POLICY NOTE

THE HEALTH PROTECTION (CORONAVIRUS) (INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL) (SCOTLAND) AMENDMENT (NO. 8) REGULATIONS 2020

SSI 2020/235

The above instrument was made in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 94(1)(b)(i) and 122(2)(b) of the Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008 ("the 2008 Act"). Section 122(5) of the 2008 Act states that regulations under section 94(1) are subject to the affirmative procedure. However, section 122(6) provides that the affirmative procedure will not apply if the Scottish Ministers consider that the regulations need to be made urgently. In such situations, section 122(7) applies.

Summary Box

This instrument makes a further amendment to the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/169, "the principal Regulations"), which impose requirements on international travellers, to reduce the public health risks posed by the spread of coronavirus (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, or SARS-CoV-2) in Scotland which causes the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). This instrument removes Andorra, The Bahamas and Belgium from the list of exempt countries and territories in Schedule A1, Part 1 and adds Brunei and Malaysia to said list. Persons arriving in Scotland are not subject to the requirement in regulation 6 of the principal Regulations for travellers to stay in specified premises if, during the 14 days preceding their arrival they have only been in exempt countries or territories.

Background

1. The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/169) ("the principal Regulations") were: made on 7 June; came into force on 8 June 2020; and were laid in the Scottish Parliament on 8 June 2020.

2. Amendments were made to the principal Regulations by: the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/171); by the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 2) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/184); by the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 3) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/209); by the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 4) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/221); by the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 5) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/224); Health Protection (Coronavirus) (International Travel) (Scotland) Amendment (No. 6) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/229) and Health Protection (Coronavirus)(International Travel)(Scotland)(Amendment)(No.7) Regulations 2020 (SSI 2020/233).

3. This instrument makes a further amendment to the principal Regulations to take into account periodic review of data on point prevalence and other data on coronavirus in other countries and territories.

4. The principal Regulations were urgently implemented in order to reduce the likelihood that an increase in coronavirus infections in Scotland would arise as a result of imported cases. The Scottish Government amended the principal Regulations on 10 July to allow for territorial exemptions from the requirement to remain at specified premises for 14 days after the day of their arrival ("the quarantine requirement"). However, this requirement is being kept under constant review with a view to ensuring that constraints can be minimised wherever appropriate and proportionate.

Policy Objectives

5. The amendments made by this instrument to the principal Regulations are to remove Andorra, The Bahamas and Belgium from the list of exempt countries and territories in schedule A1. Travellers are exempt from the quarantine requirement where, during the 14 days preceding their arrival in Scotland, they have only been in "exempt countries or territories". Andorra, The Bahamas and Belgium are being removed from the list in Schedule A1, as the public health risk of importation of coronavirus infection to Scotland from these countries has been deemed to have increased to a level that presents a significant risk of importation of coronavirus into Scotland.

6. The amendments made add Brunei and Malaysia to the list of exempt countries and territories in schedule A1. Travellers are exempt from the quarantine requirement where, during the 14 days preceding their arrival in Scotland, they have only been in "exempt countries or territories". Brunei and Malaysia have been added to the list in Schedule A1, as the public health risk of importation of coronavirus infection to Scotland from these places has been deemed sufficiently low to merit an exemption.

7. The removal of Andorra, The Bahamas and Belgium from the list of exempt countries and territories (Schedule A1 of those regulations) will not affect the quarantine requirement for persons arriving in Scotland before the coming into force of these provisions. These provisions will come into force on 8 August at 04:00.

8. The addition of Brunei and Malaysia to the list of exempt countries and territories (Schedule A1 of those regulations) will not affect the quarantine requirement for persons arriving in Scotland before the coming into force of these provisions. These provisions will come into force on 11 August at 04:00.

9. The list in Schedule A1 will be subject to on-going review and further countries will be added or removed informed by their risk status when it is appropriate and proportionate to do so.

Consultation

10. This instrument is being made urgently in Scotland to make a further amendment to the public health measures in respect of international arrivals to the UK that were brought in on a UK-wide basis from 8 June 2020. The purpose of the principal Regulations was, as above, to help prevent further spread of the coronavirus and a possible second wave. Each of the four nations is required under their own Regulations to conduct regular reviews, and as those reviews are conducted there is the possibility of divergence from that initial four nation aligned approach, either on

the need for the Regulations themselves or for any of the measures imposed by those Regulations. Such policy divergence may include the Scottish Government, or any of the other three administrations in the UK, reaching a different view on exempt countries and territories under the Regulations, reflecting differences in the prevalence of COVID-19 in that particular nation at any review point.

11. This instrument makes a further amendment to the principal Regulations to take into account the latest available data. The continued pace of the work on this and changing circumstances both in Scotland and other countries has meant limited consultation with external stakeholders in Scotland, but there has been ongoing discussion and dialogue by Scottish Government with Police Scotland, COPFS, Border Force in Scotland, Public Health Scotland and key airports in Scotland as the policy on implementation of the policy in Scotland has continued to be shaped.

Impact Assessments

12. No further impact assessments have been undertaken.

Scottish Government
COVID-19 Public Health Directorate
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