

National Assistance Act 1948
Local Authority Social Services Act 1970

The Ordinary Residence Disputes (National Assistance Act 1948) Directions 2010

The Secretary of State for Health makes the following directions in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 21(1) and 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948¹ and section 7A of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970².

Commencement and interpretation

1. (1) These directions come into force on 19th April 2010 and are addressed to every local authority in England.

(2) In these directions –

“the 1948 Act” means the National Assistance Act 1948;

“lead local authority” means the local authority which has accepted provisional responsibility for providing services to P under Part 3 of the 1948 Act (Local Authority Services) in accordance with direction 2(2), (3) or (4);

“local authorities in dispute” means the local authorities which are party to an ordinary residence dispute;

“ordinary residence dispute” means any question arising under Part 3 of the 1948 Act, or under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970³ (provision of welfare services), as to the ordinary residence of any person; and

“P” means a person whose needs have been assessed as calling for the provision of services under Part 3 of the 1948 Act and to whose ordinary residence the ordinary residence dispute relates.

(3) References in these directions to the date on which an ordinary residence dispute arises are references to the first date on which a written communication is sent by one of the local authorities in dispute to one or more of the other authorities in dispute,

¹ 1948 c. 29. Section 21(1) has been amended by paragraph 2 of Schedule 23 to the Local Government Act 1972 (c. 70) (“1972 Act”); the Schedule to the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act 1977 (c. 48); paragraph 11 of Schedule 13 to the Children Act 1989 (c. 41); and section 42 of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 (c. 19) (“1990 Act”).

Section 29(1) has been amended by Schedule 4 to the Mental Health (Scotland) Act 1960 (c. 61); paragraph 2 of Schedule 23 to the 1972 Act; and paragraph 11 of Schedule 13 to the Children Act 1989.

² 1970 c. 42. Section 7A was inserted by section 50 of the 1990 Act. For the definition of “social services functions”, see section 1A of, and Schedule 1 to, the 1970 Act.

³ 1970 c. 44. Section 2 has been amended by paragraph 12 of Schedule 2 to the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 (c. 42); Schedule 30 to the 1972 Act; paragraph 12 of Schedule 9, and Schedule 10, to the 1990 Act; and section 148(3) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (c. 14).

notifying that other authority or those other authorities that it does not accept that it is liable for the provision to P of services under Part 3 of the 1948 Act.

(4) References in these directions to the provision of services under Part 3 of the 1948 Act include references to the provision of the services listed in section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

Responsibility for provision of services pending determination of dispute

2. (1) The local authorities in dispute must not allow the existence of an ordinary residence dispute to prevent, delay or otherwise adversely affect the provision of services to P under Part 3 of the 1948 Act.

(2) One of the local authorities in dispute must provisionally accept responsibility for the provision of such services to P, pending determination of the dispute.

(3) If no local authority is providing such services to P at the date on which the ordinary residence dispute arises, the local authorities in dispute must agree without delay which of them will accept provisional responsibility for doing so.

(4) If the local authorities in dispute are unable to agree which of them is to accept provisional responsibility, the local authority in whose area P is living must do so, and if P is homeless, the local authority in whose area P is physically present must do so.

Steps to be taken before referring a dispute to the Secretary of State

3. (1) Before they may refer an ordinary residence dispute to the Secretary of State for determination in accordance with section 32(3) to (5) of the 1948 Act⁴ (adjustments between authorities), the local authorities in dispute must ensure that they have taken all reasonable steps to resolve the dispute between themselves, and in particular that they have complied with the following provisions of this direction.

(2) As soon as reasonably practicable after the date on which the dispute arises, the lead local authority must identify all the local authorities in dispute and co-ordinate discussions between those authorities in an attempt to resolve the dispute.

(3) As soon as reasonably practicable after the date on which the dispute arises, each local authority in dispute must nominate a named contact within the authority who will take the lead in discussions about the dispute on behalf of the authority.

(4) Each local authority in dispute must engage in constructive dialogue with the others, with a view to the speedy resolution of the dispute.

(5) The lead local authority must gather from the other local authorities in dispute any information which may help to resolve the dispute and those other authorities must comply without delay with any reasonable request by the lead local authority to provide such information.

⁴ Section 32 has been amended by paragraph 14 of Schedule 8 to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 (c. 49) and by section 148(2) of the Health and Social Care Act 2008 (c. 14).

(6) The lead local authority must provide to P, or P's representatives, such information as appears to it to be appropriate about progress in resolving the dispute.

Stage at which dispute must be referred to Secretary of State

4. If the local authorities in dispute cannot resolve the ordinary residence dispute within four months of the date on which the dispute arose, they must refer the dispute to the Secretary of State in accordance with direction 5.

Documents to be sent with referral to Secretary of State

5. (1) The local authorities in dispute must send to the Secretary of State the following documents within 28 days of the expiry of the period mentioned in direction 4 –

(a) a covering letter signed by the lead local authority requesting the Secretary of State to determine the ordinary residence dispute;

(b) a statement of facts signed by each of the local authorities in dispute which includes–

(i) details of P's assessed needs for services under Part 3 of the 1948 Act (Local Authority Services);

(ii) details as to which local authority has provisionally accepted responsibility for the provision of such services to P;

(iii) information about the services being provided to P and the statutory provisions under which they are being provided;

(iv) details of where P is residing and any former places of residence which are relevant to the ordinary residence dispute;

(v) a chronology of relevant events leading up to the request for a determination of the dispute, including the date on which the dispute arose;

(vi) details of the steps that the local authorities in dispute have taken to resolve the dispute themselves;

(vii) in a case where P's capacity to decide where to live is relevant to the dispute, either –

(aa) a statement that the local authorities in dispute agree that P has, or that P lacks, capacity (within the meaning of section 2 of the Mental Capacity Act 2005 (people who lack capacity)) to decide where to live; or

(ab) evidence as to P's capacity to decide where to live; and

(viii) any other factual information which is relevant to the ordinary residence dispute; and

(c) copies of all correspondence between the local authorities in dispute relating to the dispute.

(2) Each of the local authorities in dispute may in addition send to the Secretary of State legal submissions concerning the ordinary residence dispute.

(3) If a local authority in dispute sends legal submissions to the Secretary of State as described in paragraph (2), it must –

(a) send these to the Secretary of State within 14 days of the date on which the documents referred to in paragraph (1) are sent; and

(b) provide evidence that the submissions have been sent to the other local authority or authorities in dispute.

(4) The documents referred to in paragraphs (1) to (3) must be submitted to the Secretary of State at the following address –

Department of Health
Dignity and Safety Policy Management Unit
Social Care Policy and Innovation Division
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8UG.

(5) If, during the determination of the ordinary residence dispute by the Secretary of State, a local authority in dispute is asked to provide further information to the Secretary of State, that local authority must provide that information without delay.

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Signed by authority of the Secretary of State for Health
Member of the Senior Civil Service

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Date