HB Memo 4/26

Income and capital disregards for payments from Irish Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme and Church of England Redress Scheme

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Introduction

1. This memo gives guidance on the changes introduced to Housing Benefit by the Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026[1] SR 2026 No 177 and the Social Security (Income and Capital Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026[2], SR 2026 No 181.

1 SS (Misc Amdts) Regs (NI) 26; 2 SS (I&C) (Amdt) Regs (NI) 26

2. The Social Security (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 introduces changes related to the Irish Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme established by the Irish Government[1] and come into operation on 30.10.26[2].

1 Irish Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme Act 2023; 2 SS (Misc Amdts) Regs (NI) 26, reg 1(1)

3. The Social Security (Income and Capital Disregards) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 introduces changes related to the Church of England Redress Scheme[1] and come into operation on 31.10.26[2] or, if later, the day on which section 12 of the Abuse Redress Measure 2025 comes into force.

1 Abuse Redress Measure 2025; 2 SS (I&C) (Amdt) Regs (NI) 26, reg 1(2)

Background

4. The Irish Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme provides financial compensation, referred to as a Mother and Baby Scheme payment, to eligible people who spent time in Mother and Baby Institutions. The Scheme is administered by the Irish Government.

5. The Church of England Redress Scheme provides financial compensation, referred to as a Church of England Redress payment, to eligible people who suffered abuse carried out by a person representing the Church of England.

Definitions

6. These regulations insert new definitions for

1. Mother and Baby Scheme Payment (see paragraph 7)

2. Church of England Redress Scheme (see paragraph 8)

3. qualifying person (see paragraph 9).

7. “Mother and Baby Scheme payment” means a payment under the Mother and Baby Institutions Payment established by the Irish Government under section 5 of the Irish Mother and Baby Institutions Payment Scheme Act 2023[1].

1 HB Regs (NI) 06, reg 2(1); HB (SPC) Regs (NI) 06, reg 2(1)

8. “Church of England Redress Scheme” means a payment by the scheme administered by the redress body under the Abuse Redress Measure 2025[1].

1 HB Regs (NI) 06, reg 2(1); HB (SPC) Regs (NI) 06, reg 2(1)

9. In the definition of qualifying person, a Mother and Baby Scheme Payment and Church of England Redress Payment is inserted into relevant legislation[1]. This means any person that receives a payment from these schemes is added to the definition of a qualifying person.

1 HB Regs (NI) 06, reg 2(1); HB (SPC) Regs (NI) 06, reg 2(1)

Capital disregards

10. These regulations provide that for

    1. working age Housing Benefit claimants[1]

    2. pension age Housing Benefit claimants[2]

    any Mother and Baby scheme payments and Church of England Redress payments will be disregarded indefinitely from a person’s capital.

1 HB Regs (NI) 06, Sch 7, para 25(1A); 2 HB (SPC) Regs (NI) 06, Sch 7, para 16(1A)

Notional capital

11. For working age Housing Benefit[1], any Mother and Baby Scheme or Church of England Redress payment paid to

1. a third party for the claimant or their partner **or**

2. the claimant or their partner for a third party

is not to be treated as notional capital.

1 HB Regs (NI) 06, reg 46(4A)

Income disregards

12. For working age Housing Benefit fully disregard[1]

1. any Mother and Baby Scheme or Church of England Redress Scheme Payment **and**

2. any income from capital that was a Mother and Baby Scheme or Church of England Redress Scheme payment

3. payments to a third party in respect of a claimant or their partner[2]

4. income treated as capital[3].

1 HB Regs (NI) 06, Sch 6, para 37(1A) to 37(6); 2 reg 39(7A); 3 reg 43(6)

Non-dependant deductions

13. For both working age and pension age Housing Benefit Mother and Baby Scheme or Church of England Redress Scheme compensation payments are also disregarded as non-dependants' gross weekly income for the purposes of calculating deductions for allowable housing costs[1].

1 HB Regs (NI) 06, reg 72(9); HB (SPC) Regs (NI) 06, reg 53(10)

Contacts

If you have any queries about this memo, please contact:

Decision Making Services
Sections 1 & 7
Causeway Exchange
Level 3
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Exts: 38069, 37908, 38078, 37145, 37104, 43586, 38529, 38537 & 37080

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