

Public Health (Amendment) Bill 2013
Second Reading approved

4.1 Mr Gawne to move:

That the Public Health (Amendment) Bill 2013 be read the second time.

The Speaker: We turn now to Item 4, a Bill for Second Reading, the Public Health (Amendment) Bill. I call on the mover, Mr Gawne.

Mr Gawne: Gura mie eu, Loayreyder.

This Bill makes a number of amendments to the Public Health Act 1990. They provide the control measures to assist in the prevention and control of the spread of serious diseases caused by infection and contamination from chemicals or radiation. They empower the Departments to give effect in the Isle of Man to new international health regulations adopted by the World Health Organisation in relation to the international spread of disease in ways which are commensurate with and restricted to public risks and which are intended to avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

The amendments reflect modern concerns about the spread of infectious diseases and ensure that public health inspections may take place in the Isle of Man to address incidences where serious disease, infection or contamination occurs.

In the modern day of increased international travel, we must have robust procedures in place to enable the Isle of Man to address any threats that occur in relation to this issue.

Loayreyder, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The Speaker: Mrs Beecroft.

Mrs Beecroft: I beg to second and reserve my remarks.

The Speaker: The Hon. Member for Ramsey, Mr Singer.

Mr Singer: Can I ask the Minister, is this Bill just regularising what we already do, or will we be bringing in further measures in order to comply with Bill?

The Speaker: The Hon. Member for Onchan, Mr Karran.

Mr Karran: Vainstyr Loayreyder, with the short title of the Bill, it talks about making fresh provisions, as far as the control of disease and for connected purposes. Will the Bill be used as an opportunity by Hon. Members to be able to maybe look at things where, allowing for the pressure that is on the Council of Ministers now with restriction of budgets, issues to do with public health – mainly things like needle exchange and the likes – could be put into this Bill on a statutory basis in order to make sure that certain public health issues cannot be used for the knife of the accountants, where these issues might not seem to be as big a priority?

Allowing for the short title of the Bill, it does seem to give the impression that it makes fresh provisions, as far as the control of disease and for connected purposes, and I would just like to know what the Hon. Member for Rushen, moving the Bill... would be, as far as allowing for other issues to do with public health and the spread of disease being put in, which are not to do with marine safety, as he has put out in this proposed legislation.

The Speaker: I call on the mover to reply, Mr Gawne.

Mr Gawne: Gura mie eu, Loayreyder, and I thank my seconder.

The comments of the Hon. Member for Ramsey and Mr Karran, I will deal with together.

Mr Singer asks whether this is regularising what we already do. In essence, what... My understanding, anyway, of the Bill... and I have to say that the Bill began its life prior to my arrival in the Department. It actually went out to consultation in 2011 in the spring.

Effectively, what we have at the moment does not give us the powers and the ability to do what we need to do as effectively as we would like, so the purpose of the Bill is to bring in our ability to do a little bit more in a more effective way. I am not fully aware as to whether that will require new sets of regulations, but I anticipate that there will be further secondary legislation as a result of what we are doing.

We did actually only receive one comment on our consultation. That was from the Department of Health

– I think they spotted a typo, but otherwise were generally supportive of what we were trying to do.

If the short title gives the opportunity for the Hon. Member to come back with a variety of amendments, then I look forward to having a look at those amendments and seeing whether we can accept them or not.

I beg to move the Second Reading.

The Speaker: I put the motion that the Public Health (Amendment) Bill be read for the second time. Those in favour, please say aye; against, no. The ayes have it. The ayes have it.