

# Working Minds: Stress campaign to help HGV drivers

- Road Haulage Association announced as new Working Minds partner
- Help is available via the free, confidential, text “BeAMate” service

More needs to be done to protect Britain’s truckers from work-related stress.

That’s the view of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), whose Working Minds campaign will now target HGV drivers – and their bosses – to promote good mental health whilst at work. The Road Haulage Association (RHA) today, Thursday 10 August, joins as a campaign partner.

Long hours away from home, demanding delivery times and limited access to toilets and showers are common causes of stress for drivers.



When safe to do so, drivers can text “BeAMate” for free confidential health support 24/7 – a service provided by Working Minds campaign partner, Mates in Mind.

Elizabeth Goodwill, from the HSE’s Stress and Mental Health Policy Team said: “HGV drivers keep the country and our economy moving. It’s therefore vital employers meet their legal duty to ensure risks of stress and mental ill health are factored into risk assessments.

“Initiatives such as ‘BeAMate’ are helpful for people needing individual help, but we would like to see more focus on preventing work-related stress at an organisational level, to stop it developing into poor mental health. We look forward to working with the Road Haulage Association and Mates in Mind to provide employers with the help they need to protect and support drivers.

“Driving a HGV and its cargo naturally comes with pressure. However, that does not mean the simple steps in our “5R’s” (Reach out>Recognise>Respond>Reflect>make it Routine) can’t be followed. Problems arise when there is excessive pressure workers are unable to cope with.”

Material and advice from the Working Minds campaign for drivers and employers can be found [here](#).

Laura Taylor, HR Director at the RHA said: “We are delighted to be supporting HSE’s Working Minds campaign. At the RHA we recognise that our employees’

mental health wellbeing is not just a personal concern to them but a vital component of our collective success as an organisation.

“Therefore, supporting mental health is not just a token initiative for us but a commitment to nurturing an environment where all employees feel valued, understood and empowered.”

### **The view from the behind the wheel – Michelle Upson**

Michelle Upson, a lorry driver who has been in the industry for more than three decades, is concerned about the welfare of her fellow workers. She said: “I’d say there is a mental health problem in the industry. Especially for the guys up the road all week and without their families – it is a lot tougher for them.

“Most of the workforce is men and the age demographic is still high. I think they are less likely to talk about their mental health problems so promoting it is a good thing.

“Mates in Mind say it is okay not to be okay and I think that is a valuable message to promote if anyone has got a problem and whether they need someone to talk to.

“Line managers certainly need to promote positive mental health because if it helps one individual it is a success, isn’t it?

“Highlighting mental health is a very good idea and all managers need to be aware of it and that obviously involves training. If there are managers who are able to see and spot the signs of poor mental health then it would be good if they can try and help to promote good mental health.”

### **Work-related stress is on the rise**

HSE and the Working Minds campaign warns that the scale of work-related stress across the economy has increased in recent years. Stress, depression or anxiety is now the number one cause of work-related ill-health in Great Britain.

Within the transportation and storage sector as a whole (which includes road haulage), around four in ten cases of work-related ill-health are due to stress, depression or anxiety.

Elizabeth Goodwill continued: “Michelle’s warning that HGV drivers are less likely to say they are struggling, combined with what we know about the rise of work-related stress across the economy, mean it’s crucial these workers have support in place.”

## Mates in Mind: Help is available

Sarah Meek, managing director at Mates in Mind, said: “As a partner of Working Minds from the outset of the campaign, we are pleased to be supporting this initiative to raise awareness of the impact that a proactive and preventative approach to mental health delivers within the transport and logistics sector.

“As a charity, Mates in Mind works with many businesses within the sector, including Wincanton and Palletways, that have made the commitment to raising awareness and supporting their teams by developing a positive culture towards mental health and wellbeing. Our fantastic anonymous text service is proving popular particularly with those on the road, to communicate any worries or personal challenges with someone available 24/7.

“If you want to know more about how Mates in Mind can provide expert support in co-creating your mental health strategy and proactive plan, including workforce awareness sessions, please contact us at [support@matesinmind.org](mailto:support@matesinmind.org). Let’s start the conversation about mental health within your workplace.”

**Text “BeAMate”:** If you or someone you know needs help or support, you can use our “BeAMate” text support service. To use the service, simply text “BeAMate” to 85258 and trained volunteers can help with issues including anxiety, stress, loneliness or depression and are available 24/7.

## Notes to Editors

1. The [Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise.
2. To read more about HSE’s Working Minds campaign click [here](#)
3. For press and media enquiries please contact [media.enquiries@hse.gov.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@hse.gov.uk)
4. The Road Haulage Association (RHA) is a member-led trade association supporting people and businesses in the road transport industry. For more see [rha.uk.net](http://rha.uk.net)
5. Mates in Mind charity exists to improve the mental health and wellbeing of workplaces across the UK. It provides specific support for construction, transport and logistics industries. For more see [matesinmind.org](http://matesinmind.org)