



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Health

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Health Protection (Travel Restrictions)
Regulations

21 January 2021

week, we were not really presented with any rationale at all, bar the comment that the CMOs endorsed it, and that is very worrying. My understanding is that there is an issue around compliance. There is a perception or a belief that compliance wanes after seven or eight days or whatever the day is, but that is in part down to people being financially concerned and not having enough protection against being off work. I still think that there are concerns about this. Obviously, I do not have a wealth of medical data to back up my concern. The fact that we were led to go along with it because of other reasons caused me to stop and think about it. I still have those concerns.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Thanks, Gerry. I am conscious that the Minister will be at the Committee on 11 February. Like so many of the other SRs, the SR has wider issues and there is the potential for upheaval or confusion on some of the other issues that are involved. It is not just the issue of isolation. We will want to drill further into that. Some of the reading that I have done over the past while indicates that it reinforces compliance and makes it easier for people who are struggling to apply that. Isolation because of COVID-19 is something that we need to provide support to people on more broadly.

Are there any other comments, views, questions or points on the SRs? This is our last opportunity to discuss them.

Mr Buckley: The fact that only two people from Denmark who arrived in Northern Ireland from Dublin contacted the Public Health Agency (PHA) — it states that in the paper — perhaps illustrates that there is a need for better information sharing. Maybe that was mentioned when I took a comfort break, but it certainly should be raised. Furthermore, how will enforcement of pre-arrival testing differ from the current enforcement of the failure to self-isolate? It is not very clear. We probably do not have an official on the line who can answer that.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): We have an official on standby who could come in on that question. I will check with the Committee Clerk. We also have a session planned with the two CMOs. There is a key point there about coordination.

Mr Buckley: I am happy to hold off until then. It is a question about these regulations. Information sharing has been raised on numerous occasions, and I am happy to leave those questions until we get a briefing from them directly.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): OK. No other members have indicated that they wish to speak, so I will put the Questions formally.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, Public Health Advice for Persons Travelling to Northern Ireland) (No. 2) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Do members agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2020/325, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, Public Health Advice for Persons Travelling to NI) (No. 2) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2020, and has no objection to the rule? Are we agreed?

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Thank you.

Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Amendment No. 25) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Do members agree formally that the Committee for Health has considered SR 2020/326, the Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Amendment No. 25) Regulations (NI) 2020, and has no objection to the rule? Are we agreed?

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairperson (Mr Gildernew): Thank you, members.