
EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations amend the Social Security (Medical Evidence) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1976 (“the 1976 Regulations”) and the Statutory Sick Pay (Medical Evidence) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1985 (“the 1985 Regulations”).

Regulation 2 amends the 1976 Regulations, and regulation 3 amends the 1985 Regulations, to expand the people who can sign statements (which are known as “fit notes”) to include registered nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists. Fit notes are the prescribed form of evidence for social security and statutory sick pay purposes. Regulations 2 and 3 replace references to “doctor” with references to “healthcare professional”. They also insert a definition of “healthcare professional” which includes doctors and the four new professions.

Regulation 4 makes consequential amendments to other sets of Regulations which refer to medical evidence under the 1976 Regulations as having been signed by doctors or registered medical practitioners.

These Regulations make, in relation to Northern Ireland, only provision corresponding to provision in regulations made by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in relation to Great Britain and accordingly, by virtue of section 149(3) of, and paragraph 10 of Schedule 5 to, the Social Security Administration (Northern Ireland) Act 1992), are not subject to the requirement of section 149(2) of that Act for prior reference to the Social Security Advisory Committee.