

Legislation: Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2021

The haulage sector has been experiencing a shortage of HGV drivers worldwide for some time. The issue has been further exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic as driver testing had to be suspended for much of last year, meaning the shortage increased further.

This country enjoys a robust and resilient supply chain. Nevertheless, there is no room for complacency and this government is determined to do what it can to mitigate the effects as far as is possible. It is therefore vital that we expedite legislation that will expand and accelerate testing – while at the same time acknowledging that the road haulage industry must play its part in improving recruitment and training by offering better pay and conditions.

The Department for Transport and other government departments have worked closely with the haulage sector considering a range of options to improve the number of HGV drivers. As part of these measures a [consultation closed on 7 September on change to streamline the HGV driving licence regime](#) and removing a separate trailer test for car drivers. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency has already taken administrative action to increase capacity and offer more practical HGV tests but more is needed.

The first of these measures will be addressed via a draft affirmative statutory instrument that will be laid before Parliament today (16 September 2021) and will mean that car drivers will no longer need to take another test to tow a trailer or caravan, freeing up some 30,000 test slots annually. This additional capacity can be used to reduce the backlog in HGV testing.

To make rapid progress on this, we are making use of the urgent procedure under paragraph 14(6) of Schedule 8 to the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018. I am of the opinion that, by reason of urgency, the requirements for the statutory instrument to be published in draft 28 days before it is laid, and for a scrutiny statement to be made before laying, should not apply.

Accelerating the legislation by forgoing the 28-day publication period will allow earlier laying of the legislation than would have otherwise been possible and strengthen the steps we have already taken to increase testing capacity and ease supply chain issues as quickly as possible.

Arrangements will be in place to ensure that the changes made by the legislation are operationally effective as soon as the legislation is in force.

Road safety continues to be of paramount importance. We will engage with training providers and insurers to test the response to this change and to explore how we can seek to ensure that any road safety concerns are

addressed. We will also explore options for an industry-led accreditation that could offer a standardised testing approach if that would be welcomed by the market, insurers and consumers.