EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

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

S.R. 2022 No. 29

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 amend the scheme of financial assistance (Coronavirus Financial Assistance) awarded to occupiers of certain hospitality hereditaments affected by public health guidance issued in December 2021.

2.2. Regulation 1 contains the citation and commencement provisions.

2.3. Regulation 2 provides for amendments to the Financial Assistance (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022 to allow Northern Ireland Tourist Board certified hotels to be included in the scheme, to allow financial assistance to licensed bar and restaurant facilities occupied and operated by sports clubs, and to allow financial assistance to inflatable parks, soft play businesses and trampoline parks, which incorporate a café.

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.

3.3. On 27 January 2022 the Executive agreed that additional categories of businesses within the wider hospitality should be brought within the scope of the original 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. These Regulations add just over an additional £5.8M to the estimated cost of the principal scheme introduced in January 2022.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1. It is the view of the Department that this Rule is 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.