EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE MOTOR VEHICLES (DRIVING LICENCES) (AMENDMENT) (NO. 2) REGULATIONS 2026

2026 No. 741

1. Introduction

1.1 This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Transport and is laid before Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

2. Declaration

2.1 Simon Lightwood MP, Minister for Roads and Buses at the Department for Transport confirms that this Explanatory Memorandum meets the required standard.

2.2 Cathy Miller, Deputy Director for Road Safety, at the Department for Transport confirms that this Explanatory Memorandum meets the required standard.

3. Contact

3.1 Chris Billingham at the Department for Transport, can be contacted by email at the following address with any queries regarding the instrument: Ukraine.Licences@dft.gov.uk. Alternatively, the Department can be contacted by telephone: 07484 551152.

Part One: Explanation, and context, of the Instrument

4. Overview of the Instrument

What does the legislation do?

4.1 This instrument extends the period during which eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders can drive cars, motor bicycles and mopeds ("relevant vehicles") in Great Britain ("GB") due to the extension to the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme ("UPES"). The specific cohorts of individuals who fall within the scope of "eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders" are described in detail in paragraph 5.3.

4.2 This includes a new cohort of Ukrainian driving licence holders who were not covered by the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) Regulations 2025 ("the 2025 Regulations")[1](S.I. 2025/138) and who, subject to meeting the relevant conditions, will be able to drive relevant vehicles in GB during the extended eligibility period.

4.3 The instrument also makes minor drafting amendments to the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999("the 1999 Regulations")[2] (S.I. 1999/2864) to provide greater clarity in relation to the previous driving eligibility periods for Ukrainian driving licence holders, as introduced by the 2025 Regulations.

Where does the legislation extend to, and apply?

4.4 The extent of this instrument (that is, the jurisdiction(s) which the instrument forms part of the law of) is England and Wales and Scotland.

[1] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2025/138/made
[2] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1999/2864/contents

4.5 The territorial application of this instrument (that is, where the instrument produces a practical effect) is England and Wales and Scotland.

What is being done and why?

5.1 This instrument amends the 1999 Regulations, to permit eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders to continue to drive relevant vehicles in GB for a further 24 months, thereby extending their total driving eligibility period to up to five years (60 months), or in some cases six years and six months (78 months), after becoming resident. The instrument also makes minor drafting amendments to the 1999 Regulations to provide greater clarity in relation to the previous driving eligibility periods for Ukrainian driving licence holders, as introduced by the 2025 Regulations.

5.2 The reason for granting this extension is that the Home Office has extended the period of stay granted under the UPES by a further 24 months. This instrument responds to that extension by allowing eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders that successfully apply for an extension to continue to drive relevant vehicles in GB for a further 24 months. This will bring their total driving entitlement to five years (60 months) or six years and 6 months (78 months) after becoming resident, depending on the original Ukrainian visa scheme applicable to them (that is, the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship ("HFUS") Scheme, the Ukraine Family Scheme ("UFS"), or the Ukraine Extension Scheme ("UES") and in certain circumstances, the date/time of their original visa application. It also brings within scope an additional cohort of Ukrainian driving licence holders that have leave of the type described in UKR 29.3(b) and (c) of the Appendix Ukraine Scheme to Immigration Rules[3], who were not covered by the 2025 Regulations.

5.3 The specific cohorts of Ukrainian driving licence holders who fall within the scope of eligible driving licence holders, and their corresponding eligibility periods, are as follows:

- Ukrainian driving licence holders who held a HFUS visa and who applied for that visa before 3pm on 19 February 2024, who successfully applied for UPES leave before the expiry of their HFUS leave, and who now apply for an extension of their UPES leave before the expiry of their initial UPES leave period will be able to drive relevant vehicles for six years and six months (78 months) after becoming resident.

- Ukrainian driving licence holders who held a HFUS visa, who applied for that visa at or after 3pm on 19 February 2024, who successfully applied for UPES leave before the expiry of their HFUS leave, and who now apply for an extension of their UPES leave before the expiry of their initial UPES leave period will be able to drive relevant vehicles for five years (60 months) after becoming resident.

- Ukrainian driving licence holders who held UES leave, which they applied for on or before 16 May 2024, who became resident in GB on or after 3 March 2022, who successfully applied for UPES before the expiry of their UES leave, and who now apply for an extension of their UPES before the expiry of their initial UPES leave

[3] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-ukraine-scheme

period will be able to drive relevant vehicles for six years and six months (78 months) after becoming resident.

- Ukrainian driving licence holders who held UFS leave, who successfully applied for UPES leave before the expiry of their UFS leave, and who now apply for an extension of their UPES leave before the expiry of their initial UPES leave period will be able to drive relevant vehicles for six years and six months (78 months) after becoming resident.

- Ukrainian driving licence holders who have never held leave under the original Ukraine visa schemes, who held leave of a type described in UKR 29.3(b) or (c) of the Appendix Ukraine Scheme to Immigration Rules, who successfully applied for UPES leave before the expiry of that leave, and who now apply for an extension of their UPES leave before the expiry of their initial current UPES leave period will be able to drive relevant vehicles for six years and six months (78 months) after becoming resident.

5.4 Eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders will be able to continue to drive relevant vehicles in GB during the period in which their application for the UPES extension is pending. However, if an application is rejected, refused or withdrawn, the eligibility to drive in GB will cease.

5.5 The measure is intended to support mobility and day-to-day living for Ukrainian nationals in GB during the extended period of leave, including access to employment, education, healthcare and wider integration.

5.6 The measure also reflects the Government's broader humanitarian support for those affected by the war in Ukraine and maintains consistency with the temporary nature of the relevant immigration arrangements.

5.7 This measure does not change the existing five-year period within which holders of exchangeable foreign licences (including Ukrainian licence holders) may exchange their licence for a GB licence without taking a GB driving test.

What was the previous policy, how is this different?

5.8 Under the previous policy, individuals who held entry clearance or permission to stay in the United Kingdom ("UK") under the Ukraine visa schemes (i.e. original Ukrainian visa schemes as mentioned in paragraph 5.2), who successfully applied for UPES (i.e. the initial UPES period) and who hold driving licences issued in Ukraine authorising the driving of relevant vehicles, were authorised to drive such vehicles in GB for either three years (36 months) or four years and six months (54 months) after becoming resident, depending on the original Ukrainian visa scheme applicable to them and in certain circumstances, the date/time of their original visa application.

5.9 This instrument extends that driving eligibility by a further 24 months for eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders. As a result, eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders will be able to drive relevant vehicles for a total of up to five years (60 months) or six years and six months (78 months) after becoming resident, again depending on the original Ukrainian visa scheme applicable to them (as defined in

paragraph 5.2) and, in certain circumstances, the date and time of their original visa application.

5.10 This instrument also grants driving eligibility to a new cohort of Ukrainian driving licence holders who were not previously granted driving eligibility (see the final bullet point in paragraph 5.3).

6. Legislative and Legal Context

How has the law changed?

6.1 This instrument, which is made using the powers in the Road Traffic Act 1988[4] ("RTA"), amends the 1999 Regulations to increase the period during which eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders can drive relevant vehicles in GB by a further 24 months, and to bring an additional cohort of Ukrainian driving licence holders within scope. This would increase the period from 36 months to 60 months for some eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders, and from 54 months to 78 months for others (as described in section 5), measured from the date on which they became resident in GB.

6.2 The instrument also makes minor drafting amendments to regulation 80A of the 1999 Regulations to provide greater clarity in relation to the existing driving eligibility periods for eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders, as introduced by the 2025 Regulations.

6.3 The 1999 Regulations are the principal Regulations made under the RTA concerning driving licences. Amending those Regulations is the most appropriate way to extend driving eligibility for eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders, because they are the appropriate place for this measure and already make provision about the circumstances in which Ukrainian licence holders may drive in GB. No alternative legislative approach was identified.

7. Consultation

Summary of consultation outcome and methodology

7.1 A four-week public consultation was held between 26 March 2026 and 23 April 2026, with 128 responses received.

7.2 A consultation period of four weeks was considered appropriate in this case. The implementation of this measure is required to align with the extension of the UPES and to avoid a gap in driving eligibility for affected Ukrainian licence holders. The Department considered that four weeks provided sufficient opportunity for comment because the proposal is an extension of an existing policy, is limited in scope, and the consultation was open to organisations and members of the public.

7.3 The consultation received responses from organisations and members of the public.

7.4 A public consultation ran from 26 March to 23 April 2026 and received 128 responses (127 online and 1 by email). A clear majority of respondents (95%) supported the proposal to further extend the period during which eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders can drive in Great Britain (up to 78 months). A small minority (around 4%) disagreed, with some respondents raising concerns about road safety in the absence of

[4] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/52/introduction

a GB driving test. The Government has carefully considered the consultation responses and we consider the policy will be taken forward as set out in this instrument. The consultation and consultation outcome are available online[5] and are also available in hard copy by contacting the Driving Licence Team, Road Safety Division, Great Minster House, 33 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 4DR.

8. Applicable Guidance

8.1 Current guidance,[6] published online at gov.uk, on driving licence exchange for Ukraine licence holders will be amended when the changes made by this instrument come into force to reflect the policy introduced by this instrument.

8.2 The guidance will explain that this measure does not change the existing five-year period within which holders of exchangeable foreign licences (including Ukrainian licence holders) may exchange their licence for a GB licence.

Part Two: Impact and the Better Regulation Framework

9. Impact Assessment

A full Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument because it is estimated that the equivalent annual net direct cost to business as a result of this instrument falls below the threshold that is required for a full impact assessment (i.e. ±£10 million). Therefore, a de minimis assessment has been completed and is published alongside this Explanatory Memorandum online[7].

Impact on businesses, charities and voluntary bodies

9.1 There is no significant direct impact on businesses, charities or voluntary bodies because this instrument does not impose regulatory requirements on them. There may, however, be limited indirect impacts on some businesses, such as driving schools, where eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders may decide that driving lessons are not necessary because they are able to continue driving in GB for a longer period under this measure.

9.2 The legislation does impact small or micro businesses; it may indirectly affect some small or micro businesses, such as driving schools, if eligible Ukrainian driving licence holders choose not to take driving lessons because they can continue driving under this measure.

9.3 It is not possible to mitigate that impact on those businesses, as it arises indirectly from the measure rather than from any regulatory requirements imposed on them. Any such impact is expected to be temporary, reflecting the temporary nature of the measure.

9.4 There is no, or no significant, impact on the public sector as there is familiarity with the existing three year (36 month) or four-and-a-half year (54 month) regime and a further 24-month extension will not trigger any new impacts.

[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ukrainian-driving-licences-extending-the-eligibility-period-in-great-britain-by-24-months
[6] https://www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-in-great-britain-ukrainian-driving-licence-exchange
[7] www.legislation.gov.uk

10. Monitoring and review

What is the approach to monitoring and reviewing this legislation?

10.1 The Department will monitor the implementation and operational impact of this instrument, including through engagement with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency and relevant stakeholders. The effect of this instrument will be considered alongside the planned review of the 2025 Regulations, where appropriate.

10.2 The instrument does not include a statutory review clause as it is excluded from the obligation in the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015[8] to include a statutory review provision by virtue of section 28(3)(d) of that Act.

Part Three: Statements and Matters of Particular Interest to Parliament

11. Matters of special interest to Parliament

11.1 None.

12. European Convention on Human Rights

12.1 As the instrument is subject to negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

13. The Relevant European Union Acts

13.1 This instrument is not made under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020 or the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023 ("relevant European Union Acts").

[8] https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/26/contents