

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Public Health Notifiable Diseases Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

S.R. 2020 No. 23

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Health to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under section 1(2) of the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The Statutory Rule will mean that medical practitioners will be required to share patient information with the Public Health Agency if they become aware, or have reasonable grounds for suspecting, that a person they are attending has coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

3. Background

- 3.1. This information will be vital in alerting the Public Health Agency to cases or suspected cases of COVID-19, to ensure that the Health and Social Care system can quickly respond, and for surveillance and tracking of the spread and epidemiology of the disease.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. Given the rapidly evolving global situation regarding the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) there is insufficient time to consult on this proposal.

5. Equality Impact

- 5.1. Given the rapidly evolving global situation regarding the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) there is insufficient time to consider equality impacts. The designation of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a notifiable disease, will be part of a range of measures designed to assist efforts to protect the Northern Ireland population by seeking to contain the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) should we have cases confirmed here.

6. Regulatory Impact

- 6.1. Given the rapidly evolving global situation regarding the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) there is insufficient time to consider regulatory impacts more fully, however, any impacts are not likely to be significant.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. Given the rapidly evolving global situation regarding the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) there is insufficient time to consider financial implications associated with designating coronavirus disease

(COVID-19) a notifiable disease, however, any impacts are not likely to be significant.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 8.1. Consideration has been given to the human rights implications of these regulations. They are considered compatible with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

9. EU Implications

- 9.1. There are no EU implications.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

- 10.1. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was made a notifiable disease in Scotland under the Public Health (Scotland) Act 2008 on 22 February 2020. It is not known if England and/or Wales intend to make coronavirus disease (COVID-19) notifiable. The Republic of Ireland made COVID-19 a notifiable disease by introducing the Infectious Diseases (Amendment) Regulations 2020 on 20 February 2020.

11. Additional Information

- 11.1. Not Applicable