

- 1. Is the Department confident that the self-declaration of medical issues is suitable on the grounds of road safety, for a possible 1-year period?**
Exercise of this power will be discretionary. Before deciding whether to issue any 1 year licence renewals, based on a self-declaration, I will assess the road safety risk. Clearly, my preference is that normal licensing arrangements are restored, and that medical assessments are readily available once again. However I believe it is prudent to ensure that the option of issuing 1 year licence renewals to key workers should be available to my Department.
- 2. Has the Department applied for an extension within the EU regulations. If yes, when and if not, then please explain this.**
Any application for an extension to the EU Emergency Regulation must be made by the Department for Transport by 1 August, rather than by my Department. An application must cite the reasons why an extension is required and I will continue to consider our position and make representations to DfT, as appropriate, in advance of the application deadline. There is no guarantee that an extension request would be granted by the Commission. Given this uncertainty, I believe it is prudent to keep open the option of issuing 1 year licence renewals.
- 3. To clarify, this bill only gives the Department the statutory provision, and any decision to go ahead and grant the extension in the north will ultimately come down to the Department for Infrastructure?**
That is correct.
- 4. Please clarify why Westminster does not have the same EU law compatibility restrictions and if this is typical for member states on this issue.**
Each Member State has its own internal governance arrangements. The Assembly's compatibility restriction is set by section 6 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. Parliament, while it may be criticised for failure to comply, is under no such legislative restriction on its competence.
- 5. Will this include extensions for Taxi Driver licenses as well?**
No. Taxi driver licences are regulated separately under the Taxis Act (NI) 2008. However for taxi drivers who do not have a medical condition to declare, my Department can and will renew their 5 year driving licence under existing legislative provisions. They may be asked to submit a medical report at some future date. For those taxi drivers with medical conditions, I will do everything within my powers to ensure that they are prioritised for medical appointments.
- 6. Is it a 1-year period from the point when the minister decides to grant the extension? E.g. September 2020 to September 2021?**
That is correct. In each instance, the 1 year period would commence from the day after the previous licence expires. Also, the ability to grant 1 year licence renewals will lapse at 24 March 2022.