



EXPLANATORY NOTES

Coronavirus Act 2020

Chapter 7



a Williams Lea company

Published by TSO (The Stationery Office), part of Williams Lea Tag, and
available from:

Online

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Mail, Telephone, Fax & E-mail

TSO

PO Box 29, Norwich, NR3 1GN

Telephone orders/General enquiries: 0333 202 5070

Fax orders: 0333 202 5080

E-mail: customer.services@tso.co.uk

Textphone: 0333 202 5077

TSO@Blackwell and other Accredited Agents

ISBN 978-0-10-560194-4



9 780105 601944

CORONAVIRUS ACT 2020

EXPLANATORY NOTES

What these notes do

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c. 7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020.

- These Explanatory Notes have been prepared by the Department for Health and Social Care in order to assist the reader of the Act and to help inform debate on it. They do not form part of the Act and have not been endorsed by Parliament.
- These Explanatory Notes explain what each part of the Act means in practice; provide background information on the development of policy; and provide additional information on how the Act affects existing legislation in this area.
- These Explanatory Notes might best be read alongside the Act. They are not, and are not intended to be, a comprehensive description of the Act.

Table of Contents

Subject	Page of these Notes
Overview of the Act	7
Emergency registration of health professionals	8
Temporary registration of social workers	9
Emergency volunteers	10
Mental health and mental capacity	10
Health service indemnification	10
NHS and local authority care and support	11
Registration of deaths and still-births etc	11
Investigatory Powers	13
Appointment of Judicial Commissioners	13
Urgent warrant process	13
Fingerprints and DNA profiles	14
Food supply	15
Inquests	15
Disclosure: Wales	16
Disclosure: Scotland	16
Vaccinations: Scotland	16
Schools, childcare providers etc	16
Statutory sick pay	17
Pensions	18
Protection of public health	18
Powers to direct suspension of port operations	18
Powers relating to potentially infectious persons	18
Powers relating to events, gatherings and premises	19
Courts and tribunals: use of video and audio technology	19
Powers in relation to bodies	20
Postponement of elections, referendums, recall petitions and canvass	20
Other administrative requirements	21
National Insurance Contributions	22
Financial Assistance to industry	22
HMRC Functions	22
Up-rating of working tax credit etc	23
Local Authority meetings	23

Business Improvement Districts	23
Extension to ballots	24
Residential tenancies: protection from eviction	24
Business tenancies: protection from forfeiture etc	25
General Synod of the Church of England	26
Legal background	26
Territorial extent and application	27
Commentary on provisions of Act	27
Part 1: Main Provisions	27
Section 1: Meaning of “coronavirus” and related terminology	27
Section 2 and Schedule 1: Emergency registration of nurses and other health and care professionals	27
Section 3 and Schedule 2: Emergency arrangements concerning medical practitioners: Wales	28
Section 4 and Schedule 3: Emergency arrangements concerning medical practitioners: Scotland	29
Section 5 and Schedule 4: Emergency registration of and extension of prescribing powers for pharmaceutical chemists: Northern Ireland	29
Section 6 and Schedule 5: Emergency registration of social workers: England and Wales	29
Section 7 and Schedule 6: Temporary registration of social workers: Scotland	30
Section 8 and Schedule 7: Emergency volunteering leave	31
Section 9: Compensation for emergency volunteers	31
Section 10 and Schedules 8, 9, 10 and 11: Temporary modification of mental health and mental capacity legislation	32
England and Wales	32
Scotland	32
Northern Ireland	34
Section 11: Indemnity for health service activity: England and Wales	35
Section 12: Indemnity for health service activity: Scotland	36
Section 13: Indemnity for health and social care activity: Northern Ireland	36
Section 14: NHS Continuing Healthcare assessments: England	36
Section 15 and Schedule 12: Local authority care and support	36
Section 16: Duty of local authority to assess needs: Scotland	37
Section 17: Section 16: further provision	37
Section 18 and Schedule 13: Registration of deaths and still-births etc	37
Part 1 – England and Wales	38
Part 2 – Scotland	38
Part 3 - Northern Ireland	39
Section 19: Confirmatory medical certificate not required for cremations: England and Wales	40
Section 20 and Schedule 14: Review of cause of death certificates and cremations: Scotland	40
Section 21: Modifications of requirements regarding medical certificates for cremations: Northern Ireland	40
Section 22: Appointment of temporary Judicial Commissioners	41
Section 23: Time limits in relation to urgent warrants etc under Investigatory Powers Act	41
Section 24: Extension of time limits for retention of fingerprints and DNA profiles	41

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Section 25: Power to require information relating to food supply chains	42
Section 26: Authorities which may require information	43
Section 27: Restrictions on use and disclosure of information	43
Section 28 and Schedule 15: Enforcement of requirement to provide information	44
Section 29: Meaning of “food supply chain” and related expressions	44
Section 30: Suspension of requirement to hold inquest with jury: England and Wales	45
Section 31: Suspension of requirement to hold inquest with jury: Northern Ireland	45
Section 32: Deaths in custody from natural illness: Northern Ireland	45
Section 33: Disapplication etc by Welsh Ministers of DBS provisions	45
Section 34: Temporary disapplication of disclosure offences: Scotland	46
Section 35: Power to reclassify certain disclosure requests: Scotland	46
Section 36: Vaccination and immunisation: Scotland	46
Section 37 and Schedule 16: Temporary closure of educational institutions and childcare premises	47
Part 1 – England and Wales	47
Part 2 – Scotland	48
Part 3 – Northern Ireland	50
Section 38 and Schedule 17: Temporary continuity: education, training and childcare	51
Part 1 – England and Wales	51
Part 2 – Scotland	52
Part 3 – Northern Ireland	53
Section 39: Statutory sick pay: funding of employers’ liabilities	54
Section 40: Statutory sick pay: power to disapply waiting period limitation	54
Section 41: Statutory sick pay: modification of regulation making powers	54
Section 42: Statutory sick pay: funding of employers’ liabilities: Northern Ireland	55
Section 43: Statutory sick pay: power to disapply waiting period limitation: Northern Ireland	55
Section 44: Statutory sick pay: modification of regulation making power: Northern Ireland	55
Section 45: NHS Pension Schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: England and Wales	55
Section 46: NHS pension schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: Scotland	56
Section 47 Health and social care pension schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: Northern Ireland	56
Section 48 and Schedule 18: Powers to act for the protection of public health: Northern Ireland	57
Section 49 and Schedule 19: Health Protection Regulations: Scotland	57
Section 50 and Schedule 20: Power to suspend port operations	58
Section 51 and Schedule 21: Powers relating to potentially infectious persons	59
Section 52 and Schedule 22: Powers to issue directions relating to events, gatherings and premises	60
Section 53 and Schedule 23: Expansion of availability of live links in criminal proceedings	61
Section 54 and Schedule 24: Expansion of availability of live links in other criminal hearings	62
Section 55 and Schedule 25: Public participation in proceedings conducted by video or audio	63
Section 56 and Schedule 26: Live links in magistrates’ court appeals against requirements or restrictions imposed on a potentially infectious person	63
Section 57 and Schedule 27: Use of live links in legal proceedings: Northern Ireland	64
Section 58 and Schedule 28: Powers in relation to transportation, storage and disposal of dead bodies etc.	64
Section 59: Elections and referendums due to be held in England in period after 15 March 2020	66
Section 60: Postponement of elections due to be held on 7 May 2020	66
Section 61: Power to postpone certain other elections and referendums	67

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Section 62: Power to postpone a recall petition under the Recall of MPs Act 2015	68
Section 63: Power to make supplementary etc provision	68
Section 64: Northern Ireland: timing of the canvass and Assembly by-elections	69
Section 65: Elections due to be held in Wales in period after 15 March 2020	70
Section 66: Postponement of National Assembly for Wales elections for constituency vacancies	70
Section 67: Power to postpone local authority elections in Wales for casual vacancies	70
Section 68: Power to make supplementary etc provision	70
Section 69: Postponement of Scottish Parliament elections for constituency vacancies	71
Section 70: Postponement of local authority elections for casual vacancies	71
Section 70: Postponement of local authority elections for casual vacancies	71
Section 71: Signatures of Treasury Commissioners	71
Section 72: Power under section 143 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992	72
Section 73: Power under section 145 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992	72
Section 74: Power under section 5 of the National Insurance Contributions Act 2014	73
Section 75: Disapplication of limit under section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982	73
Section 76: HMRC Functions	74
Section 77: Up-rating of working tax credit etc	74
Section 78: Local Authority Meetings	74
Section 79: Extension of BID arrangements: England	75
Section 80: Extension of BID arrangements: Northern Ireland	76
Section 81 and Schedule 29: Residential tenancies in England and Wales: protection from eviction	77
Section 82: Business tenancies in England and Wales: protection from forfeiture etc	78
Section 83: Business tenancies in Northern Ireland: protection from forfeiture etc	78
Section 84: Postponement of General Synod elections	78
Part 2: Final Provisions	79
Section 85: Interpretation	79
Section 86: Financial provision	79
Section 87: Commencement	79
Section 88: Power to suspend and revive provisions of this Act	79
Section 89: Expiry	80
Section 90: Power to alter expiry date	80
Section 91: Power to amend Act in consequence of amendments to subordinate legislation	80
Section 92: Power to make consequential modifications	81
Section 93: Procedure for certain regulations made by a Minister of the Crown	81
Section 94: Procedure for certain regulations made by the Welsh Ministers	81
Section 95: Procedure for certain regulations made by the Scottish Ministers	81
Section 96: Procedure for certain orders made by a Northern Ireland department	81
Section 97: Report by Secretary of State on status of non-devolved provisions of this Act	82
Section 98: Six-monthly parliamentary review	82
Section 99: Parliamentary consideration of status of non-devolved provisions of this Act	82
Section 100: Extent	82
Section 101: Extension to the Isle of Man	82
Section 102: Short title	82

Commencement 83

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Annex A - Territorial extent and application	84
Annex B - Hansard References	89
Annex C - Progress of Bill Table	90

Overview of the Act

- 1 The purpose of the Coronavirus Act is to enable the Government to respond to an emergency situation and manage the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. A severe pandemic will lead to a reduced workforce, increased pressure on health services and death management processes. The Act contains temporary measures designed to either amend existing legislative provisions or introduce new statutory powers which are designed to mitigate these impacts.
- 2 The Act aims to support Government in doing the following:
 - Increasing the available health and social care workforce
 - Easing the burden on frontline staff
 - Containing and slowing the virus
 - Managing the deceased with respect and dignity
 - Supporting people
- 3 The Act is part of a concerted effort across the whole of the UK to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak. The intention is that it will enable the right people from public bodies across the UK to take appropriate actions at the right times to manage the effects of the outbreak.
- 4 As part of its contingency planning, the Government has considered what measures would be needed during a severe COVID-19 outbreak to reduce the pressure of key services and limit the spread of infection.
- 5 The action plan¹ sets out options that can be taken as part of the response. This Act ensures that the agencies and services involved in this response – schools, hospitals, the police etc. – have the tools and powers they need. Each of the four nations of the UK has its own set of laws, and thus these tools and powers differ to varying degrees in each area. Consistency of outcome has been achieved by making the range of tools and powers consistent across the UK.
- 6 This Act is just one part of the overall solution. It has therefore not been necessary for each tool or power needed to address the COVID-19 pandemic to be covered by this Act. Some exist already in statute. Some exist in some parts of the UK but not others. This Act aims to level up powers across the UK, so that the actions to tackle this threat can be carried out effectively across all four nations.
- 7 These are extraordinary measures that do not apply in normal circumstances. For this reason, the legislation is time-limited to two years, and it is neither necessary nor appropriate for all of its measures to come into force immediately. Instead, many of the measures in this Act can be commenced from area to area and time to time, so as to ensure that the need to protect the public's health can be aligned with the need to safeguard individuals' rights. These measures

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-action-plan/coronavirus-action-plan-a-guide-to-what-you-can-expect-across-the-uk>

can subsequently be suspended and then later reactivated, if circumstances permit, over the lifetime of the Act.

- 8 The lifetime of the Act can itself be ended early, if the best available scientific evidence supports a policy decision that these powers are no longer needed. It is also possible to extend the lifetime of the Act for a further temporary period, again if it is prudent to do so.
- 9 This facility can be adjusted so that early termination (“sunsetting”) can apply to some provisions; and extensions can be applied to others. The aim is to make sure that these powers can be used both effectively and proportionately.
- 10 These provisions also take due account of the UK’s devolution settlement in a way that enables swift action to be taken when and where it is needed. UK Government Ministers control the use of provisions on matters that are reserved or England only. This is intended to be a streamlined system that is nonetheless consonant with the role of the Devolved Administrations.
- 11 As is explained below, while the Act includes provisions which relate to a wide spectrum of areas across the UK, they are all focused on responding to circumstances that may arise as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emergency registration of health professionals

- 12 The Act introduces new registration powers for the Registrars of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (“NMC”) and the Health and Care Professions Council (“HCPC”). This is to help to deal with the increase in those needing medical care and the shortage of approved staff to help. On notification from the Secretary of State of an emergency, Registrars of the NMC and HCPC are able to temporarily register fit, proper and suitably experienced persons with regard to an emergency, as regulated healthcare professionals.
- 13 The NMC registration covers nurses, midwives, and nursing associates, and the HCPC registration covers paramedics, biomedical scientists, clinical scientists, operating department practitioners and any other of the ‘relevant professions’ it regulates. There are existing legislative powers for the General Medical Council to register doctors in the UK, and for the General Pharmaceutical Council to register pharmacists in Great Britain, in an emergency. This Act confers similar powers onto the NMC and the HCPC.
- 14 For Scotland, provision is made to modify the National Health Service (Primary Medical Services Performers Lists) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 to support the fast deployment of temporarily registered health care workers by the NHS. For Wales, the National Health Service (Performers Lists) (Wales) Regulations 2004 are amended on the same basis. The modifications permit general practitioners with temporary registration under section 18A of the Medical Act 1983 (temporary registration with regard to emergencies) to provide primary medical services despite not being included in the primary medical services performers list of a Health Board in Scotland or a Local Health Board in Wales where they have applied to the Health Board or Local Health Board as applicable, and the application has not been refused or deferred.
- 15 As Performers Lists Regulations apply to all medical practitioners who are involved in primary medical services, under the current arrangements all temporarily registered GPs who are recruited to join the COVID-19 emergency response would have to be on the performers list of the Health Board in Scotland or the Local Health Board in Wales which recruits them. Scottish and Welsh Governments understand that the majority of GPs who leave the profession in Scotland and Wales also promptly leave the relevant performers lists to which they used to belong. This relieves them of their obligations under the Regulations, chiefly the

requirement to submit to an annual performance appraisal. It is expected that very few, possibly none, of the additional GPs who are recruited will currently be on a Health Board in Scotland or Local Health Board in Wales performers list. Action is therefore necessary to modify the requirement to be on a performers list in order to streamline the process.

- 16 To ensure that patient safety is not jeopardised, the Act maintains the requirement to be listed in order to provide primary medical services, and continues to require GPs to apply in the usual way. To speed up the emergency response and prevent performers lists requirements from being a barrier, GPs who are temporarily registered are permitted to provide primary medical services in Scotland or in Wales while their application is considered. This compromise allows the Health Boards in Scotland and Local Health Boards in Wales to gather all of the information which they would usually, and to have access to the powers they usually would in case of any conduct incidents, but would also enable GPs to act without undue delay. The National Health Service (Performers Lists) (England) Regulations 2013 make provision in relation to doctors registered under s.18A Medical Act 1983 in relation to practising in the NHS in England.
- 17 For Northern Ireland, the Pharmaceutical Society of Northern Ireland (“the Society”) is the regulatory body for the pharmacy profession in Northern Ireland. The Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 sets out the powers and responsibilities of the Society including the criteria required to be registered as a pharmaceutical chemist (“pharmacist”) and the criteria required for a pharmacist’s entry in the register to be annotated as either a supplementary or independent prescriber. The Act allows for people who may have been prevented from registering under the 1976 Order to be registered when directed by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland that an emergency has occurred or is occurring. Groups that could be considered for temporary registration may include pre-registration pharmacists or recently retired pharmacists.
- 18 Medicines legislation in Northern Ireland requires a registered pharmacist to supervise certain activities, for example, the supply of prescription-only medicines from a registered pharmacy. In an emergency, the situation may arise where additional pharmacists are required, or additional pharmacists with annotations are required, to assist with the prescribing and supply of medicines. The Act provides mechanisms which will help deal with such a situation.

Temporary registration of social workers

- 19 The Act introduces emergency registration powers for the Registrar of Social Work England (“SWE”) and the Registrar of Social Care Wales (“SCW”). The registrars of SWE and SCW are able to temporarily register fit, proper and suitably experienced persons with regard to an emergency, as social workers. The addition of emergency registrants to the registers held by SWE and SCW will help to manage a shortage of social workers in the children’s and adult social care sectors as a result of increased staff absenteeism.
- 20 In Scotland, provision is also made to allow Ministers to direct the Scottish Social Services Council (“SSSC”) to temporarily register retired social workers, those on a career break and social work students, who are in their final year of training, in order to increase the pool of social workers available to deliver critical social services in Scotland due to the coronavirus.
- 21 The Act also provides that newly employed workers in social care services in Scotland have a longer period of time to complete their registration, increasing this from 6 months to 12 months. This helps to reduce administrative requirements for new workers and employers and allow people to stay on the register after the initial 6 month period that will help deal with the shortage of social services workers in the care sector.

Emergency volunteers

- 22 The Act introduces a new form of unpaid statutory leave, and powers to establish a compensation scheme to compensate for some loss of earnings and expenses incurred by volunteers. These measures enable relevant appropriate authorities (local authorities and relevant health and social care bodies) to maximise the pool of volunteers that they can draw on to fill capacity gaps by addressing two primary deterrents to participation: risk to employment and employment rights, and loss of income.
- 23 These measures maximise the number of volunteers able to fill gaps in capacity, thus helping to safeguard essential services that could be at risk due to increased demand on services as a result of the pandemic.

Mental health and mental capacity

- 24 The Act introduces temporary amendments to the Mental Health Act 1983, the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003, the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and associated subordinate legislation. The amendments allow certain functions relating to the detention and treatment of patients to be satisfied by fewer doctors' opinions or certifications. Temporary amendments also allow for the extension or removal of certain time limits relating to the detention and transfer of patients.
- 25 Further provisions temporarily amend current provisions in respect of defendants and prisoners with a mental health condition. The Act reduces the number of doctors' opinions required and modifies time limits for detention and movement between court, prison and hospital. This enables them to be admitted to hospital for treatment where there might otherwise be delay owing to shortage of qualified staff in a pandemic.
- 26 In Scotland and Wales, provisions also permit the reduction in the number of members required to constitute a mental health tribunal and permit a tribunal to make a decision without holding an oral hearing.
- 27 In Wales, provisions permit the nomination of a temporary deputy if the President of the Tribunal is temporarily unable to act in the office.
- 28 In Northern Ireland, provisions temporarily amend the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 to allow for social workers, other than approved social workers, to carry out certain statutory functions in relation to detention and deprivation of liberty. The provisions also temporarily amend the timelines for carrying out examinations and reports and the operation of the trust panel.
- 29 In Northern Ireland, further provisions also temporarily amend parts relating to criminal proceedings and transfers from prisons to healthcare facilities, and longer time periods for assessment and detention in criminal and civil justice settings relating to mentally ill persons and persons who lack mental capacity.

Health service indemnification

- 30 The Act includes powers to provide indemnity coverage for clinical negligence of health care workers and others carrying out NHS activities (and for Northern Ireland, health and social care activities) connected to care, treatment or diagnostic services provided under the arrangements for responding to the COVID-19 outbreak. This indemnity is intended to act as a 'safety net' where clinical negligence arising from the provision of such services is not already covered under a pre-existing indemnity arrangement, for example under state indemnity schemes, private arrangements with medical defence organisations or under

commercial insurance policies or through membership of a professional body.

- 31 Existing indemnity arrangements in England include the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts and the Clinical Negligence Scheme for General Practice. Existing state indemnity arrangements in Wales include indemnity for clinical negligence provided by the Welsh Risk Pool and under the General Medical Practice Indemnity scheme. Existing indemnity arrangements in Scotland include the Clinical Negligence and Other Risks Indemnity Scheme. Existing indemnity arrangements in Northern Ireland include the Clinical Negligence Scheme for Trusts and indemnity arrangements for General Practice.
- 32 Other existing indemnity arrangements include indemnity provided to members of organisations representing certain professions, indemnity arrangements with medical defence organisations and insurance policies with insurance companies.

NHS and local authority care and support

- 33 Currently, patients with social care needs go through a number of stages before they are discharged from hospital. For some patients, one of these stages is an NHS Continuing Healthcare Assessment; a process that can take a number of weeks. The Act allows the procedure for discharge from an acute hospital setting for those with a social care need to be simplified.
- 34 There are also duties on Local Authorities in Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 to assess and meet needs for care and support. The Act replaces these duties with a power to meet needs for care and support, underpinned by a duty to meet those needs where not to do so would be a breach of an individual's human rights, and a power to meet needs in other cases.
- 35 The Act also allows that, if a Local Authority has not charged an individual for their care during the COVID-19 pandemic, they are able to do so retrospectively after the conclusion of this period subject to financial assessment.
- 36 The immediate operationalisation of these provisions allows Local Authorities to amend current practices if necessary, and is intended to reduce operational burden so that Local Authorities can prioritise the services they offer in order to ensure the most urgent and serious care needs are met.
- 37 In order to support Local Authorities in operating under the new powers, including making prioritisation decisions in a consistent, and ethical manner, the Government has published an ethical framework and supplements this with operational guidance. The Act enables the Secretary of State to direct Local Authorities to comply with this guidance.

Registration of deaths and still-births etc

- 38 It is important to ensure that the administrative processes relating to the registration of births, deaths and still-births can operate effectively during the COVID-19 outbreak as systems may be put under additional pressure and people may not be able to attend Registrars' offices in person.
- 39 In England and Wales, the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 places a responsibility on the deceased's doctor to provide a medical certificate giving the cause of death to the best of the doctor's knowledge and belief. This medical certificate is given to the registrar and used to record the cause of death in the death registration. If the doctor is not able to sign the medical certificate, for whatever reason, the death has to be referred to the coroner for investigation. The Act simplifies and creates flexibility in this process by enabling a doctor who may not have seen the deceased to certify the cause of death without the death being referred to the coroner.

- 40 Current civil registration legislation also requires a person, normally a family member, to attend the register office to register the death. The Act allows a person to register without attending the register office and extends the list of people who can give the relevant information to the registrar to register the death to funeral directors.
- 41 These provisions aim to both provide flexibility during the pandemic, and mitigate the spread of infection. Provisions are also made for the necessary documentation relating to death registration to be transmitted by alternative methods, including electronically.
- 42 There is a legislative framework across the four nations which sets out when coroners need to be notified of a death and what medical certificates are required before a cremation can take place. This Act enables the streamlining of some of those processes by temporarily modifying much of existing legislation.
- 43 The registration of births, deaths and still-births in England and Wales is governed primarily by the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 (the “1953 Act”), the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926 (the “1926 Act”), the Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987 (the “1987 Regulations”) and the Registration of Births and Deaths (Welsh Language) Regulations 1987 (the “1987 Welsh Regulations”). The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965 is the main legislation governing the registration of births and deaths in Scotland. The registration of deaths and still-births in Northern Ireland is governed by the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (the “1976 Order”) and the Civil Registration Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 (the 2012 Regulations).
- 44 The Act makes similar changes to the relevant legislation relating to England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to streamline processes.
- 45 The Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008 sets out the conditions that must be met before the body of a deceased person may be cremated. The Act allows cremations to take place without the need for additional medical practitioner oversight, reducing the burden on healthcare professionals freeing them to support the response to the pandemic with other duties. It also reduces the likelihood of delays to allowing families to be able to make cremation arrangements for the deceased.
- 46 In Scotland, a review of death certificates is established under the Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011. The review system requires that a random selection of death certificates is independently audited by a team of medical reviewers. Where a certificate is being reviewed the death cannot be registered and so funerals cannot proceed until the review has been completed. The Act enables the Scottish Ministers to suspend this system if, in consultation with the review service, this is considered appropriate to free up medical personnel and expedite the disposal of bodies.
- 47 The Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 places duties on cremation authorities, funeral directors and local authorities to take steps to trace and contact relatives of deceased persons to make arrangements for the collection or disposal of ashes. The Act suspends these duties and the relevant bodies are to be under a duty to retain the ashes. Once the provisions are re-instated the original duties to ascertain the wishes of the family will also be re-instated in relation to any retained ashes.
- 48 The Cremation (Belfast) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1961 set out the conditions that must be met before the body of a deceased person may be cremated. The Regulations require both a medical certificate giving the cause of death which must be given by a registered medical practitioner and a confirmatory medical certificate which must be given by a second registered medical practitioner, independent of the first, before a cremation may take place. The Act modifies those Regulations to streamline this process and to remove the requirement for a confirmatory medical certificate.

Investigatory Powers

Appointment of Judicial Commissioners

- 49 The Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (the “IPA”) creates the statutory basis for the use of the investigatory powers by the intelligence and law enforcement agencies, using warrants issued under the IPA. These warrants provide the agencies with the capability they need to protect national security and investigate and prevent serious crime. The Investigatory Powers Commissioner is the independent overseer of almost all investigatory powers. They also have oversight functions under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers (Scotland) Act 2000, and the Police Act 1997. They are supported in this role by 15 Judicial Commissioners, all of whom have held, or do hold, high judicial office. A warrant under the IPA must be signed by the relevant Secretary of State (or, in relation to certain warrants, the Scottish Ministers) and then approved by a Judicial Commissioner for it to be lawful, which is known as the ‘double lock’ (other than urgent warrants, which need to be approved by a Judicial Commissioner within three working days of being issued).
- 50 Section 227 of the IPA specifies the appointment procedure for a Judicial Commissioner. It requires that a Judicial Commissioner must be jointly recommended by the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, the Lord President of the Court of Session, the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland and the Investigatory Powers Commissioner before they can be appointed by the Prime Minister.
- 51 The Act provides the ability to increase the number of Judicial Commissioners should the effects of COVID-19 mean that there is a shortage of Judicial Commissioners. Having a sufficient number of Judicial Commissioners is critical in protecting national security and preventing serious crime, given their vital role in the “double lock” for warrants.
- 52 The Act also creates a regulation-making power to allow the Secretary of State to vary the appointment process for Judicial Commissioners at the request of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner where there are too few Judicial Commissioners available to exercise their functions as a result of the effects of COVID-19. This variation allows the Commissioner to directly appoint temporary Judicial Commissioners for a term of up to 6 months, renewable to a maximum period of 12 months.

Urgent warrant process

- 53 Provisions in the IPA create a procedure for urgent warrants. This allows for later authorisation by a Judicial Commissioner within three working days of the warrant being issued. Such urgent warrants only last for a maximum period of five working days unless renewed.
- 54 The Act creates a regulation-making power to enable the timespan of an urgent warrant to be varied at the request of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner, extending the period for later Judicial Commissioner authorisation and the lifespan of the warrant for up to 12 working days. This ensures that impacts on the warranty process from the pandemic can be mitigated and ensures the safeguard of judicial approval within the lowest possible time frame after a warrant is issued continues, and will mean the agencies are able to maintain their ability to protect national security and prevent serious crime during a period of potential widespread upheaval.

Fingerprints and DNA profiles

- 55 Biometrics (fingerprints and DNA profiles) are used daily in support of national security and, once taken or received in the UK, can only be retained for a specific period (except in certain circumstances where retention is permitted indefinitely). The material must be destroyed at the end of that period, unless a chief officer of police makes a national security determination to permit retention for a further period of up to 2 years.
- 56 A national security determination may be made if the chief officer of police considers that retention of the material is necessary for the purposes of national security; and must be made in writing. A chief officer of police may make further national security determinations in respect of the material, each for a maximum of 2 years.
- 57 The relevant provisions are:
- a. the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984;
 - b. the Terrorism Act 2000;
 - c. the Counter-Terrorism Act 2008;
 - d. the Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011;
 - e. the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995; and
 - f. the Police and Criminal Evidence (Northern Ireland) Order 1989.
- 58 It is anticipated that the impact that COVID-19 will have on the resources of the police will be such that chief officers of police will not be in a position to assess retained fingerprints and DNA profiles in the usual way, in order to determine whether it is necessary for these to be retained for the purposes of national security. This will mean that fingerprints and DNA profiles that would otherwise be retained for the purposes of national security may fall to be destroyed.
- 59 It is vitally important that biometrics are not automatically deleted due to the effects of the pandemic restricting the capacity of chief police officers to consider the case for making or remaking a National Security Determination.
- 60 Biometric material held using national security determinations is known in the past year to have led to the identification of individuals thought to have travelled to take part in the conflict in Syria or Iraq; linked individuals to other intelligence provided by overseas partners; linked individuals to unidentified crime stains; provided evidence of potential terrorist offences; and matched to potential visa and asylum applications, resulting in individuals being refused entry to the UK where it is appropriate.
- 61 The Act therefore confers a regulation-making power on the Secretary of State so that they may vary the statutory retention deadlines for biometric material (fingerprints and DNA profiles) taken under the Terrorism Act 2000, Counter-Terrorism Act 2008, Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures Act 2011 and Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (and similar legislation applicable in Scotland and Northern Ireland).

Food supply

- 62 The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (“Defra”) holds UK Government Departmental responsibility for food as a Critical National Infrastructure sector jointly with the Food Standards Agency (“FSA”), with Defra being responsible for supply and the FSA responsible for safety. This includes planning for and responding to disruptions to food and drink supply chains, working closely with the food industry.
- 63 Defra has a long history of working collaboratively with industry and across Government to respond to food supply disruption, as do the Devolved Administrations. Defra and Devolved Administration officials work closely in this area, to ensure an aligned, inter-governmental approach. There are a number of regular engagement forums, including the Food Chain Emergency Liaison Group (“FCELG”), comprising Trade Associations from across the food supply chain, as well as Defra and Devolved Administration officials, which provides a conduit between industry and Government to plan for and respond to food supply disruption in any scenario.
- 64 The response to food supply disruption relies on information being provided to Defra and the Devolved Administrations by industry on a voluntary basis during the disruption, to enable them to assess the situation and scale of disruption. As part of our response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Government has agreed a Data Sharing Protocol with food retailers to regularly gather information on a voluntary basis. The FCELG will also be convened on a more regular basis as a response to COVID-19. The information gathered through these methods will help Government to effectively support an industry-led response to any food supply disruption resulting from COVID-19, and inform a cross-Government response.
- 65 Whilst ongoing collaboration on a voluntary basis between Government and industry is anticipated, it is right and proper for a responsible Government to plan for every scenario. Therefore, the Act includes a power to act if a member(s) of the food industry is to refuse to comply with voluntary requests for information in order to ensure that Government has the necessary information to build a clear understanding of the situation, make informed judgements and respond effectively.

Inquests

- 66 Under existing legislation, the status of COVID-19 as a notifiable disease in England meant that any inquest into a death where the coroner has reason to suspect that the death was caused by COVID-19 must take place with a jury.
- 67 This could have very significant resource implications for coroner workload and Local Authority coroner services, resulting in a possible 25,000 additional jury inquests even at the lower end of COVID-19 mortality modelling in England and Wales.
- 68 Although the inquests could be adjourned until the pandemic has passed, this would deprive bereaved families of swift closure and would, in any event, simply delay resource pressure for the future.
- 69 The Act modifies the existing legislation to disapply the requirement that coroners must conduct any inquest with a jury where they have reason to suspect the death was caused by COVID-19. For Northern Ireland, the Act makes corresponding provision, including in relation to inquests into a death in prison from natural illness.

Disclosure: Wales

- 70 The regulations governing social care service providers and independent health care providers in Wales include requirements relating to vetting procedures for staff before they are permitted to start work. These are provided for by regulations under section 22 of the Care Standards Act 2000 and under section 27 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. The Coronavirus Act allows the Welsh Ministers to issue a notice disapplying or varying the requirements to provide increased flexibility for providers to enable them to take steps to address workforce issues in a more agile way.
- 71 Notices issued in this way must contain a statement by the Welsh Ministers, explaining why the step is appropriate and proportionate. Notices must not exceed one month though the Welsh Ministers may issue further notices as well as cancelling them.

Disclosure: Scotland

- 72 In Scotland, the Act allows the Scottish Ministers to relax certain requirements under the Protecting Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007 to allow the disclosure service to better cope in an emergency and continue to support recruitment in key sectors.
- 73 To ensure that safeguarding is not compromised should its staff be seriously affected by illness, the Act contains powers for the Scottish Ministers to reclassify certain types of disclosure application to allow faster processing.
- 74 Disclosure Scotland (an Executive Agency of Scottish Government) is also working to ensure that disclosure checks are not a barrier to fast employment and deployment of emergency health and care workers. With this in mind, the Act permits the Scottish Ministers to suspend certain offences which would otherwise apply if an employer appointed a person who was barred from working with vulnerable groups to do regulated work. It will continue to be an offence for a barred individual to take on regulated work.

Vaccinations: Scotland

- 75 There are currently requirements set out in the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978 which provide that vaccinations and immunisations must be administered by medical practitioners or persons acting under their direction and control. The Act modifies current legislation to allow a wider range of health professionals to administer vaccinations and immunisations (in accordance with existing regulatory provisions about the administration of vaccines in the Human Medicines Regulations 2012) in order to respond as flexibly as may be required to the pandemic.

Schools, childcare providers etc

- 76 COVID-19 presents particular challenges and risks to those operating in an educational or childcare context, whether children, students, teachers or visitors, because of the need or tendency for persons to learn together in groups and because of the harmful effect that any break in education may have on a young person's development and progression to further study or employment.
- 77 What is in the best interests of those in the education arena will vary according to the level of risk which presents itself in a particular place at a particular time. Accordingly, the Act seeks to take a suite of powers to enable Government to react flexibly to manage differing levels of risk.

- 78 The provisions will be in place for the period of time required to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some provisions will remain in force after the expiry of other provisions in the Act to deal with any residual matters.
- 79 The Act includes three powers relating to education:
- a power to require/direct temporary closure of an educational institution or registered childcare provider;
 - a power to make specified types of directions in connection with the running of the education and registered childcare systems; and
 - a power to dis-apply or vary specified existing requirements contained in or arising out of education and childcare legislation.

Statutory sick pay

- 80 Statutory Sick Pay (“SSP”) was introduced in 1983. It is paid by an employer to an employee who is absent from work due to sickness. SSP is paid at a flat weekly rate and may be paid for a maximum of 28 weeks.
- 81 The legislative framework for SSP is set out in Part 11 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 and Part X1 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits (Northern Ireland) Act 1992 and associated regulations.
- 82 The current SSP system does not provide the flexibility required for the response to managing and mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the number of people off work may increase significantly. This would present a significant financial burden on employers through increased SSP costs. The legislative changes in this Act look to provide the ability to provide relief to employers, with the primary focus being on small and medium size enterprises.
- 83 The Act enables the Secretary of State to make regulations regarding the recovery from HMRC of additional payments of SSP by certain employers for absences related to COVID-19. The ability to recover SSP is important so that employers are supported in a period when their payments of SSP are likely to escalate. It is also necessary to ensure that employees are incentivised not to attend work when advised not to do so for reasons of health security. There are penalties for employers who make fraudulent claims or who fail to keep the records required to support a claim.
- 84 Ordinarily, statutory sick pay is not payable for the first three days of sickness. These are commonly referred to as ‘waiting days’. This may discourage people from taking sick days in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The Act therefore allows for the temporary suspension of waiting days for those employees who are absent from work due to COVID-19, should this be necessary.
- 85 The approach to SSP needs flexibility and to align with the most up-to-date public health guidance. The Act allows the most recent version of guidance issued by Public Health England, National Health Services Scotland, Public Health Wales and the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being to be used when determining whether an employee should be deemed to be incapable of work by reason of COVID-19, for example because the employee is self-isolating. It is anticipated that the guidance will change frequently and it is necessary to ensure that employees who self-isolate in accordance with whatever is the current guidance are deemed incapable for work and entitled to SSP from day one.

Pensions

- 86 It is important that restrictions on returning to work whilst in receipt of a pension do not act as a disincentive for healthcare professionals who wish to re-enter the workforce in order to assist the healthcare response to COVID-19. The Act therefore suspends certain rules that apply in the NHS Pension Scheme in England and Wales so that healthcare professionals who have recently retired can return to work and those who have already returned can increase their hours without there being a negative impact on their pension entitlements.
- 87 The Act contains provisions to make changes for the NHS Pension Scheme in England and Wales, as well as corresponding changes in the respective NHS Pension Schemes in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Protection of public health

- 88 The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2008) contains regulation-making powers that enable a number of public health measures to be taken in situations such as the current COVID-19 outbreak. To increase consistency of the powers available across the UK the Act includes new powers which are broadly based on the existing powers that apply in England and Wales, in respect of Scotland and Northern Ireland. It is noted that the Scottish Ministers already have powers under the Public Health etc. (Scotland) Act 2008 to make regulations to give effect to international agreements or arrangements, including World Health Organisation recommendations, and so that element is not covered in respect of new Scottish powers in the Act.

Powers to direct suspension of port operations

- 89 Protecting the border is a key priority for Government. In the event that there is a real and significant risk that, due directly or indirectly to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are, or will be, insufficient Border Force resources available to maintain adequate border security, the Act enables steps to be taken to ensure that arrivals are directed to key locations where there will be sufficient Border Force officers to process them.
- 90 Specifically, the Act provides powers for the Secretary of State to direct a port operator (i.e. a person concerned in the management of a port) to suspend relevant operations, partially or wholly. The power also provides for the Secretary of State to issue consequential directions to other parties if the Secretary of State considers it appropriate in connection with the primary direction.

Powers relating to potentially infectious persons

- 91 The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 were made and came into force on 10th February 2020, and provide for the detention, isolation and screening of, and other appropriate restrictions to be imposed upon, persons who have or may have coronavirus, or who have arrived in England from an area in which the virus is prevalent. The Regulations apply only in relation to England, and where the Secretary of State has made a declaration that the incidence or transmission of novel Coronavirus constitutes a serious and imminent threat to public health (such declaration was made on 10th February 2020), and where the measures outlined in the Regulations are considered as an effective means of delaying or preventing further transmission of the virus.

- 92 The Act includes similar provisions for the screening and isolation of certain persons, including powers to impose other restrictions and requirements, and revokes the Regulations. In this way:
- there is a consistent, UK-wide approach, since the provisions are capable of applying not only in England, but to the UK as a whole;
 - enforcement provisions for immigration officers (including Border Force officers) can be included, since these officers act across the UK.
- 93 The majority of people are likely to comply with relevant public health advice. The policy aim of these provisions is to ensure that proportionate measures can be enforced if and when necessary. The proposals provide public health officers, constables and (in some circumstances) immigration officers with the means to enforce sensible public health restrictions, including returning people to places that they have been required to stay. Where necessary and proportionate, constables and immigration officers are able to direct individuals to attend, remove them to, or keep them at suitable locations for screening and assessment. These measures look to fill existing gaps in powers to ensure the screening and isolation of people who may be infected or contaminated with the virus and to ensure that constables can enforce health protection measures where necessary.

Powers relating to events, gatherings and premises

- 94 The Act gives the Secretary of State the power to prohibit or restrict events and gatherings, and to close premises, if the public health situation deems it necessary. This streamlines existing legislation in England and Wales, to ensure that powers to prevent events or gatherings can be deployed as quickly as possible in the event this is justified by the evidence. It also extends the power to Scotland and Northern Ireland too, where there is no equivalent legislation.
- 95 This can be deployed if, having had regard to the relevant advice, such a prohibition or restriction would:
- a. prevent, protect against or control the incidence or transmission of coronavirus, or
 - b. facilitate the most appropriate deployment of medical or emergency personnel and resources.

Courts and tribunals: use of video and audio technology

- 96 The efficiency and timeliness of court and tribunal hearings will suffer during the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions on travel will make it difficult for parties to attend court and without action a significant number of hearings and trials are likely to be adjourned. In criminal proceedings, the courts have a duty to deal with cases effectively and expeditiously and that includes making use of technology such as live video links, telephone or email where this is lawful and appropriate. Video link technology is increasingly being used across the court estate enabling greater participation in proceedings from remote locations. The courts currently have various statutory and inherent powers which enable them to make use of technology.
- 97 The Act amends existing legislation so as to enable the use of technology either in video/audio-enabled hearings in which one or more participants appear before the court using a live video or audio link, or by a wholly video/audio hearing where there is no physical courtroom and all participants take part in the hearing using telephone or video conferencing facilities.

- 98 Provisions are also made within the Act to enable the public to see and hear proceedings which are held fully by video link or fully by audio link. This enables criminal, family and civil courts and tribunals to make directions to live stream a hearing which is taking place in this manner.
- 99 There are existing restrictions on photography and sound recording in physical courts. Section 41 of the Criminal Justice Act 1925 provides prohibitions on photography in courts. The Contempt of Court Act 1981 prohibits the making of unauthorised sound recordings. These offences were created to protect participants in court proceedings, but long before the concept of a virtual hearing was thought possible. Provisions in the Act therefore create similar offences to protect participants and prohibit recording or transmitting live-streamed proceedings, photography and sound recordings in the context of virtual hearings and live-links.
- 100 The Act provides for restrictions to be imposed on individuals who are potentially infectious and that the decision to impose such restrictions can be appealed to magistrates' court. The Act therefore ensures that such hearings should be conducted fully by video link, unless the court directs otherwise, given the person appealing the decision would be subject to restrictions, and there is the risk of passing on the infection if they were to travel to court.

Powers in relation to bodies

- 101 The Act introduces powers for Local and National Authorities to require information about capacity to manage bodies locally and nationally. Local and National Authorities across the UK have, where necessary, additional powers to direct organisations to support the death management processes. This ensures that deceased bodies can be stored, transported and disposed of with care and respect. Local and National Authorities must have regard to the deceased person's wishes, religion or belief, if known, when carrying out functions under such powers.

Postponement of elections, referendums, recall petitions and canvass

- 102 On Friday 13th March 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the elections scheduled for 7th May 2020 would be postponed until 6th May 2021. There were a number of polls scheduled for 7th May 2020 due to the ordinary cycle of such elections:
- a. 40 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) elections in England and Wales
 - b. 118 English council elections
 - c. 3 local authority mayors (Bristol, Liverpool and Salford)
 - d. 4 combined authority mayors (Greater Manchester, Liverpool, Tees Valley, and West Midlands)
 - e. London Mayor and Greater London Assembly
 - f. Parish elections
- 103 There are also other polls set to be run on that day and that will need to be postponed:
- a. certain other local referendums that are planned for 7th May 2020
 - b. Local Authority by-elections for seats that would not ordinarily be completed on that day but become vacant by, for example, resignation.

- 104 Most of these polls were due to take place in England only, with the exception of PCC elections which were planned in both England and Wales.
- 105 The decision to postpone was taken following advice from the Government's medical experts in relation to the response to COVID-19 and the advice of those involved with delivering polls (for example, a call by the Electoral Commission that the 7th May elections be postponed until the Autumn).
- 106 The need for the postponement arises from concerns that running a poll will be, at best, inadvisable and, at worst, impossible if candidates, campaigners, electors, electoral administrators and those providing supply and support to them are affected by either COVID-19 or the measures around it. Concerns have already been raised by electoral administrators that there would be insufficient staff available to them or their suppliers. Additional risks include polling station safety, the possible demands on Local Authority electoral staff to support other key services, and the impracticality or potential impossibility of campaigning activity. Attempting to run a poll in those circumstances could lead to questions as to legitimacy of the outcome and sets a context for legal challenge to the results and the more general question of why it went ahead in the circumstances.
- 107 There is no existing legislative provision that allows for any of the statutory polls scheduled for 7th May, or others around that time and which arise going forward, to be postponed. There are some powers to move poll dates by secondary legislation, but these are only available significantly in advance and can no longer be used for the May polls, or others in the future. The Act enables the postponement of the polls scheduled for 7th May. It also covers the handling of other elections and referendums (such as by-elections and local referendums) that might arise during the COVID-19 outbreak and may need to be postponed - for public health reasons - in a similar way. These include local elections (in England and Wales) and referendums (in England) that were required to be held in the period between 16th March 2020 and 30 days following Royal Assent of the Coronavirus Bill (25th March 2020), but which were not in the event held during that period. It also provides for the postponement of the canvass in Northern Ireland - an exercise to create a new register of electors that happens every decade. The canvass will be moved from 2020 to 2021.

Other administrative requirements

- 108 The functions of the Treasury are carried out by the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury ("the Commissioners"). There are currently eight Commissioners: the Prime Minister (as the First Lord of the Treasury), the Chancellor of the Exchequer (as the Second Lord of the Treasury) and 6 Junior Lords of the Treasury.
- 109 By virtue of section 1 of the Treasury Instruments (Signature) Act 1849, where any instrument or act is required to be signed by the Commissioners, it may be signed by two or more of the Commissioners. It is crucial that the work of the Treasury can continue unimpeded during the COVID-19 outbreak and instruments are not delayed in a situation where Commissioners are not available because they are impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. The Act provides flexibility so a Minister of the Treasury can act as Commissioner and reduce the number of Commissioners needed to sign instruments during the COVID-19 outbreak.

National Insurance Contributions

- 110 The Act temporarily modifies the existing procedures around introducing National Insurance Contribution (“NICs”) changes, in order to respond quickly to the COVID-19 outbreak if required. The Act removes the statutory requirement that a report from the Government Actuary Department accompany secondary legislation implementing rate changes. The Act also provides for the secondary legislation to be subject to the negative procedure in Parliament rather than the affirmative procedure. The temporary modifications will last for two years from the day the Bill received Royal Assent (25th March 2020).
- 111 Sections 143 and 145 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 provide that orders may alter the rate of contributions payable by employees, employers and the self-employed. Section 5 of the National Insurance Act 2014 provides that regulations may be made to alter the amount of the Employment Allowance and who qualifies for it.

Financial Assistance to industry

- 112 COVID-19 is an unforeseen and exceptional pressure on the economy. The Act makes provision to ensure that any expenditure to address the impact of COVID-19 does not affect the ability of the Government going forward to deliver more routine general economic policy and address economic shocks and investment needs as they arise.
- 113 Section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 is the principal general power for a Secretary of State to provide financial assistance to business. The power is exercisable by a Secretary of State on a shared or concurrent basis with the Scottish Ministers and the Welsh Ministers. Subsections (4) and (5) impose an aggregate limit of £12,000 million (£12 billion) for financial assistance under section 8.
- 114 The Act provides that financial assistance provided under section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 does not count towards the £12 billion aggregate limit where it is “coronavirus-related”.

HMRC Functions

- 115 The Act gives HM Treasury the power to direct HMRC to create new functions in relation to COVID-19. Specifically, it enables HMRC to pay grants to businesses to deliver the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Under this Scheme, employers are able to contact HMRC for a grant to cover most of the wages of people who are not working but are furloughed and kept on payroll. The Scheme will cover 80% of the salary of workers retained, up to a total of £2,500 per month. It will cover the cost of wages backdated to 1st March 2020 and will be open initially for at least three months.
- 116 In addition to allowing HMRC to deliver the Job Retention Scheme, it also provides the flexibility for HM Treasury to provide further directions if necessary, as the Government continues to respond to the situation as it develops.
- 117 Unlike ministerial departments, HMRC is a statutory body established by the Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005. This power is necessary as HMRC is a statutory body that only has the functions conferred by or under statute – for example the power to collect and manage a wide range of taxes.

Up-rating of working tax credit etc

- 118 The rate of the basic element of working tax credit for the 2020/2021 tax year was set at £1,995, by the Tax Credits, Child Benefit and Guardian's Allowance Up-rating Regulations 2020, due to come into force from 6th April 2020. The Act replaces the reference to £1,995 with a reference to the amount of £3,040 for that tax year.
- 119 Section 41 of the Tax Credits Act 2002 requires the Treasury to review each tax year the tax credits rates and thresholds to determine whether they have retained their value in relation to prices in the UK. The basic element of Working Tax Credit, as provided for in regulations made under section 11 of the Tax Credits Act 2002, is subject to review under section 41.
- 120 The Act substitutes a higher amount for the rate of the basic element of Working Tax Credit specified in regulation 20 of, and Schedule 2 to, the Working Tax Credit (Entitlement and Maximum Rate) Regulations 2002. The higher amount will apply for the tax year 2020/2021 only.
- 121 The Act enables the basic element of Working Tax Credit to return to the 6th April 2020 baseline rate of £1,995 for the purpose of conducting the Treasury's review of tax credit rates for the tax year 2021/2022.
- 122 It is also proposed to increase the Universal Credit standard allowance in a separate set of regulations. This Act therefore also enables the amounts of the standard allowance to be the 6th April 2020 baseline rates for the purpose of the review of benefit rates by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for the tax year 2021/2022.

Local Authority meetings

- 123 Local Authorities are being asked to undertake a number of essential and unusual functions in order to manage the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. They are also expected to contribute to local resilience planning for the pandemic through Local Resilience Forums and continue the effective delivery of local services, including planning and licensing. The Act creates a power to make regulations to relax some requirements in relation to Local Authority meetings for a specified period.
- 124 Along with the postponement of elections and by-elections this is intended to increase the Local Authorities' flexibility over how they can respond and deploy their resources, minimise risks to their continuing conduct of business, and ensure their members and officers can act in accordance with official health guidance.
- 125 The need for these measures arises because meetings may generate significant work that would put a strain on Local Authority resources when such resources might already be stretched or may be used efficiently elsewhere.

Business Improvement Districts

- 126 Business Improvement Districts ("BIDs") are business-led partnerships which are created voluntarily to deliver additional local services and upgrade the local environment for the benefit of business. A BID is a self-defined area, in which local businesses vote to approve the BID arrangements; those arrangements include raising a levy on all businesses covered by the arrangements. This levy is collected by the Local Authority and used by the BID organisation to undertake projects that benefit the local area.

- 127 There is a legal maximum of five years within which BIDs can operate as set out in section 54 of the Local Government Act 2003. Any which operate for longer than the five-year maximum without holding another business vote, or ballot, will place those BIDs operating at legal risk.
- 128 The overall policy intent is to support businesses, particularly in high streets and town centres across England, as BIDs have a role to play in high street regeneration: in 2019, 259 BIDs across England raised over £106.7 million through levy payments to invest back into their respective towns and cities. Their role will be even more important in the recovery phase from the current crisis.

Extension to ballots

- 129 The Government accepted the Electoral Commission's recent recommendation to postpone local elections for a year due to COVID-19. The Government wishes to also include BID ballots within this delay to avoid local authorities making inconsistent decisions on whether to delay the vote.
- 130 Without the Act some Local Authorities would interpret the delay to local elections as cause for delaying BID ballots, which would also lead to the extension of BID arrangements beyond the legal maximum of five years, as set out in, section 54 of the Local Government Act 2003, which will place those BIDs operating beyond the five year maximum at legal risk.
- 131 There is a risk that by legally forcing BIDs to go to ballot during the COVID-19 pandemic they will not succeed, as businesses are concerned about the economic impact of COVID-19 and would be unwilling to pay the levy when they are at risk of administration or insolvency (which runs against the Government position of wanting to see more BIDs established due to their benefits to high streets, town centres and businesses).
- 132 The Act temporarily extends the maximum duration of English BID arrangements. This is to ensure consistency of the BIDs legislation with the delay introduced for local government elections, to give local government, BIDs and local business communities certainty and clarity at a turbulent and disruptive time.
- 133 BID arrangements that are in place on the day of Royal Assent (25th March 2020) but are due to terminate on or before 31st December 2020 are to be extended until 31st March 2021. The purpose being to maintain the status quo to enable a further ballot to take place after the current emergency has abated.
- 134 The Government proposes to temporarily extend the maximum duration of Northern Ireland BID arrangements. This is to ensure consistency of application of the Business Improvement Districts Act (Northern Ireland) 2013 with the delay introduced for local government elections, to give councils, BIDs and local business communities certainty and clarity at a turbulent and disruptive time.

Residential tenancies: protection from eviction

- 135 It is necessary to ensure that tenants in the private and social rented sectors are protected from eviction for a reasonable and specified period of time, in recognition of the unusual circumstances arising from the COVID-19 outbreak. As such, the Act delays when landlords are able to evict tenants either by extending the notice period that landlords in England and Wales are required to serve on a tenant to at least three months or, in some cases, creating a three months' notice requirement where a requirement to give notice does not currently exist.

136 Under the current legislative framework for both the private and social rented sectors, landlords are able to lawfully evict a tenant and gain possession of the property under a range of circumstances. To do so, they must usually serve on the tenant a valid notice of intention that they wish to possess the property and may be required to evidence their reason for seeking possession in court. These reasons can include when the tenant has accumulated rent arrears. The Act applies to all landlords who have granted tenancies governed by the Rent Act 1977 and the Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 1996. This covers all statutory tenants in the private and social rented sectors. It does not include common law tenancies or licenses (other than secure licenses).

Business tenancies: protection from forfeiture etc

137 Forfeiture is a right to end a lease by a landlord at an earlier date than the lease would normally end because of some default by the tenant. The right to forfeit is a contractual right rather than a common law or statutory right and most contracts contain express provisions for forfeiture.

138 The Act ensures that leases cannot be forfeited for non-payment of rent for a three-month period for all types of commercial tenants but still allows for forfeiture at the end of the period for such non-payment. This works to encourage businesses that are in a position to make their rent payment to do so, whilst providing three months' grace to those that are struggling.

139 This position is in line with the Government's previous announcement to bring forward primary legislation to prevent the eviction of private rented sector leaseholders.

140 The protection period recognises that commercial property landlords may in cases of rental arrears be deprived of an income stream for the period, and will be delayed in gaining possession of the property to sell or put to alternative use—it is aimed at being a proportionate response to both parties.

141 This Act provides that where non-payment of rent enables a landlord to treat a lease as forfeited, that right will not be able to be exercised for a period of three months (to 30th June 2020)—with a power to extend if it is needed.

142 Landlords are still be able to claim forfeiture after the three-month period (either by peaceably re-entering the premises or by issuing a claim for forfeiture).

143 The protection applies to all business tenancies within the meaning of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 (the "1954 Act"), whether or not they have opted out of the protections afforded by the 1954 Act. In Northern Ireland, it applies to all business tenancies within the meaning of the Business Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (the "1996 Order") and to any tenancy to which the Order would apply if any relevant occupier were the tenant.

144 The 1954 Act allows a landlord to oppose the right of a protected tenant to renew where there has been a "persistent delay in paying rent". This could be a problem for a tenant who is relying on the moratorium against forfeiture whose lease comes up for renewal during the moratorium period. The tenant's behaviour during the moratorium period could give the landlord a ground to oppose their renewal in future. This period is therefore to be ignored for the purposes of section 30(1)(b) of the 1954 Act.

145 The 1996 Order allows a landlord to oppose the right of a protected tenant to renew where there has been a 'persistent delay in paying rent'. This could be a problem for a tenant who is relying on the moratorium against forfeiture whose lease comes up for renewal during the moratorium period. The tenant's behaviour during the moratorium period could give the landlord a ground to oppose their renewal in future. This period is therefore to be ignored for the purposes of Article 12(1)(b) of the 1996 Order.

- 146 Landlords are protected for the period of the forfeiture moratorium: the non-collection of rent by the landlord during the period will not be treated as a waiver of the right to pursue rent.
- 147 The moratorium only applies to non-payment of rent. Landlords continue to be able to exercise other rights of forfeiture; for example, a tenant is not allowed to cause willful damage.

General Synod of the Church of England

- 148 The General Synod is the national assembly of the Church of England and is made up of the Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity (although the first two Houses are technically the ancient Convocations of Canterbury and York). It needs to pass important legislation in the coming months – including provision to implement recommendations from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse.
- 149 Primary legislation made by the General Synod is called a ‘Measure’ and requires Parliamentary approval and Royal Assent.
- 150 Like Parliament, the General Synod is elected for a five-year term (unless dissolved sooner). That five-year term is prescribed in primary legislation: the Church of England Convocations Act 1966 (an Act of Parliament) and the Synodical Government Measure 1969 (a Church Measure). The General Synod was last elected in the summer of 2015 and fresh elections were accordingly due to take place this summer.
- 151 Elections to the General Synod are conducted in each diocese of the Church of England (a diocese being the geographical area under the authority of a particular bishop). The officials in the dioceses who have the responsibility for conducting elections have informed officials at Church House, Westminster, that as all diocesan offices are now working remotely, some with skeleton staff, it will be impracticable to prepare for and conduct elections in the present circumstances.
- 152 As matters stand, there is no legal power that enables the lifetime of the General Synod to be extended beyond five years. Under the Church of England Convocations Act 1966, the Convocations of Canterbury and York automatically stand dissolved at the end of five years (unless dissolved by Royal writs earlier than that). When the Convocations are dissolved, the General Synod is automatically dissolved under the Synodical Government Measure 1969. There is no mechanism in existence to enable dissolution to be postponed beyond the five years prescribed by the 1966 Act.
- 153 The Act addresses that problem. It creates a power enabling Her Majesty, by Order in Council, at the joint request of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, to postpone the date on which the Convocations of Canterbury and York – and therefore the General Synod – automatically stand dissolved under the Church of England Convocations Act 1966.
- 154 Once the relevant Order in Council is made, and the postponement is in place, it will be possible for the Church to re-schedule the elections that were due to take place this summer.

Legal background

- 155 The relevant legal background is explained in the policy background of these notes.

Territorial extent and application

- 156 Section 100 sets out the territorial extent of the Act, which describes the jurisdictions in which the Act forms part of the law. The territorial extent of the Act is, variously, the United Kingdom, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The extent of an Act of Parliament can be different from its application. Application is about where an Act produces a practical effect. The commentary on individual provisions of the Act explain their extent and application.
- 157 The Act contains provisions which cover reserved and devolved subject areas.
- 158 There is a convention that Westminster will not normally legislate with regard to matters that are within the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament, the National Assembly for Wales or the Northern Ireland Assembly without the consent of the legislature concerned.
- 159 To the extent that the provisions of the Act fall within the legislative competence of devolved legislatures, the legislative consent procedure would be appropriate.
- 160 See the table in Annex A for a summary of the position regarding territorial extent and application in the United Kingdom. The table also summarises the position regarding legislative consent motions.

Commentary on provisions of Act

Part 1: Main Provisions

Section 1: Meaning of “coronavirus” and related terminology

- 161 This section defines “coronavirus” and “coronavirus disease” which are terms used throughout the Act. It also explains that references to infection or contamination in the Act are references to infection or contamination with COVID-19. However, references to persons infected by COVID-19 do not (unless a contrary intention appears) include any person who has been infected but is clear of COVID-19 (unless the person is re-infected).
- 162 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 2 and Schedule 1: Emergency registration of nurses and other health and care professionals

- 163 This section and Schedule make temporary modifications to the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 and the Health Professions Order 2001, allowing for the temporary registration of certain healthcare professionals.
- 164 On notification from the Secretary of State that an emergency is occurring or about to occur, the Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council has the power to register a person or specified group of persons as a nurse, midwife, or nursing associate. On the same emergency notification procedure by the Secretary of State, the Registrar of the Health and Care Professions Council has the power to register a person or specified group of persons as a member of a ‘relevant profession’ i.e. physiotherapists, paramedics and others.

- 165 The relevant Registrar must be satisfied that the emergency registration requirement is met, i.e. that the person or persons are “fit, proper and suitably experienced to be registered” as a professional, with regard to the emergency.
- 166 Conditions of practice may be imposed, and the relevant Registrar may revoke the registration at any time including where the Registrar suspects that the person’s fitness to practise may be impaired.
- 167 The relevant Registrar must revoke the registration on notification from the Secretary of State that the emergency no longer exists, and transitional provision is made to ensure the Registrar’s power to revoke registration continues after the Act has expired.
- 168 There is no appeal right available where the relevant Registrar has refused to register a person under the emergency provision, or where the Registrar has revoked a person’s registration under the emergency provision.
- 169 If a person breaches a condition to which their registration is subject, anything that is done by the person in breach of the condition, is to be treated as if it has not been done by a professional regulated by the Nursing and Midwifery Council or Health and Care Professions Council.
- 170 For the purposes of the temporary modifications made by section 2 and Schedule 1 to the Act, certain provisions of the Nursing and Midwifery Order 2001 and the Health Professions Order 2001 do not apply to persons registered under the emergency provision. These disapplied provisions relate to the standard registration of healthcare professionals, education and training, and fitness to practise (save for articles enabling identification of an individual).
- 171 It is expected members of these professions who are recently retired, students, trainees and those on sabbatical would be appropriate for emergency registration, but this is not an exhaustive list. It is at the discretion of the Registrars to determine on the emergency registration requirement being met and who to register on a temporary basis.
- 172 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 3 and Schedule 2: Emergency arrangements concerning medical practitioners: Wales

- 173 The section and Schedule modifies the National Health Service (Primary Medical Services Performers Lists) (Wales) Regulations 2004 to support the fast deployment of temporarily registered health care workers by the NHS. The modifications permit medical practitioners with temporary registration under section 18A of the Medical Act 1983 to provide primary medical services despite not being included in the primary medical services performers list of a Local Health Board provided that they have made an application to the Local Health Board and the Local Health Board has not refused or deferred that application.
- 174 Provision is also made to ensure necessary associated contractual changes to the National Health Service (General Medical Services Contract) (Wales) Regulations 2004.
- 175 The territorial extent of the section and Schedule is England and Wales only and the application is Wales only.

Section 4 and Schedule 3: Emergency arrangements concerning medical practitioners: Scotland

- 176 The section and Schedule modify the National Health Service (Primary Medical Services Performers Lists) (Scotland) Regulations 2004 to support the fast deployment of temporarily registered healthcare workers by the NHS. The modifications permit general practitioners with temporary registration under section 18A of the Medical Act 1983 to provide primary medical services despite not being included in the primary medical services performers list of a Health Board if they have applied to the Health Board and the Health Board has not refused or deferred the application.
- 177 Provision is also made to ensure necessary associated contractual changes to the National Health Service (General Medical Services Contract) (Scotland) Regulations 2018.
- 178 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is Scotland only.

Section 5 and Schedule 4: Emergency registration of and extension of prescribing powers for pharmaceutical chemists: Northern Ireland

- 179 This section and Schedule amend the Pharmacy (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (the “1976 Order”) to allow the registrar to temporarily enter in the register the name of a pharmacist, or a group of pharmacists when directed by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland that an emergency has occurred or is occurring. This allows people who do not meet the qualifications under the 1976 Order to be registered in an emergency situation at the discretion of the registrar. Groups that could be considered for temporary registration may include pre-registration pharmacists or recently retired pharmacists.
- 180 Provision is also made to allow the registrar to temporarily annotate a pharmacist’s record or the record of a group of pharmacists in the register when directed by the Department of Health that an emergency has occurred or is occurring. The purpose of the annotation would be to extend the power to prescribe certain drugs, medicines and appliances to people who would not be authorised under the 1976 Order.
- 181 The Schedule also provides that certain provisions of the 1976 Order that do not apply to temporary registrations and annotations, can be reapplied to such registrations and annotations by regulations.
- 182 The Schedule removes certain decisions relating to temporary registrations and annotations from the scope of the normal appeal mechanisms under the 1976 Order.
- 183 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is Northern Ireland only.

Section 6 and Schedule 5: Emergency registration of social workers: England and Wales

- 184 The Section and Schedule modify the Social Workers Regulations 2018 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, allowing for the temporary registration of social workers in England and Wales. Social Work England (the “regulator”) and the registrar for Social Care Wales (the “registrar”) have the power to register a person or specified group of persons, as a social worker.
- 185 As with the emergency registration of healthcare professionals, the regulator or registrar must be satisfied that the emergency registration requirement is met, i.e. that the person or persons are “fit, proper and suitably experienced to be registered” with regard to the emergency. It is at the discretion of the regulator or registrar to determine who to register on a temporary

basis. Conditions of practice may be imposed, and the regulator or registrar may revoke the registration at any time, including where they suspect that the person's fitness to practise may be impaired. The regulator or registrar must revoke the registration if the Secretary of State advises the regulator or registrar that the circumstances leading to a notification of an emergency no longer exist.

186 Certain provisions of the Social Workers Regulations 2018 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 are disapplied with regard to the conditions of registration of social workers. These disapplied provisions relate to the standard registration, education and training, and fitness to practise of social workers.

187 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is England and Wales only.

Section 7 and Schedule 6: Temporary registration of social workers: Scotland

188 The section and Schedule modifies the Regulation of Care (Scotland) Act 2001 (the "2001 Act") to give the Scottish Social Services Council (the "SSSC") the power to consider applications for a temporary social worker in Scotland from those who have retired from being a social worker, those who are on a career break and from social work students. The Scottish Ministers have the power to direct the SSSC to start considering applications for temporary registration. Before issuing a direction, they must have regard to any advice from the Chief Medical Officer of the Scottish administration (or Deputy Chief Medical Officer of the Scottish administration), and be satisfied that the direction is necessary and proportionate in response to the risk of transmission of COVID-19, and its impact on the provision of social services in Scotland.

189 In order for the SSSC to register a person as a temporary social worker, it must be satisfied that the relevant criteria are met. An application for temporary registration can be made by a retired social worker or a person on a career break who was previously working as a social worker within the last 5 years. Applications for temporary registration can also be considered from social work students who are in the final year of their training. Applications can be received from persons who may have worked or obtained qualifications in Scotland, or another part of the UK. In each case, the SSSC has the discretion to determine if applicants are persons who are of good character and satisfy any requirements for competence and conduct.

190 It is at the discretion of the SSSC to determine who is registered on a temporary basis, and conditions on temporary registrations may be imposed. The SSSC may revoke the registration at any time including where they suspect that the person's fitness to practise may be impaired. The SSSC must revoke the temporary registration if the Scottish Ministers directs it to cease considering applications for temporary registration. Provision is made to make it clear that any person who is on the register as a temporary social worker can apply, at any point they are on the register, for registration in another part of the register. This enables people who are retired or on a career break to make an application to return to work as a fully qualified social worker if they choose to do so. Equally, it enables social work students to apply to be registered as a social worker as soon as they complete their education, if they are still registered as a temporary social worker. If any such application is successful, that person would be removed from the register of temporary social workers. The SSSC has power to make rules in relation to the applications for temporary registration or those who are registered as temporary social workers. Certain provisions of the 2001 Act in relation to appeals against the decisions of the SSSC for application for full registration have been disapplied in respect of applications for temporary registration.

- 191 Section 7 and Schedule 6 amend the Registration of Social Workers and Social Services Workers in Care Services (Scotland) Regulations 2013 to increase the period of time which a person who is a social services worker or a social worker who works in the care service sector in Scotland must be registered to work in those services from 6 month to 12 months.
- 192 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is Scotland only.

Section 8 and Schedule 7: Emergency volunteering leave

- 193 The section and Schedule establish a new form of unpaid statutory leave for employees and workers (“workers”) that qualify as emergency volunteers for the purpose of Emergency Volunteering Leave (“EVL”).
- 194 Part 1 of the Schedule sets out the entitlement to take EVL. To qualify for EVL a worker must be issued with an Emergency Volunteering Certificate (“EVL Certificate”) by an appropriate authority confirming that they have been approved as an emergency volunteer, and that they will volunteer for a specified period. A worker must then provide written notice, including the EVL Certificate to their employer at least 3 working days before the first day of the period specified in the EVL Certificate. A worker is entitled to take a set block of 2, 3 or 4 consecutive weeks of EVL during a period of 16 weeks (a “volunteering period”). There is no requirement for a worker to have any qualifying period of service with their employer to take EVL. Subsequent volunteering periods can be specified by relevant national authorities in regulations. The categories of workers who are exempted from the entitlement to take EVL are set out in paragraph 3 of the Schedule and relevant national authorities are able to make regulations to extend the list of exempt workers.
- 195 Part 2 of the Schedule sets out the effect of an individual taking EVL. Paragraph 5 mandates the continued application of terms and conditions of employment during any period of EVL. Paragraph 6 sets out an individual’s right to return after a period of EVL. Paragraph 7 describes the effects of EVL on an individual’s pension rights.
- 196 Part 3 of the Schedule modifies the Employment Rights Act 1996 so as to make new provisions that ensure that workers who take or seek to take EVL are protected from detriment and that employees receive additional unfair dismissal protections. Part 3 also modifies the Employment Rights Act to allow for workers who take or seek to take EVL to pursue complaints and obtain remedies in the Employment Tribunal.
- 197 Part 4 of the Schedule modifies the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 to insert equivalent protections to those described in respect of Part 3.
- 198 Part 5 of the Schedule is a general provision, which sets out the application of this Schedule to agency workers, and contains definitions and more information on powers to make regulations under the Schedule.
- 199 The territorial extent and application of provisions relating to EVL is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, but Part 3 of the Schedule extends and applies to England and Wales and Scotland only, and Part 4 extends and applies to Northern Ireland only.

Section 9: Compensation for emergency volunteers

- 200 This section requires the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the payment of compensation to emergency volunteers for some loss of earnings (where relevant) and travelling and subsistence.
- 201 The territorial extent and application of the provision to establish an emergency volunteer compensation scheme is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 10 and Schedules 8, 9, 10 and 11: Temporary modification of mental health and mental capacity legislation

202 This section gives effect to Schedules 8, 9, 10 and 11 which make temporary modifications to mental health and mental capacity legislation in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

England and Wales

203 Schedule 8 applies to England and Wales and modifies the Mental Health Act 1983 (the “MHA”) and related provisions.

204 Paragraph 3 relates to sections 2 and 3 of the MHA, which allow for the compulsory hospitalisation of patients with mental disorders. Normally, applications by Approved Mental Health Professionals to detain patients must be supported by the recommendations of two doctors. However, paragraph 3(1) allows for applications to contain only one such medical recommendation, if obtaining the advice of two doctors is either impractical or would unduly delay the application.

205 Paragraph 4 modifies the effect of section 5 of the MHA, which allows for the short-term detention of patients who are already in hospital. It extends the maximum period for which a patient can be detained under section 5.

206 Paragraphs 5 to 8 provide for patients involved in the criminal justice system:

- a. Paragraph 5 extends the period for which a person accused of a crime can be remanded to hospital under sections 35 and 36 of the MHA, by removing the rule that a person cannot be remanded for more than 12 weeks in total. It will remain the case that a person cannot be remanded to hospital for more than 28 days at a time.
- b. Paragraph 6 applies to various sections of the MHA which allow a court to send an accused or convicted person to hospital. It provides that, in certain circumstances, courts can make such orders on the advice of one doctor rather than two.
- c. Paragraph 7 modifies the conditions under which the Secretary of State may make a “transfer direction”, to move a serving prisoner or other type of detainee to hospital.
- d. Paragraph 8 deals with the time limits imposed by the MHA for taking an accused or convicted person to hospital, following a decision to admit them. It allows for the person to be taken to hospital as soon as is practicable after the normal limit expires.

207 Paragraph 9 changes procedures around the administration of medication to detained patients without their consent. Paragraph 10 extends the time for which a person can be kept in a “place of safety” by a police officer under sections 135 and 136 of the MHA.

208 Paragraphs 11 to 13 contain transitional provisions.

Scotland

209 Schedule 9 contains temporary modifications of the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 (the “2003 Act”), the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 (the “1995 Act”) and related subordinate legislation, to provide measures including:

- a. The modification of forms that are used in connection with the 2003 Act and Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995 or for such forms to be read as if they were so modified.
- b. Extending maximum periods of detention to 120 hours.

- c. Permitting a short term detention certificate (“STDC”) to be granted without the need to first consult a mental health officer in certain circumstances and permitting a second STDC to be granted.
- d. Enabling a mental health officer (“MHO”) to apply for a Compulsory Treatment Order under section 63 of the 2003 Act founded on only one mental health report, provided the MHO considers that it would be impractical or involve delay to obtain two mental health reports.
- e. Where a serving prisoner is found to be suffering from mental disorder and requires medical treatment, the Scottish Ministers may make a transfer for treatment direction (“TTD”) under section 136(2) of the 2003 Act. Paragraph 6 permits that Ministers may be so satisfied on the basis of one report from an Approved Medical Practitioner, where they consider that to obtain two reports would be impractical or involve delay.
- f. Extending the limit on the length of time nurses can detain patients in hospital from 3 to 6 hours.
- g. Allowing for a prisoner to be transferred to hospital by a TTD.
- h. In relation to section 136(3) and (6) of the 2003 Act (which provides that where a prisoner is to be transferred to hospital by a TTD they should be so moved within 7 days of the date the direction was made), providing that the transfer may be made within that period or as soon as practicable after the end of that period.
- i. Enabling reviews of certain orders and directions at certain specified intervals carried out by responsible medical officers (RMO) to be suspended.
- j. Suspending the requirement imposed on the Scottish Ministers in certain circumstances to make a reference to the Tribunal in respect of hospital directions or transfer for treatment directions.
- k. Allowing that, where certain conditions are met, the RMO may administer medication to someone being treated under mental health legislation after the 2 month period laid out in the 2003 Act without the need to seek a second opinion from a designated medical practitioner (DMP) if the RMO has made a request for a DMP visit and it would cause undesirable delay to wait for the DMP’s assessment.
- l. Allowing a Mental Health Tribunal panel to operate with a reduced number of members where it is not practical to proceed with the required three members, as long as one of the members is a legal member or Sheriff Convener.
- m. Allowing the period of extension for assessment orders to be increased at the discretion of the court, from 14 days to 12 weeks.
- n. Enabling detention on the advice of just one medical practitioner (instead of the two required under the 2003 Act), if the court considers that it would be impractical in the circumstances to secure the second recommendation and the court is satisfied that the evidence of the single practitioner is sufficient.
- o. Providing that the conveyance or admittance of accused or convicted persons to hospital may be achieved as soon as is practicable after the end of the prescribed time limits in the 1995 Act.

- p. Allowing the Tribunal to decide a case without a hearing in the circumstance where the patient may have requested oral representations or oral evidence to be heard. In those circumstances, relevant parties could make written submissions to the Tribunal before a decision is reached.
- q. Allowing medical practitioners in Scotland who are not independent (e.g. are in the same hospital, or with a supervisory relationship, or working in an independent hospital where the patient is being treated), to examine a patient for the purposes of the 2003 Act.

Northern Ireland

210 Schedule 10 contains temporary modifications of the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and related provisions including:

- a. Providing for the modification of forms used in connection with the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order (the “1986 Order”) or for such forms to be read as if they were so modified.
- b. Modifying Part 2 of the 1986 Order relating to the application for detention and the periods of detention. This includes temporary modifications of the professional requirements to make applications and reports, and the length of time a person can be detained.
- c. Modifying the period during which a person can be remanded in hospital.
- d. Making modifications related to the medical evidence required before a court can make a remand or a healthcare disposal under the 1986 Order or make a determination of unfitness to plead or a direction for recording a finding that a person is not guilty by reason of insanity.
- e. Making modifications in relation to the medical reports required before a transfer of a prisoner or other person detained in a custodial environment to a healthcare environment can take place.
- f. Modifying the timescales within which an accused or convicted person is conveyed or admitted to hospital under the 1986 Order.
- g. Allowing the Department of Health in Northern Ireland to designate a different hospital than the one it previously designated in order to allow maximum flexibility during a period when it may be impractical to admit a person to the previously designated hospital and it would be possible that a person may be admitted sooner to a different hospital.
- h. Enabling the Department of Health in Northern Ireland to provide a modified Code of Practice during the time of the emergency.
- i. Making transitional provision where the procedures in Part 2 of Schedule 10 to the Act are already underway at the end of the period for which the relevant provision of this Schedule has effect.

211 Schedule 11 provides for modifications to the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (the “2016 Act”), including:

- a. Introductory provisions - including interpretation and how to read the forms - that have been prescribed as a result of a subordinate legislation power in the 2016 Act.

- b. Modifying parts of the 2016 Act relating to the functioning of additional safeguards, such as the operation of the panels. This includes temporary modifications on timings relating to when reports can be made, the length of time an authorisation can last and requirements relating to who must be consulted before a report for short-term detention for examination can be authorised.
- c. Providing for an extension to the time limits for detaining a person in a place of safety.
- d. Modifying the period during which a person can be remanded in hospital.
- e. Modifying requirements for the medical evidence required before a court can make a remand or a healthcare disposal under Part 10 of the 2016 Act or make a determination of unfitness to plead or a direction for recording a finding that a person is not guilty by reason of insanity.
- f. Modifying timescales for a medical practitioner making an extension report for a public protection order without restrictions.
- g. Making modifications relating to medical reports required before a transfer of a prisoner or other person detained in a custodial environment to a healthcare environment can take place.
- h. Modifying timescales within which a person subject to a hospital transfer direction is admitted to hospital under Part 10 of the 2016 Act.
- i. Enabling the Department of Health in Northern Ireland to provide a modified Code of Practice.
- j. Making transitional provision where the procedures in Part 2 of Schedule 11 are already underway at the end of the period for which the relevant provision of this Schedule has effect.
- k. Providing a requirement for each health and social care trust to maintain certain records and to report and review how the provisions are used.

212 The territorial extent and application of section 10(1) and Schedule 8 is England and Wales only, the territorial extent and application of section 10(2) and Schedule 9 is Scotland only and the territorial extent and application of sections 10(3) and 10(4) and Schedules 10 and 11 is Northern Ireland only.

Section 11: Indemnity for health service activity: England and Wales

213 This section enables the Secretary of State (in relation to the NHS in England) and the Welsh Ministers (in relation to the NHS in Wales) to provide an indemnity for clinical negligence liabilities arising from NHS activities connected to the diagnosis, care or treatment of a person who has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 or is suspected, or is at risk, of having the disease. These powers are not exercisable where indemnity arrangements are already in place (whether under an insurance policy or otherwise) that cover the clinical negligence liability in question.

214 The section also extends to indemnity being provided for clinical negligence arising from NHS ‘business-as-usual’ activities that healthcare professionals and others (including retired healthcare professionals assisting with an outbreak) may be asked to carry out in consequence of the pandemic. These are NHS activities that are routinely provided as part of the NHS for England or the NHS for Wales and may include activities undertaken by healthcare professionals and others operating outside the scope of their usual day-to-day practices. In other words, these are NHS activities not connected to the diagnosis, care or treatment of a person who has been diagnosed as having COVID-19 disease, or is suspected, or is at risk, of having the disease. Once again, indemnity for such activities is not available where indemnity arrangements are already in place that cover the clinical negligence liability in question.

215 The Secretary of State and the Welsh Ministers also have powers to make arrangements authorising another person to provide such indemnity.

216 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales only.

Section 12: Indemnity for health service activity: Scotland

217 The section enables the Scottish Ministers to provide indemnity for clinical negligence and other delictual liabilities (that is, liabilities relating to willful wrongs) arising from the NHS activities carried out in Scotland in the same circumstances as section 11 provides that the Secretary of State or the Welsh Ministers can provide indemnities. The Scottish Ministers also have powers to make arrangements authorising another person to provide such indemnity.

218 The territorial extent and application of this section is Scotland only.

Section 13: Indemnity for health and social care activity: Northern Ireland

219 The section enables the Department of Health in Northern Ireland (the “Department”) to provide indemnity for clinical negligence arising from the NHS activities carried out in Northern Ireland in the same circumstances as section 11 provides that the Secretary of State or the Welsh Ministers can provide indemnities. The Department also has powers to make arrangements authorising another person to provide such indemnity.

220 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 14: NHS Continuing Healthcare assessments: England

221 This section changes the procedure for discharge from an acute hospital setting for those with a social care need.

222 It allows NHS providers to delay undertaking the NHS Continuing Healthcare Assessment and pending that assessment, the patient will continue to receive NHS care.

223 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales only and the application is England only.

Section 15 and Schedule 12: Local authority care and support

224 This section and Schedule replace various duties on Local Authorities in Part 1 of the Care Act 2014 or Parts 3 and 4 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (“SSWWA”) to assess needs for care and support, and to meet those needs, with a duty on Local Authorities to meet needs for care and support where for England, not to do so would be a breach of an individual’s human rights, and a power to meet needs in other cases. In Wales the test is aligned with the existing SSWWA provision where an adult or adult carer may be experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.

- 225 Local Authorities will have no duty to carry out assessments under sections 9, 10, 37, 58, 60 or 63 of the Care Act 2014, (or sections 19, 24 and 56 of the SSWWA); to make determinations of eligible needs under section 13 of the Care Act 2014 (or section 32 of the SSWWA); or to carry out financial assessments under section 14 of the Care Act 2014 (or section 63 of the SSWWA). No charge can be made under section 14 of the Care Act or 53 of the SSWWA unless a financial assessment has been carried out.
- 226 The duties on Local Authorities to meet eligible needs under sections 18, 19 and 20 of the Care Act 2014 (or sections 35 and 40 of the SSWWA) would be replaced by a duty to meet needs for care and support where failure to do so would breach an individual's human rights and Local Authorities would have a power to meet other needs. They will still be expected to meet other needs if they are able to and to prioritise provision as necessary. In Wales the test is aligned with the existing SSWWA provision where an adult or adult carer may be experiencing or at risk of abuse or neglect.
- 227 Guidance to support prioritisation by Local Authorities may be issued by the Department of Health and Social Care for England and the Welsh Government for Wales, and the Secretary of State for England and the Welsh Ministers for Wales have a power to direct Local Authorities to comply with that guidance.
- 228 Local Authorities are permitted to provide urgent care to individuals without a full Care Act 2014 or SSWWA assessment, and without a financial assessment, and to prioritise the provision of care and support.
- 229 The territorial extent of these provisions is England and Wales only. Part 1 of the Schedule applies to England, and Part 2 of the Schedule applies to Wales.

Section 16: Duty of local authority to assess needs: Scotland

- 230 Under this section, the duty on Local Authorities to conduct a needs assessment under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 is relaxed to allow Local Authorities the discretion to dispense with the requirement in order to provide services and support for those most in urgent need without delay. It provides that Local Authorities can dispense with the requirement if conducting an assessment would be impractical or cause undesirable delay.
- 231 The section also amends the duties under the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 and associated regulations, to convert the duty to prepare an adult carer support plan/young carer's statement to a power to do so.
- 232 The territorial extent and application of this section is Scotland only.

Section 17: Section 16: further provision

- 233 This section makes further provision for issuing statutory guidance, charging and protecting authorities against legal action if there are delays in providing assessments when the normal system is switched back on again.
- 234 The territorial extent and application of this section is Scotland only.

Section 18 and Schedule 13: Registration of deaths and still-births etc

- 235 Part 1 of the Schedule relates to England and Wales; Part 2 relates to Scotland and Part 3 relates to Northern Ireland.

Part 1 – England and Wales

- 236 The list of people who can give the necessary information to register a death under sections 16 and 17 of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 (the “1953 Act”), is extended to include, where authorised by the deceased’s family, a funeral director. The requirements in the 1953 Act for a person to attend the Registrar’s office and sign the register in relation to a death (or still birth) in the presence of the Registrar is removed. Instead, information can be provided over the telephone or by any other method specified by the Registrar General in guidance.
- 237 Section 22 of the 1953 Act, which requires the medical practitioner who personally attended the deceased during their last illness to sign the medical certificate of cause of death (“MCCD”) is modified. If this is impractical for the doctor, or if they are unable to do this, another doctor can state the cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief and this certificate can be delivered to the Registrar to enable the death to be registered. Paragraph 4 also allows a doctor to sign the MCCD of a deceased person who was not attended personally during their last illness by a doctor, if the doctor can state cause of death to the best of their knowledge and belief.
- 238 The requirement for a death to be reported to the coroner if the deceased had not been seen by a doctor during their last illness is relaxed as long as there are no other factors that require the death to be reported to the coroner, and the doctor can state to the best of their knowledge and belief the cause of death. Without this provision there would be increased pressure on the coronial service arising from the modifications to section 22 of the 1953 Act.
- 239 The Notification of Deaths Regulations 2019 are also modified to limit the circumstances when a medical practitioner needs to notify a coroner of a person’s death under regulation 3(1).
- 240 The Registration of Births and Deaths Regulations 1987 (the “1987 Regulations”) (at regulations 34, 42, 43 and 47) require a ‘qualified informant’ (a person allowed by the 1953 Act), normally a family member, to attend personally before a registrar to give the information to register the death (or still-birth). Paragraph 6 removes this requirement enabling registrars and members of the public to register deaths (or still-births) even if they cannot, for whatever reason, travel to a register office. This reduces the chance of cross infection in the general public and enables those who cannot travel due to their own illness, or caring responsibilities, or any other factor, to register a death.
- 241 The requirement in regulation 41(1)(b)(ii) of the 1987 Regulations that a death must be reported to the coroner if the certifying doctor has not seen the deceased after death or within 14 days from the date of death is relaxed so that the death need not be reported to the coroner if another doctor, other than the one certifying the cause of death, has seen the deceased after death or within an extended period of 28 days.

Part 2 – Scotland

- 242 Part 2 of the Schedule contains similar provisions for Scotland to paragraphs 1 to 3, 5, 7 and 8 of Part 1 of the Schedule for England and Wales, although the provisions refer to the registration of deaths and still-births under the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965 (the “1965 Act”) rather than the 1926 Act, the 1953 Act, and the 1987 Regulations. There are some differences in provision, in comparison with England and Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- 243 Part 2 of the Schedule provides that a funeral director who is responsible for the arrangement of the funeral may give information concerning a death, as required under section 23(1) of the 1965 Act (as a first option) if the funeral director is so authorised by a relative.

- 244 Part 2 of the Schedule provides for alternative methods by which a person who is required under the 1965 Act to give information about a death or still-birth to the district registrar may attest the death registration form, or the register page for a still-birth, rather than attending at the registration office to manually sign the form or the page.

Part 3 - Northern Ireland

- 245 The registration of deaths and still-births in Northern Ireland is governed by the Births and Deaths Registration (Northern Ireland) Order 1976 (the “1976 Order”) and the Civil Registration Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 (the “2012 Regulations”).
- 246 The modifications made by Part 3 include streamlining the registration of a still birth. Part 3 requires a registered doctor or registered midwife to send a certificate of cause of stillbirth electronically to the registrar. In addition following receipt of the notification and a copy of the certificate of cause of stillbirth, the registrar can electronically issue the certificate of registration directly to the funeral director to enable the disposal of the body to proceed.
- 247 The requirements under regulation 25 of the 2012 Regulations that someone must attend personally before a registrar to verify and sign the registration of a death are relaxed and people can provide the particulars required for the registration of deaths or still-births either by telephone or electronically and removing the need for informants to sign the register.
- 248 Part 3 of the Schedule also relaxes requirements under Article 25 of the 1976 Order in relation to the signing of the MCCD by a doctor. It provides that, if the deceased died of a natural illness and no doctor attended the deceased during their last illness, the MCCD may be signed by any doctor who is able to state the cause of the deceased’s death to the best of their knowledge and belief. If the deceased was seen by a doctor within 28 days prior to death another doctor can sign the MCCD if the person died as a result of natural illness, it is impracticable for the attending doctor to sign the MCCD and the signing doctor can state to the best of their knowledge and belief the cause of death. The Schedule includes a consequential amendment to Form 12 of the 2012 Regulations to align with this procedure.
- 249 Part 3 of the Schedule removes the requirement under section 7 of the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959 that a death from natural illness or disease must be notified to the coroner if the deceased has not been seen or treated by a registered doctor within 28 days prior to the death.
- 250 A doctor who signs the MCCD can send this electronically directly to the registrar.
- 251 Part 3 also enables the certificate of registration of death to be issued directly to the funeral director to enable the disposal of the body rather than having to be issued to the person giving the information (as provided for under Article 29 of the 1976 Order). It can be provided electronically.
- 252 There are transitional provisions in all three Parts of the Schedule which allow for anything that is being done in reliance on anything in the Schedule to continue to be done even after the relevant provisions no longer have effect. For example, documents relating to the registration of a death or still-birth (such as the cause of death or cause of still-birth certificate) that have been sent electronically before the provisions no longer have effect may still be processed.
- 253 The territorial extent and application of section 18(1) and Part 1 of the Schedule is England and Wales only, the territorial extent and application of section 18(2) and Part 2 of the Schedule is Scotland only and the territorial extent and application of section 18(3) and Part 3 of the Schedule is Northern Ireland only.

Section 19: Confirmatory medical certificate not required for cremations: England and Wales

254 This section modifies regulation 16 of the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008 so that the medical referee (a registered medical practitioner engaged by the cremation authority who authorises cremations) can authorise a cremation on the basis of the medical certificate from a single registered medical practitioner without the confirmatory medical certificate from a second registered medical practitioner. Removing this additional medical practitioner oversight simplifies the process in order to address the expected increased volume of deaths and the need to focus a reduced number of available medical practitioners on dealing with more priority cases whilst keeping a necessary level of safeguards in place.

255 The section also makes minor and consequential amendments to the Cremation (England and Wales) Regulations 2008 to facilitate the above.

256 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales only.

Section 20 and Schedule 14: Review of cause of death certificates and cremations: Scotland

257 Part 1 of this Schedule enables the Scottish Ministers to suspend the review of death certificates in Scotland under the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Scotland) Act 1965 and the Certification of Death (Scotland) Act 2011 and makes provision for reviews which have been started but not completed when the suspension takes effect.

258 Part 2 of the Schedule enables the Scottish Ministers to suspend sections 53 to 55 and 87 of the Burial and Cremation (Scotland) Act 2016 and relevant associated provisions of the Cremation (Scotland) Regulations 2019. This removes duties on cremation authorities, funeral directors and local authorities to trace and contact relatives of deceased persons to ascertain their wishes in respect of ashes. Instead, the relevant bodies will be placed under a duty to retain the ashes and to comply with their duties under that Act once the provisions have been re-instated.

259 The territorial extent and application of the section and Schedule is Scotland only.

Section 21: Modifications of requirements regarding medical certificates for cremations: Northern Ireland

260 This section modifies the Cremation (Belfast) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1961 (the “1961 Regulations”) to apply in relation to the death of a person:

- a. To remove the requirement for the completion of Form C (Confirmatory Medical Certificate) from regulation 10.
- b. To make consequential modifications to the powers and duties of the Medical Referee in regulations 12 and 13 of the 1961 Regulations, due to the removal of the requirement to complete Form C. To remove the reference to a person being seen and treated within twenty-eight days by a registered medical practitioner for a natural illness or disease in the case where the matter has been referred to the Coroner.
- c. To remove the requirement in Forms A and B for a registered medical practitioner having to have attended a deceased person during their last illness and within twenty-eight days before death and make consequential modifications to Form B due to the removal of the requirement to complete Form C.

261 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 22: Appointment of temporary Judicial Commissioners

- 262 This section creates a regulation-making power to modify section 227(4) of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 so that at the request of the Investigatory Powers Commissioner the Secretary of State can provide for the Investigatory Powers Commissioner to directly appoint temporary Judicial Commissioners to carry out the functions conferred on Judicial Commissioners under the Act. The temporary Judicial Commissioners will be appointed for a term of up to 6 months each and renewable to a maximum period of 12 months in total for each temporary Judicial Commissioner.
- 263 The regulations must include a requirement on the Investigatory Powers Commissioner to inform the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales, the Lord President of the Court of Session, the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland, the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister.
- 264 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 23: Time limits in relation to urgent warrants etc under Investigatory Powers Act

- 265 This section creates a regulation-making power to modify the relevant sections in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 which specify the length of period referred to in the Act as “the relevant period” which relates to the time period for when authorisation is required by a Judicial Commissioner after a warrant has been issued.
- 266 Regulations made under this section can extend the “relevant period” to no more than 12 days for Judicial Commissioner approval and for the lifespan of the warrant. The section requires the regulations to be time-limited to a period of 12 months.
- 267 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 24: Extension of time limits for retention of fingerprints and DNA profiles

- 268 The section confers a regulation-making power on the Secretary of State to ensure that the impact that COVID-19 is anticipated to have on the resources of the police does not lead to the loss of fingerprints and DNA profiles that would otherwise be retained for national security purposes.
- 269 The section permits the Secretary of State to make regulations to extend the periods for which fingerprints and DNA profiles may be retained for the purposes of national security.
- 270 Subsection (1) provides that the section applies to fingerprints and DNA profiles that are retained in accordance with a national security determination, under the provisions that are listed in subsection (1)(b), or that are retained before being destroyed in accordance with the provisions that are listed in subsection (1)(c).
- 271 Subsection (2) confers a power on the Secretary of State allowing them to make regulations to extend, for up to six months, the period for which the fingerprints and DNA profiles may be retained.

- 272 Subsection (3) provides that the Secretary of State may exercise the power under subsection (2) only if he or she considers:
- a. that COVID-19 is having, or is likely to have, an adverse effect on the capacity of persons responsible for making national security determinations to consider whether to make, or renew, national security determinations, and
 - b. it is in the interests of national security to retain the fingerprints or DNA.
- 273 Subsection (4) provides that the power under subsection (2) may be exercised on more than one occasion. However it also provides that the power cannot be exercised so as to extend the period for which any fingerprints or DNA profile may be retained by more than 12 months.
- 274 Subsection (5) provides that the power under subsection (2) may be exercised only in relation to fingerprints and DNA profiles which (ignoring the possibility of an extension otherwise than by regulations under that subsection) would fall to be destroyed within the period of 12 months beginning with the day on which this Bill received Royal Assent (25th March 2020).
- 275 Subsection (6) provides that before making regulations under this section, the Secretary of State must first consult the Commissioner for the Retention and Use of Biometric Material.
- 276 Subsection (7) provides that if the Secretary of State has not exercised the power under subsection (2) within 3 months of the date on which the Act is passed, section 24 ceases to have effect.
- 277 The territorial extent and application of the section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 25: Power to require information relating to food supply chains

- 278 This section provides the appropriate authority with the power to require information from persons within, or closely connected to, a food supply chain in certain specified circumstances. The required information must relate to that person's activities within that food supply chain.
- 279 The power may not be used to require an individual to provide information. This protects individual farmers and sole traders from being subject to requirements made under the powers.
- 280 This section limits the circumstances in which a requirement may be imposed to ensure that information can only be requested:
- a. if the authority considers the information is needed to establish (either alone or within other information) (i) whether the whole or part of a food supply chain is being disrupted or is at risk of disruption; or (ii) the nature of such a disruption; and
 - b. if the authority has previously requested the person to do so and the person has not supplied information willingly or provided information which is misleading or false to a material extent.
- 281 In order to allow for the power to be used at short notice, this section allows for requirements to be made in writing, as opposed to through a Statutory Instrument.
- 282 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 26: Authorities which may require information

283 This section provides for the power under section 25 to be exercised by “the appropriate authority”. This section defines appropriate authorities for these purposes as:

- a. the Secretary of State;
- b. the Scottish Ministers, if and to the extent that an Act of the Scottish Parliament could have authorised the Scottish Ministers to impose the requirement;
- c. the Welsh Ministers, if and to the extent that an Act of the National Assembly for Wales could have authorised the Welsh Ministers to impose the requirement;
- d. the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland (“DAERA”), if and to the extent that an Act of the Northern Ireland Assembly made without the Secretary of State’s consent, could have authorised DAERA to impose the requirement.

284 Devolved Administrations’ ability to exercise the power at section 25 is linked to their respective Parliament or Assembly’s legislative competence. This section provides that where the Secretary of State wishes to exercise the power under section 25, if and to the extent that it could have been exercised by another of the appropriate authorities, the consent of the relevant authority is required.

285 This section provides that the Secretary of State is not required to seek consent from an appropriate authority in order to request information about an activity if and to the extent that the activity to which the requirement relates takes place outside of their area.

286 This section requires that any information obtained in response to a requirement made with the consent of another authority, and which relates to that authority’s area, must be disclosed to that authority.

287 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 27: Restrictions on use and disclosure of information

288 This section places restrictions on the appropriate authority as to the use in decision making and the disclosure of information received as a result of the imposition of a requirement under section 25.

289 The first pre-condition which must be met before information can be either used or disclosed is that its use or disclosure is for a permitted purpose.

290 This section restricts the disclosure of information to bodies which are not government authorities to ensure that only anonymised information is shared. Disclosure of information onwards by a body which is not a government authority may only be made in accordance with the terms on which the information was initially disclosed to that body.

291 This section expressly limits the use and disclosure of information containing personal data under this section to that which is authorised by data protection legislation.

292 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 28 and Schedule 15: Enforcement of requirement to provide information

- 293 This section sets out the enforcement regime for the power in section 25, with further information on the financial penalties detailed in Schedule 15.
- 294 The Schedule sets out the financial penalties for failing to comply with a requirement under section 25 or for providing information which is false or misleading. It provides for a financial penalty to be imposed, up to a maximum of 1% of qualifying turnover, after following the procedure set out in the schedule.
- 295 The Schedule provides that appeals may be made against the final notice to the First-tier Tribunal in England and Wales, to the sheriff court in Scotland, or to a county court in Northern Ireland, and the Schedule sets out the grounds of appeal at paragraph 7(2).
- 296 The Schedule does not make provision for the imposition of penalties on individuals as these persons are ruled out of the scope at section 25(6) as set out above.
- 297 The territorial extent and application of this section and the Schedule is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 29: Meaning of “food supply chain” and related expressions

- 298 This section defines the term “food supply chain” and related terms.
- 299 It defines a food supply chain as supplying individuals with food or drink for personal consumption which have been produced to any extent through agriculture, fishing or aquaculture.
- 300 The definition captures both those in and those closely connected with a food supply chain. It is intended to catch suppliers at every point along a food supply chain before the product reaches the consumer, supplying either food products directly to industry/consumers, or critical dependencies into the food supply chain.
- 301 Those within a food supply chain include producers, slaughterhouses, packaging centres, distributors and retailers. The term ‘closely connected’ with a food supply chain is intended to capture suppliers who provide critical dependencies (or inputs) into the food supply chain (i.e. not directly supplying food). This may include those who supply seeds, fertiliser, chemicals, stock, equipment or similar items for use in agriculture, fishing or aquaculture; and those who provide goods or services either to producers or further up the supply chain which relate to the safety or quality of food or drink or the welfare of animals. This would include, for example, suppliers of CO₂ to slaughterhouses, suppliers of food packaging materials to packaging centres or companies which provide cleaning services to food processing plants.
- 302 The definition also captures trade bodies which represent those in or closely connected to a food supply chain. Defra works closely with many of these bodies in the response to any food supply chain disruption through the Food Chain Emergency Liaison Group.
- 303 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 30: Suspension of requirement to hold inquest with jury: England and Wales

- 304 Under section 7(2)(c) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, an inquest into a death must be held with a jury if the coroner has reason to suspect that the death was caused by a notifiable accident, poisoning or disease.
- 305 The section modifies the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 so that COVID-19 is not a notifiable disease for the purposes of section 7(2)(c) and therefore the duty to hold a jury inquest in section 7 does not apply.
- 306 However, the coroner still retains the discretion to hold a jury inquest where they consider that there is sufficient reason to do so, under section 7(3) of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.
- 307 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales only.

Section 31: Suspension of requirement to hold inquest with jury: Northern Ireland

- 308 Section 18(1)(c) of the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959 requires an inquest into a death caused by a notifiable disease (a disease, notice of which is required under any enactment to be given to a government department, or to any inspector or other officer of a government department) to be held with a jury. Section 31 provides that COVID-19 is not a notifiable disease for the purposes of Section 18, removing the requirement for an inquest to be held with a jury where the death is from COVID-19.
- 309 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 32: Deaths in custody from natural illness: Northern Ireland

- 310 This section enables a coroner to hold (or continue to hold) an inquest into a death in prison from natural illness without a jury. The section achieves this by providing that a coroner need not comply with the requirements set out under section 39 of the Prison Act (Northern Ireland) 1953, and under section 18(1) of the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959 which require an inquest into a death in prison to be held with a jury.
- 311 Inquests can still be heard with a jury if a coroner considers this desirable.
- 312 Section 13 of the Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959 enables one inquest to be held into a number of deaths resulting from the same circumstances. The section modifies this provision to enable one inquest without a jury to be held into a number of deaths in prison from natural illness.
- 313 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 33: Disapplication etc by Welsh Ministers of DBS provisions

- 314 The scope of this power is limited to the single issue of modifying or disapplying requirements about DBS checks in relation to regulations governing social care service providers and independent health care providers in Wales where there are requirements relating to vetting procedures for staff before they are permitted to start work. The provision requires the Welsh Ministers to issue a notice and to include on the notice a statement of why the notice is appropriate and proportionate should such DBS check requirements be modified or disappplied.

315 The purpose of this power is to put providers in Wales in the same position as those in other parts of the UK during the period of the COVID-19 outbreak. For example, in England vetting requirements for similar settings allow workers to begin work before an enhanced disclosure is received. However, the wording of the regulatory requirements in the schemes under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 do not permit this in Wales even in an emergency. The provision provides equivalence for Wales, should the Welsh Ministers consider it safe and appropriate to do so, during the period of the COVID-19 outbreak.

316 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales only and application of this section is Wales only.

Section 34: Temporary disapplication of disclosure offences: Scotland

317 This section allows the Scottish Ministers to issue a direction that disapplies the offences under section 35 (organisations not to use barred individuals for regulated work) and section 36 (personnel suppliers not to supply barred individuals for regulated work) of the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007. This is intended to ensure that NHS boards who are employing temporarily registered healthcare workers are not inadvertently committing an offence if they have not obtained a Protecting Vulnerable Groups ("PVG") disclosure check in advance.

318 The territorial extent and application of this section is Scotland only.

Section 35: Power to reclassify certain disclosure requests: Scotland

319 This section allows the Scottish Ministers, where they receive certain types of disclosure requests under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (Scotland) Act 2007, to treat them as if they were a disclosure request which simply confirms whether or not the individual is in the PVG Scheme and if they are barred. This allows Disclosure Scotland to process disclosure applications more quickly, either in the event of increased demand to deploy temporarily registered healthcare workers quickly, or as a result of staff shortages due to sickness absence.

320 The territorial extent and application of this section is Scotland only.

Section 36: Vaccination and immunisation: Scotland

321 This Section modifies section 40 of the National Health Service (Scotland) Act 1978, which requires that vaccinations and immunisations are administered by medical practitioners or persons acting under their direction and control. The modified section provides that the Scottish Ministers are to make arrangements for the provision of vaccinations and immunisations in respect of any disease.

322 The section also consequentially modifies an existing provision which delegates the section 40 function to territorial health boards, so that boards can in practice continue to exercise this function as they do now, but without the requirement that this always be under the direction and control of a medical practitioner.

323 The territorial extent and application of this section is Scotland only.

Section 37 and Schedule 16: Temporary closure of educational institutions and childcare premises

Part 1 – England and Wales

- 324 This section and Part 1 of the Schedule confer on the Secretary of State and the Welsh Ministers the power to direct, by “temporary closure direction”, the temporary closure of educational institutions and providers in England and Wales respectively, including maintained schools, independent schools, 16-19 Academies, further education providers, and higher education providers.
- 325 The Schedule provides equivalent powers in relation to registered childcare providers.
- 326 Such temporary closure directions can apply to named educational institutions or childcare providers, all educational institutions or childcare providers (or all of them in a particular area of England or Wales respectively), or all educational institutions or childcare providers of certain descriptions.
- 327 A temporary closure direction in respect of an educational institution requires the responsible body of that institution to take reasonable steps to secure that persons do not attend the premises of the institution for a specified period. A temporary closure direction in respect of a registered childcare provider requires the registered childcare provider to take the same steps in relation to the attendance of persons for purposes connected with the provision of childcare.
- 328 Temporary closure directions can relate to specific steps to be taken, specified persons, specified premises or parts of premises, attendance for specified purposes, and can be framed in relation to relevant matters, or they can be general.
- 329 Before giving a temporary closure direction, the Secretary of State must have regard to any advice from the Chief Medical Officer or one of the Deputy Chief Medical Officers, and must be satisfied that the direction is a necessary and proportionate action in response to the risk of transmission of COVID-19. A Welsh Minister must have regard to any advice from the Welsh Chief Medical Officer or one of the Welsh Deputy Chief Medical Officers, and must be satisfied that the direction is a necessary and proportionate action in response to the incidence of transmission of COVID-19.
- 330 The provisions of a temporary closure direction are enforceable, on application by the Secretary of State or Welsh Minister respectively, by injunction.
- 331 Where a temporary closure direction has effect in relation to a school there would be no breach or failure in relation to certain specified duties on Local Authorities to arrange for exceptional educational provision, or of specified duties in connection with school attendance orders in the case of non-attendance. Failure by a child to attend school is to be disregarded when considering whether an offence has been committed, in each case to the extent that any breach or failure is attributable to the direction.
- 332 Where a temporary closure direction has effect in relation to a registered childcare provider in England, there would be no breach of the duty of a Local Authority to secure free early years provision under section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006, or of the Secretary of State’s duty to secure 30 hours’ free childcare under section 1 of the Childcare Act 2016. Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills must take the direction into account when dealing with any allegation that a registered childcare provider to which the direction applies has failed to meet any requirement specified under section 39(1)(a) or (b) of the Childcare Act 2006.

- 333 Where a temporary closure direction has effect in relation to a registered childcare provider in Wales, there is no breach of the duty of a Local Authority to secure sufficient provision of nursery education under section 118 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 nor of the duty of the Welsh Ministers under section 1(1) of the Childcare Funding (Wales) Act 2019 to provide funding for childcare of working parents.
- 334 The Welsh Ministers must also, in exercising functions under Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010, take the direction into account when dealing with any allegation that a registered childcare provider to which the direction applies has failed to meet any requirement specified under section 30(3) of that Measure.
- 335 The Secretary of state or the Welsh Ministers respectively may authorise that a Local Authority exercise their functions with regards to the making of a temporary closure direction.
- 336 Temporary closure directions must be published by the Secretary of State or Welsh Minister respectively

Part 2 - Scotland

- 337 Section 37(2) and Part 2 of Schedule 16 confer on the Scottish Ministers the power to direct the temporary closure of all or part of specified educational establishments in Scotland, including local authority schools, independent schools, further education institutions, higher education institutions and registered childcare providers.
- 338 Under these provisions a relevant authority must have regard to any advice relating to coronavirus from the Chief Medical Officer of the Scottish Administration. “Relevant authority” in this context means a relevant operator of an educational establishment, a relevant manager of school boarding accommodation, or a relevant manager of student accommodation. Before giving a direction under Part 2 of the Schedule, the Scottish Ministers must also have regard to any such advice of the Chief Medical Officer and must be satisfied that giving the direction is a necessary and proportionate action in response to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus.
- 339 Paragraph 8(1) of the Schedule confers a power on the Scottish Ministers to give an “educational closure direction” to the relevant operator or operators of one or more named educational establishments, all educational establishments in Scotland or any part of Scotland, or educational establishments of a particular description in Scotland or any part of Scotland, to require the relevant operator to take reasonable steps to restrict access to that establishment for a specified period.
- 340 The direction may further provide that a failure to comply with any statutory duty or time limit imposed under any enactment or rule of law relating to education be disregarded to the extent that it is attributable to an educational closure direction. Paragraph 13(4) of the Schedule requires that a direction in these terms will be subject to review every 21 days.
- 341 An educational closure direction may include further provision as set out in paragraph 8(4). An educational closure direction can relate to specific steps to be taken, specified persons, specified premises or parts of premises, attendance for specified purposes, be framed in relation to relevant matters, or can be general.
- 342 “Relevant operator” in relation to a school means an education authority (in the case of a public school under the management of the authority), the managers of a grant-aided school, or the proprietor of an independent school. In relation to a further education institution or a higher education institution, it means that institution’s governing body. It includes a person who provides out of school care in a school.

- 343 Where Early Learning and Childcare (“ELC”), other school education or out of school care is provided by a person in premises other than a school, “relevant operator” also includes that person, and any reference to “educational establishment” also includes such premises. Where a child minder provides ELC or out of school care in premises that are mainly used as a private dwelling, any educational closure direction may only apply to the part of the premises in which such care is provided.
- 344 The Act also includes provisions for the effect any educational closure direction given by the Scottish Ministers may have on the operation of other education legislation in Scotland.
- 345 Where an educational closure direction has effect in relation to a school, paragraph 9 of the Schedule provides that any failure by an education authority to discharge any duty listed there is to be disregarded to the extent such failure is attributable to an educational closure direction. This also applies to ELC in relation to the premises that they are provided in if this is outside a school. Similar provision is made in respect of duties of education authorities in relation to additional support for learning, and the mandatory amount of ELC.
- 346 The duty of parents to provide education to their children under section 30(1) of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980 is also disapplied in respect of a child who is a pupil at a school in respect of which an educational closure direction has effect, and is unable to attend school regularly because of the direction.
- 347 Any failure of a child to attend a school in respect of which an educational closure direction has effect is to be disregarded for the purposes of section 35 of the Education (Scotland) Act 1980, to the extent the failure is attributable to the direction.
- 348 Power is conferred on the Scottish Ministers under paragraph 10 of the Schedule to give a “boarding accommodation closure direction” to the relevant manager or managers of one or more named school boarding establishments, all school boarding establishments in Scotland or any part of Scotland, or school boarding establishments of a particular description in Scotland or any part of Scotland.
- 349 A boarding accommodation closure direction given in respect of a school boarding establishment can require a relevant manager to take reasonable steps to restrict access to that establishment for a specified period; or to provide for pupils for whom boarding accommodation is provided to be confined there for a specified period.
- 350 Under paragraph 10(3), a boarding accommodation closure direction may provide that a failure to comply with any statutory duty or time limit imposed under any enactment or rule of law relating to education be disregarded to the extent that it is attributable to a boarding accommodation closure direction. Paragraph 13(4) specifies that a direction in these terms must be reviewed every 21 days.
- 351 A boarding accommodation closure direction can make further provision in terms of paragraph 10(4). A boarding accommodation closure direction can relate to specific steps to be taken, specified persons, specified premises or parts of premises, attendance for specified purposes, be framed in relation to relevant matters, or can be general.
- 352 Paragraph 11(1) confers a power on the Scottish Ministers to give a “student accommodation closure direction” to the relevant manager or managers of one or more named student accommodation premises, all student accommodation premises in Scotland or any part of Scotland, or student accommodation premises of a particular description in Scotland or any part of Scotland.

- 353 A student accommodation closure direction given in respect of student accommodation premises can require a relevant manager of student accommodation premises to take reasonable steps to restrict access to those premises for a specified period, or can provide for students for whom student accommodation is provided to be confined there for a specified period.
- 354 Under paragraph 11(3), a student accommodation closure direction may further provide that a failure to comply with any statutory duty or time limit imposed under any enactment or rule of law relating to education be disregarded to the extent that it is attributable to a student accommodation closure direction. A direction in these terms must be reviewed every 21 days, under paragraph 13(4).
- 355 A student accommodation closure direction can relate to specific steps to be taken, specified persons, specified premises or parts of premises, attendance for specified purposes, be framed in relation to relevant matters, or can be general.
- 356 Paragraph 12(1) requires a relevant authority to comply with a direction under Part 2 of the Schedule. A relevant authority must also have regard to any guidance given by the Scottish Ministers about how to comply with a direction. If a relevant authority fails to comply with a direction, paragraph 12(3) allows the Scottish Ministers to enforce the direction by an application for a court order for interdict or specific implement. The Scottish Ministers do not need to give notice to the relevant authority before applying for a court order.
- 357 Paragraph 13(1) requires the Scottish Ministers to publish a direction under Part 2 of the Schedule. A direction remains in force until the end of the period specified in the direction or until revoked by a further direction (whichever is earlier).

Part 3 – Northern Ireland

- 358 Paragraph 14 of the Schedule gives the Department of Education in Northern Ireland (the “DE”) the power to direct the managers of particular schools, or schools in general, to close during a COVID-19 outbreak.
- 359 A duty is placed on the managers of a school, which is subject to a temporary closure direction, to have regard to any guidance issued by the DE about how to comply with a temporary closure direction. Temporary closure directions must be published.
- 360 A temporary closure direction can be enforced, on application by the DE, by injunction. No notice needs to be given to the managers of a school of such an application.
- 361 The following duties are relaxed for the period of the temporary closure direction: the current duty on parents to secure education of their children; the duty on managers of schools to provide milk and meals; the duty on the managers of schools to admit a child who is the subject of an attendance order; the duty on parents to ensure their children regularly attend school; and the duty on the Education Authority to make exceptional education provision for children who require it.
- 362 Paragraph 15 of the Schedule gives a power to the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland to direct further education colleges and higher education institutions (“relevant institutions”) in Northern Ireland to close.
- 363 The Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland is given the power to direct all relevant institutions in Northern Ireland, or particular relevant institutions, to close in the event of an outbreak of COVID-19. It must consult with the Chief Medical Officer in Northern Ireland or, in the Chief Medical Officer’s absence, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer before making such a direction.

- 364 Under a temporary closure direction, the governing bodies of relevant institutions must take all reasonable steps to ensure that no persons are in attendance at premises of the institution for the duration of a temporary closure direction.
- 365 Paragraph 16 of the Schedule also gives the Department of Health in Northern Ireland the power to issue temporary closure directions to registered day care providers and childminders (childcare providers) in the event of a COVID-19 pandemic. This requires the affected childcare providers to take reasonable steps to ensure that persons do not attend their premises for any purpose relating to childcare for the period of time set out in the direction.
- 366 The Department of Health in Northern Ireland is allowed to specify, in any temporary closure direction: any steps required to be taken by the childcare provider; the persons affected by restrictions in attendance at the premises; and the purposes for which attendance is restricted.
- 367 The Department of Health in Northern Ireland is required to publish any temporary closure direction and a temporary closure direction would apply until either the end of the period specified in the direction, or the revocation of the direction by a further Departmental direction issued before that date.
- 368 Registered childcare providers are required to have regard to any guidance issued by the Department of Health in Northern Ireland in relation to compliance with temporary closure directions.
- 369 The Department of Health in Northern Ireland has a power to enforce a temporary closure direction by way of an injunction. An application for an injunction may be made without notice.
- 370 Provision is made, where a temporary closure direction is in place, for duties which an authority is required to discharge in respect of children in need by Article 19(2) or (5) of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 to be disregarded for the duration of the application of the temporary closure direction.
- 371 The territorial extent and application of section 37(1) and Part 1 of the Schedule is England and Wales only, the territorial extent and application of section 37(2) and Part 2 of the Schedule is Scotland only and the territorial extent and application of section 37(3) and Part 3 of the Schedule is Northern Ireland only.

Section 38 and Schedule 17: Temporary continuity: education, training and childcare

Part 1 - England and Wales

- 372 The section and Schedule give the Secretary of State and the Welsh Ministers the power to make directions in connection with the running of the education and registered childcare systems in England and Wales.
- 373 It allows the Secretary of State and the Welsh Ministers to direct that relevant institutions (which include registered childcare providers, schools, 16-19 academies and further and higher education providers) stay open or re-open and admit specified persons for the purposes of the receipt of education, training, childcare or ancillary services or facilities. It also allows a direction that other reasonable steps are taken for those purposes.

374 The Secretary of State may authorise a Local Authority to issue a temporary continuity direction in relation to a registered childcare provider, a school or 16-19 academy in its area, in England, and may authorise the Office for Students to issue a temporary continuity direction in relation to a higher education provider in England. The Welsh Ministers have similar powers in relation to Wales.

375 The section further allows the Secretary of State and the Welsh Ministers, by notice, to disapply and modify, for a maximum period of one month, certain specified legislative requirements or restrictions relating to education or childcare, and any similar provision found in academy arrangements as applicable. Any such notice must be published, and other reasonable steps must be taken to bring the notice to the attention of those affected by it.

Part 2 - Scotland

376 Section 38(2) and Part 2 of the Schedule confer on the Scottish Ministers powers to make directions in connection with the running of educational establishments in Scotland.

377 Under paragraph 10(1), a relevant operator of an educational establishment is under a duty to have regard to any advice relating to coronavirus from the Chief Medical Officer of the Scottish Administration. Before issuing a direction under paragraph 11, the Scottish Ministers must also have regard to such advice and must be satisfied that the giving of the direction is a necessary and proportionate action for or in connection with the continued provision of education.

378 Paragraph 11(1) provides that the Scottish Ministers may give an educational continuity direction to one or more named educational establishments in Scotland, to all educational establishments in Scotland or any part of Scotland, or to educational establishments in Scotland of a particular description.

379 Paragraph 11(2) defines an educational continuity direction as a direction relating to the continuing operation of an educational establishment for a specified period.

380 Paragraph 11(3) provides that an educational continuity direction may provide that any failure to comply with a duty or time limit imposed under any enactment or rule of law relating to education is to be disregarded where an educational continuity direction is in force. A direction in these terms must be reviewed every 21 days (under paragraph 13(4)).

381 Paragraph 11(4) provides that an educational continuity direction may confer additional functions on a relevant operator relating to the provision of early learning and childcare, schools education, further education or higher education; the provision of related services (for example, out of school care); or the use of the operator's premises for the purpose of protecting public health. Further provision on the types of matters that may be specified in an educational continuity direction are set out in subparagraph (4)(b) to (m). This includes requiring an educational establishment to open, stay open or re-open; requiring a relevant operator to allow people (who would not otherwise attend) to attend an establishment under that operator's management; requiring measures to ensure hygiene standards be put in place; and requiring the alteration of term dates, holiday dates or exam dates.

382 Paragraph 11(5) defines "relevant operator", "relevant premises" and "specified" for the purposes of Part 2 of the Schedule.

383 Paragraph 12(1) provides that a relevant operator must comply with an educational continuity direction. Enforcement of compliance is by way of an application by the Scottish Ministers for an interdict or specific implement.

384 Paragraph 12(2) provides that the Scottish Ministers may issue guidance in relation to compliance with their functions under this Part, and a relevant authority must have regard to any such guidance.

385 Paragraph 13(1) requires Ministers to publish an educational continuity direction. A direction has effect for the period specified in it, or until revoked by a further direction.

Part 3 –Northern Ireland

386 The provisions give the Department of Education (DE) the power to issue a direction to the Education Authority or schools. This direction is called a Temporary Continuity Direction.

387 A temporary continuity direction is one which insists that the body (or bodies) named in the direction should take such action as DE considers appropriate in connection with the provision of education or any services that DE specifies are in relation to educational services.

388 DE must have regard to advice from the Chief Medical Officer (or deputies) prior to the issue of a direction under this provision. DE must also be satisfied that the direction must be necessary and proportionate and lead to action that allows the continuation of education in NI at the time of a COVID-19 outbreak.

389 The Schedule describes the kind of information that can be included in a Temporary Continuity Direction.

390 The body named in a direction must consider DE advice on how to meet the terms of the direction. DE has a duty to publish all directions.

391 Should the body named in a direction (be that the Education Authority or a school or schools) not comply, in the opinion of DE, with the terms of a direction then DE has the power to apply to a court for an injunction to enforce the direction.

392 Should DE apply for an injunction against any body it does not have to inform the body prior to the application.

393 Should a direction include an alteration of term dates or holiday dates, this section allows for a relaxation of schools' duties in relation to these dates.

394 The provisions also give the Department for the Economy (the "Department") the power to issue a Temporary Continuity Direction to further education colleges or higher education institutions.

395 A temporary continuity direction is one which requires the institutions named in the direction to take such action as the Department considers appropriate in connection with the provision of further and higher education or any services that the Department specifies are in relation to educational services.

396 The Department must have regard to advice from the Chief Medical Officer (or deputies) prior to the issue of a direction under this provision. The Department must also be satisfied that the direction must be necessary and proportionate and lead to action that allows the continuation of education in Northern Ireland at the time of a COVID-19 outbreak.

397 The Department has a duty to publish all directions. Should the institutions named in a direction not comply with the terms of a direction then the Department has the power to apply to a court for an injunction to enforce the direction. Should the Department apply for an injunction against any body it does not have to inform the body prior to the application.

398 The Department of Health in Northern Ireland may also give temporary continuity directions that apply to registered day care providers and childminders under paragraph 16 of the Schedule.

399 The territorial extent and application of section 38(1) and Part 1 of the Schedule is England and Wales only, the territorial extent and application of section 38(2) and Part 2 of the Schedule is Scotland only and the territorial extent and application of section 38(3) and Part 3 of the Schedule is Northern Ireland only.

Section 39: Statutory sick pay: funding of employers' liabilities

400 This section inserts a new section 159B in the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, providing for a power in relation to the funding of additional employer liabilities for Statutory Sick Pay ("SSP") incurred as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Qualifying employers would therefore receive a specified rebate for SSP payments made for a specified period. The Secretary of State is allowed to make regulations regarding the recovery from HMRC of additional payments of SSP by qualifying employers for absences related to COVID-19. The regulations may in particular control the levels of rebate, to whom the rebate is paid, and the period for which the rebate will be available. As the situation changes with regard to the virus, it might be considered appropriate to extend the rebate to larger businesses. Also, it might become necessary to increase, or decrease, the amount of the rebate payable. This is achievable using the new regulation making power.

401 There are penalties for employers who make fraudulent claims or who fail to keep the records required to support a claim.

402 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales and Scotland only.

Section 40: Statutory sick pay: power to disapply waiting period limitation

403 This section enables the Secretary of State to make regulations which can disapply section 155(1) of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 in relation to an employee whose incapacity for work is related to COVID-19. This means that the regulations can be used to temporarily suspend waiting days for those employees who are absent from work due to COVID-19.

404 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales and Scotland only.

Section 41: Statutory sick pay: modification of regulation making powers

405 This section amends section 151 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 to include a provision that the Secretary of State may make regulations referring to guidance issued by Public Health England, National Health Services Scotland and Public Health Wales in determining whether an employee should be deemed to be incapable of work by reason of COVID-19, for example because the employee is self-isolating.

406 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales and Scotland only.

Section 42: Statutory sick pay: funding of employers' liabilities: Northern Ireland

407 This section inserts a new section (154B) in the Social Security Contributions and Benefits (Northern Ireland) Act 1992. It provides for a power in relation to the funding of additional employer liabilities for SSP incurred as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. The section provides the Commissioners for Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs with a power to make regulations which provide for the payment by employers of SSP for absences related to COVID-19 to be recoverable from HMRC in prescribed circumstances.

408 The regulations may control the levels of rebate, to whom the rebate is paid, and the period for which the rebate will be available. As the nature of the COVID-19 outbreak changes, it might be considered appropriate to extend the rebate to larger businesses. It might also become necessary to increase, or decrease, the amount of the rebate payable. The above will be achievable using the new regulation-making power.

409 There are penalties for employers who make fraudulent claims or who fail to keep the records required to support a claim.

410 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 43: Statutory sick pay: power to disapply waiting period limitation: Northern Ireland

411 This section enables the Secretary of State to make regulations which can disapply section 151(1) of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act (Northern Ireland) Act 1992 in relation to an employee whose incapacity for work is related to COVID-19. This means that the regulations can be used to temporarily suspend waiting days for those employees who are absent from work due to COVID-19.

412 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 44: Statutory sick pay: modification of regulation making power: Northern Ireland

413 This section amends section 147 of the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act (Northern Ireland) Act 1992 to include a provision that the Secretary of State may make regulations referring to guidance issued by the Regional Agency for Public Health and Social Well-being, Public Health England, National Health Services Scotland and Public Health Wales in determining whether an employee should be deemed to be incapable of work by reason of COVID-19, for example because the employee is self-isolating.

414 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 45: NHS Pension Schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: England and Wales

415 This section omits certain regulations that provide for pension abatement and suspension so as to enable individuals already in receipt of their NHS pension to return to work, or increase their working capacity if they have already returned, without facing either suspension or abatement of their pension.

416 Regulation S1 of the National Health Service Pension Scheme Regulations 1995 (the "1995 NHS Pension Regulations") requires a member's pension benefits to be suspended if they return to NHS employment and commit to more than 16 hours per week within one month of the pension becoming payable.

417 Subsection (1)(a) omits regulation S1 so that a member who has recently retired from the NHS and elects to immediately return at a capacity of above 16 hours per week will not have their pension suspended.

418 Subsection (1)(b) omits the reference to Regulation S2(1A)(c) in paragraph (3) of regulation S2 of the 1995 NHS Pension Regulations. Regulation S2(1A)(c) applies to members who are “special class officers”. Special class officers are able to access their pension benefits at age 55 rather than 60. If a special class officer in receipt of benefits returns to work before the age of 60, they will have their pension abated in accordance with regulation S2(3) of the 1995 NHS Pension Regulations. Removing the reference to Regulation S2(1A)(c) in regulation S2(3) will allow special class officer members to return to NHS work, or increase their working commitment if they have already returned without having their pension abated.

419 The National Health Service Pension Regulations 2008 (the “2008 NHS Pension Regulations”) and the National Health Service Pension Regulations 2015 (the “2015 NHS Pension Regulations”) make provision for the partial retirement of members. Members exercising this option are able to draw down a portion of their pension on the condition that they reduce their pensionable pay (or level of commitment to the NHS) by at least 10%.

420 Subsection (2) omits regulation 2.D.6(2)(a) (abatement of pension following increase in pensionable pay) and regulation 3.D.6(2)(a) (abatement of pension following increase in engagement in employment) of the 2008 NHS Pension Regulations and subsection (3) omits regulation 86(3) of the 2015 NHS Pension Regulations. Those regulations provide that a member will have their pension abated in full if the terms of the member’s employment change and their level of pay increases within 12 months of the member electing to draw down their pension.

421 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales only.

Section 46: NHS pension schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: Scotland

422 This section omits in respect of Scotland certain regulations that provide for pension abatement and suspension so as to enable individuals already in receipt of their NHS pension to return to work, or increase their working capacity if they have already returned without facing either suspension or abatement of their pension. The regulations omitted are the nearest Scottish equivalent regulations to those omitted as regards England and Wales by section 45.

423 The territorial extent and application of the section is Scotland only.

Section 47 Health and social care pension schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: Northern Ireland

424 This section omits in respect of Northern Ireland certain regulations that provide for pension abatement and suspension so as to enable individuals already in receipt of their health and social care pension to return to work, or increase their working capacity if they have already returned without facing either suspension or abatement of their pension. It has the same effect for Northern Ireland equivalent legislation as outlined as regards England and Wales by section 45.

425 The extent and application of the section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 48 and Schedule 18: Powers to act for the protection of public health: Northern Ireland

- 426 This Schedule inserts various provisions as Part 1A into the Public Health Act (Northern Ireland) 1967. It provides a power for the Department of Health in Northern Ireland to make regulations to allow for measures to be introduced to help delay or prevent further transmission of COVID-19, which presents or could present significant harm to human health.
- 427 The Schedule provides powers that enable the Department of Health in Northern Ireland to make regulations for preventing danger to public health from conveyances (or the persons or articles on those conveyances) arriving at any place or for preventing the spread of COVID-19 by conveyances leaving any place. It also provides a power for regulations to give effect to international agreements or arrangements, for example World Health Organisation recommendations. There is also a power to make regulations to prevent, protect against, control or provide a public health response to the incidence or spread of COVID-19 in Northern Ireland.
- 428 Compulsory medical treatment, including vaccination, is excluded from the ambit of the regulation-making powers.
- 429 Powers are also given to magistrates' courts to order health measures in relation to people, things and premises. Provision is made in relation to the evidence the Department of Health must make available to the court.
- 430 Only the Public Health Agency may apply for an order but an affected person, in addition to the Public Health Agency or any other authority with the function of executing or enforcing the order in question, can apply for the order to be varied or revoked.
- 431 It is an offence to fail to comply, without reasonable excuse, with a restriction or requirement imposed by or under an order of a magistrates' court or to wilfully obstruct anyone executing the order.
- 432 The Assembly procedures for making regulations under this Part in different circumstances are set out. Regulations of a kind to which draft affirmative procedure would normally apply may be made and brought into effect immediately if they contain a declaration that the Department of Health in Northern Ireland is of the opinion that it is necessary by reason of urgency for them to be made without a draft being approved under that procedure.
- 433 There are powers of entry for a person authorised by the Public Health Agency to carry out functions and it is an offence to willfully obstruct an authorised officer in execution of such powers.
- 434 Offences are also created for bodies corporate. There is a special extended time limit of up to 3 years for prosecutions for these new offences when certain conditions are met.
- 435 The territorial extent and application of the section and the Schedule is Northern Ireland only.

Section 49 and Schedule 19: Health Protection Regulations: Scotland

- 436 The section and the Schedule provide the Scottish Ministers with a regulation-making power for the purpose of preventing, protecting against, controlling or providing a public health response to the incidence or spread of infection or contamination of COVID-19 in Scotland. The threat can come from within or outside of Scotland.

437 Paragraph 1(3) of the Schedule gives examples of particular provisions which might be made. For example, the regulations could impose restrictions or requirements on or in relation to persons, things or premises in the event of, or in response to, a threat to public health. This includes 'special requirements', which are defined at paragraph 4 and include (amongst other things) requiring a person to submit to medical examination, be removed to or detained in a hospital or other suitable establishment and be kept in isolation or quarantine. Special requirements also include requirements relating to seizure and disinfection of things and the closing and disinfecting of premises.

438 The following measures are not regarded as special restrictions or requirements: a requirement to keep a child away from school; a restriction on the holding of an event; or a restriction or requirement relating to the handling, transport, burial or cremation of dead bodies or the handling, transport or disposal of human remains.

439 Paragraphs 2 and 3 restrict how the power under paragraph 1 can be used. Paragraph 2 puts in place restrictions to ensure that any restrictions or requirements authorised by the regulations are used proportionately. In particular, paragraph 2(3) prohibits regulations from enabling the imposition of a special restriction or requirement unless certain conditions are met. Those conditions are: that there is a serious and imminent threat to public health when the regulations are made; or the decision to impose the restrictions or requirements is expressed in the regulations to be contingent on there being such a threat at the time the decision to impose them is made. Paragraph 3 makes clear that the regulations cannot be used to make a person undergo medical treatment (including vaccination).

440 Paragraph 5 makes further provision about the regulations. For example, it provides that the regulations can create offences and can provide for appeals and reviews of decisions taken under the regulations. It also sets out the maximum penalties which can be imposed if offences are created. Paragraphs 5(5) and 5(6) also set out particular requirements in relation to appeals and reviews of a decision which imposes a special restriction or requirement.

441 Paragraph 6 provides that the procedure for regulations made under paragraph 1 is the affirmative procedure, unless the Scottish Ministers consider that the regulations need to be made urgently. If they do, an emergency procedure applies. This is necessary to ensure that the Scottish Ministers can make regulations quickly in response to a COVID-19 outbreak.

442 The territorial extent and application of the section and the Schedule is Scotland only.

Section 50 and Schedule 20: Power to suspend port operations

443 This section makes provision for the conferral of powers on the Secretary of State in relation to the suspension of port operation. The Schedule sets out the detail of the provisions.

444 Paragraph 1 of the Schedule provides for the Secretary of State to give a written direction to a person concerned in the management of a port arrival (an airport, seaport or international rail terminal) in the UK which requires them to suspend such operations that are specified in the direction. There is a high threshold for the use of the power. Paragraph 1(2) establishes the conditions which must exist before the Secretary of State may give a direction, namely that: the Secretary of State must consider that there is real and significant risk that, due to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19; there are, or will be insufficient Border Force resources available to maintain adequate border security; and, before making a direction, the Secretary of State must have taken all reasonably practicable measures to mitigate the risk. Paragraph 1(3) sets out the details which must be specified in any direction, namely the operator, the specific port operations which are to be suspended, the time at which the direction comes into effect and the duration of the suspension period and any incidental arrangements.

- 445 Paragraph 2 makes provision for the duration of the suspension such that the initial suspension period may last for no longer than six hours and may be extended by notice for a further six hours, subject to the conditions in paragraph 1(2) continuing to be met. Thereafter, the suspension period may be extended for further periods of up to 12 hours on each occasion subject to the same conditions.
- 446 Paragraph 3 provides that, where a direction has been issued under paragraph 1, the Secretary of State may also issue a consequential written direction to other specified parties to make arrangements, or take steps, which are appropriate in connection with the primary direction. For example, where an airport operator had been directed to suspend operations necessary to process arriving passengers and their baggage, a consequential direction may be issued to NATS, as an air navigation service provider, to require that arriving flights are diverted to an alternative port of arrival.
- 447 Paragraph 3 also establishes the details which must be specified in a direction and provides examples of the types of things that may be included, such as a period of time for which the direction is to remain in effect.
- 448 Paragraph 4 requires the Secretary of State to notify the relevant Ministers in the Devolved Administrations when a direction or notice is issued.
- 449 Paragraph 5 gives the Secretary of State a power to revoke a direction or notice. This ensures that, in the event that the risk to border security reduces to the extent that it is no longer necessary for port operations to remain suspended, any direction or notice may be cancelled before it expires.
- 450 Paragraph 6 makes provision for an offence for failing to comply with a direction under this section without reasonable excuse and sets the level of penalties where a person is guilty of an offence under this paragraph.
- 451 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 51 and Schedule 21: Powers relating to potentially infectious persons

- 452 The section and Schedule confer certain powers on public health officers, constables and immigration officers for the purposes of protecting the public from the health risks associated with the COVID-19.
- 453 The provisions apply in relation to England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, respectively, where the relevant authority for that territory is of the view that there is a serious and imminent threat to public health due to the incidence or transmission of the COVID-19, and that the exercise of the powers will be an effective means of delaying or preventing significant further transmission of the virus; and has made a declaration to that effect. The relevant authorities are: for England, the Secretary of State; for Scotland, the Scottish Ministers; for Wales, the Welsh Ministers; and for Northern Ireland, the Department of Health in Northern Ireland.
- 454 The provisions confer powers on public health officers to require persons to go to suitable place to undergo screening and assessment where they reasonably suspect the person has or may have COVID-19, or has been in an infected area within the 14 days preceding that time. Such persons are referred to in the provisions as 'potentially infectious' persons. There are additional powers for public health officers to impose other appropriate restrictions and requirements upon potentially infectious persons where they are necessary and proportionate, such as a requirement to remain in isolation, restrictions on travel, activities and contact with

other people. The provisions also confer powers on public health officers and constables to enforce the restrictions and requirements imposed under the Schedule.

455 The Schedule also confers certain powers on immigration officers and constables in relation to persons whom they have reasonable grounds to suspect as being potentially infectious. An immigration officer or a constable may direct such a person to go to a place suitable for screening and assessment, or may remove a person to such a place to undergo screening and assessment, or to keep that person there for a time-limited period to be handed over to a public health officer for the same purpose. In exercising their powers under these provisions, immigration officers and constables are obliged to consult a public health officer, so far as practicable to do so.

456 This section revokes the Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020.

457 The territorial extent of the section and Schedule is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The application of Part 1 of the Schedule is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The application of Part 2 of the Schedule is England only. The application of Part 3 of the Schedule is Scotland only. The application of Part 4 of the Schedule is Wales only. The application of Part 5 of the Schedule is Northern Ireland only.

Section 52 and Schedule 22: Powers to issue directions relating to events, gatherings and premises

458 The section and Schedule enable the Secretary of State, the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and Executive Office in Northern Ireland to restrict or prohibit gatherings or events and to close and restrict access to premises during a public health response period (which is determined by Ministers based on criteria defined in the Schedule).

459 The Secretary of State, the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and the Executive Office in Northern Ireland should respectively consult: the Chief Medical Officer or a Deputy Chief Medical Officer; the Chief Medical Officer of the Scottish Administration; the Chief Medical Officer or one of the Deputy Chief Medical Officers for Wales; and the Chief Medical Officer or any of the Deputy Chief Medical Officers of the Department of Health in Northern Ireland before making a declaration that starts a public health response period (or revoking any such declaration).

460 Part 2 of the Schedule makes provision for England. The rest of the Schedule makes similar provisions for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

461 The power to restrict or prohibit gatherings or events may be directed towards the owner or occupier of the premises or anyone involved in holding such an event or gathering. The power to close or restrict access to premises may be directed towards the owner or occupier of the premises, or anyone involved in managing access to and within the premises.

462 The Schedule provides that the Secretary of State, the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and the Executive Office in Northern Ireland should respectively have regard to: the advice of the Chief Medical Officer or one of the Deputy Chief Medical Officers; the Chief Medical Officer of the Scottish Administration; the Chief Medical Officer or one of the Deputy Chief Medical Officers for Wales; and the Chief Medical Officer or any of the Deputy Chief Medical Officers of the Department of Health in Northern Ireland, before issuing a direction under this power. The Executive Office in Northern Ireland is also required to consult with one of the specified persons before issuing a direction.

463 The territorial extent and application of the section and the Schedule is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Part 2 of the Schedule applies in England only, Part 3 of the Schedule applies in Scotland only, Part 4 of the Schedule applies in Wales only, and Part 5 of the Schedule applies in Northern Ireland only.

Section 53 and Schedule 23: Expansion of availability of live links in criminal proceedings

464 This Schedule amends the Criminal Justice Act 2003 (the “CJA 2003”) in order to extend the circumstances in which a criminal court can use audio and live links during hearings.

465 It expands the courts’ powers to use technology across a wider range of hearings, and participants. The court may direct that a person (but not a jury member) take part in eligible criminal proceedings through the use of a live audio link or a live video link. The court must be satisfied that a live link direction is in the interests of justice before making one. By way of an additional safeguard, it also provides for the parties, and the relevant youth offending team in youth cases, to be given the opportunity to make representations to the court before the court determines whether to make a live link direction.

466 The amendments made by paragraph 2(5) of the Schedule provide that the court may direct the use of live link to multiple, or all, persons participating in particular proceedings, and may also give a direction which only applies to certain aspects of the proceedings, for example the giving of evidence. A person directed to give evidence in proceedings by live link must only give evidence in accordance with the direction. Persons outside of England and Wales may participate through a live link if the court so directs. These powers are subject to the restrictions set out in new Schedule 3A to the CJA 2003.

467 The court may rescind a live link direction at any time, but only if this is in the interests of justice, and only after having considered representations from the parties or relevant youth offending team in youth cases.

468 The Schedule amends section 53 of the CJA 2003 (magistrates’ courts permitted to sit at other locations) to accommodate any participation through live link, rather than just the giving of evidence.

469 Participation in eligible criminal proceedings through a live audio or video link as directed by the court will be treated as complying with any requirement to attend or appear before court, or to surrender to the custody of the court, and such persons will be treated as present in court for the purposes of the proceedings.

470 The Schedule also amends section 54 of the CJA 2003 (warning to jury) in accordance with the expanded power to use live links and section 55 of the CJA 2003 (rules of court) in accordance with the expanded power to use live links, and to enable the Criminal Procedure Rules to provide for contested as well as uncontested live link applications to be determined without a hearing. Paragraph 8 of the Schedule creates a new Schedule 3A to the CJA 2003, which introduces additional prohibitions and limitations on use of live links in certain circumstances.

471 Part 2 of the Schedule amends the Criminal Appeal Act 1968 in accordance with the expanded powers to use live links under section 51 of the CJA 2003 in relation to appeals to the criminal division of the Court of Appeal. It also provides for a single judge of the Court of Appeal and the Registrar of Criminal Appeals to be able to exercise these powers.

472 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is England and Wales only.

Section 54 and Schedule 24: Expansion of availability of live links in other criminal hearings

473 Part 1 of the Schedule expands the use of live links in Part 3A of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (the “CDA 1998”) beyond the attendance of the accused at certain preliminary, sentencing and enforcement hearings to all participants in preliminary, sentencing and enforcement hearings.

474 Paragraph 3 of the Schedule amends section 57B of the CDA 1998 to expand the availability of live links at preliminary hearings in a magistrates’ court or the Crown Court to include live video and audio links and all persons participating in the hearing, not solely live video links for the accused when in custody. Safeguards are introduced such that the court in making any live link direction in a preliminary hearing must be satisfied that it is in the interests of justice to do so. The parties or the relevant youth offending team must also have been given the opportunity to make representations.

475 The Schedule makes similar provision in relation to live links in preliminary hearings as paragraph 2(5) of Schedule 23 does in relation to live links in ‘eligible criminal proceedings’. The provisions set out the factors that the court must consider when deciding whether to give, vary or rescind a live link direction.

476 The Schedule allows for the expansion of the use of live links in sentencing hearings and enforcement hearings in a similar way to preliminary hearings.

477 A court may not impose imprisonment or detention in default of payment of a sum at an enforcement hearing where proceedings are being conducted with participation via live audio link (other than for the purpose of giving evidence).

478 Paragraph 6 inserts new section 57G of the CDA 1998 (requirement to attend court, perjury) which makes identical provision in relation to hearings conducted in accordance with a direction under section 57B, 57E or 57F as paragraph 4 of Schedule 23 does in relation to ‘eligible criminal proceedings’ conducted in accordance with a live link direction.

479 The Schedule creates a new Schedule 3A to the CDA 1998, which introduces additional prohibitions and limitations on use of live links.

480 Part 2 of the Schedule makes amendments to the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 in accordance with the expanded powers to use live links under section 57B of the CDA 1998. It also amends section 22 of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985 to reflect the fact that a jury no longer determines whether a defendant is unfit to plead. It omits section 32 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 (evidence given by persons abroad through television links) as it is no longer required.

481 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule in so far as they relate to Part 2 of the Schedule is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

482 The territorial extent and application of the section and the Schedule so far as they relate to Parts 1 and 3 of the Schedule is England and Wales only.

Section 55 and Schedule 25: Public participation in proceedings conducted by video or audio

483 This Schedule inserts new sections 85A, 85B, 85C and 85D to the Courts Act 2003, making provisions for the live streaming of wholly audio or video hearings.

484 The new sections of the Act provide that proceedings which are conducted as wholly video proceedings or wholly audio proceedings (a “fully virtual” hearing) can be broadcast so members of the public can observe proceedings or be made for record-keeping purposes (section 85A). It is an offence to make, or attempt to make, an unauthorised recording or transmission which relates to the broadcasting of such proceedings. The maximum penalty for being found guilty of such an offence is a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1,000) (section 85B). It is also an offence to make, or attempt to make an unauthorised recording or transmission of an image or sound which is being transmitted through a live audio or video link including in relation to a person’s participation in court proceedings through a live link. This includes a recording or transmission of the person’s own participation. The maximum penalty for being found guilty of such an offence is a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale (currently £1,000) (section 85C).

485 The Schedule also inserts new sections 29A, 29B, 29C and 29D to the Tribunals Courts and Enforcement Act 2007, making provisions for the live streaming of wholly audio or wholly video hearings. New sections 29A to 29D to that Act make identical provision as that in s85A to 85D of the Courts Act 2003 for wholly video or wholly audio proceedings in First-tier Tribunals and Upper Tribunals.

486 The territorial extent and application of this section in respect of paragraph 1 to Schedule 25 is England and Wales only.

487 The territorial extent and application in respect of paragraph 2 to Schedule 25 is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 56 and Schedule 26: Live links in magistrates’ court appeals against requirements or restrictions imposed on a potentially infectious person

488 This Schedule inserts sections 57ZA to 57ZF into the Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980.

489 It provides that appeals against decisions by the Secretary of State or an authorised public health official to impose restrictions under powers set out in section 51 and Schedule 21, be heard by telephone or video in civil proceedings in the Magistrates Court, subject to the court’s power to direct different arrangement be made. The court may, if it is in the interests of justice, direct that one or more persons should not participate in the appeal by video; or that they should participate by telephone. Such a direction may be made by a single magistrate or authorised court officer (as defined in subsection (5)).

490 Sections 57ZD and 57ZE create new criminal offences in relation to:

- a. the unauthorised recording or transmission of a broadcast of a live video or audio hearing and,
- b. the unauthorised recording and transmission in relation to a person’s participation in proceedings through live video or audio links. These sections create the same criminal offences and make identical provisions to those in section 55 and Schedule 25.

491 The territorial extent and application of the section and Schedule is England and Wales only.

Section 57 and Schedule 27: Use of live links in legal proceedings: Northern Ireland

492 This section and Schedule ensure that all courts and devolved tribunals in Northern Ireland can require some or all of the participants in a case to take part in proceedings via audio or video live link. The Schedule also makes provisions for the live streaming of wholly audio or wholly video hearings by courts and devolved tribunals in Northern Ireland.

493 Provision is also made for offences of recording or transmission in relation to broadcasts and in relation to participation through live link. Specific provision is also made for public health applications via live links to the magistrates' courts.

494 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is Northern Ireland only.

Section 58 and Schedule 28: Powers in relation to transportation, storage and disposal of dead bodies etc.

495 Part 1 of this Schedule ensures that Local and National Authorities have the powers to require persons (and in the case of National Authorities, to require Local Authorities) to provide information to enable those Authorities to ascertain capacity in areas to effectively manage the transportation, storage and disposal of dead bodies and other human remains. This may include information from private companies (such as private funeral homes or crematoria) on their capacity and operational status. They may direct that this information is shared with other actors who require this information (for example neighbouring Local Authorities who are searching for spare capacity in the region).

496 Information shared under these information-sharing powers must be used only for the purpose of ascertaining capacity to manage the transportation, storage and disposal of dead bodies and other human remains.

497 This information sharing provision is needed to inform decisions to designate a Local Authority so that directions can be made to enable changes in the death management system where there is or is likely to be insufficient capacity in that area as a result of deaths from COVID-19. The provision improves visibility of the system and helps to prevent the system from becoming overwhelmed.

498 Restrictions are placed on the use and disclosure of the information provided and offences are created in relation to failing to comply with a requirement to provide information, using or disclosing information in contravention of provisions, or knowingly or recklessly providing false information. These provisions ensure compliance with the information sharing provisions.

499 Part 2 allows National Authorities to designate a Local Authority area where, as a result of COVID-19, there is likely to be insufficient capacity within that area to transport, store or dispose of dead bodies or other human remains. Once an area is designated a Local Authority can give directions to companies or corporations. In addition to this, a National Authority can give the same directions where a regional or national response is more appropriate. The trigger point of this will be a ministerial decision in the relevant nation. The flexibility to direct locally, regionally or nationally provides that powers are only used where necessary, and in an effective and proportionate manner.

- 500 The directions that can be given are broadly defined to give flexibility in responding as necessary to the specific situation. However it is expected the following directions may be required: direction to a private company to, for example, extend crematoria operating hours or use their vehicle to transport deceased bodies. The power to direct also includes a power to make directions in relation to a body within an area to be moved to another area.
- 501 Personal choice for body disposal will be respected as far as possible. However, only where there is no suitable alternative (for example if safe storage limits were likely to be breached and out of area alternatives were not available), the power to direct may be used to direct whether a body is buried or cremated. It has been necessary to disapply section 46(3) of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 which prohibits cremation against the wishes of the deceased. Similar provisions are disapplied in Northern Ireland. Scottish legislation already requires due regard to be had to the deceased's wishes so no equivalent disapplication is required.
- 502 There is power provided for the appropriate National Authority to make a direction in place of a Local Authority where the Local Authority has failed to exercise its functions properly. In the event that any Local Authority directions conflict with a National Authority direction, the National Authority direction prevails.
- 503 Part 3 confers powers on National Authorities to give directions to Local Authorities as to the exercise of their functions where Local Authorities have failed to exercise functions in relation to dead bodies generally. This allows central Government to intervene if the Local Authority is not effectively managing the deaths in their area.
- 504 Part 4 provides that in carrying out functions under Schedule 28, Local and National Authorities must have regard to the deceased person's wishes, religion and belief, where known, of the method used for their final committal (i.e. burial or cremation). It also disapplies legislation prohibiting cremation against the wishes of the deceased, instead requiring authorities to have regard for wishes, religion or belief where known. In other words, while powers of direction may be used to direct whether a body is buried or cremated, the appropriate Local or National Authority must have regard for the deceased's wishes before making such a direction. In Scotland, legislation already requires due regard to be had to the deceased's wishes so no equivalent disapplication is needed.
- 505 Part 4 also requires the National Authority to give guidance to Local Authorities on discharging their duties to have regard for the wishes of the deceased.
- 506 A devolved minister can activate the powers to direct in their nation without needing the approval of the other nations.
- 507 The Schedule came into effect upon the Coronavirus Bill obtaining Royal Assent (25th March 2020), meaning the information powers in Part 1 available immediately; however, the Direction making powers in Part 2 only are exercisable on designation by a National Authority, and a designation can be revoked at which point any direction made under it will lapse.
- 508 The powers to direct will be activated within each nation by their respective Ministers if required. The ministers who can activate the powers in the provision are set out in paragraph 14 of the Schedule.
- 509 The territorial extent and application of this section and Schedule is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 59: Elections and referendums due to be held in England in period after 15 March 2020

510 This section deals with polls for relevant elections or referendums that are required to be held in the period beginning on 16th March 2020 and ending a month after the Coronavirus Bill obtained Royal Assent (25th March 2020), but which are not held during that period. The intention is to cover polls that were due to be held during that period but were cancelled following the Prime Minister's announcement about the cancellation of the polls scheduled for 7th May 2020. The elections and referendums that are relevant here are local government by-elections in England and any referendum in connection with a neighbourhood development plan.

511 The main purpose of the section is to remove any criminal liability that could otherwise be incurred under section 63 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (the "1983 Act") by returning officers, registration officers, presiding officers or others for breach of their official duties in connection with the failure to hold the poll. The section also disappplies section 39 of the 1983 Act, which could otherwise apply in relation to local government election polls that are abandoned for any reason.

512 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales only and application is England only.

Section 60: Postponement of elections due to be held on 7 May 2020

513 This section postpones a series of scheduled elections due to take place on 7th May 2020 by a year - until 'the ordinary day of election' in 2021, which is Thursday 6th May. The polls covered by this section are:

- a. Polls for the election of councillors for any local government area in England;
- b. The poll for the election of the Mayor of London and London Assembly;
- c. Polls for the election of mayors of local or combined authorities; and
- d. Polls for the election of Police and Crime Commissioners.

514 This section extends the term of office for local government councillors who were due to retire after the scheduled elections in 2020 until after the postponed election in 2021. This section then reduces the term of office for councillors returned at the postponed election in 2021 to three years, with a retirement date after the election in 2024. This is to ensure that their term aligns with the local government existing election cycle of electing by thirds and for two tier authorities. Maintaining the previous electoral rhythm provides for an election in each year in many two-tier areas, with clarity in each year over the proportion of local government being elected.

515 This section provides for an exclusion from provisions in the Local Government Act 1972 that determine how councillors are selected for retirement (for example, those who have been councillors for the longest period since re-election). This section states that where a councillor has had their term extended until after the postponed election in 2021, these provisions should not apply.

516 This section ensures that the subsequent term for 7th May 2020 elections for the Mayor of London/London Assembly, elected mayors of Local Authorities, elected mayors of combined authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners will be three years. This is to maintain the existing elections cycle, as above, and to ensure that the future cycle does not conflict with borough elections in London.

517 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales only.

Section 61: Power to postpone certain other elections and referendums

518 This section provides a power for the Secretary of State or Minister for the Cabinet Office to postpone, by regulations, other 'relevant' elections and referendums (not covered in section 60) that cannot currently be anticipated. Such elections would include, for example, by-elections which are required by statute to be held within a specified period after the triggering event.

519 The Prime Minister has taken the decision that the scheduled elections due to take place on 7th May 2020 should be postponed by a year. It follows that it may be desirable and necessary to postpone other elections (such as by-elections and local referendums) that arise during the COVID-19 outbreak. This section provides the necessary power to enable this.

520 This section sets out that the Secretary of State or Minister for the Cabinet Office may make regulations to postpone the date of a 'relevant' election or referendum, so long as the election or referendum is held on the date or within the period specified in the regulations (and is not later than 6th May 2021). Where appropriate, this power can be exercised more than once. This section also confers power by regulations to delay the holding of any relevant election or referendum that falls within a period specified in the regulations until a later date or period specified in the regulations (which again cannot be or end later than 6th May 2021).

521 This section states that a 'relevant' election or referendum is one for which the poll falls in the period between the day on which this Act is passed and ending with 5th May 2021 and which is within one of the categories of election or referendum set out in the section. These categories include elections: to fill a 'casual vacancy' (by-elections) in local government in either England or Northern Ireland; the Greater London Assembly; in the office of the London Mayor or in the office of an elected mayor; or in the office of a Police and Crime Commissioner in England. They also include referendums under section 9MC of the Local Government Act 2000 (referendums following petition); under section 52ZN of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (in relation to council tax); and referendums under Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (on neighbourhood development plans).

522 This section makes clear that the power can be applied to specified descriptions of elections or referendums. So, for example, regulations made under this section could make provision by reference to a group of elections in a specific area, of a specific nature, or falling within a specific time period.

523 This section allows regulations under this section to amend legislation, e.g. where a date set out in primary or secondary legislation needs to be amended.

524 This section provides for regulations under the power to be subject to the negative procedure. This is to enable the elections set out above to be postponed in situations where either Parliament is not sitting or is unavailable.

525 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales and Northern Ireland only.

Section 62: Power to postpone a recall petition under the Recall of MPs Act 2015

526 A recall procedure for Members of Parliament is set out in the Recall of MPs Act 2015 (the “2015 Act”). MPs can be recalled in certain circumstances, for example, if they are convicted in the UK of an offence, or if they are suspended from the House of Commons for a specified period. The recall procedure includes a petition being made available for signing for 6 weeks for registered electors to sign. To be successful, 10% of eligible registered voters need to sign the petition. If the 10% threshold is reached, the Speaker of the House of Commons is notified, the MP’s seat becomes vacant and a by-election is required.

527 This section does two things. First, it relaxes the duty on the petition officer under section 7(4) of the 2015 Act in relation to the designation of the first day of the 6-week petition period. Instead of being required to designate the 10th working day after the day on which the officer receives a Speaker’s notice that one of the recall conditions has been met, or the nearest reasonably practicable working day after that day, the petition officer is required to designate a working day falling no later than 6th May 2021 (or, if that is not reasonably practicable, the nearest reasonably practicable working day after that day). This therefore relaxes the timetable for cases where a Speaker’s notice has been given but the beginning of the 6-week petition period has not yet been designated.

528 Secondly, this section then deals with the case of a recall petition where the petition officer has designated a day for the beginning of the petition period, and that day falls between the date on which this Act came into place (25th March 2020) and 5th May 2021. In such a case, the Secretary of State or the Minister for the Cabinet Office may by regulations provide that the designated day is postponed until a date specified in the regulations (falling no later than 6th May 2021).

529 This section provides that the Secretary of State or the Minister for the Cabinet Office’s power may be exercised more than once in respect of a single recall petition. This section also provides that a statutory instrument containing such regulations is subject to negative procedure in Parliament.

530 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 63: Power to make supplementary etc provision

531 This section provides the Secretary of State or the Minister for the Cabinet Office with the power to make, by regulations, supplementary provision in connection with the postponement of polls under sections 60 to 62. Such regulations would be subject to the negative procedure.

532 Regulations made under this section could deal with a variety of matters, including, for example:

- a. Provision about things done (or not done) in connection with any poll prior to its postponement (which could include provision disapplying any criminal liability that might otherwise arise e.g. for returning officers, counting officers or presiding officers)
- b. The handling of nominations of candidates
- c. The handling of postal ballots
- d. The terms of office of incumbent office holders, which might need to be extended in the event of an election being postponed

- e. The handling of expenses of persons other than local authorities (e.g. candidate expenses)
- f. Compensation of local authorities or candidates incurring additional expenditure as a result of the Act
- g. Making any necessary amendments to orders under section 7 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (orders giving effect to structural changes, proposals affecting the membership, or governance arrangements of local authorities).

533 Regulations made under this section make retrospective provision, to deal with situations where an election timetable has automatically been triggered. This will, for example, enable provision to be made disapplying (after the event) certain statutory steps that should have been taken in the run-up to the original poll date.

534 This section allows regulations under this section to amend, repeal or revoke statutory provisions (including primary legislation).

535 This section provides for regulations under the power to be subject to the negative procedure.

536 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 64: Northern Ireland: timing of the canvass and Assembly by-elections

537 This section amends the timing of the canvass in Northern Ireland, moving it from 2020 to 2021.

538 The electoral register lists the names and addresses of everyone who is registered to vote in public elections. The register is used for electoral purposes, such as making sure only eligible people can vote, and other limited purposes (such as calling people for jury service). The canvass is one method of gathering information on potential additions to, changes to, and deletions from, the register.

539 In Northern Ireland the register is maintained through a process of continuous registration and cross matching of data with the addition of a canvass which must take place at least every ten years from 2010. It was last conducted in 2013. There are 1.3 million individuals on the 2019 register and the canvass exercise is hugely resource intensive, requiring postal delivery of significant amounts of printed material and large numbers of processing staff. COVID-19 presents significant risks to canvass being completed successfully in Northern Ireland in 2020 and as a result of this section, the canvass will be moved from 2020 to 2021.

540 With the exception of delaying the 2020 canvass by a year, the section retains the timing of the previously established schedule of statutory canvass years, specifying 2030 and every tenth year thereafter as years on which canvass must be conducted.

541 The section also provides that if, at any time during the relevant period, the Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland is required to set a date for a by-election for the Northern Ireland Assembly, the Chief Electoral Officer must consult the Secretary of State before setting the date. For this purpose the 'relevant period' is the period beginning with the day on which this Act is passed and ending with 1st February 2021.

542 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 65: Elections due to be held in Wales in period after 15 March 2020

543 This section relates to polls for a relevant election or referendum that are required to be held in the period beginning on 16th March 2020 and ending a month the Coronavirus Bill came into effect (25th March 2020), but which are not in fact held during that period. The intention is to cover polls that were due to be held during that period but were cancelled following the Prime Minister's announcement about the cancellation of the polls scheduled for 7th May 2020. The elections and referendums that are relevant here are local government by-elections in Wales and any referendum in connection with a neighbourhood development plan.

544 The main purpose of the section is to remove any criminal liability that could otherwise be incurred under section 63 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (the "1983 Act") by returning officers, registration officers, presiding officers or others for breach of their official duties in connection with the failure to hold the poll. The section also disappplies section 39 of the 1983 Act, which could otherwise apply in relation to local government election polls that are abandoned for any reason.

545 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales only and application of this section is Wales only.

Section 66: Postponement of National Assembly for Wales elections for constituency vacancies

546 This section provides that where, before 6th May 2021, an election under section 10 of the Government of Wales Act 2006 to fill a vacant constituency seat would otherwise be required to be held the Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales may fix a later date for that poll. This power may be exercised more than once but before the Presiding Officer exercises it, the Presiding Officer must consult with the Welsh Ministers and the Electoral Commission.

547 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the application is to Wales only.

Section 67: Power to postpone local authority elections in Wales for casual vacancies

548 This section enables any casual vacancies (also known as by-elections) which may arise in Local Authorities in Wales where the date of the poll for the election would otherwise fall between the period beginning with the day on which the Coronavirus Act came into effect (25th March 2020) and ending with 5th May 2021, to be postponed by regulations made by the Welsh Ministers.

549 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales only and the application is to Wales only.

Section 68: Power to make supplementary etc provision

550 This section enables the Welsh Ministers to make by regulations consequential, supplementary, incidental, transitional or saving provision in connection with sections 66 and 67. Such regulations may include provisions about electoral activity prior to the postponement of a poll, the conduct of elections, the manner of voting in elections that have been postponed, the terms of office of incumbent officer holders, nominations of candidates, expenses incurred in relation to the election by those other than Local Authorities, and compensation for Local Authorities or candidates as a result of the provisions within the Act.

551 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the application is to Wales only.

Section 69: Postponement of Scottish Parliament elections for constituency vacancies

552 This section enables the Presiding Officer (“PO”) of the Scottish Parliament to postpone constituency by-elections. The power enables the PO to fix a later date for the poll where a date has been fixed or, where no date has been fixed, to fix a date that is outside the period required by section 9(3) of the Scotland Act 1998. The PO must fix a new date as soon as reasonably practicable. This power can be exercised more than once and this section specifies who the PO must consult before exercising the power. The power cannot be exercised to fix the date of a by-election after 6th May 2021.

553 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and application is Scotland only.

Section 70: Postponement of local authority elections for casual vacancies

554 This section applies where under section 37 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 an election is to be held to fill a casual vacancy in the office of councillor in a Local Authority. It enables the relevant Returning Officer (“RO”) to postpone a by-election to fill a councillor vacancy in a Local Authority. The power enables the RO to fix a later date for the poll where a date has been fixed or, where no date has been fixed, to fix a date which is outside the period required by section 37(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The RO must fix a new date as soon as reasonably practicable. This power can be exercised more than once and this section specifies who the RO must consult before exercising the power. The power cannot be exercised to fix a by-election after 6th May 2021.

555 The territorial extent and application of this section is Scotland only.

Section 70: Postponement of local authority elections for casual vacancies

556 This section applies where under section 37 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 an election is to be held to fill a casual vacancy in the office of councillor in a Local Authority. It enables the relevant Returning Officer (the “RO”) to postpone a by-election to fill a councillor vacancy in a Local Authority. The power enables the RO to fix a later date for the poll where a date has been fixed or, where no date has been fixed, to fix a date which is outside the period required by section 37(1) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. The RO must fix a new date as soon as reasonably practicable. This power can be exercised more than once and this section specifies who the RO must consult before exercising the power. The power cannot be exercised to fix a by-election after 6th May 2021.

557 The territorial extent and application of this section is Scotland only.

Section 71: Signatures of Treasury Commissioners

558 This section modifies section 1 of the Treasury Instruments (Signature) Act 1849 so that, during a COVID-19 outbreak, the reference in that section to two or more of the Commissioners has effect – (a) as if it were a reference to one or more of the Commissioners, and (b) as if a Minister of the Crown in the Treasury (who is not also a Commissioner) were a Commissioner. ‘Minister of the Crown’ for these purposes means the holder of an office in Her Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom.

559 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 72: Power under section 143 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992

560 This section modifies the operation of section 143 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (the “1992 Act”) by temporarily altering the procedure for making orders under it.

561 This section applies to an order made under section 143 of the 1992 Act made on or after the day the Bill (now Act) was introduced (19th March 2020) but within 2 years of this Act having passed.

562 It only applies to an order if that order does not increase contribution rates above the level of those rates on 6th April 2020.

563 Subsection (2) modifies section 143(1) of the 1992 Act in order that the level of the National Insurance Fund, and the sums expected to be paid from it, does not have to be taken into account in relation to orders made under this section for a temporary period.

564 Subsection (3) provides that the limit on increases to the rates of National Insurance Contributions (NICs) of 0.25% in section 143(4) of the 1992 Act does not apply to orders made under the Act. This will enable rates to return to their 6th April 2020 baseline once any reduction is no longer needed.

565 Subsection (4) provides that Section 144 of the 1992 Act does not apply to an order to which this section applies. This removes the requirement to lay a report by the Government Actuary when changing rates, and provides greater flexibility to determine the period for which rates are to apply.

566 Subsection (5) provides that the affirmative procedure does not apply to orders made under section 143 of the 1992 Act to which this section applies. The negative procedure will apply.

567 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the application is England, Wales and Scotland only.

Section 73: Power under section 145 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992

568 This Section modifies the operation of section 145 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (the “1992 Act”) by temporarily altering the procedure for making orders under it.

569 Subsection (1) provides that the section only applies to an order made between introduction of the Bill (now Act) (19th March 2020) and 2 years after the passing of the Act, if that order does not increase rates above the 6th April 2020 baseline.

570 Subsection (2) provides that the limit on increases to the rates of NICs of 0.25% in section 145(3) of the 1992 Act does not apply to orders made under the 1992 Act and to which this section applies (and increases above the 6th April 2020 baseline are not allowed).

571 Subsection (3) provides subsections (2) to (5) of section 147 of the 1992 Act do not apply to an order made under section 145 of the 1992 Act and to which this section applies. This allows greater flexibility on the application of rate changes, and removes the requirement to lay a report by the Government Actuary.

572 Subsection (4) provides that the affirmative procedure does not apply to orders made under section 145 of the 1992 Act and to which this section applies. The negative procedure will apply.

573 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and the application is England and Wales and Scotland only.

Section 74: Power under section 5 of the National Insurance Contributions Act 2014

574 This section modifies the operation of section 5 of the National Insurance Act 2014 by temporarily altering the Parliamentary procedure for making regulations under it.

575 Subsection (1) provides for the modifications to apply to regulations made on or after the day the Bill (now Act) was introduced (19th March 2020) and before the end of the period of two years from the date the Act is passed.

576 Subsection (2) provides for the negative Parliamentary procedure to apply to regulations made under section 5 during that period instead of the affirmative procedures specified in that section.

577 Subsection (3) provides that subsection (2) does not apply to regulations which decrease the value of the Employment Allowance below £4,000 (so the affirmative Parliamentary procedure will continue to apply).

578 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 75: Disapplication of limit under section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982

579 Section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 is the principle general power for the Secretary of State to give financial assistance to business where, in the Secretary of State's opinion:

- a. the financial assistance is likely to benefit the economy of the UK (or any part or area of the UK);
- b. providing the financial assistance is in the national interest; and
- c. the financial assistance cannot otherwise be appropriately provided.

580 The provision of financial assistance under section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982 is subject to certain conditions. In particular, subsections (4) and (5) impose an aggregate limit of £12,000 million (£12 billion).

581 Under subsections (1) and (2) of this section financial assistance provided under section 8 of the IDA 1982 does not count towards the £12 billion aggregate limit where the providing authority designates the financial assistance as related to COVID-19. The providing authority may make that designation if it appears to the authority that the assistance is provided (wholly or to a significant degree) for the purpose of preventing, reducing or compensating for any effect or anticipated effect (direct or indirect) of COVID-19.

582 Subsection (3) of this section requires the Secretary of State to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of any quarter in which the Secretary of State has provided financial assistance designated as "coronavirus-related". The report must include the amount of designated assistance and other details the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

583 The territorial extent and application of the section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 76: HMRC Functions

584 This section provides that Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs ("HMRC") have such functions as the Treasury may direct in relation to COVID-19. It allows the Treasury to grant additional functions to HMRC where these are necessary to deliver the Government's response to COVID-19.

585 In particular, this section enables the Treasury to grant the functions necessary for HMRC to pay grants to businesses to deliver the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

586 This ensures that HMRC is allowed to deliver the scheme, and provides the flexibility to provide further directions if necessary as the Government continues to respond to the situation as it continues to develop.

587 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Section 77: Up-rating of working tax credit etc

588 This section increases the rate of the basic element of Working Tax Credit, providing additional support to claimants to help them manage the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The section replaces the annual rate of £1,995 which had been due to take effect from 6th April 2020 with a higher amount. The increased rate will apply for the 2020/2021 tax year only.

- a. Subsection (1) increases the rate of the basic element of Working Tax Credit from £1,995 to £3,040.
- b. Subsection (2) provides for the increase to have effect for the 2020/2021 tax year, i.e. from 6th April 2020 to 5th April 2021, only. It also provides that the rate on which the Treasury will base its review is £1,995.
- c. Subsection (3) contains a consequential amendment which provides that the benefit rates on which the Secretary of State will base their review will be the 6th April 2020 baseline rates.

589 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, except for subsection (3) which extends and applies to England and Wales and Scotland only.

Section 78: Local Authority Meetings

590 This section provides a power for the Secretary of State (in England), the Welsh Minister and the Northern Ireland Department for Communities to make provision, by regulations, in relation to Local Authority meetings. These can include provisions in relation to the requirement to hold meetings, the requirements on timing and frequency of meetings, the place at which meetings must be held, the way in which people should attend, speak at and vote, and public admission and access to meetings and documents in relation to council meetings.

591 This includes the ability to make provision for meetings being held without any or all of the persons being together in the same place, which would enable local authorities to hold meetings remotely.

592 Subsection (3) states that the regulations will only refer to meetings held or required to be held before 7th May 2021. This gives Local Authorities the flexibility to carry on with vital business needs.

593 In this provision, meetings are defined as meetings of the Authority, a committee or sub-committee of the Authority, an executive of a Local Authority or a committee or sub-committee of an executive. There is a broad definition of Local Authority which includes principal councils, combined authorities, parish councils, and national park authorities.

594 The territorial extent and application of the section is England and Wales and Northern Ireland only.

Section 79: Extension of BID arrangements: England

595 This section establishes the delay of Business Improvement District (“BID”) ballots through an extension of maximum duration of English BID arrangements, for those BID arrangements that are in place on the day of Royal Assent but are due to terminate on or before 31st December 2020. Those BIDs’ arrangements will be extended until 31st March 2021.

596 Subsection (1) sets out which BID arrangements are included within the delay:

- a. if a BID is in force on the day on which the Bill (now Act) received Royal Assent; and
- b. the BID arrangements are due to expire between the date the Coronavirus Bill obtained Royal Assent (25th March 2020) and the 31st December 2020.

597 Subsection (2) sets out the BIDs that are excluded from the delay:

- a. if a new BID ballot under section 49(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 (the “LGA 2003”) has taken place before the Bill (now Act) received Royal Assent (25th March 2020), and the BID arrangements are the same or substantially the same as the current arrangements in force; or
- b. a renewal ballot under section 54(2) of the LGA 2003 for the renewal of the current BID arrangements has taken place before the Bill (now Act) received Royal Assent (25th March 2020).

598 Subsection (3) sets out how the extension to the BID arrangements for BIDs included within the delay will work in practice:

- a. that the BID arrangements will now end on 31st March 2021, rather than at the previous five-year maximum which would have ended between the day of Royal Assent and 31st December 2020;
- b. that the extension beyond the previous-five year maximum will be treated as a new charging period (defined as the 2021 charging period) ending on 31st March 2021.
- c. sets out in greater detail how the levy for the 2021 chargeable period created by the extension will work:
 - i. the 2021 chargeable period created by the extension will be calculated in the same manner as the 2020 chargeable period; and
 - ii. the levy will be applied in a way that is just and reasonable, in the case where the 2021 chargeable period is longer or shorter than the last 2020 chargeable period.
- d. Sets out that the non-domestic ratepayers specified in the arrangements (or hereditaments) liable for the levy will be the same as the last 2020 chargeable period.

599 Subsection (4) defines ‘the last 2020 chargeable period’ as the chargeable period that would have been the last chargeable period for the BID that was due to end in 2020 had it not been extended beyond the five-year maximum by this legislation.

600 Subsection (5) disapplies the five-year maximum rule for BID arrangements set out in section 54(1) of the LGA 2003 for the BID arrangements included within the extension for this legislation.

601 Subsection (6) highlights that the termination and alteration procedures for BID arrangements set out in section 54(4) of the LGA 2003 continue to apply and BID arrangements included within the extension can still utilise those procedures if necessary.

602 Subsection (7) highlights that expressions included within this legislation retain the same legal meaning as those in Part 4 of the LGA 2003.

603 Subsection (8) binds the Crown.

604 Subsection (9) highlights that the legislation only applies to BID arrangements within England, and not within Wales, as the Welsh Government did not wish to be included within the extension as no Welsh BID arrangements are due to end within the period between the day of Royal Assent and the 31st December 2020.

605 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales only and applies to England only.

Section 80: Extension of BID arrangements: Northern Ireland

606 This section establishes the delay of BID ballots through an extension of maximum duration of Northern Ireland BID arrangements, for those BID arrangements that were in place on the day of Royal Assent but are due to terminate on or before 31st December 2020. Those BIDs' arrangements will be extended until 31st March 2021.

607 Subsection (1) sets out which BID arrangements fall within the provisions of the section:

- a. if BID arrangements are in force on the day on the Coronavirus Bill (now Act) obtained Royal Assent (25th March 2020); and
- b. the BID arrangements are due to expire between the day the Coronavirus Bill (now Act) obtained Royal Assent (25th March 2020) and the 31st December 2020.

608 Subsection (2) sets out how the extension to the BID arrangements for BIDs included within the delay will work in practice:

- a. that the BID arrangements will now end on 31st March 2021, rather than at the previous five-year maximum which would have ended between the day the Coronavirus Bill (now Act) obtained Royal Assent (25th March 2020) and 31st December 2020;
- b. that the extension beyond the previous-five year maximum will be treated as a new charging period (defined as the 2021 charging period) ending on 31st March 2021.
- c. sets out in greater detail how the levy for the 2021 chargeable period created by the extension will work:
 - i. the 2021 chargeable period created by the extension will be calculated in the same manner as the 2020 chargeable period; and
 - ii. the levy will be applied in a way that is just and reasonable, in the case where the 2021 chargeable period is longer or shorter than the last 2020 chargeable period.
- d. Sets out that the non-domestic ratepayers specified in the arrangements (or hereditaments) liable for the levy will be the same as the last 2020 chargeable period.

- 609 Subsection (3) defines “the last 2020 chargeable period” as the chargeable period that would have been the last chargeable period for the BID that was due to end in 2020 had it not been extended beyond the five-year maximum by this section.
- 610 Subsection (4) disapplies the five-year maximum rule for BID arrangements set out in section 16(1) of the Business Improvement Districts Act (NI) 2013, for the BID arrangements included within the extension for this section.
- 611 Subsection (5) highlights that the termination and alteration procedures for BID arrangements set out in section 16(4) of the Business Improvement Districts Act (NI) 2013 continue to apply and BID arrangements included within the extension can still utilise those procedures if necessary.
- 612 Subsection (6) highlights that expressions included within this section retain the same legal meaning as those in the Business Improvement Districts Act (NI) 2013.
- 613 Subsection (7) binds the individuals in public service of the Crown.
- 614 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 81 and Schedule 29: Residential tenancies in England and Wales: protection from eviction

- 615 This section and Schedule delays when landlords are able to evict tenants. It does this either by extending the notice period that a landlord is required to serve on a tenant to at least three months or, in some cases, creating a three months’ notice requirement where a requirement to give notice does not currently exist. The section does not prevent a landlord from serving a notice of intention to possess, nor does it end a tenant’s liability for rental payments.
- 616 The Schedule applies to all landlords who have granted tenancies governed by the Rent Act 1977 and the Housing Acts 1985, 1988 and 1996. This covers all statutory tenants in the private and social rented sectors. It does not include common law tenancies or licenses (other than secure licenses).
- 617 In most cases a landlord must provide notice of intention to seek possession of an assured, assured shorthold, secure, demoted or introductory tenancy. These provisions extend such notice periods to at least three months. They also add a requirement to give three months’ notice in respect of a fixed term secure tenancy. The Rent Act 1977 does not require a notice to be served on statutory regulated tenants under the Act and so these provisions introduce a notice period for those tenancies and sets out that it must be at least three months. They also amend the relevant forms to be used in serving notice, to ensure the information they contain is correct.
- 618 These provisions will apply for a specified period of time, from the date on which the Coronavirus Bill (now Act) obtained Royal Assent (25th March 2020) to 30th September 2020.
- 619 These provisions allow the Secretary of State to change the date on which they end or to extend the three month notice period to a maximum of six months. These measures have been drafted so as to only apply for the specified time stated, not as permanent changes, and for the process to return to current functioning once this period has ended.
- 620 Scotland and Northern Ireland have differing tenancy systems which are a devolved competence.
- 621 The territorial extent and application of the section and the Schedule is England and Wales only.

Section 82: Business tenancies in England and Wales: protection from forfeiture etc

- 622 This section establishes that where non-payment of rent enables a landlord to treat a lease as forfeited, that right cannot be exercised for a relevant period. The relevant period commenced on the date on which the Coronavirus Bill (now Act) obtained Royal Assent (25th March 2020) and will end on 30th June 2020—with a power to extend by statutory instrument if it is needed (subject to the negative procedure).
- 623 Subsections (1) and (2) set out that the landlord may not enforce a right of re-entry or forfeiture during the relevant period but protects the landlord from inadvertently waiving the breach. A landlord may, however, expressly waive the breach in writing.
- 624 Subsections (3) to (6) limit the power of the High Court to order forfeiture or possession for non-payment of rent. The court cannot make an order which takes effect before the end of the relevant period.
- 625 Subsections (7) to (10) make similar provision in respect of the County Court.
- 626 Subsection (11) ensures that the tenant's failure to pay rent during the relevant period is ignored for the purposes of a protected tenant under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 whose lease comes up for renewal. It means that failure to pay rent during this period is not treated as a 'persistent delay in paying rent' for the purposes of considering a lease renewal.
- 627 Subsection (12) defines key terms including 'relevant business tenancy'. The definition includes tenancies to which Part 2 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 applies and to tenancies to which that Part of that Act would apply if any relevant occupier were the tenant (for example where the original tenant has sublet premises and is no longer in occupation).
- 628 The territorial extent and application of this section is England and Wales only.

Section 83: Business tenancies in Northern Ireland: protection from forfeiture etc

- 629 This section establishes that where non-payment of rent enables a landlord to treat a lease as forfeited, that right cannot be exercised for a relevant period. The relevant period commenced on the date on which the Coronavirus Bill (now Act) obtained Royal Assent (25th March 2020) and will end on 30th June 2020—with a power for the Department of Finance in Northern Ireland to extend the period if it is needed.
- 630 The protection applies to all business tenancies within the meaning of the Business Tenancies (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and to any tenancy to which the Order would apply if any relevant occupier were the tenant.
- 631 The territorial extent and application of this section is Northern Ireland only.

Section 84: Postponement of General Synod elections

- 632 The section enables elections to the General Synod of the Church of England that are due to take place this summer to be postponed. It does so by creating a delegated power enabling Her Majesty, by Order in Council, at the joint request of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, to postpone the date on which the Convocations of Canterbury and York – and therefore the General Synod – automatically stand dissolved under the Church of England Convocations Act 1966.
- 633 The territorial extent of this section is England and Wales only, but it applies only to the Church of England.

Part 2: Final Provisions

Section 85: Interpretation

634 The content of this section is self-explanatory.

Section 86: Financial provision

635 Section 86 recognises that, as a matter of House of Commons procedure, a financial resolution needed to be agreed for the Bill from which the Act resulted.

Section 87: Commencement

636 Subsection (1) sets out the provisions of the Act - other than those listed in subsection (2) - which commenced on Royal Assent of the Bill (now Act) on 25th March 2020.

637 Subsection (2) sets out the provisions which instead come into force using regulations made by a Minister of the UK Government. The Minister may do so in relation to devolved matters only with the consent of the relevant Devolved Administration. The Devolved Administrations can exercise the power in so far as the provision being commenced is within the legislative competence of the relevant Devolved Legislature.

638 Subsection (10) allows these provisions to be commenced on different days in different areas. The course of the outbreak is unpredictable and the response must be accordingly flexible.

639 Subsection (11) is a power to allow Ministers to make transitional provisions in relation to provisions in the Act coming into force. Subsections (12), (13), (14) and (15) relate to how this power can be used in respect of devolved areas.

Section 88: Power to suspend and revive provisions of this Act

640 This section allows measures in the Act to be suspended if no longer needed. It also allows for measures to be revived if needed again. The method of achieving suspension and revival is by way of a regulation made by a Minister. Subsection (2) provides that a "suspension" of a provision should be treated in the same way as a repeal for the purposes of applying the general savings provisions that apply to repeals contained in section 16(1) of the Interpretation Act 1978. Suspension and revival can be done more than once (subsection (4)). To provide for flexibility, subsection (5) allows Ministers to make the regulations for different purposes, on different days in different areas; and to make technical transitional, transitory and savings provisions in regulations made under the section.

641 There are some provisions in the Act which would not be appropriate to suspend/revive. As such, subsection (6) sets out the provisions that the power to suspend or revive does not apply to.

642 As with other sections within the Final Provision section of the Act, the section includes provisions which deal with how the powers should operate in respect of devolved matters. In particular, consent of the relevant Devolved Administration is required where a Minister of the UK Government exercises the power in relation to devolved matters. The Devolved Administrations are also given the same powers in so far as the provision being suspended or revived is within the legislative competence of the relevant Devolved Legislature.

Section 89: Expiry

643 The Act supports public bodies, and the wider society, in responding purely to the COVID-19 outbreak and so is time limited. This section provides that the Act expires at the end of the period of 2 years beginning with the day on which it is passed. Two qualifications to that basic principle are set out in subsection (2) (which lists the provisions that will not expire) and section 90 which allows for the period to be extended (or shortened) in relation to all other provisions.

644 Subsection (3) allows Ministers to make regulations which set out technical transitional, transitory and savings provisions in connection with the expiry of any provision of the Act. Subsection (4) specifies when consent of the relevant Devolved Administration is required in respect of this regulation-making power. The section also provides the same powers to the relevant Devolved Administration in so far as the provision relates to an area within the relevant Devolved Legislature's legislative competence.

Section 90: Power to alter expiry date

645 The sections of the Act should apply when they are needed. Therefore, subsections (1) and (2) enable Ministers to extend or terminate a particular provision through regulations. Subsection (3) stipulates that an extension may not be for more than six months at a time. To provide flexibility these regulations can be made for different purposes, on different days in different areas. Subsection (5) enables a Minister of the UK Government to exercise these powers. Consent of the relevant Devolved Administration is required in relation to devolved matters. The section also provides powers to the Devolved Administrations in so far as the relevant provision for which the expiry date is being altered is within the legislative competence of the Devolved Legislature.

646 The draft affirmative procedure must be followed when the power is being used to sunset a provision early. Where the power is being used to delay the sunset of a provision, either the made affirmative or the draft affirmative procedure can be used (this is set out in sections 93 (procedure for certain regulations made by a Minister of the Crown) – 96 (procedure for certain orders made by a Northern Ireland Department)).

Section 91: Power to amend Act in consequence of amendments to subordinate legislation

647 Many of the provisions in this Act operate by modifying the effect of pieces of secondary legislation. If underlying secondary legislation that the Act modifies changes during the life of the Act the modifications may no longer work properly. This section therefore allows for the update of the modifications contained in the Act in the event that underlying legislation is changed. This ensures that the measures in the Act maintain their intended effect.

648 Subsections (1) and (2) set out that parts of the Act that modify secondary legislation may be updated in consequence of other amendments to secondary legislation.

649 Regulations may be made by a UK Government Minister. Consent of the relevant Devolved Administration is required in relation to devolved matters. The section also provides the same power to the Devolved Administrations so far as provisions would be within the legislative competence of the relevant Devolved Legislature.

650 A choice of made affirmative or draft affirmative procedure can be used to make regulations under this power (this is set out in sections 93 (procedure for certain regulations made by a Minister of the Crown) – 96 (procedure for certain orders made by a Northern Ireland Department)).

Section 92: Power to make consequential modifications

651 This section provides a power to make consequential modifications to other legislation so that it aligns with this Act. The power can also be used to revoke the consequential modification regulations made under this power when the relevant provisions of the Act which the consequential modifications relate to are sunset or suspended. Ministers may make technical transitional, transitory and savings provisions in relation to the consequential modifications made under this section.

652 The regulations may be made by a UK Government Minister though consent of the relevant Devolved Administration is required if the regulations contain modifications that would be within devolved legislative competence. The section also provides the same power to the Devolved Administrations in respect of consequential modifications which are within their legislative competence.

653 Where consequential modifications only modify secondary legislation regulations can be made under the negative procedure. Where consequential modifications modify primary legislation either the made affirmative or draft affirmative procedures can be used (This is set out in sections 93 (Procedure for certain regulations made by a Minister of the Crown) – 96 (Procedure for certain orders made by a Northern Ireland Department)).

Section 93: Procedure for certain regulations made by a Minister of the Crown

654 This section sets out the procedures for regulations made under the powers to alter the expiry date, the power to amend the Act in consequence of amendment to secondary legislation and the power to make consequential modifications.

Section 94: Procedure for certain regulations made by the Welsh Ministers

655 This section mirrors the provisions made in section 93 for regulations made by Ministers of the UK Government but for equivalent procedures in the Welsh Assembly.

Section 95: Procedure for certain regulations made by the Scottish Ministers

656 This section mirrors the provisions made in section 93 for regulations made by Ministers of the UK Government but for equivalent procedures in the Scottish Parliament.

Section 96: Procedure for certain orders made by a Northern Ireland department

657 This section mirrors the provisions made in section 93 for regulations made by Ministers of the UK Government but for equivalent procedures in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Section 97: Report by Secretary of State on status of non-devolved provisions of this Act

658 This section sets out the procedure for the Secretary of State to report to Parliament every two months on the status of the non-devolved provisions of Part 1 of the Act. The report must set out whether those provisions in Part 1 are in force and whether during the two month period (the “reporting period”) any of those provisions have been commenced under section 97(2), suspended or revived under section 88(1) or (3), or the expiry date in relation to the provision has been altered under section 90(1) or (2). Subsection (8) obliges the Secretary of State to present the report to Parliament, and if the Secretary of State does not do so then subsection (9) obliges the Secretary of State to explain why.

Section 98: Six-monthly parliamentary review

659 This provision obliges the Government to seek the House of Commons’ agreement to the continued use of those powers (that are not devolved) that are in force when each six month review period falls due. If the House declines to renew, then the Government has 21 days in which to make regulations terminating their use, using the powers in section 90(1). Section 93(1) removes the need to use the affirmative process for these regulations.

Section 99: Parliamentary consideration of status of non-devolved provisions of this Act

660 This section requires a debate to be held in both Houses about the one year status report that will be produced in accordance with section 97. This debate will need to be held if the substantive operational period of this Act which is defined in section 97 is on-going. This means that if any of the non-devolved sections are still in force after one-year the debate will go ahead.

661 This will provide both Houses the opportunity to scrutinise the matters covered in the status report including whether the Houses think that measures in the Act have been suspended or sunset appropriately in response to changing events.

662 In the event that Parliament is not sitting for any reason at the time of the one year report the debates will have to be scheduled within 14 sitting days from Parliament returning.

Section 100: Extent

663 This section sets out the provisions in the Act which extend to the legal jurisdictions of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the provisions which extend to the legal jurisdictions of England and Wales and Scotland only, the provisions which extend to the legal jurisdiction of England and Wales only, the provisions which extend to the legal jurisdiction of Scotland only, the provisions which extend to the legal jurisdiction of Northern Ireland and the provisions which have the same extent as the enactments they amend.

Section 101: Extension to the Isle of Man

664 This provision is self-explanatory.

Section 102: Short title

665 This provision is self-explanatory.

Commencement

666 Section 87(1) sets out the provisions of the Act - other than those listed in section 87(2) - which commenced on Royal Assent. Section 87(2) sets out the provisions which will instead commence on the day or days appointed by regulations. The section ensures that the provisions are commenced in a way that conforms with the devolution settlements.

Annex A - Territorial extent and application

667 The entries in this table summarise the position for the sections in the Act. The entries do not necessarily represent the position for all sub-sections.

Provision	Extends to E & W and applies to England?	Extends to E & W and applies to Wales?	Extends and applies to Scotland?	Extends and applies to Northern Ireland?
Section 1 (Meaning of “coronavirus” and related terminology)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 2 (Emergency registration of nurses and other health and care professionals)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 3 (Emergency arrangements concerning medical practitioners: Wales)	N	Y	N	N
Section 4 (Emergency arrangements concerning medical practitioners: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 5 (Emergency registration of and extension of prescribing powers for pharmaceutical chemists: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 6 (Emergency registration of social workers: England and Wales)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 7 (Temporary registration of social workers: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 8 (Emergency volunteering leave)	In part	In part	In part	In part
Section 9 (Compensation for emergency volunteers)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 10 (Temporary modification of mental health and mental capacity legislation)	In part	In part	In part	In part
Section 11 (Indemnity for health service activity: England and Wales)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 12 (Indemnity for health service activity: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 13 (Indemnity for health and social care activity: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 14 (NHS Continuing Healthcare assessments: England)	Y	N	N	N
Section 15 (Local authority care and support)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 16 (Duty of local authority to assess needs: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 17 (Section 16: further provision)	N	N	Y	N
Section 18 (Registration of deaths and still-births etc)	In part	In part	In part	In part

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Section 19 (Confirmatory medical certificate not required for cremations: England and Wales)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 20 (Review of cause of death certificates and cremations: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 21 (Modifications of requirements regarding medical certificates for cremations: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 22 (Appointment of temporary Judicial Commissioners)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 23 (Time limits in relation to urgent warrants etc under Investigatory Powers Act)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 24 (Extension of time limits for retention of finger prints and DNA profiles)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 25 (Power to require information relating to food supply chains)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 26 (Authorities which may require information)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 27 (Restrictions on use and disclosure of information)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 28 (Enforcement of requirement to provide information)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 29 (Meaning of "food supply chain" and related expressions)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 30 (Suspension of requirement to hold inquest with jury: England and Wales)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 31 (Suspension of requirement to hold inquest with jury: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 32 (Deaths in custody from natural illness: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 33 (Disapplication etc by Welsh Ministers of DBS provisions)	N	Y	N	N
Section 34 (Temporary disapplication of disclosure offences: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 35 (Power to reclassify certain disclosure requests: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 36 (Vaccination and Immunisation: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 37 (Temporary closure of educational institutions and childcare premises)	In part	In part	In part	In part
Section 38 (Temporary continuity: education, training and childcare)	In part	In part	in part	In part

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Section 39 (Statutory sick pay: funding of employers' liabilities)	Y	Y	Y	N
Section 40 (Statutory sick pay: power to disapply waiting period limitation)	Y	Y	Y	N
Section 41 (Statutory sick pay: modification of regulation making powers)	Y	Y	Y	N
Section 42 (Statutory sick pay: funding of employers' liabilities: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 43 (Statutory sick pay: power to disapply waiting period limitation: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 44 (Statutory sick pay: modification of regulation making powers: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 45 (NHS pension schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: England and Wales)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 46 (NHS pension schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 47 (Health and social care pension schemes: suspension of restrictions on return to work: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 48 (Power to act for the protection of public health: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 49 (Health Protection Regulations: Scotland)	N	N	Y	N
Section 50 (Power to suspend port operations)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 51 (Powers relating to potentially infectious persons)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 52 (Power to issue directions relating to events, gatherings and premises)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 53 (Expansion of availability of live links in criminal proceedings)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 54 (Expansion of availability of live links in other criminal hearings)	Y	Y	In part	In part
Section 55 (Public participation in proceedings conducted by video or audio)	Y	Y	In part	In part
Section 56 (Live links in magistrates' court appeals against requirements or restrictions imposed on a potentially infectious person)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 57 (Use of live links in legal proceedings: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 58 (Powers in relation to transportation, storage and disposal of dead bodies etc)	Y	Y	Y	Y

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Section 59 (Elections and referendums due to be held in England in period after 15 March 2020)	Y	N	N	N
Section 60 (Postponement of elections due to be held on 7 May 2020)	Y	In part	N	N
Section 61 (Power to postpone certain other elections and referendums)	In part	In part	N	In part
Section 62 (Power to postpone a recall petition under the Recall of MPs Act 2015)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 63 (Power to make further supplementary etc provision)	In part	In part	In part	In part
Section 64 (Northern Ireland: timing of canvass and Assembly by-elections)	N	N	N	Y
Section 65 (Elections due to be held in Wales in period after 15 March 2020)	N	Y	N	N
Section 66 (Postponement of National Assembly for Wales elections for constituency vacancies)	N	Y	N	N
Section 67 (Power to postpone local authority elections in Wales for casual vacancies)	N	Y	N	N
Section 68 (Power to make supplementary etc provision)	N	Y	N	N
Section 69 (Postponement of Scottish Parliament elections for constituency vacancies)	N	N	Y	N
Section 70 (Postponement of local authority elections in Scotland for casual vacancies)	N	N	Y	N
Section 71 (Signatures of Treasury Commissioners)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 72 (Power under section 143 of Social Security Administration Act 1992)	Y	Y	Y	N
Section 73 (Power under section 145 of Social Security Administration Act 1992)	Y	Y	Y	N
Section 74 (Power under section 5 of National Insurance Contributions Act 2014)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 75 (Disapplication of limit under section 8 of the Industrial Development Act 1982)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 76 (HMRC functions)	Y	Y	Y	Y
Section 77 (Up-rating of Working Tax Credit etc)	Y	Y	Y	In part
Section 78 (Local authority meetings)	Y	Y	N	Y
Section 79 (Extension of BID arrangements: England)	Y	N	N	N

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Section 80 (Extension of BID arrangements: Northern Ireland)	N	N	N	Y
Section 81 (Residential tenancies in England and Wales: protection from eviction)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 82 (Business tenancies in England and Wales: protection from forfeiture etc)	Y	Y	N	N
Section 83 (Business tenancies in Northern Ireland: protection from forfeiture etc)	N	N	N	Y
Section 84 (Postponement of General Synod elections)	Y	N	N	N
Part 2*	Y	Y	Y	Y

* These entries summarise the position for Part 2 and do not necessarily represent the position for all sections in that Part.

Annex B - Hansard References

668 The following table sets out the dates and Hansard references for each stage of the Bill's passage through Parliament.

Stage	Date	Hansard Reference
<i>House of Commons</i>		
Introduction	19 March 2020	Vol. 673 Col. 1190
Second Reading	23 March 2020	Vol. 674 Col. 35
Public Act Committee	23 March 2020	Vol. 674 Col. 102
Report and Third Reading	23 March 2020	Vol. 674 Col. 102
<i>House of Lords</i>		
Introduction	24 March 2020	Vol. 802 Col. 1649
Second Reading	24 March 2020	Vol. 802 Col. 1650
Grand Committee	25 March 2020	Vol. 802 Col. 1740
Report	25 March 2020	Vol. 802 Col. 1779
Third Reading	25 March 2020	Vol. 802 Col. 1793
Royal Assent	25 March 2020	House of Commons Vol. 674 Col. 413
		House of Lords Vol. 802 Col. 1794

Annex C - Progress of Bill Table

669 This Annex shows how each section and Schedule of the Act was numbered during the passage of the Bill through Parliament. The Bill was not amended in the Lords.

Section of the Act	Bill as Introduced in the Commons	Bill as amended in Committee in the Commons	Bill as introduced in the Lords	Bill as amended in Committee in the Lords	Bill as amended on Report in the Lords
Section 1	Clause 1	Clause 1	Clause 1	Clause 1	Clause 1
Section 2	Clause 2	Clause 2	Clause 2	Clause 2	Clause 2
Section 3	N/A	Clause 3	Clause 3	Clause 3	Clause 3
Section 4	Clause 3	Clause 4	Clause 4	Clause 4	Clause 4
Section 5	Clause 4	Clause 5	Clause 5	Clause 5	Clause 5
Section 6	Clause 5	Clause 6	Clause 6	Clause 6	Clause 6
Section 7	Clause 6	Clause 7	Clause 7	Clause 7	Clause 7
Section 8	Clause 7	Clause 8	Clause 8	Clause 8	Clause 8
Section 9	Clause 8	Clause 9	Clause 9	Clause 9	Clause 9
Section 10	Clause 9	Clause 10	Clause 10	Clause 10	Clause 10
Section 11	Clause 10	Clause 11	Clause 11	Clause 11	Clause 11
Section 12	Clause 11	Clause 12	Clause 12	Clause 12	Clause 12
Section 13	Clause 12	Clause 13	Clause 13	Clause 13	Clause 13
Section 14	Clause 13	Clause 14	Clause 14	Clause 14	Clause 14
Section 15	Clause 14	Clause 15	Clause 15	Clause 15	Clause 15
Section 16	Clause 15	Clause 16	Clause 16	Clause 16	Clause 16
Section 17	Clause 16	Clause 17	Clause 17	Clause 17	Clause 17
Section 18	Clause 17	Clause 18	Clause 18	Clause 18	Clause 18
Section 19	Clause 18	Clause 19	Clause 19	Clause 19	Clause 19
Section 20	Clause 19	Clause 20	Clause 20	Clause 20	Clause 20
Section 21	Clause 20	Clause 21	Clause 21	Clause 21	Clause 21
Section 22	Clause 21	Clause 22	Clause 22	Clause 22	Clause 22
Section 23	Clause 22	Clause 23	Clause 23	Clause 23	Clause 23
Section 24	N/A	Clause 24	Clause 24	Clause 24	Clause 24
Section 25	Clause 23	Clause 25	Clause 25	Clause 25	Clause 25
Section 26	Clause 24	Clause 26	Clause 26	Clause 26	Clause 26
Section 27	Clause 25	Clause 27	Clause 27	Clause 27	Clause 27
Section 28	Clause 26	Clause 28	Clause 28	Clause 28	Clause 28
Section 29	Clause 27	Clause 29	Clause 29	Clause 29	Clause 29
Section 30	Clause 28	Clause 30	Clause 30	Clause 30	Clause 30
Section 31	Clause 29	Clause 31	Clause 31	Clause 31	Clause 31
Section 32	Clause 30	Clause 32	Clause 32	Clause 32	Clause 32

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Section 33	Clause 31	Clause 33	Clause 33	Clause 33	Clause 33
Section 34	Clause 32	Clause 34	Clause 34	Clause 34	Clause 34
Section 35	Clause 33	Clause 35	Clause 35	Clause 35	Clause 35
Section 36	Clause 34	Clause 36	Clause 36	Clause 36	Clause 36
Section 37	Clause 35	Clause 37	Clause 37	Clause 37	Clause 37
Section 38	Clause 36	Clause 38	Clause 38	Clause 38	Clause 38
Section 39	Clause 37	Clause 39	Clause 39	Clause 39	Clause 39
Section 40	Clause 38	Clause 40	Clause 40	Clause 40	Clause 40
Section 41	Clause 39	Clause 41	Clause 41	Clause 41	Clause 41
Section 42	Clause 40	Clause 42	Clause 42	Clause 42	Clause 42
Section 43	Clause 41	Clause 43	Clause 43	Clause 43	Clause 43
Section 44	Clause 42	Clause 44	Clause 44	Clause 44	Clause 44
Section 45	Clause 43	Clause 45	Clause 45	Clause 45	Clause 45
Section 46	Clause 44	Clause 46	Clause 46	Clause 46	Clause 46
Section 47	Clause 45	Clause 47	Clause 47	Clause 47	Clause 47
Section 48	Clause 46	Clause 48	Clause 48	Clause 48	Clause 48
Section 49	Clause 47	Clause 49	Clause 49	Clause 49	Clause 49
Section 50	Clause 48	Clause 50	Clause 50	Clause 50	Clause 50
Section 51	Clause 49	Clause 51	Clause 51	Clause 51	Clause 51
Section 52	Clause 50	Clause 52	Clause 52	Clause 52	Clause 52
Section 53	Clause 51	Clause 53	Clause 53	Clause 53	Clause 53
Section 54	Clause 52	Clause 54	Clause 54	Clause 54	Clause 54
Section 55	Clause 53	Clause 55	Clause 55	Clause 55	Clause 55
Section 56	Clause 54	Clause 56	Clause 56	Clause 56	Clause 56
Section 57	Clause 55	Clause 57	Clause 57	Clause 57	Clause 57
Section 58	Clause 56	Clause 58	Clause 58	Clause 58	Clause 58
Section 59	N/A	Clause 59	Clause 59	Clause 59	Clause 59
Section 60	Clause 57	Clause 60	Clause 60	Clause 60	Clause 60
Section 61	Clause 58	Clause 61	Clause 61	Clause 61	Clause 61
Section 62	Clause 59	Clause 62	Clause 62	Clause 62	Clause 62
Section 63	Clause 60	Clause 63	Clause 63	Clause 63	Clause 63
Section 64	Clause 61	Clause 64	Clause 64	Clause 64	Clause 64
Section 65	N/A	Clause 65	Clause 65	Clause 65	Clause 65
Section 66	Clause 62	Clause 66	Clause 66	Clause 66	Clause 66
Section 67	Clause 63	Clause 67	Clause 67	Clause 67	Clause 67
Section 68	Clause 64	Clause 68	Clause 68	Clause 68	Clause 68
Section 69	Clause 65	Clause 69	Clause 69	Clause 69	Clause 69

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020 (c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Section 70	Clause 66	Clause 70	Clause 70	Clause 70	Clause 70
Section 71	Clause 67	Clause 71	Clause 71	Clause 71	Clause 71
Section 72	Clause 68	Clause 72	Clause 72	Clause 72	Clause 72
Section 73	Clause 69	Clause 73	Clause 73	Clause 73	Clause 73
Section 74	Clause 70	Clause 74	Clause 74	Clause 74	Clause 74
Section 75	N/A	Clause 75	Clause 75	Clause 75	Clause 75
Section 76	N/A	Clause 76	Clause 76	Clause 76	Clause 76
Section 77	N/A	Clause 77	Clause 77	Clause 77	Clause 77
Section 78	N/A	Clause 78	Clause 78	Clause 78	Clause 78
Section 79	N/A	Clause 79	Clause 79	Clause 79	Clause 79
Section 80	N/A	Clause 80	Clause 80	Clause 80	Clause 80
Section 81	N/A	Clause 81	Clause 81	Clause 81	Clause 81
Section 82	N/A	Clause 82	Clause 82	Clause 82	Clause 82
Section 83	N/A	Clause 83	Clause 83	Clause 83	Clause 83
Section 84	N/A	Clause 84	Clause 84	Clause 84	Clause 84
Section 85	Clause 71	Clause 85	Clause 85	Clause 85	Clause 85
Section 86	Clause 72	Clause 86	Clause 86	Clause 86	Clause 86
Section 87	Clause 73	Clause 87	Clause 87	Clause 87	Clause 87
Section 88	Clause 74	Clause 88	Clause 88	Clause 88	Clause 88
Section 89	Clause 75	Clause 89	Clause 89	Clause 89	Clause 89
Section 90	Clause 76	Clause 90	Clause 90	Clause 90	Clause 90
Section 91	Clause 77	Clause 91	Clause 91	Clause 91	Clause 91
Section 92	Clause 78	Clause 92	Clause 92	Clause 92	Clause 92
Section 93	Clause 79	Clause 93	Clause 93	Clause 93	Clause 93
Section 94	Clause 80	Clause 94	Clause 94	Clause 94	Clause 94
Section 95	Clause 81	Clause 95	Clause 95	Clause 95	Clause 95
Section 96	Clause 82	Clause 96	Clause 96	Clause 96	Clause 96
Section 97	Clause 83	Clause 97	Clause 97	Clause 97	Clause 97
Section 98	N/A	Clause 98	Clause 98	Clause 98	Clause 98
Section 99	Clause 84	Clause 99	Clause 99	Clause 99	Clause 99
Section 100	Clause 85	Clause 100	Clause 100	Clause 100	Clause 100
Section 101	Clause 86	Clause 101	Clause 101	Clause 101	Clause 101
Section 102	Clause 87	Clause 102	Clause 102	Clause 102	Clause 102
Schedule 1	Schedule 1	Schedule 1	Schedule 1	Schedule 1	Schedule 1
Schedule 2	N/A	Schedule 2	Schedule 2	Schedule 2	Schedule 2
Schedule 3	Schedule 2	Schedule 3	Schedule 3	Schedule 3	Schedule 3
Schedule 4	Schedule 3	Schedule 4	Schedule 4	Schedule 4	Schedule 4

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Coronavirus Act 2020(c.7) which received Royal Assent on 25 March 2020

Schedule 5	Schedule 4	Schedule 5	Schedule 5	Schedule 5	Schedule 5
Schedule 6	Schedule 5	Schedule 6	Schedule 6	Schedule 6	Schedule 6
Schedule 7	Schedule 6	Schedule 7	Schedule 7	Schedule 7	Schedule 7
Schedule 8	Schedule 7	Schedule 8	Schedule 8	Schedule 8	Schedule 8
Schedule 9	Schedule 8	Schedule 9	Schedule 9	Schedule 9	Schedule 9
Schedule 10	Schedule 9	Schedule 10	Schedule 10	Schedule 10	Schedule 10
Schedule 11	Schedule 10	Schedule 11	Schedule 11	Schedule 11	Schedule 11
Schedule 12	Schedule 11	Schedule 12	Schedule 12	Schedule 12	Schedule 12
Schedule 13	Schedule 12	Schedule 13	Schedule 13	Schedule 13	Schedule 13
Schedule 14	Schedule 13	Schedule 14	Schedule 14	Schedule 14	Schedule 14
Schedule 15	Schedule 14	Schedule 15	Schedule 15	Schedule 15	Schedule 15
Schedule 16	Schedule 15	Schedule 16	Schedule 16	Schedule 16	Schedule 16
Schedule 17	Schedule 16	Schedule 17	Schedule 17	Schedule 17	Schedule 17
Schedule 18	Schedule 17	Schedule 18	Schedule 18	Schedule 18	Schedule 18
Schedule 19	Schedule 18	Schedule 19	Schedule 19	Schedule 19	Schedule 19
Schedule 20	Schedule 19	Schedule 20	Schedule 20	Schedule 20	Schedule 20
Schedule 21	Schedule 20	Schedule 21	Schedule 21	Schedule 21	Schedule 21
Schedule 22	Schedule 21	Schedule 22	Schedule 22	Schedule 22	Schedule 22
Schedule 23	Schedule 22	Schedule 23	Schedule 23	Schedule 23	Schedule 23
Schedule 24	Schedule 23	Schedule 24	Schedule 24	Schedule 24	Schedule 24
Schedule 25	Schedule 24	Schedule 25	Schedule 25	Schedule 25	Schedule 25
Schedule 26	Schedule 25	Schedule 26	Schedule 26	Schedule 26	Schedule 26
Schedule 27	Schedule 26	Schedule 27	Schedule 27	Schedule 27	Schedule 27
Schedule 28	Schedule 27	Schedule 28	Schedule 28	Schedule 28	Schedule 28
Schedule 29	N/A	Schedule 29	Schedule 29	Schedule 29	Schedule 29

© Crown copyright 2020

Printed and published in the UK by The Stationery Office Limited under the authority and superintendence of Jeff James, Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office and Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament.

