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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

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

These Regulations amend rules which govern entitlement to housing benefit, in so far as they provide for an additional amount to be disregarded when calculating how much of a claimant's income is to be taken into account for the purpose of determining his right to benefit.

Regulation 2 amends paragraph 16 of Schedule 3 to the Housing Benefit (General) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987 which provides for the amount which would otherwise be disregarded from earnings under that Schedule to be increased where certain conditions are satisfied as to the minimum number of hours each week in which the claimant or any partner of his is engaged in remunerative work. Those conditions are amended to reduce the minimum limit from 30 to 16 hours per week where the claimant is a lone parent, or where he and his partner are responsible for one or more children, or where the person engaged in remunerative work is over the age of 50 and has recently started work, or that person satisfies the condition for a disability premium. A consequential change is made in Schedule 4 to those Regulations as respects the amount of working tax credit to be disregarded when calculating income other than earnings.

Regulation 3 makes equivalent changes in Schedule 2 to the Housing Benefit (State Pension Credit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003, which modify the provisions referred to above in the case of persons who have attained the qualifying age for state pension credit and who are not in receipt of income support or an income-based jobseeker's allowance. An amendment is also made in regulation 8 of those Regulations to secure that the amount of income used for calculating the claimant's state pension credit (which must usually also be used for the purpose of calculating his housing benefit) may continue to be adjusted to take account of the additional amount to be disregarded where the conditions as to remunerative work are satisfied.

These Regulations do not impose any charge on business.