

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Taxi Drivers' Licences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

S.R. 2014 No. 239

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of the Environment to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under sections 23(2) to (5), 30(1) and (2), 52 and 56(1) of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The making of a Statutory Rule to implement new taxi driver licensing requirements under the provisions of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008.

3. Background

- 3.1. In 2007, the Department consulted on proposals to reintroduce a taxi driver test for new taxi drivers under the provisions of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. The previous taxi driver test was abolished in 1996.
- 3.2. The Taxi Drivers' Licences Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 introduce a taxi driver test for new drivers and require all taxi drivers to undertake regular periodic training prior to renewing their licence.
- 3.3. The Regulations specify the application fees for a taxi driver's licence and set out the conditions to be attached to the licence and the information which a taxi driver must notify to the Department.
- 3.4. The Regulations also set out the nature and order of the tests for a taxi driver's licence and specify the fees for the individual tests.
- 3.5. The Regulations specify how certain disabilities are dealt with in regards to obtaining a taxi driver's licence and implement changes to driving licence medical standards in relation to vision and epilepsy to align with the medical standards applied to bus and lorry drivers as consequence of Commission Directives 2009/112/EC and 2009/113/EC.

4. Consultation

- 4.1. The Department consulted on proposals to introduce a taxi driver test and periodic training requirements between 10 July and 27 September 2013. There were 220 responses to the consultation, stating that they represented the views of 2,317 people.
- 4.2. Over 99% agreed with the proposal that the taxi driver test should apply to new taxi drivers only and that those already in the industry should have "acquired rights." The issue of periodic training saw 69% agree with the proposal to introduce training for all drivers before the renewal of their licence. It was felt by these respondents that a mixture of a test for new

applicants and training for everyone was the best way of creating a professional taxi industry.

5. Equality Impact

5.1. The introduction of taxi operator licensing was assessed with regards to its impact on s75 groups. No adverse impact on any s75 group was identified.

6. Regulatory Impact

6.1. A RIA was produced which identified the new practical and theory test fees and the cost of periodic training as having an impact, with the benefits to the industry in terms of improved road safety and customer care standards and greater customer confidence.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. New taxi drivers will have to pay a fee for a theory test and a practical driving test. All taxi drivers will have to pay for the required periodic training in order for their licences to be renewed.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1. The proposals have been scrutinised to ensure compliance with s24. They are compatible with Convention rights, Community Law and do not result in discrimination.

9. EU Implications

9.1. Not applicable.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1. Not applicable.

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable.