

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Financial Assistance (Coronavirus: Hospitality) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022

SR 2022 No. 5

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Finance ("the Department") to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under sections 1(2) and 3 of the Financial Assistance Act (Northern Ireland) 2009 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. These Regulations provide for financial assistance (Coronavirus Financial Assistance) to be awarded to occupiers of certain hospitality hereditaments affected by public health guidance issued in December 2021.
- 2.2. Regulation 1 provides for citation and commencement.
- 2.3. Regulation 2 provides for the Coronavirus Financial Assistance scheme to be set out in the Schedule.
- 2.4. The Schedule lays out the scheme for the purposes of providing financial assistance to occupiers of certain hospitality hereditaments in line with the Executive's agreement to provide support on 23 December 2021.
- 2.5. Paragraph 1 of the Schedule provides for interpretation to be applied in respect of the scheme.
- 2.6. Paragraph 2 of the Schedule provides for applications to be made in relation to the scheme.
- 2.7. Paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of the Schedule provide the eligibility criteria for the scheme.
- 2.8. Paragraph 6 of the Schedule provides for certain exclusions under the scheme.
- 2.9. Paragraph 7 of the Schedule provides for information requirements for the purposes of the scheme.
- 2.10. Paragraph 8 of the Schedule provides for the award of Coronavirus Financial Assistance.
- 2.11. Paragraph 9 of the Schedule provides for recovery provisions in respect of the scheme.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 23 December 2021 the Executive agreed a £40 million support package for certain businesses within the hospitality sector.
- 3.2 The Executive Office has designated the Department of Finance as the relevant Department required to bring forward that support scheme under the Financial Assistance Act (Northern Ireland) 2009. These Regulations implement the scheme.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 These are emergency Regulations made in tandem with the Northern Ireland Executive's wider response to COVID-19 and are made as a mitigating provision related to the wider public health response.

5. Equality Impact

- 5.1 These are emergency Regulations made in tandem with the Northern Ireland Executive's wider response to COVID-19 and are made as a mitigating provision related to the wider public health response.

6. Regulatory Impact

- 6.1 These are emergency Regulations made in tandem with the Northern Ireland Executive's wider response to COVID-19 and are made as a mitigating provision related to the wider public health response.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1 The scheme will be financed from resources allocated following Executive agreement for this Covid-19 financial assistance. The scheme has allocated £40 million for the award of one-off financial assistance payments for those hospitality businesses deemed eligible.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

- 8.1 The Department of Finance and Personnel considers the Regulations to be compatible with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

9. Parity or Replicatory Measure

- 9.1 Not directly applicable. England, Scotland and Wales each have implemented their own measures to support businesses at this time.

10. Additional Information

- 10.1 Not applicable.