

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Public Health Notifiable Diseases Order (Northern Ireland) 2022 S.R. 2022 No. 181

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. To make monkeypox a notifiable disease so 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 monkeypox.

3. Background

- 3.1. There is currently an outbreak of monkeypox in the UK and Europe. The Public Health Notifiable Diseases Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 includes smallpox but not monkeypox. In order to make monkeypox a notifiable disease, a Statutory Rule would be required.
- 3.2. Addition of monkeypox as a notifiable disease would mean that medical practitioners have a statutory duty to notify patient information with the Public Health Agency if they become aware, or have reasonable grounds for suspecting, that a person has monkeypox. This information will be vital in alerting the PHA to cases or suspected cases of monkeypox, to ensure that the Health and Social Care system can respond, for surveillance and tracking of the spread and epidemiology of the disease.
- 3.3. Inclusion of monkeypox on the list of notifiable diseases reflects the serious nature of this current outbreak and provides the legislature to protect public health.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. N/A

5. Equality Impact

- 5.1. Equality screening was carried out and it is in compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

6. Regulatory Impact

- 6.1. Regulatory Impact Assessment not necessary because the proposal results in no costs or savings.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. Not applicable

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. Not applicable

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1. Monkeypox will become notifiable in England on 7 June 2022. It remains under consideration in Scotland and Wales.

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable