

**FROM THE MINISTER OF HEALTH**



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Date: 15 June 2026

Dear *Keith*

**The Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Resident (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026**

The Department of Health purposes to make the above Statutory Rule under powers conferred by Articles 42, 106(b) and 107(6) of the Health and Personal Social Services (Northern Ireland) Order 1972. The Statutory Rule is subject to negative resolution procedure before the Assembly.

**Purpose of the Statutory Rule**

This Statutory Rule follows the Public Health (Notifiable Diseases) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026 which is currently being considered, to make hantavirus disease (including hantavirus pulmonary or cardio-pulmonary syndrome and haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome) a notifiable disease under the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, so that medical practitioners will be required to share patient information with the Public Health Agency if they become aware, or have reasonable grounds, for suspecting that a person they are attending has hantavirus disease.

Consequently, this Statutory Rule proposes to amend the Provision of Health Services to Persons Not Ordinarily Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 to ensure that hospital treatment for Hantavirus diseases, including hantavirus pulmonary or cardiopulmonary syndrome (HCPS) and haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS) is provided to any visitor to Northern Ireland without charge.

This will ensure that there is no financial barrier to visitors to Northern Ireland being given hospital treatment for Hantavirus disease, thus ensuring that the risk to public health from symptomatic visitors is minimised.

### **Financial Implications**

The proposals will ensure that hospital treatment for Hantavirus disease, including hantavirus pulmonary or cardiopulmonary syndrome and haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome is provided to any visitor to Northern Ireland without charge.

The amendment is made in conjunction with Department of Finance.

### **Consultation**

There has been no public consultation in relation to this Statutory Rule as the legislative change is urgently required as a contingency to ensure that the health service in Northern Ireland can take steps in preparation and in the knowledge they are not breaking the law and to ensure that there is no financial barrier to visitors to Northern Ireland being given hospital treatment for Hantavirus disease thus ensuring that the risk to public health from symptomatic visitors is minimised.

### **Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998**

Consideration has been given to the human rights implications of these regulations. The Department is satisfied that this legislation is compatible with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

### **Equality Impact**

In accordance with guidance produced by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and in keeping with Regulation 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the proposals were screened for equality impact and it is concluded that a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

### **Regulatory Impact**

A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) screening was carried out and concluded that the proposals would have negligible cost impact on businesses, charities, social economy enterprises or the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland and will not otherwise adversely affect these groups. The Department considered that a full RIA is not required.

### **Rural Needs Impact**

The Department has assessed the proposals in line with the Rural Needs Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and has determined they will not have an adverse impact on rural communities.

### **Data Protection Impact**

The Department considers that these Regulations are compliant the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the GDPR and that the Regulations are consistent with the data protection principles set out therein. A Data Protection Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

### **Child Rights Impact**

The proposals do not involve any direct impact on children's rights; therefore, a Child Rights Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

### **Position in Great Britain**

The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) (Amendment) Regulations 2026 were laid on 18 May 2026 in England to include "Hantavirus disease, including hantavirus pulmonary or cardiopulmonary syndrome and haemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome". This amendment makes the diagnosis or treatment for Hantavirus disease exempt from charge, provided that the overseas visitor has not travelled to the United Kingdom for the purpose of seeking that diagnosis or treatment, unless it is by means of a form of transport which has been agreed with or funded by the Secretary of State.

### **EU Implications**

Consideration has been given to Article 2 of the Windsor Framework to the Withdrawal Agreement. We are content that neither the 'non-diminution' commitment nor the 'keep pace' commitment is engaged in this proposal.

### **Proposed timing of consideration of the SL1**

The SL1 has been submitted to the Committee and the Department would propose that the Committee considers it at their next scheduled meeting to ensure that the regulations come into operation as soon as possible.

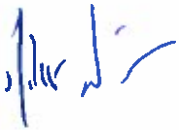
### **Proposed Operational Date**

These Regulations will be brought into operation as soon as they are made thereby breaking the 21 day rule. The Department intends to write to the Examiner of Statutory Rules to advise them of the situation.

It is proposed that the Statutory Rule will be made and laid as soon as all necessary approvals are received. A draft of the proposed Statutory Rule is attached.

When the Rule together with the Explanatory Memorandum has been laid at the Assembly Business Office the Business Office will submit copies to the Assembly.

Yours sincerely



**Mike Nesbitt MLA**  
**Minister of Health**

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Gary Mervyn (Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer)