

Written Ministerial Statement

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Department for Infrastructure

EXTENDING THE USE OF TEMPORARY EXEMPTION CERTIFICATES TO HELP MANAGE MOT WAITING TIMES

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Ms Liz Kimmins (The Minister for Infrastructure): Last year Minister O'Dowd outlined measures to reduce MOT waiting times, one of which was the introduction of Temporary Exemption Certificates (TECs) for 5-and 7-year-old vehicles. This combined with record levels of testing conducted by the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) has significantly reduced MOT waiting times from over 100 days in May 2024 to around 30 days in early February 2025. These TECs that were introduced on 1 June 2024 will start to expire from 31 May 2025 onwards.

From 1 April 2024 to 31 January 2025, the DVA conducted 956,759 vehicle tests, compared with 942,789 for the same period in 2023-24. In 2024, there were only six days when the DVA did not offer MOT appointments.

However, the demand for vehicle testing remains high and after careful consideration I have decided to extend the use of TECs during 2025-26 to manage the demand for MOTs and keep waiting times under control until new testing facilities at Hydebank and Mallusk open for vehicle testing. These centres will provide the capacity to test more than 200,000 additional vehicles annually.

The DVA will introduce TECs for private cars which were first registered within the following date ranges, and which have a valid MOT certificate issued here in place:

- Those first registered between 1 June 2020 and 31 May 2021, which will be 5-year-old cars: and
- those first registered between 1 June 2018 and 31 May 2019, which will be 7-year-old cars.

These date ranges have been carefully selected, with road safety very much in mind and I am satisfied that this decision strikes the right balance between managing waiting times and the impact on road safety. Vehicle licensing information shows that around 107,000 cars may be eligible for a TEC.

The DVA will automatically apply TECs to eligible private cars. The vehicle licensing record will be updated to enable cars issued with a TEC to be taxed. Customers will not need to do anything as this process will be automatic.

The DVA booking system will prevent anyone with a car that is eligible for a TEC from making an MOT appointment, and their systems will advise them of the reason.

Those who received a TEC in the previous tranche, will now be eligible for an MOT.

More detailed information will soon be available on the NI Direct website. Social media messaging has also been developed to direct customers to the relevant information.

Finally, as road users we all have a personal responsibility to behave in a way that keeps ourselves and others safe and, regardless of TECs, it remains our responsibility to ensure our cars are in a roadworthy condition. If you are eligible for a TEC, you should still get your car serviced.