not sign the Agreement at this stage.**

**When you have completed the Agreement (before signing)**

Take the form to a local court office (see Telephone Directory under Northern Ireland Court Service, Court Offices — for Belfast see Northern Ireland Court Service, Court Offices, Magistrates' Court) or to the Office of Care and Protection in the Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, Belfast. A Master (in the High Court) or a lay panel member of the Family Proceedings Court or the Clerk of Petty Sessions (or the authorised Deputy of the Clerk of Petty Sessions) will witness your signature. **He or she will require you to produce the following documents before witnessing your signature on the Agreement.**

**To the mother:** you will need to prove that you are the child's mother, so you must produce the child's **full birth certificate** (not the short birth certificate). And you will also need **evidence of identify** showing a **photograph or signature** (for example a full or provisional Northern Ireland driving licence, official pass or passport).

**To the father:** you will also need **evidence of identify** showing a **photograph and signature**.

**When the Agreement has been signed and witnessed**

Make **two copies** of the Agreement (you do not need to copy these notes). **Take or send the original of the signed and witnessed Agreement and the two copies to the Office of Care and Protection, Royal Courts of Justice, Chichester Street, BELFAST BT1 3JF.**

The Office of Care and Protection will record the Agreement and keep the original. A copy will be sent to each parent at the address which that parent has given on the Agreement. **A Parental Responsibility Agreement will not take effect until it has been recorded in the Office of Care and Protection.** That date will appear on the copies sent to the parents.

**Ending the Agreement**

**Once a Parental Responsibility Agreement has been made and has taken effect by being recorded in the Office of Care and Protection it can only be brought to an end—**

- **by an order of the court** made on the application of any person who has parental responsibility for the child
- **by an order of the court** made on the application of the child with the leave of the court
- **when the child reaches the age of 18.**

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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Regulations.)*

These Regulations prescribe the form to be used for parental responsibility agreements under Article 7(1)(b) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (“the Children Order”). They also prescribe the manner of recording parental responsibility agreements.

A parental responsibility agreement is one way in which a father can acquire parental responsibility for a child (defined in Article 6 of the Children Order) where the mother and father of the child were not married to each other at the time of the child’s birth (within the meaning of Article 155 of the Children Order). Where the child’s mother and father were so married, each parent has parental responsibility for the child automatically.