

COM/2025/747 Proposal for a Regulation on monitoring and controlling drug precursors and repealing Regulations (EC) No 273/2004 and (EC) No 111/2005

- 1. As the UK Government's Explanatory Memorandum is now available, can you provide clarity on the Department of Health's understanding about whether it appears likely that the application of the proposed EU act would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist? If there are outstanding areas of uncertainty, please provide details of this.**

The Department of Health's (DoH) current understanding is that application of this proposed EU regulation will not have a significant impact specific to the everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland (NI), in a way that is liable to persist.

- 2. As the UK Government's Explanatory Memorandum is now available, can you provide clarity on the Department of Health's understanding about whether not applying the proposed EU act would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist? If there are outstanding areas of uncertainty, please provide details of this.**

The DoH's current understanding is that non-application of this proposed EU regulation will not have a significant impact specific to the everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland (NI), in a way that is liable to persist.

- 3. The UK Government's Explanatory Memorandum notes the potential for divergence with rules in GB regarding the changes in categorisation and the new electronic processes introduced by the proposed act. What is the potential impact of this divergence for Northern Ireland?**

The divergence discussed in the Explanatory Memorandum should be seen as potential (in the event that the UK Government were to decide not to mirror these changes in Great Britain) rather than expected. As it stands, there is already divergence between GB and NI in the regulation of DPCs – the UK Government has taken steps on the 26 February 2026 to remove the existing divergence, submitting [draft regulations](#) to Parliament. These have been approved by the House of Lords and, if approved by the House of Commons, will come into force no later than 14 July 2026. DoH officials remain closely engaged with Home Office (HO) colleagues to ensure there is clarity in respect of licensing rules for NI, emanating from the current and future potential regulatory regime irrespective of potential divergence between GB and NI.

- 4. How many businesses in Northern Ireland would be affected by the proposed EU act?**

DoH understands that approximately 5 businesses in NI could be affected by the proposed EU act.

5. How would these businesses be affected? What positive or negative impacts are anticipated?

Elements of the proposal are that obligations under the existing regulations would be simplified or automated in line with the EU digital agenda. Potential benefits of this proposal could be realised:

- i. The new electronic system, the introduction of controls on imports and exports based on total quantities rather than individual transactions, and the removal of the 15-day Pre-Export Notification (PEN) waiting period, could remove administrative burdens on operators without compromising control.
- ii. Equally the consolidation of two regulations into one could also make the process simpler for businesses and public authorities.

6. Have you engaged with stakeholders on the proposed EU act, and if so, what views have been expressed?

As this proposal is still in the early stages, we have not directly engaged with stakeholders. The HO remains the UK lead authority for DPC control providing related advice and licensing of DPCs for NI, future stakeholder engagement will be led by the Home Office, if required. Those affected in NI would be a small number of businesses and the proposal does not introduce new obligations but removes or automates various existing requirements which might be expected to be welcomed by businesses.

7. What are the potential benefits of applying the proposed EU act in Northern Ireland?

As stated above the potential benefits of applying the proposed regulation in NI could simplify the process for businesses and public authorities whilst also potentially removing administrative burdens on operators without compromising control of DPC's. Merging the two existing EU regulations should streamline processes for NI businesses.

8. The UK Government states that there would likely be costs for it to implement measures supporting the Regulation in Northern Ireland. Can you provide further details about these measures and costs?

As the UK lead authority for this regulatory regime, it may be expected that the HO would incur transitional costs during this process, this would be subject to the final text of the EU proposal being confirmed.

9. The UK Government's Explanatory Memorandum states that it considers that the licensing of drug precursor chemicals (DPCs) in Northern Ireland is

a devolved matter. The Department of Health states that “Advice and licensing of DPCs in Northern Ireland is led by the Home Office”. What are the responsibilities of the Home Office and the Department of Health regarding the licensing of DPCs in Northern Ireland?

The UK Government considers that licensing of DPCs is a devolved matter and that other matters related to DPC control are reserved. Licensing of DPCs in NI has always been administered by the HO, and, in the context of the regulations currently before Parliament, Northern Ireland Ministers have recently confirmed to HO Ministers that, based on the position of the UK Government, they are content for the UK Government to continue to do this. The UK Government administered central system for the consideration of DPC licensing results in a consistent licensing approach across all nations which is considered beneficial.

10. What specific impact would the provisions in the proposed EU act have on the licensing of DPCs in Northern Ireland?

At the time of writing, until the final text of the EU proposal is confirmed and the UK Government position in respect of the overarching regulatory regime is clear, specific impacts on the licensing of DPCs in NI cannot be detailed.