

**EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO**  
**The Water Meters Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

**S.R. 2016 No. 422**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Infrastructure to accompany the Water Meters Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 which have been laid before the Assembly in draft.
- 1.2 The Statutory Rule is being made under section 3(1) and (2) of the Water and Sewerage Services Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (“the 2016 Act”) and is subject to draft affirmative resolution.

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1 The purpose of the rule is to amend Article 81 of the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 (“the 2006 Order”) to suspend the requirement to install meters at all new domestic water connections.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Article 81 of the 2006 Order imposed a duty on Northern Ireland Water to install water meters at all new domestic water connections. The 2016 Act introduced a power to make regulations to remove or qualify that duty.
- 3.2 The Regulations suspend the requirement for Northern Ireland Water to install water meters at all new domestic water connections.
- 3.3 They also suspend the requirement for Northern Ireland Water to install water meters where a connection notice has been served but has not yet been installed at the commencement date of the Regulations.
- 3.4 In addition, the Regulations suspend the requirement for Northern Ireland Water to approve or publish specifications for water meters for use in private domestic dwellings as such specifications will not be required.

**4. Consultation**

4.1 The Department has consulted with the statutory consultees in accordance with section 3(7) of the 2016 Act. Three responses were received and there were no objections to the legislative proposals.

**5. Regulatory Impact**

5.1 The Department has considered the proposed legislative provisions against the criteria for regulatory impact and concluded that a full Regulatory Impact Assessment is not required for these proposals.

**6. Financial Implications**

6.1 There will be a reduction in costs for NI Water of approximately £148k per year.

**7. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

7.1 Consideration has been given to compliance with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. No human rights issues have been identified by the Department.

**8. Equality Impact**

8.1 Consideration has been given to section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. An equality impact screening assessment has been completed which identified no impact on Section 75 groups. A full Equality Impact Assessment is not therefore necessary.