

Mental health issues in the workplace

Press release

The Traffic Commissioner for the East of England made comments on mental health issues facing drivers in a recent public inquiry.



In a recent case, whilst the Traffic Commissioner for the East of England, Richard Turfitt, found William Morris of Linline Transport to have lost his good repute, he took account of some wider health issues, facing the industry.

The operator and Transport Manager had encountered mental health challenges for some time, made worse by the challenging conditions of the pandemic. Like many operators and drivers contributing to the national effort, he continued to work as a 'key worker' during the first lock down. The uncertainty of the pandemic and the lack of understanding about how the virus was transmitted, coupled with issues around container haulage, further impacted on his health.

The commissioner acknowledged that the availability and health of professional drivers is rightly a matter of national concern, given the reliance placed on the transport industries. It is important to recognise the additional pressures placed on drivers. HSE's publicly available guidance defines stress as 'the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them'. It recognised that those suffering from stress may not be best placed to make decisions about any necessary control measures.

The commissioner said "Drivers must feel able to report issues with their health and to talk about their problems. Driving can be a solitary job, placing drivers at even greater risk. Goods vehicles are essential for delivering products, upon which our economy and society rely, but those vehicles are useless without qualified and healthy drivers. As a society, we must not lose sight of the importance of the driver and that driver's welfare; that includes their mental health. That challenge needs to be recognised across what frustratingly continues to be a male-dominated industry, and where evidence tells us that it may be harder to challenge societal expectations and gender stereotypes."

Further details can be found [here](#).

For advice and guidance on mental health, visit [Every Mind Matters](#).

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