EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2023

SR 2023 No. 137

1. Introduction

1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of Finance to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under section 90(2) of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and is subject to the confirmatory resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

2.1. The purpose of the Order is to extend the expiry date of Section 18(3) and Part 3 of Schedule 13, paragraphs 18 - 22 and 27 - 29 to, the Coronavirus Act 2020 from 24 September 2023 to 24 March 2024. The provisions were due to expire at midnight on 24 March 2022 but the Act included permanent powers to enable devolved administrations to make extensions to their provisions for a 6 month period (and further 6 month periods following this). This enabled GRO to bring forward the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) Order (NI) 2022 which extended the provisions until 24 September 2022, the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) Extension (No.2) Order (NI) 2022 which further extended the provisions to 24 March 2023 and the Coronavirus Act 2020 (Registration of Deaths and Still-Births) (Extension) (No.2) Order (NI) 2023.

3. Background

3.1. The Act put in place provisions which allowed for temporary changes to the death certification and registration process. The provisions allow for the electronic transfer of documents and the registration of deaths and still-births without attendance at registration offices.

4. Consultation

4.1. Due to the tight timescale it has not been possible to carry out a consultation exercise on the provisions however feedback from main stakeholders has been positive.

5. Equality Impact

5.1. No equality impact assessment or screening has been completed on this Order.

6. Regulatory Impact

6.1. An assessment of regulatory impacts has not been carried out as the proposal results in no or negligible costs or savings on businesses, charities, social enterprises or voluntary bodies.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. None

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1. The Department has considered its obligations under section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and is satisfied that the Order is not incompatible with Convention rights; is not incompatible with Community law; does not discrimate against a person or class of person on the grounds of religious belief or political opinion and does not modify an enactment in breach of section 7 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

9. EU Implications

9.1. Not applicable.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1. Not applicable.

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable.