

Government announces package of measures to support road haulage industry

- industry and government join forces to tackle heavy goods (HGV) driver shortages
- measures include launch of new consultations to provide as many HGV driving tests as possible
- government to work with industry to encourage more drivers into the profession and ease pressure on sector

A package of measures to help tackle the HGV driver shortage has today (20 July 2021) been announced by the government.

In an [open letter to the road haulage sector](#), ministers have pledged to work with industry leaders to attract new drivers, simplify training and encourage people to stay in the industry.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has already worked to ensure almost 1,500 HGV drivers pass their driving test every week but the government is going further still to make sure new drivers get up and running in the industry as quickly as possible.

A new consultation will be launched on allowing drivers to take one test to drive both an articulated and rigid lorry. This would streamline the process for new drivers to gain their HGV licence and would increase lorry test appointment availability. The consultation will ensure road safety is paramount and set out that drivers will still be supervised until fully qualified.

The consultation will also look at allowing trainers to actually examine drivers in the off-road manoeuvres part of the HGV driving test, and look at whether specific car and trailer tests should be required. This will allow a significant increase in the number of HGV driving tests to be conducted whilst maintaining road safety standards.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

I want to thank all those in the road haulage industry who have worked so hard throughout the pandemic to provide such a vital service.

I understand the challenges faced by drivers and operators right now and while longer-term solutions must be led first and foremost by industry leaders, today we are saying this government is here to help.

This set of measures will kickstart that help, easing pressure on the sector as we work together to attract new drivers, improve conditions and ensure the industry's future is a prosperous one.

The government is also looking to help the road haulage sector improve the working conditions of drivers – something which is key to addressing the shortage and encouraging British workers to forge long, successful careers in the sector. It will support this, initially, by working alongside the industry to support more official parking spaces for lorry drivers and look at ways to improve the standard of lorry parks.

Ministers are also keen to hear more from sector leaders about an industry-led Year of Logistics, looking at various other ways to attract more people to join the industry from all parts of society.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Therese Coffey said:

As part of our Plan for Jobs, we are helping people gain the skills and experience needed to take up opportunities in the haulage sector, including access to key training, and our Jobcentres are playing a vital role in matching jobseekers with the right roles in the sector.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will continue to encourage those who have already left the industry to re-join, confirming that they are developing a new driver training pilot through Jobcentre Plus to bring jobseekers into the industry.

The government has also called on local councils to be flexible around delivery times to supermarkets and other retailers, allowing drivers to make deliveries earlier in the morning or later in the evening where necessary.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

Our road haulage key workers have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic and formed a vital part of the unprecedented response, moving goods and ensuring supplies kept flowing across the nation.

The government is committed to supporting the logistics industry, which is why we are introducing this package of practical measures to support recruitment and retention of drivers. This follows the recent relaxation to drivers' hours and supermarket delivery hour restrictions to further support the industry.

The recently announced [temporary relaxation of drivers' hours rules](#) allows HGV drivers to make slightly longer journeys, but must only be used where necessary and must not compromise driver safety.