

These notes refer to the Public Health (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 (c.5) which received Royal Assent on 6 May 2008

Public Health (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2008

EXPLANATORY NOTES

1.

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Explanatory note has been prepared by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, (“the Department”).

2.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 2.1. The Act’s purpose is to amend section 2A of the [Public Health Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1967\(c.36\)](#) (power to make regulations for control of certain diseases) The amendment is required to extend the Department’s regulation making powers under that Act in order to facilitate revision of the [Public Health \(Ships\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 1971 S.R 1971 No 183](#), and the [Public Health \(Aircraft\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 1971 S.R. 1971 No 182](#), known collectively as the Ships and Aircraft Regulations.
- 2.2. Amendments to the Ships and Aircraft regulations are required to comply with the UK’s obligations in relation to the World Health Organisation’s International Health Regulations 2005 (IHR), some of which are already in operations. The regulations require amendments to enable ports in Northern Ireland to issue the new, internationally accepted, Ship Sanitation Control Certificates (SSCs).

3.

OPTIONS

- 3.1. The Department is obliged to bring the Ships and Aircraft regulations into compliance with International Health obligations and therefore had no option but to introduce a Bill amending the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967.

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Overview

- 4.1. Section 2A of the [Public Health Act \(Northern Ireland\) 1967 \(c.36\)](#) refers. After sub-section 1 paragraph (b), a new paragraph (c) has been inserted relating to infection or contamination.
 - 4.2. Sub-section 1(c), is followed by an insertion of subsection (1A) which provides the definition of “contamination”.
- 5.

FINANCIAL EFFECTS OF THE ACT

- 5.1. No extra expenditure will be necessitated by virtue of this Act

Human Rights Issues

- 6.1. The provisions of the Act are compatible with the Convention on Human Rights.

Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1. The Department did not prepare an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), for this Act as it was previously decided that, following the Public Health (Amendment) Bill consultation, no concerns or comments were raised and therefore an EIA was not needed for the Public Health Amendment Bill.

Hansard Reports

The following table sets out the dates of the Hansard reports for each stage of the Act’s passage through the Northern Ireland Assembly.

STAGE	DATE
Introduction of Bill to Committee	15 November 2007
First Stage- Introduction of Bill to the Assembly	26 November 2007
Second Stage Debate	4 December 2007
Committee Stage-Departmental briefing on the provisions of the Bill	24 January 2008
Committee Report on the Bill	31 January 2008
Consideration Stage in the Assembly	4 March 2008
Further Consideration Stage	7 April 2008
Final Stage	21 April 2008
Royal Assent	6 May 2008