

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Public Health Notifiable Diseases Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

SR 2021 No. 160

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 [1 (2) of the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. To make Hepatitis C 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 Hepatitis C.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967 Schedule 1 includes Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and 'Hepatitis unspecified : viral'. In 1989, the Hepatitis C virus was established as the main cause of unspecified viral hepatitis. Reliable tests for the Hepatitis C virus were developed during the 1990s and following these developments, unspecified viral hepatitis was removed as a notifiable disease in the rest of the UK and ROI, and replaced with Hepatitis C.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. In the consultation stakeholders were asked if Hepatitis C should be made a notifiable disease in Northern Ireland and the question received a favourable response.

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. Hepatitis C is a notifiable disease in England under the Health Protection (Notification) Regulations 2010, in Scotland under the Public Health etc (Scotland) Act 2008 (Notifiable Diseases and Notifiable Organisms), and in Wales under the Public Health (Control of Diseases) Act 1984 (as amended in 2010). The Republic of Ireland made Hepatitis C a notifiable disease in 2004 via an amendment to the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1984.

11. Additional Information

- 11.1. Not applicable