EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE GAS SAFETY (INSTALLATION AND USE) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2026

S.R. 2026 No. 178

1. Introduction

1.1 This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department for the Economy (DfE) to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above), which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

1.2 The Rule is made in exercise of the powers conferred by Articles 17(1), (2) and (5) and 55(2) of, and paragraphs 1(1) and (2) and 15 of Schedule 3 to, the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978[1] and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

1.3 The Rule is due to come into operation on 30 November 2026.

2. Purpose

2.1 The Rule amends the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004[2] ("GSIUR") relating to health and safety.

2.2 GSIUR is domestic legislation with no basis in European Union (EU) law and is focused primarily on protecting consumers from unsafe gas work. The amendments maintain the original policy intent of the Regulations.

3. Background

3.1 This Rule introduces three amendments to existing secondary legislation.

3.2 Landlords must complete gas safety checks within 12 months of the last check. Landlords tend to begin the process early due to problems gaining access to properties, resulting in 11 checks taking place on an average every 10 years, instead of the statutory 10. This over-compliance is potentially an unnecessary and unintentional financial burden on landlords. The amendments introduce a degree of flexibility in the timing of landlords' annual gas safety checks. This gives landlords some flexibility in meeting the requirements of the legislation without disadvantaging themselves by shortening the safety-check cycle, or reducing safety standards. This will make it easier for them to comply fully with the law without over-complying. It allocates a "deadline date" to each gas appliance or flue within the scope of the Regulations and allows landlords to carry out their annual gas safety checks between 10 and 12 months from the date of the last check but retain the deadline date. In addition, a one-off flexibility is permitted to allow landlords to realign the dates of safety checks on existing appliances and a new appliance within 12 months of its installation.

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[1] Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 (S.I. 1978/1039 (N.I. 9))
[2] Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 (S.R. 2004 No. 63)

3.3 Landlords are under no obligation to take advantage of this flexibility if they do not wish to. If they prefer, they can continue with their current regime of gas safety checking, as long as it meets the legal minimum requirements set out in the Regulations.

3.4 Since 2016 an exemption to GSIUR allows engineers to carry out alternative safety checks when the requirement to measure heat input and/or measure the operating pressure, cannot be met because there is no meter present. The amendment incorporates the existing exemption into the Regulations to consolidate the situation. The change not only includes circumstances where there is no meter, which is already covered by the exemption, but also situations where the meter is not accessible or the meter display is not working. The remaining and alternative safety checks will ensure safety.

3.5 At present anyone proposing to carry out compressed natural gas (CNG) filling of vehicles has to apply for an exemption to GSIUR. This is not for safety reasons but because this scenario had not been imagined when the Regulations were written. The amendment disapplies CNG filling stations fed by a dedicated gas supply from the majority of the requirements of GSIUR. This brings them into line with other industrial premises. Other, more appropriate, Regulations apply to these sites that will ensure safety.

4. Consultation

4.1 The Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland ("HSENI") ran a Public Consultation exercise from 2nd December 2025 to 10th February 2026. Letters were issued to 450 consultees, including individuals and bodies representative of section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and other organisations with an interest in equality and related issues (including each member of the Northern Ireland Assembly).

4.2 During the consultation period 6 formal replies were received.

4.3 A summary of the outcome of the consultation exercise can be found on the HSENI website[3].

5. Equality Impact

5.1 The Rule has been screened for any possible impact on equality of opportunity affecting the groups listed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and no adverse or differential impacts were identified. There is no evidence to suggest that the proposals will impact disproportionately on any other Section 75 group.

6. Regulatory Impact

6.1 HSENI is of the opinion that the analysis and considerations as set out in the Great Britain Impact Assessment[4] can be applied to Northern Ireland on a proportionate basis.

[3] https://www.hseni.gov.uk/publications/gsiur-analysis-consultation-responses-and-hseni-responses
[4] The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 - Impact Assessment

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The Rule has no financial implications for DfE, Charities or Voluntary Bodies or for HSENI. HSENI estimates that the total cost to businesses will be a saving of £341,000.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1 The Department has considered the matter of Convention rights and is satisfied that there are no matters of concern.

9. EU Implications

9.1 This Rule is made under Northern Ireland legislation and there are no EU implications.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1 In Great Britain, the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018[5] were made on 5th February 2018 and came into force on 6th April 2018.

11. Additional Information

11.1 The Rule is supported by an updated Approved Code of Practice (ACoP) 'Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances' (L56). These Guidance documents, produced by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), have been adopted for use in Northern Ireland. They are published in a free, downloadable format on HSE's website and will also be provided through the HSENI website[6].

11.2 On 23rd March 2023 HSE carried out a Post Implementation Review[7] as required by law and concluded that intervention by regulation is the most effective way to control risk of gas and the regulatory framework provided remains a valid means of protecting people and places.

11.3 Evidence gathered from surveyed duty holders highlighted that regulation is necessary and effective in keeping people safe. Respondents also believed that the introduction of flexibilities to landlords' gas safety certificates was of benefit. Going forward, HSENI will monitor developments in Britain. The Regulations will be reviewed again by HSE in 2028 to check they continue to be relevant and deliver their intended objectives.

Department for the Economy

13 October 2026

[5] The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018 (S.I.2018/139)

[6] L56 Safety in the installation and use of gas systems and appliances - GB ACOP approved for use in NI | Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland, controlling risk together

[7] Post Implementation Review of Gas Safety (Installation and Use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018