
STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2012 No. 396

**The Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme
Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012**

PART 7

ENFORCEMENT

Power to temporarily withhold periodic support payments to investigate alleged non-compliance

43.—(1) Where the Department has reasonable grounds to suspect that a participant has failed or is failing to comply with an ongoing obligation and the Department requires time to investigate, it may temporarily withhold all or part of that participant's periodic support payments.

(2) Within 21 days of a decision to withhold periodic support payments, the Department must send a notice to the participant specifying—

- (a) the respect in which the Department suspects the participant has failed or is failing so to comply;
- (b) the reason why periodic support payments are being withheld;
- (c) the date from which periodic support payments will be withheld;
- (d) the next steps in the investigation; and
- (e) details of the participant's right of review including any relevant time-limits.

(3) The Department's investigation must be commenced and completed as soon as is reasonably practicable.

(4) The Department may withhold a participant's periodic support payments for a maximum period of 6 months commencing with the date specified in accordance with the notice required by paragraph (2)(c).

(5) The Department must review its decision to withhold a participant's periodic support payments every 30 days commencing 30 days after the date of the notice required by paragraph (2).

(6) Following a review pursuant to paragraph (5), the Department must send a notice to the participant providing an update on—

- (a) the progress of any investigation to date; and
- (b) whether the Department intends to continue to withhold periodic support payments.

(7) For the purposes of calculating the time-limit specified in paragraph (4), no account is to be taken of any period attributable to the participant's delay in providing any information reasonably requested by the Department.

(8) For the purposes of paragraph (7), a participant is not to be deemed to have delayed in providing information if that participant responds within 2 weeks of a request from the Department.

(9) On expiry of the period referred to in paragraph (4) or, if earlier, the conclusion of the investigation, the Department must—

- (a) send the participant a notice specifying the outcome of the investigation or, where the investigation is not concluded, inform the participant accordingly; and
- (b) pay within 28 days of the date of that notice all periodic support payments temporarily withheld under this regulation, subject to any permanent withholding or reduction of any such payments under regulation 45.

(10) If, on conclusion of the investigation, the Department is satisfied that a participant is failing or has failed to comply with an ongoing obligation it may impose one or more of the other sanctions set out in this Part.