



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Health Protection (Coronavirus, International
Travel) (Amendment No. 12) Regulations
(Northern Ireland) 2020

15 October 2020

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Colm Gildernew (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Paula Bradshaw
Mr Gerry Carroll
Mr Alan Chambers
Mr Alex Easton
Ms Órlaithí Flynn
Mr Pat Sheehan

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): We are considering two statutory rules (SRs) regarding travel restrictions, which we deferred from last week. We have not been able to get the departmental official on the line, but we will discuss any questions or issues that we have with these SRs now. I will take the two SRs together. I ask members for their questions and comments in relation to either SR.

Mr Carroll: There is obviously an ongoing issue with information and data on R rates. That is still being processed, but there is an outstanding concern about it. I think that we should emphasise that we need that as soon as possible. This is not being facetious: given our rate of infection, which is higher than America and one of the highest in the world, is there also merit in questioning whether people should be encouraged to come here? I mean that not as a flippant or facetious question but one that is genuine and has to be considered. I do not know whether that can be added to a letter, but it has to be addressed by somebody.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): OK, thank you. Do any other members wish to ask a question in relation to these SRs?

One of the key things that I wanted to explore today is the fact that there are a number of specific areas outlined; in elite sports, there is reference to cricket teams and things like that. I wonder how much of this is cut and paste from elsewhere and, therefore, how much of it is not tailored to our specific circumstances, geography or needs at any given time. I want to know more about the process by which they transpose what is drafted elsewhere and apply a local filter to ensure that we are doing additional things or that things that are not relevant to us are not included unnecessarily. We have asked a number of questions previously about the evidence that underpins these SRs. Are members content that we indicate that we do not object to the SRs but reiterate our concerns in relation to that level of detail?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): The Department has advised that SR2020/203 broadens exemptions from self-isolation rules for various categories of persons connected to elite sports and film production and those having to travel as part of the fourth National Lottery licence competition. In addition, Curaçao, Denmark, Iceland and Slovakia are omitted from the list of countries and territories that are exempt from post-travel self-isolation.

If members do not have not further issues with that, I ask members to agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR2020/203, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Amendment No. 12) Regulations (NI) 2020, and has no objection to the rule. Are we agreed?

Members indicated assent.