

# Future of freight plan

As a proud, free-trading nation, moving goods domestically and abroad has always been the backbone of the United Kingdom's economy. Throughout the pandemic and in our work to deliver Brexit and a global Britain we have been reminded of the vital role that the freight and logistics sector has supporting the supply chains that maintain our economic wellbeing.

Across government, we have worked collectively and collaboratively with industry to mitigate disruption to our supply chains. We have delivered unprecedented action with 33 measures to help the sector tackle the shortage of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers. This included making more driving test slots available than needed and introducing [bootcamps](#), which has seen the number of available HGV drivers stabilise.

We also provided [vital support to ferry and freight operators](#) to weather the start of the pandemic.

This, alongside other actions, has led to sector reports of pressures easing following global challenges on the supply chain and supported this highly effective and adaptable sector to maintain the smooth flow of goods into, out of and across the country.

It is now important that we look to ensure that the sector is ready to grasp opportunities in the medium- and long-term. The [Future of Freight](#) is the first time that the UK government has developed a long-term cross-modal plan for the freight and logistics sector.

The plan is a collaboration with industry and we have engaged stakeholders extensively in its development, including through the [Freight Council](#). It sets out how the UK government and industry have agreed to work more closely together, and with the devolved administrations, to deliver a world-class, seamless flow of freight across our roads, railways, seas, skies and waterways.

The vision set out in the plan is for a freight and logistics sector that is cost-efficient, reliable, resilient, environmentally sustainable and valued by society for its role in supporting our way of life. The plan is also clear on the importance of the sector to achieving some of the government's strategic priorities.

The sector is ideally placed to support levelling up, driving economic activity across all corners of the UK and proving secure employment, for example, in ports and distribution centres sited in levelling-up priority areas and opportunities in all our communities. The plan also supports our efforts to strengthen the Union improving connectivity across the United Kingdom.

The plan focuses on 5 priority areas of challenge identified with industry. It is the start of a long-term collaboration that will raise the status of

freight within government. It sets out government and industry commitment to collaborate on a number of actions:

### **The National Freight Network**

We will identify a National Freight Network (NFN) across road, rail, maritime, aviation, inland waterway and warehouse infrastructure. Our long-term aim will be to remove the barriers which prevent the seamless flow of freight.

### **Transition to net zero**

We want to support the entire sector in its transition to net zero. We will launch the Freight Energy Forum with industry, focused on collaborating with industry to assess future energy and fuel needs and paths to providing the requisite infrastructure.

### **Planning**

We will further embed freight in planning, transport and design policy and guidance, and ensure freight is represented in planning reform. We will publish a call for evidence with industry to support this work.

### **People and skills**

We will expand awareness of the sector and freight careers amongst the public, particularly through the industry-led and government-backed [Generation Logistics communication campaign](#). This will maximise the impact of cross-government employment and skills programmes for the freight sector.

### **Data and technology**

We will maximise opportunities for uptake of innovative technology and digitalisation, including through delivery of a dedicated cross-modal £7 million freight innovation fund.

Moving goods efficiently has underpinned Britain's historical growth, prosperity and global influence.

In today's increasingly interconnected and competitive global economy, we require a world-beating freight and logistics sector that will deliver the greener, fairer, and stronger economy we need. A sector that will help build a truly global Britain.

I will place a copy of the [Future of freight: a long term plan](#) in the libraries of both Houses.