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## EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Rules)*

These Rules amend the Legal Aid for Crown Court Proceedings (Costs) Rules (Northern Ireland) 2005, which prescribe the remuneration for solicitors and counsel assigned under Articles 29 or 36(2) of the Legal Aid, Advice and Assistance (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.

The Rules –

- introduce new standard fees, payable to solicitors as Trial Preparation Fees, for cases in which the assisted person pleads guilty to one or more offences after the first arraignment and the case does not proceed to trial (rules 4 and 7(i));
- substitute increased levels of standard fees for guilty pleas and trials (rules 4 and 7(c) and (i));
- substitute a new provision regarding the fees payable where a solicitor was dismissed or obliged to withdraw from a case for compelling professional reasons (rules 4 and 7(k)); and
- make other minor and consequential amendments.

The Rules come into operation on 15th April 2016.

The amendments made by these Rules apply for the determination of costs payable in respect of work done under a criminal aid certificate granted on or after 5th May 2015, subject to a transitional provision (rule 3).