

SCHEDULES

SCHEDULE 7

Section 59.

HOUSING BENEFIT: REVISIONS AND APPEALS

Introductory

1.—(1) In this Schedule “relevant authority” means the Housing Executive or the Department of Finance and Personnel, as the case may be.

(2) In this Schedule “relevant decision” means any of the following—

- (a) a decision of a relevant authority on a claim for housing benefit;
- (b) any decision under paragraph 4 which supersedes a decision falling within head (a), within this paragraph or within head (b) of sub-paragraph (1) of that paragraph,

but references in this Schedule to a relevant decision do not include references to a decision under paragraph 3 to revise a relevant decision.

Decisions on claims for benefit

2. Where at any time a claim for housing benefit is decided by a relevant authority—

- (a) the claim shall not be regarded as subsisting after that time; and
- (b) accordingly, the claimant shall not (without making a further claim) be entitled to the benefit on the basis of circumstances not obtaining at that time.

Revision of decisions

3.—(1) Any relevant decision may be revised or further revised by the relevant authority which made the decision—

- (a) either within the prescribed period or in prescribed cases or circumstances; and
- (b) either on an application made for the purpose by a person affected by the decision or on its own initiative,

and regulations may prescribe the procedure by which a decision of a relevant authority may be so revised.

(2) In making a decision under sub-paragraph (1), the relevant authority need not consider any issue that is not raised by the application or, as the case may be, did not cause it to act on its own initiative.

(3) Subject to sub-paragraphs (4) and (5) and paragraph 18, a revision under this paragraph shall take effect from the date on which the original decision took (or was to take) effect.

(4) Regulations may provide that, in prescribed cases or circumstances, a revision under this paragraph shall take effect from such other date as may be prescribed.

(5) Where a decision is revised under this paragraph, for the purposes of any rule as to the time allowed for bringing an appeal, the decision shall be regarded as made on the date on which it is so revised.

(6) Except in prescribed circumstances, an appeal against a decision of the relevant authority shall lapse if the decision is revised under this paragraph before the appeal is determined.

Decisions superseding earlier decisions

4.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (4), the following, namely—

(a) any relevant decision (whether as originally made or as revised under paragraph 3); and

(b) any decision under this Schedule of an appeal tribunal or a Commissioner, may be superseded by a decision made by the appropriate relevant authority, either on an application made for the purpose by a person affected by the decision or on its own initiative.

(2) In making a decision under sub-paragraph (1), the appropriate relevant authority need not consider any issue that is not raised by the application or, as the case may be, did not cause it to act on its own initiative.

(3) Regulations may prescribe the cases and circumstances in which, and the procedure by which, a decision may be made under this paragraph.

(4) Subject to sub-paragraph (5) and paragraph 18, a decision under this paragraph shall take effect from the date on which it is made or, where applicable, the date on which the application was made.

(5) Regulations may provide that, in prescribed cases or circumstances, a decision under this paragraph shall take effect from such other date as may be prescribed.

(6) In this paragraph “the appropriate relevant authority” means the authority which made the decision being superseded, the decision appealed against to the tribunal or, as the case may be, the decision to which the decision being appealed against to the Commissioner relates.

Use of experts by relevant authorities

5. Where it appears to a relevant authority that a matter in relation to which a relevant decision falls to be made by it involves a question of fact requiring special expertise, it may direct that, in dealing with that matter, it shall have the assistance of one or more persons appearing to it to have knowledge or experience which would be relevant in determining that question.

Appeal to appeal tribunal

6.—(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), this paragraph applies to any relevant decision (whether as originally made or as revised under paragraph 3) of a relevant authority which—

- (a) is made on a claim for, or on an award of, housing benefit; or
- (b) does not fall within head (a) but is of a prescribed description.

(2) This paragraph does not apply to—

- (a) any decision terminating or reducing the amount of a person's housing benefit that is made in consequence of any decision made under regulations under section 2A of the Administration Act (work-focused interviews);
- (b) any decision of a relevant authority as to the amount of benefit to which a person is entitled in a case in which the amount is determined by the rate of benefit provided for by law; or
- (c) any such other decision as may be prescribed.

(3) In the case of a decision to which this paragraph applies, any person affected by the decision shall have a right of appeal to an appeal tribunal.

(4) Nothing in sub-paragraph (3) shall confer a right of appeal in relation to—

- (a) a prescribed decision; or
- (b) a prescribed determination embodied in or necessary to a decision.

(5) Regulations under sub-paragraph (4) shall not prescribe any decision or determination that relates to the conditions of entitlement to housing benefit for which a claim has been validly made.

(6) Where any amount of housing benefit is determined to be recoverable under section 73 of the Administration Act (overpayments of housing benefit), any person from whom it has been determined that it is so recoverable shall have a right of appeal to an appeal tribunal.

(7) A person with a right of appeal under this paragraph shall be given such notice of the decision in respect of which he has that right, and of that right, as may be prescribed.

(8) Regulations may make provision as to the manner in which, and the time within which, appeals are to be brought.

- (9) In deciding an appeal under this paragraph, an appeal tribunal—
- (a) need not consider any issue that is not raised by the appeal; and
 - (b) shall not take into account any circumstances not obtaining at the time when the decision appealed against was made.

Redetermination, etc. of appeals by tribunal

7.—(1) This paragraph applies where an application is made to a person for leave under paragraph 8(7)(a) or (c) to appeal from a decision of an appeal tribunal.

(2) If the person considers that the decision was erroneous in point of law, he may set aside the decision and refer the case either for redetermination by the tribunal or for determination by a differently constituted tribunal.

(3) If each of the principal parties to the case expresses the view that the decision was erroneous in point of law, the person shall set aside the decision and refer the case for determination by a differently constituted tribunal.

- (4) In this paragraph and paragraph 8 “principal parties” means—
- (a) where it is the applicant for leave to appeal or the circumstances are otherwise such as may be prescribed, the Department;
 - (b) the relevant authority against whose decision the appeal to the appeal tribunal was brought; and
 - (c) the person affected by the decision against which the appeal to the appeal tribunal was brought or by the tribunal’s decision on that appeal.

Appeal from tribunal to Commissioner

8.—(1) Subject to the provisions of this paragraph, an appeal lies to a Commissioner from any decision of an appeal tribunal under paragraph 6 or 7 on the ground that the decision of the tribunal was erroneous in point of law.

- (2) An appeal lies under this paragraph at the instance of any of the following—
- (a) the Department;
 - (b) the relevant authority against whose decision the appeal to the appeal tribunal was brought;
 - (c) any person affected by the decision against which the appeal to the appeal tribunal was brought or by the tribunal’s decision on that appeal.

(3) If each of the principal parties to the appeal expresses the view that the decision appealed against was erroneous in point of law, the Commissioner may set aside the decision and refer the case to a tribunal with directions for its determination.

(4) Where the Commissioner holds that the decision appealed against was erroneous in point of law, he shall set it aside.

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- (5) Where under sub-paragraph (4) the Commissioner sets aside a decision—
- (a) he shall have power, if he can do so without making fresh or further findings of fact, to give the decision which he considers the tribunal should have given;
 - (b) he shall also have power, if he considers it expedient, to make such findings and to give such decision as he considers appropriate in the light of them; and
 - (c) if he does not exercise the power in head (a) or (b), he shall refer the case to a tribunal with directions for its determination.
- (6) Subject to any direction of the Commissioner, a reference under sub-paragraph (3) or (5)(c) shall be to a differently constituted tribunal.
- (7) No appeal lies under this paragraph without leave; and leave for the purposes of this sub-paragraph may be given—
- (a) by the person who constituted, or was the chairman of, the tribunal when the decision to be appealed against was given;
 - (b) subject to and in accordance with regulations, by a Commissioner; or
 - (c) in a prescribed case, by such person not falling within head (a) or (b) as may be prescribed.
- (8) Regulations may make provision as to the manner in which, and the time within which, appeals are to be brought and applications made for leave to appeal.

Appeal from Commissioner on point of law

- 9.—**(1) Subject to sub-paragraphs (2) and (3), an appeal on a question of law shall lie to the Court of Appeal from any decision of a Commissioner.
- (2) No appeal under this paragraph shall lie from a decision except—
- (a) with the leave of the Commissioner who gave the decision or, in a prescribed case, with the leave of a Commissioner selected in accordance with regulations; or
 - (b) if he refuses leave, with the leave of the Court of Appeal.
- (3) An application for leave under this paragraph in respect of a Commissioner's decision may only be made by—
- (a) a person who, before the proceedings before the Commissioner were begun, was entitled to appeal to the Commissioner from the decision to which the Commissioner's decision relates;
 - (b) any other person who was a party to the proceedings in which the decision to which the Commissioner's decision relates was given;
 - (c) any other person who is authorised by regulations to apply for leave,

and regulations may make provision with respect to the manner in which, and the time within which, applications must be made to a Commissioner for leave under this paragraph, and with respect to the procedure for dealing with such applications.

Procedure

10.—(1) Regulations may make for the purposes of this Schedule any such provision as is specified in Schedule 4 to the 1998 Order, or as would be so specified if the references to the Department in paragraph 1 of that Schedule were references to a relevant authority.

(2) Regulations prescribing the procedure to be followed in cases before a Commissioner shall provide that any hearing shall be in public except in so far as the Commissioner for special reasons otherwise directs.

(3) The power by regulations to prescribe procedure includes power—

(a) to make provision as to the representation of one person, at any hearing of a case, by another person whether having professional qualifications or not; and

(b) to confer on the Department a right to be represented and heard in any proceedings before a Commissioner to which it is not already a party.

(4) If it appears to a Commissioner that a matter before him involves a question of fact of special difficulty, he may direct that in dealing with that matter he shall have the assistance of one or more persons appearing to him to have knowledge or experience which would be relevant in determining that question.

(5) If it appears to the Chief Commissioner (or, in the case of his inability to act, to such other of the Commissioners as he may have nominated to act for the purpose) that—

(a) an application for leave under paragraph 8(7)(b); or

(b) an appeal,

falling to be heard by one of the Commissioners involves a question of law of special difficulty, he may direct that the application or appeal be dealt with, not by that Commissioner alone, but by a tribunal consisting of any two or more of the Commissioners.

(6) If the decision of such a tribunal is not unanimous, the decision of the majority shall be the decision of the tribunal; and the presiding Commissioner shall have a casting vote if the votes (including his first vote) are equally divided.

(7) Where a direction is given under sub-paragraph (5)(a), paragraph 8(7)(b) shall have effect as if the reference to a Commissioner were a reference to such a tribunal as is mentioned in sub-paragraph (5).

(8) Except so far as it may be applied by regulations, Part I of the Arbitration Act 1996 (c. 23) shall not apply to any proceedings under this Schedule.

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Finality of decisions

11. Subject to the provisions of this Schedule, any decision made in accordance with the preceding provisions of this Schedule shall be final.

Matters arising as respects decisions

- 12.** Regulations may make provision as respects matters arising—
- (a) pending any decision under this Schedule of a relevant authority, an appeal tribunal or a Commissioner which relates to—
 - (i) any claim for housing benefit;
 - (ii) any person's entitlement to that benefit or its receipt; or
 - (b) out of the revision under paragraph 3, or on appeal, of any such decision.

Suspension in prescribed circumstances

- 13.—**(1) Regulations may provide for—
- (a) suspending, in whole or in part, any payments of housing benefit;
 - (b) the subsequent making, or restoring, in prescribed circumstances of any or all of the payments so suspended.
- (2) Regulations made under sub-paragraph (1) may, in particular, make provision for any case where, in relation to a claim for housing benefit—
- (a) it appears to the relevant authority that an issue arises whether the conditions for entitlement to such a benefit are or were fulfilled;
 - (b) it appears to the relevant authority that an issue arises whether a decision as to an award of such a benefit should be revised (under paragraph 3) or superseded (under paragraph 4);
 - (c) an appeal is pending against a decision of an appeal tribunal, a Commissioner or a court; or
 - (d) it appears to the relevant authority, where an appeal is pending against the decision given by a Commissioner or a court in a different case, that if the appeal were to be determined in a particular way an issue would arise whether the award of housing benefit in the case itself ought to be revised or superseded.
- (3) For the purposes of sub-paragraph (2), an appeal against a decision is pending if—
- (a) an appeal against the decision has been brought but not determined;
 - (b) an application for leave to appeal against the decision has been made but not determined; or
 - (c) the time within which—

- (i) an application for leave to appeal may be made; or
 - (ii) an appeal against the decision may be brought,
- has not expired and the circumstances are such as may be prescribed.
- (4) In sub-paragraph (2)(d) the reference to a different case—
- (a) includes a reference to a case involving a different relevant authority; but
 - (b) does not include a reference to a case relating to a different benefit.

Suspension for failure to furnish information, etc.

14.—(1) The powers conferred by this paragraph are exercisable in relation to persons who fail to comply with information requirements.

- (2) Regulations may provide for—
- (a) suspending, in whole or in part, any payments of housing benefit;
 - (b) the subsequent making, or restoring, in prescribed circumstances of any or all of the payments so suspended.

(3) In this paragraph and paragraph 15 “information requirement” means a requirement in pursuance of regulations made by virtue of section 5(1)(hh) of the Administration Act to furnish information or evidence needed for a determination whether a decision on an award of that benefit should be revised under paragraph 3 or superseded under paragraph 4.

Termination in cases of a failure to furnish information, etc.

15. Regulations may provide that, except in prescribed cases or circumstances, a person who—

- (a) is a person whose benefit has been suspended in accordance with regulations under paragraph 13 and who subsequently fails to comply with an information requirement; or
- (b) is a person whose benefit has been suspended in accordance with regulations under paragraph 14 for failing to comply with such a requirement,

shall cease to be entitled to the benefit from a date not earlier than the date on which payments were suspended.

Decisions involving issues that arise on appeal in other cases

- 16.**—(1) This paragraph applies where—
- (a) a relevant decision, or a decision under paragraph 3 about the revision of an earlier decision, falls to be made in any particular case; and

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(b) an appeal is pending against the decision given in another case by a Commissioner or a court.

(2) A relevant authority need not make the decision while the appeal is pending if it considers it possible that the result of the appeal will be such that, if it were already determined, there would be no entitlement to benefit.

(3) If a relevant authority considers it possible that the result of the appeal will be such that, if it were already determined, it would affect the decision in some other way—

(a) it need not, except in such cases or circumstances as may be prescribed, make the decision while the appeal is pending;

(b) it may, in such cases or circumstances as may be prescribed, make the decision on such basis as may be prescribed.

(4) Where—

(a) a relevant authority acts in accordance with sub-paragraph (3)(b); and

(b) following the making of the determination it is appropriate for its decision to be revised,

it shall then revise its decision (under paragraph 3) in accordance with that determination.

(5) For the purposes of this paragraph, an appeal against a decision is pending if—

(a) an appeal against the decision has been brought but not determined;

(b) an application for leave to appeal against the decision has been made but not determined; or

(c) the time within which—

(i) an application for leave to appeal may be made; or

(ii) an appeal against the decision may be brought,

has not expired and the circumstances are such as may be prescribed.

(6) In heads (a), (b) and (c) of sub-paragraph (5), any reference to an appeal against a decision, or to an application for leave to appeal against a decision, includes a reference to an application for judicial review of the decision under section 18 of the Judicature (Northern Ireland) Act 1978 (c. 23) or for leave to apply for judicial review.

(7) In sub-paragraph (1)(b) the reference to another case—

(a) includes a reference to a case involving a decision made, or falling to be made, by a different relevant authority; but

(b) does not include a reference to a case relating to another benefit.

Appeals involving issues that arise on appeal in other cases

17.—(1) This paragraph applies where—

- (a) an appeal (“appeal A”) in relation to a relevant decision (whether as originally made or as revised under paragraph 3) is made to an appeal tribunal, or from an appeal tribunal to a Commissioner; and
- (b) an appeal (“appeal B”) is pending against a decision given in a different case by a Commissioner or a court.

(2) If the relevant authority whose decision gave rise to appeal A considers it possible that the result of appeal B will be such that, if it were already determined, it would affect the determination of appeal A, it may serve notice requiring the tribunal or Commissioner—

- (a) not to determine appeal A but to refer it to that authority; or
- (b) to deal with the appeal in accordance with sub-paragraph (4).

(3) Where appeal A is referred to the relevant authority under sub-paragraph (2)(a), following the determination of appeal B and in accordance with that determination, it shall if appropriate—

- (a) in a case where appeal A has not been determined by the tribunal, revise (under paragraph 3) its decision which gave rise to that appeal; or
- (b) in a case where appeal A has been determined by the tribunal, make a decision (under paragraph 4) superseding the tribunal’s decision.

(4) Where appeal A is to be dealt with in accordance with this sub-paragraph, the appeal tribunal or Commissioner shall either—

- (a) stay appeal A until appeal B is determined; or
- (b) if the tribunal or Commissioner considers it to be in the interests of the appellant to do so, determine appeal A as if—
 - (i) appeal B had already been determined; and
 - (ii) the issues arising on appeal B had been decided in the way that was most unfavourable to the appellant.

(5) Where the appeal tribunal or Commissioner acts in accordance with sub-paragraph (4)(b), following the determination of appeal B the relevant authority whose decision gave rise to appeal A shall, if appropriate, make a decision (under paragraph 4) superseding the decision of the tribunal or Commissioner in accordance with that determination.

(6) For the purposes of this paragraph, an appeal against a decision is pending if—

- (a) an appeal against the decision has been brought but not determined;
- (b) an application for leave to appeal against the decision has been made but not determined; or

- (c) the time within which—
 - (i) an application for leave to appeal may be made; or
 - (ii) an appeal against the decision may be brought,
 has not expired and the circumstances are such as may be prescribed.
- (7) In this paragraph—
 - (a) the reference in sub-paragraph (1)(a) to an appeal to a Commissioner includes a reference to an application for leave to appeal to a Commissioner;
 - (b) the reference in sub-paragraph (1)(b) to a different case—
 - (i) includes a reference to a case involving a different relevant authority; but
 - (ii) does not include a reference to a case relating to a different benefit; and
 - (c) any reference in head (a), (b) or (c) of sub-paragraph (6) to an appeal, or to an application for leave to appeal, against a decision includes a reference to an application for judicial review of the decision under section 18 of the Judicature (Northern Ireland) Act 1978 (c. 23) or for leave to apply for judicial review.
- (8) In sub-paragraph (4) “the appellant” means the person who appealed or, as the case may be, first appealed against the decision mentioned in sub-paragraph (1)(a).
- (9) Regulations may make provision supplementing the provision made by this paragraph.

Restrictions on entitlement to benefit in certain cases of error

- 18.—**(1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2), this paragraph applies where—
- (a) the effect of the determination, whenever made, of an appeal by virtue of this Schedule to a Commissioner or the court (“the relevant determination”) is that the relevant authority’s decision out of which the appeal arose was erroneous in point of law; and
 - (b) after the date of the relevant determination a decision falls to be made by a relevant authority in accordance with that determination (or would, apart from this paragraph, fall to be so made)—
 - (i) in relation to a claim for housing benefit;
 - (ii) as to whether to revise, under paragraph 3, a decision as to a person’s entitlement to that benefit; or
 - (iii) on an application made under paragraph 4 for a decision as to a person’s entitlement to that benefit to be superseded.

- (2) This paragraph does not apply where the decision mentioned in sub-paragraph (1)(b)—
- (a) is one which, but for paragraph 16(2) or (3)(a), would have been made before the date of the relevant determination; or
 - (b) is one made in pursuance of paragraph 17(3) or (5).
- (3) In so far as the decision relates to a person's entitlement to benefit in respect of a period before the date of the relevant determination, it shall be made as if the relevant authority's decision had been found by the Commissioner or court not to have been erroneous in point of law.
- (4) Sub-paragraph (1)(a) shall be read as including a case where—
- (a) the effect of the relevant determination is that part or all of a purported regulation or order is invalid; and
 - (b) the error of law made by the relevant authority was to act on the basis that the purported regulation or order (or the part held to be invalid) was valid.
- (5) It is immaterial for the purposes of sub-paragraph (1)—
- (a) where such a decision as is mentioned in head (b)(i) falls to be made, whether the claim was made before or after the date of the relevant determination;
 - (b) where such a decision as is mentioned in head (b)(ii) or (iii) falls to be made on an application under paragraph 3 or (as the case may be) 4, whether the application was made before or after that date.
- (6) In this paragraph "the court" means—
- (a) the High Court;
 - (b) the Court of Appeal;
 - (c) the House of Lords; or
 - (d) the Court of Justice of the European Community.
- (7) For the purposes of this paragraph, any reference to entitlement to benefit includes a reference to entitlement—
- (a) to any increase in the rate of a benefit; or
 - (b) to a benefit, or increase of benefit, at a particular rate.
- (8) The date of the relevant determination shall, in prescribed cases, be determined for the purposes of this paragraph in accordance with any regulations made for that purpose.
- (9) Regulations made under sub-paragraph (8) may include provision—
- (a) for a determination of a higher court to be treated as if it had been made on the date of a determination by a lower court or by a Commissioner; or
 - (b) for a determination of a lower court or of a Commissioner to be treated as if it had been made on the date of a determination by a higher court.

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Correction of errors and setting aside of decisions

- 19.—**(1) Regulations may make provision with respect to—
- (a) the correction of accidental errors in any decision or record of a decision made under any relevant provision; and
 - (b) the setting aside of any such decision in a case where it appears just to set the decision aside on the ground that—
 - (i) a document relating to the proceedings in which the decision was made was not sent to, or was not received at an appropriate time by, a party to the proceedings or a party’s representative, or was not received at an appropriate time by the body or person who made the decision; or
 - (ii) a party to the proceedings or a party’s representative was not present at a hearing related to the proceedings.
- (2) Nothing in sub-paragraph (1) shall be construed as derogating from any power to correct errors or set aside decisions which is exercisable apart from regulations made by virtue of that sub-paragraph.
- (3) In this paragraph “relevant provision” means—
- (a) any of the provisions of this Schedule;
 - (b) any of the provisions of Part VII of the Contributions and Benefits Act so far as they relate to housing benefit; or
 - (c) any of the provisions of Part VIII of the Administration Act or of any regulations under section 2A of that Act, so far as the provisions or regulations relate to, or to arrangements for, housing benefit.

Regulations

- 20.—**(1) The power to make regulations under this Schedule shall be exercisable—
- (a) in the case of regulations with respect to proceedings before the Commissioners, by the Lord Chancellor; and
 - (b) in any other case, by the Department.
- (2) Any power conferred by this Schedule to make regulations shall include power to make different provision for different areas or different relevant authorities.
- (3) Article 74(3) to (6) of the 1998 Order (regulations and orders) shall apply to any power to make regulations under this Schedule as it applies to any power to make regulations under that Order.
- (4) A statutory rule containing (whether alone or with other provisions) regulations under paragraph 6(2)(c) or (4) shall be laid before the Assembly after

being made and shall take effect on such date as may be specified in the regulations, but shall (without prejudice to the validity of anything done thereunder or to the making of new regulations) cease to have effect upon the expiration of a period of six months from that date unless at some time before the expiration of that period the regulations have been approved by a resolution of the Assembly.

(5) Regulations made under this Schedule by the Department, and which are not subject to the procedure specified in sub-paragraph (4) shall be subject to negative resolution.

(6) Regulations made under this Schedule by the Lord Chancellor shall be subject to annulment in pursuance of a resolution of either House of Parliament in like manner as a statutory instrument, and section 5 of the Statutory Instruments Act 1946 (c. 36) shall apply accordingly.

(7) In this paragraph the reference to regulations with respect to proceedings before the Commissioners includes a reference to regulations with respect to any such proceedings for the determination of any matter, or for leave to appeal to or from the Commissioners.

Consequential amendment of the Administration Act

21. In section 5(1)(hh) of the Administration Act (regulations about claims for and payments of benefit)—

- (a) in sub-paragraph (i), after “1998” there shall be inserted “or, as the case may be, under paragraph 3 of Schedule 7 to the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act (Northern Ireland) 2000”; and
- (b) in sub-paragraph (ii), after “Order” there shall be inserted “or, as the case may be, paragraph 4 of that Schedule”.

Consequential amendments of the 1998 Order

22.—(1) In Article 15(12) of the 1998 Order (appeal from tribunal to Commissioner), after “this Article” there shall be inserted “or under paragraph 8 of Schedule 7 to the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act (Northern Ireland) 2000”.

(2) Articles 34(4) and (5) and 35 of that Order (regulations for the determination of claims and reviews of housing benefit and for the suspension of that benefit) shall cease to have effect.

(3) In Schedule 1 to that Order (appeal tribunals: supplementary provisions), in paragraph 4(1)(a) for “or Article 22 of the Child Support Order” there shall be substituted “, Article 22 of the Child Support Order or paragraph 6 of Schedule 7 to the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act (Northern Ireland) 2000”.

*Interpretation***23.—(1)** In this Schedule—

“affected” shall be construed subject to any regulations under subparagraph (2);

“appeal tribunal” means an appeal tribunal constituted under Chapter I of Part II of the 1998 Order;

“the Chief Commissioner” means the Chief Social Security Commissioner;

“Commissioner” means the Chief Commissioner or any other Social Security Commissioner, and includes a tribunal of two or more Commissioners constituted under paragraph 10(5);

“prescribed” means prescribed by regulations under this Schedule;

“relevant authority” has the meaning given by paragraph 1(1);

“relevant decision” has the meaning given by paragraph 1(2).

(2) Regulations may make provision specifying the circumstances in which a person is or is not to be treated for the purposes of this Schedule as a person who is affected by any decision of a relevant authority.

(3) For the purposes of this Schedule any decision that is made or falls to be made—

(a) by a person authorised to carry out any function of a relevant authority relating to housing benefit; or

(b) by a person providing services relating to housing benefit directly or indirectly to a relevant authority,

shall be treated as a decision of the relevant authority on whose behalf the function is carried out or, as the case may be, to whom those services are provided.