

# Government takes further action to tackle HGV driver shortage

- new comprehensive government package to tackle HGV driver shortages
- 50,000 more HGV driving tests available as legislation changed to streamline the process
- move will accelerate entry of drivers into UK's haulage industry, showing our leadership in helping tackle long-standing challenges faced by countries around the world

Up to 50,000 more HGV driving tests will be made available each year thanks to government action to streamline the testing process and tackle the worldwide lorry driver shortage.

HGV driving tests will be overhauled, meaning drivers will only need to take 1 test to drive both a rigid and articulated lorry, rather than having to take 2 separate tests (spaced 3 weeks apart). This will make around 20,000 more HGV driving tests available every year and mean drivers can gain their licence and enter the industry more quickly.

Tests will also be made shorter by removing the 'reversing exercise' element – and for vehicles with trailers, the 'uncoupling and recoupling' exercise – and having it tested separately by a third party. This part of the test is carried out off the road on a manoeuvring area and takes a significant amount of time. Testing such manoeuvres separately will free up examiner time, meaning they can carry out another full test every day.

Car drivers will no longer need to take another test to tow a trailer or caravan, allowing roughly 30,000 more HGV driving tests to be conducted every year.

This new legislation is changing previous EU regulations which the UK is no longer obliged to use.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

From Inverness to St Ives, HGV drivers are helping to keep the country running, and have been throughout the pandemic. The shortage of drivers is a global problem, but we've been taking action here in the UK to help industry leaders attract drivers and build a more resilient sector.

We've already delivered 50% more tests than were available before the pandemic, but today's additional measures will deliver up to 50,000 more a year, helping more and more people to kickstart their career as a well-paid HGV driver.

The changes follow a [public consultation](#) over the summer, which saw thousands of respondents, including industry leaders, support the move as a positive step to help the sector tackle the lorry driver shortage currently affecting countries around the world.

The standard of driving required to drive an HGV will not be affected, with road safety continuing to be of paramount importance. Any driver who does not demonstrate utmost competence will not be granted a licence. All car drivers will also still be encouraged to undertake training to tow trailers and caravans.

The driver shortage is a widespread problem affecting countries across Europe and also the United States, caused by a range of factors, including an ageing workforce. Today's announcement will ramp up driver testing and numbers and help industry leaders build a resilient UK haulage sector which attracts drivers from across society.

[New rules for towing a trailer or caravan with a car from autumn 2021.](#)

[Driver testing changes](#) written ministerial statement, 10 September 2021.

---

## [Driver testing changes](#)

The HGV driver shortage is a long-standing challenge facing countries across the world.

As a result of the pandemic, driver testing was suspended for large parts of the last year. It is now back up and running and the government has already increased capacity, but we can go further.

Over the summer, we consulted on 3 measures which will substantially increase the number of vocational driving tests available. I can announce today (10 September 2021) that we will proceed with the measures we consulted on:

First, car drivers will no longer need to take another test to tow a trailer or caravan, allowing roughly 30,000 more HGV driving tests to be conducted every year.

Second, tests will also be made shorter by removing the 'reversing exercise' element – and for vehicles with trailers, the 'uncoupling and recoupling' exercise – and having it tested separately by a third party.

And third, we will make it quicker to get a licence to drive an articulated vehicle, without first having to get a licence for a smaller vehicle. This would make around 20,000 more HGV driving tests available every year and mean drivers can gain their licence and enter the industry more quickly – without reducing the rigour of the test.

We've already provided a 50% increase in testing compared to pre-COVID. These measures go even further. These new measures follow a [public consultation](#) over the summer, which saw thousands of respondents, including industry leaders, support the move as a positive step to help the sector tackle the lorry driver shortage currently affecting countries around the world. Some of these changes will generate additional capacity for HGV tests very rapidly, and we will shortly lay the appropriate licensing regulations before the House.

These changes will not change the standard of driving required to drive an HGV, with road safety continuing to be of paramount importance. Any driver who does not demonstrate utmost competence will not be granted a licence. All car drivers will also still be encouraged to undertake training to tow trailers and caravans.

A new cross-government ministerial group has been set up to monitor labour supply chains, identify pinch points and consider necessary government action. Chaired by CDL and meeting on a weekly basis, the group includes ministers from numerous government departments including DfT, DfE, Home Office, BEIS and DEFRA to make sure all angles are being considered.

The driver shortage is a widespread problem affecting countries across Europe and also the United States, caused by a range of factors, including an ageing workforce. Today's announcement will ramp up driver testing and numbers and help industry leaders build a resilient haulage sector which attracts drivers from across society.

[New rules for towing a trailer or caravan with a car from autumn 2021.](#)

[Government takes further action to tackle HGV driver shortage](#) news story, 10 September 2021.

---

## [OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum: UK opening statement](#)

Thank you Ambassador Funered, and to Her Excellency Foreign Minister Linde, His Excellency Minister Kulhánek, and Secretary General Schmid for your opening remarks. It is a privilege to be here in Prague and I welcome our continued discussion on these important topics, looking forward to making progress towards agreeing Ministerial Council deliverables for commitment later this year.

Over the course of the year the Forum has highlighted the challenges women face compared to men in fulfilling their economic potential – legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs; less likely than men to participate in the labour market; and limited access to finance and business

support.

Women have also been at the forefront of the fight against COVID-19. Scientists, healthcare workers and carers have been working tirelessly to keep people safe; and teachers have done a tremendous job in adapting quickly and skilfully to ensure that our children continue to be educated. But the effects of the pandemic have disproportionately affected women and girls, worsening many of the challenges they already faced.

We therefore welcome the opportunity to discuss how we may take the opportunity to recover from the pandemic in a more inclusive way. The backsliding we have seen on gender equality during the pandemic is a cause for great concern. We must now look ahead to a recovery which benefits, and indeed is driven by, women and girls around the world.

This sustainable economic development cannot be achieved unless due attention is also paid to the environment that surrounds it. As we look to the future, we must ensure that inclusion is placed front and centre in our efforts to tackle climate change. In November we will host an inclusive COP26 that will advance gender-responsive climate action and finance. We will amplify the voices of women and girls, including those that are most marginalised, ensuring that their expertise and experiences as decision-makers, advocates and leaders is acknowledged and acted upon.

Here, I am looking forward to what I hope will be a practical discussion on how we can advance this agenda through policy. In our experience, tools like gender budgeting initiatives and data disaggregates can improve women's empowerment by focusing on the key economic and social matters that are often overlooked or obscured in conventional policy analysis and decision making. I look forward to hearing others' experience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also forced all of us to rely more than ever on our digital devices for every aspect of our lives, and the increasingly-important cyber and digital sectors' workforces are not diverse. In the UK, only 15 per cent of the cyber sector workforce is female, as is only 28 per cent of the wider digital sector. Improving diversity and inclusion is therefore a crucial element to the cyber and digital sectors' ability to address the skills gap and ensure that the digital transformation is accessible and provides equal opportunities for all.

Finally, education facilitates the success of girls and should encourage them to dream bigger than the generations who have come before. This is where we sow the seeds for women leaders and decision-makers.

Equal access to education and training is one way that we may be able to tackle injustices like the gender pay gap, key to building economies that work for everyone and ensuring the equitable future of work.

In the UK, it is encouraging that the national gender pay gap is at a record low. However, to close the gap entirely we are requiring large employers across all sectors to publish the differences between what they pay their male and female staff in salaries and bonuses. Transparency is key to

addressing the gender gap because it exposes the barriers women face in the workplace and motivates employers to take action, which will help to accelerate change.

Madam Ambassador,

If our collective societies' prosperity is to be maximised, and therefore act as effectively as possible against the threat of instability and conflict, it is right that we focus our attention on these important topics. Beyond the gains for economic growth, gender equality can reduce poverty and foster a more equitable distribution of income – all elements that can prevent conflict.

Once again, we welcome and thank the Swedish chairpersonship for making this topic the focus of this year's Economic and Environmental Forum, and pledge our constructive support as we seek to strengthen our common efforts on this issue.

Thank you.

---

## [Fast-track routes for gifted stars to come to the UK](#)

Illustrious award winners and sport stars will be able to live and work in the UK more easily under new simplified Immigration Rules announced by the government.

New Immigration Rules laid today (Friday 10 September), will create the new fast-track International Sportsperson route, which will make it more straightforward for professional athletes across sports to work in the country.

While continuing to offer an option for anyone wishing to come to the UK for 12 months or less, the new route, which opens next month, brings together and replaces the current Tier 2 and Tier 5 paths, providing a dedicated and simplified visa for sportspeople and their sponsors.

The government has also added more illustrious prizes to the Global Talent Visa, making it simpler for more of the world's most gifted minds to come to the country.

Individuals at the pinnacle of their career and who have won prestigious awards from the world of arts, science, engineering, medicine and more will now be able to use their prowess to take advantage of the Global Talent Visa. This includes winners of the Booker Prize, Academy Awards, BAFTA and the Wolf Prize,

Under this path, applicants who hold a qualifying prize will be able to fast-track the endorsement application and instead make a single visa application.

Today's immigration changes are part of the UK's points-based immigration system to attract the brightest and best to the country, delivering on the government's New Plan for Immigration.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

We want to attract the world's greatest minds at the crowning point of their careers, so the UK remains number one on the global leader board in sports, the arts, science, film and technology sectors.

Through our points-based system we focus on talent and skills, not where someone comes from, and the immigration changes we're making today demonstrate this, making it much easier for the brightest and best to live and work in the UK.

Immigration Minister Kevin Foster said:

The UK is a proud home to some of the world's most talented stars and the changes we've made will make it even easier for people at the top of their game to come and work in the UK.

Our immigration rule changes put our words into action, delivering on the government's ambition to attract the brightest and best talent to the UK and ensure we build back better.

A spokesperson for the Football Association said:

The FA welcomes the Home Office changes to simplify the rules required for a visa application for an International Sportsperson. Ensuring a faster system after obtaining a Governing Body Endorsement from The FA will allow for the world's best footballers to enter the country more easily.

Among the 73 prestigious awards added to the Global Talent Visa include:

- science, engineering, humanities and medicine: Benjamin Franklin Medal, Faraday Medal, L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science, various Wolf Prize categories
- arts and culture: the Booker Prize, various Queen Elizabeth Competition categories, International Dublin Literary Award

- film and television: best supporting actor and actress across the Academy Awards, BAFTA and Golden Globes

The government's Immigration Rule changes announced today follow last month's Sponsorship Roadmap which demonstrates how the immigration system will continue to ease administrative processes for British organisations sponsoring workers from abroad.

---

## **MOD awards £3.8-million contract for advanced base protection system**

A £3.8-million contract to trial an advanced base defence system has been awarded to the American company Anduril Industries through Strategic Command's jHub.

The system uses an advanced operating system, which is assisted by AI, and a network of sensors to autonomously detect, classify, and track potential threats.

It uses a combination of sentry towers, ground sensors and drone technology to alert personnel of any intrusion on the ground or in the air and then presents options for personnel to respond. The system has the capacity to add different sensors and autonomously offers options to respond, depending on the threat.

The contract was awarded as a part of Programme TALOS, a MOD programme focused on accelerating a defence-wide approach to integrated command and control (C2). The system has been offered through a new subscription model, meaning the software and hardware will be updated with the latest technology whilst also being maintained for operational use.

This approach ensures that defence is equipped with the latest cutting-edge technology whilst also allowing the jHub to work with the company to trial and deploy new technology as it is developed. It forms part of the jHub's work towards a Sustainable Tech Adoption Model (STAM), which is looking into different ways of working with industry to procure new capabilities.

Programme TALOS previously experimented with counter ground intrusion towers at the UK's overseas base in Akrotiri, Cyprus, to see whether the systems could be integrated into the existing C2 network. This next step allows the UK to continue to develop advanced, multi-domain, integrated force protection technology.

General Sir Patrick Sanders, Commander of UK Strategic Command, said:

This state-of-the-art technology will give our serving men and women help by identifying and assessing external threats in nanoseconds. The artificial intelligence at the heart of this system has great potential to protect our people and sites. It's another success for our innovation team at jHub, working closely with Anduril to help create a bespoke system, from idea to implementation at pace, to meet the specific requirements of our Armed Forces.