

SL1 – To Departmental Committee Clerk

Dear Michael,

The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Department for Infrastructure proposes to make a Statutory Rule under powers conferred by Articles 19D and 218 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 to designate countries for the purposes of driving licence exchange.

Articles 9(2) and (4) and 218(1) of the 1981 Order enable the Department to make regulations in respect of disabilities and driving licences generally as necessary.

The Statutory Rule is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

Purpose of the Statutory Rule

The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 prescribe certain disabilities which may affect a person's ability to safely drive a motor vehicle.

In particular, Regulation 51 of the 1996 Regulations prescribes diabetes treated with insulin as a disability for which a licence may be granted, provided the holder of, or applicant for, a Group 2 licence adheres to several specified conditions.

One of these conditions is that the holder of a Group 2 licence must monitor his blood glucose levels at least twice daily and at times relevant to driving with a blood glucose meter with a memory function.

The Statutory Rule will remove the reference to "blood glucose monitoring", which restricts Group 2 drivers to the traditional testing method - a capillary blood glucose (finger prick) test - and does not allow for technological advancements which measure the glucose levels in interstitial (bodily) fluid.

Removing the restriction will allow for the use of Continuous Glucose Monitoring Systems (CGMS), which measure interstitial glucose levels. The Secretary of State for the Department for Transport's Honorary Medical Advisory Panel on Diabetes now supports the use of this technology for Group 2 drivers, recognising its benefits in both clinical and driving contexts.

Previous Engagement with the Committee

There has been no previous engagement with the Committee.

Consultations

Responses to targetted consultation in GB attracted broad support for the proposed amendment. The proposed Statutory Rule replicates provisions which now in force in GB and will reduce legislative disparity between NI and

GB. Given the non-contentious nature of the proposal, no separate public consultation is deemed necessary in this case.

Equality Impact

There are no known Section 75 implications.

Regulatory Impact

A regulatory impact assessment was not considered necessary as the proposals do not result in any costs or savings on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

Rural Needs Impact

No known impact.

Data Protection Impact

A Data Protection Impact Assessment has not been carried out as there are no known impacts.

Child Rights Impact

A Child Rights Impact Assessment has not been carried out as there are no known impacts.

Position in Great Britain (if appropriate)

The proposed Statutory Rule replicates provisions which are already in force in GB and will reduce legislative disparity between NI and GB.

Any Other Information

There are no other relevant issues.

Financial Implications

No financial implications have been identified.

Compliance with Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

The Department has carried out a Human Rights Act Screening Analysis and no human rights issues have been identified.

Consideration by the Executive

Not required.

Proposed Timing of Consideration of the SL1

This SL1 has been submitted to the Committee in accordance with the minimum four-week timeframe, and it is proposed that the Committee considers the SL1 as soon as possible but no later than on 10 June 2026.

Proposed Operational Date

It is proposed that these Regulations will come into operation at the earliest opportunity.

The draft of the proposed Statutory Rule is attached, and you will wish to bring this matter to the attention of the Committee for Infrastructure.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Heath', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JOSEPH HEATH
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer
for The Department for Infrastructure

Committee for Infrastructure Clerk
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Date: 14 May 2026

cc: Human Rights Commission
Equality Commission