



## 2000 CHAPTER 1

### **Financial assistance for political parties**

1. The Northern Ireland Assembly Commission (in this Act referred to as “the Commission”) may, in accordance with a scheme in force under section 2, make payments to political parties for the purpose of assisting members of the Assembly who are connected with such parties to perform their Assembly duties.

### **The scheme**

2.—(1) The Commission shall as soon as practicable after this Act comes into operation prepare and lay before the Assembly a scheme for the making of payments to political parties for the purpose mentioned in section 1.

(2) A scheme under this section may in particular—

- (a) provide for payments to be of such amounts as are specified in, or determined in accordance with, the scheme;
- (b) provide for payments to be made at such times and on such terms and conditions as may be specified in the scheme;
- (c) determine the circumstances in which a member of the Assembly and a political party are to be regarded as connected for the purposes of section 1 and the scheme.

(3) The Commission may at any time prepare and lay before the Assembly a revised scheme under this section.

(4) A scheme under this section (or a revised scheme) shall not come into force unless it is approved by a resolution of the Assembly.

**Transitional arrangements**

**3.—**(1) In relation to the interim period the existing arrangements shall have effect as if contained in a scheme in force under section 2.

(2) In this section—

“the interim period” means the period—

- (a) beginning on 1st December 1999; and
- (b) ending on whichever is the earlier of—
  - (i) 31st March 2000; and
  - (ii) the day immediately before that on which the first scheme under section 2 comes into force;

“the existing arrangements” means the arrangements which were—

- (a) made by the Secretary of State for the funding of political parties in the Assembly; and
- (b) in force immediately before the beginning of the interim period.

**Short title**

**4.** This Act may be cited as the Financial Assistance for Political Parties Act (Northern Ireland) 2000.