



House of Commons
Transport Committee

**Skills and workforce
planning in the road
haulage sector:
Government response
to the Committee's
Fourth Report of
Session 2016–17**

**Fifth Special Report of Session
2016–17**

*Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed
17 October 2016*

Transport Committee

The Transport Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Department for Transport and its associated public bodies.

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Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Gordon Clarke (Committee Clerk), Nehal Bradley-Depani (Second Clerk), James Clarke (Committee Specialist), Andrew Haylen (Committee Specialist), Daniel Moeller (Senior Committee Assistant), Michelle Owens (Committee Assistant) and Estelle Currie (Media Officer).

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Fifth Special Report

The Transport Committee published its Fourth Report of Session 2016–17, *Skills and workforce planning in the road haulage sector* (HC 68), on 29 July 2016. The Government's response was received on 6 October 2016 and is appended to this report.

In the Government response, the Committee's recommendations appear in **bold text** and the Government's responses are in plain text.

Appendix: Government Response

Introduction

The Government welcomes this opportunity to respond to the Transport Select Committee's recommendations on skills and workforce planning in the road haulage sector.

A Driver Shortage?

1. **We believe that the driver shortage is a shortage of people willing to work in the sector rather than a shortage of people with the right qualifications and licences. It seems to us that the apparent shortage will get worse unless action is taken to improve retention and increase recruitment.** (Paragraph 24)
2. **We conclude that there is no single cause for the driver shortage but a combination of a number of factors make the job less attractive than it was. It is imperative that the industry takes steps to improve the terms and conditions so it can recruit and retain the drivers it needs. The industry will need to invest more in recruitment, training and driver welfare following years of under-investment. We acknowledge that this is challenging for many of the smaller operators, especially given the very tight margins operators face. To improve conditions it will be necessary to address the inadequate facilities provided currently for drivers. It will also be necessary to promote the sector better in schools and colleges. We are also concerned about the terms and conditions under which some agency drivers are required to work.** (Paragraph 32)
3. **The driver shortage has resulted in a dependence on agency and particularly foreign drivers that goes beyond what is needed to cope with seasonal variations and is now necessary to sustain normal operation. The dependence on agency staff means that operators in the sector are probably not investing enough in their staff. We think this creates two risks that need to be managed. First, if the UK becomes relatively less attractive as a place for foreign drivers to work, the shortage could become much more acute, possibly quite rapidly. Second, the longer-term sustainability of the UK's road haulage sector could be undermined if there is not a steady stream of people through the sector gaining the skills and experience that they need to become transport managers and operators.** (Paragraph 41)

We agree with the broad diagnosis of the issues. This includes that there is a shortage of large goods vehicle (LGV) drivers willing to work in the industry and that many steps to

promoting LGV driving and the wider logistics sector are needed. Doing so will allow the promotion of the sector to underrepresented groups and as the diversity balance of those working in the sector improves, recruitment could be made significantly easier.

The road transport sector is vital to the continuing prosperity of the United Kingdom economy. The driver shortage is long-standing. The 2008 recession led to a reduction in demand, but also a loss of drivers from the industry. The recovery from recession, particularly strong growth in demand for freight in 2014 increased the shortage.

Significant inroads are being made into the shortage – with about 10,000 (40%) more LGV test passes in 2015/16 compared to two years before. Demand for vocational practical tests continues to rise with current 2016/17 demand at levels 10% higher than those experienced in 2015/16, 33% higher than 2014/15 levels and 54% higher than 2013/14 levels.

We agree that there is a shortage of people willing to work in the sector and that retention of drivers has been a major barrier to tackling the driver shortage. The industry should undertake an evaluation to establish why LGV licence holders left the industry and identify the barriers to their return. We believe that the industry should consider setting itself a target for attracting former drivers back to the sector.

The industry response

4. It is important that the sector broadens the pool of people from which it recruits to ensure BAME groups and women are better represented in its workforce of drivers. Efforts to attract women or BAME drivers to the industry will not solve the driver shortage if the issues currently affecting retention are not addressed. It should not be the case that these groups are targeted to replace drivers who have been driven away from the industry because of poor terms and conditions; attracting less represented groups should be done alongside improvements in the sector, not as an alternative. Current data provide sufficient information on gender balance but not on other measures of diversity. The Government and industry should consider how more reliable data can be collected on the number of drivers from BAME backgrounds and the numbers of part-time workers. They should then use the data to assess the effectiveness of the steps taken to address diversity and to plan the actions needed to improve gender balance, the representation of BAME groups, and the diversity in patterns of work. (Paragraph 53)

We agree that the sector needs to broaden the pool of people from which it recruits to address the driver shortage for the longer term. The disproportionate under-representation of women and those from BAME backgrounds will continue to stifle effective solutions to the driver shortage unless the industry takes positive action.

We agree that Government and industry should consider how more reliable data can be collected about drivers with BAME backgrounds, although we do not consider this should be done as part of the official national statistics.

The data on the gender balance of those working in the sector and the number of LGV drivers from BAME backgrounds is collected and published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The ONS data collection is sample based and so provides a reliable overview of the sector but does not provide detailed statistics. Collection of detailed

statistics for the driving population would require significant additional investment from ONS. Major employers within the sector will be best placed to monitor their own performance in this area.

The information on gender balance of licence holders originates from administrative data on licences, which is needed anyway. It is based on the whole driving population. To collect data on drivers from BAME backgrounds on the same basis, the information would need to be collected as part of the licencing process by the Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA). This would provide improved data on the number of LGV licence holders from BAME backgrounds but would not provide any indication on the number of active, employed drivers. We also do not consider it would be proportionate or appropriate to ask all licence applicants for extra information that would just be used for statistical purposes. Therefore, the Government does not intend to capture this information in this way.

The industry is developing initiatives to improve the gender balance in the sector and the Government is ready to support these programmes where possible. The Department for Transport is working with the industry and the Government Equalities Office to identify areas of work already undertaken by the Women's Business Council to spread best practice within the sector.

The Department for Transport launched its transport infrastructure skills strategy (TISS) in January 2016 which sets out how the government will deliver 30,000 new apprenticeships by 2020. This includes an ambition for at least 20% of new entrants to engineering and technical apprenticeships in the sector to be women. We are considering further extending this ambition to supporting activities for transport infrastructure, including road haulage, through agreeing procurement processes with the partners in the TISS.

We will challenge the sector to set itself a similar target for the new Logistics Trailblazer apprenticeships and to report periodically on progress. We will work with the sector and the Government Equalities Office to identify work that is already underway in other sectors and spread this best practice to the logistics industry.

The Logistics sector needs to increase the number of entry points into the industry to ensure that it can attract new employees from all sections of society including older workers, military service leavers and those from other driving occupations.

We also believe that the industry could attract more women into the logistics sector by providing more opportunities for flexible and part-time working. We will work with the Government Equalities Office to support the industry to identify opportunities to offer flexible working and to provide support to SMEs in offering opportunities to potential employees. Improving the diversity of employees throughout the logistics sector will help the industry to attract more women into driving roles.

The industry already has support groups such as Women in Logistics and She's RHA that provide mentoring and support for women already working in the sector. We will challenge the sector to widen their mentoring to include opportunities to mentor school students, under-graduates and jobseekers.

5. It is up to the industry to find ways of funding licence acquisition. We do not think the sector will be able to broaden its appeal beyond its core demographic unless it changes its approach. It is not uncommon for bus and coach companies to fund

acquisition of a PSV licence. We accept that bus and coach companies tend run on much better margins and can receive public subsidy for non-profitable work so this kind of investment may be more affordable for them. The Government's support, in the form of apprenticeships and loans, is welcome and we expect to see it being more active in providing this kind of support. (Paragraph 58)

Since the hearings the Government has announced the details of the operation of the Trailblazer scheme, including the financial eligibility of training related to LGV drivers and also other schemes in the logistics sector.

The Government has published proposals for the new funding model for apprenticeships and further details on the apprenticeship levy. The funding will support people of all ages to gain high-quality skills and experience and help employers to offer more training opportunities and build a skilled workforce. The plans propose that employers that are too small to pay the levy – around 98% of employers in England – will have 90% of the costs of training paid for. The new Logistics Trailblazer apprenticeships will ensure that the sector is well placed to take advantage of the opportunities the Apprenticeship Levy provides.

The funding of the Trailblazer apprenticeship through the apprenticeship levy provides an opportunity for smaller logistics companies, which fall below the threshold to pay the levy, to draw down funding for driver training. The new standard does not place any limits on the age of apprentices providing employers with the opportunity to recruit more widely from the pool of jobseekers.

Professional and Career Development Loans (PCDLs) remain available to help with the training costs associated with obtaining an LGV licence. The logistics sector may wish to encourage more training providers to applying to the Skills Funding Agency's PCDL register, in order to be able to enrol learners who wish to apply for a PCDL.

6. It is important that the industry gets beyond the point where it appeals mainly to those with a passion for driving. We believe that there are steps the industry can take to encourage young people, regardless of their background and gender, to work as drivers. The industry needs to work with insurers to find ways of reducing the cost of insuring young drivers. Drivers go through extensive training, their work driving is closely regulated and in many cases their driving is monitored using telematics. We believe that it should not be impossible to find a way to reduce the cost of insurance to encourage more operators to consider employing younger drivers. It is primarily the responsibility of the industry to find ways of addressing the cost of insurance but the Government has a role to play in facilitating this work. (Paragraph 65)

We agree there are steps the industry can take as the recommendation suggests. We will work to facilitate work on insurance, provided we can identify with industry some necessary and deliverable steps to take.

The industry has undertaken research to identify public perceptions of the sector. Changing those perceptions is a challenge, but it is one that we believe the industry can meet by coordinating work across all areas of the sector. There are a significant variety of roles available for employees in logistics and the promotion of the scope of employment opportunities can only assist attracting young people to the sector.

The Government believes that the Logistics sector is well placed to use the development of the three Trailblazer apprenticeships to promote the industry. We believe, rather than focussing on LGV driving in isolation, the industry should provide a vision of an industry offering a variety of possible career paths which can include LGV driving. Through this the industry can promote itself as a modern dynamic industry offering a diverse range of roles and opportunities. This will allow logistics companies to more effectively promote the enthusiasm those already within the sector have for their industry.

To further this end the Government has written to the major associations within the Logistics sector to invite them to form a working group through which we can coordinate support from Government with actions within the various parts of the sector. This will provide the Government with an opportunity to co-ordinate its work to provide wider coverage for the sector. In addition we will be able to reinforce the work of Logistics companies by providing support across the sector, reinforcing these initiatives and driving progress.

Motor Fleet insurance policies have become more prevalent over the past 5 years with mainstream insurers moving to providing 'open driving' fleet policies without age restrictions and increased premiums. These tend to require a higher excess for young drivers (an additional £250 or £350 per annum) rather than higher premiums. It may be that companies that have in general older, experienced drivers are not aware that these more flexible policies are available.

The Government response

7. The actions taken by industry, supported by Government, to improve recruitment have been successful but on too small a scale. We are concerned that, even when taken together, they will fall short of the number of drivers that are needed to address the current shortage and replace those likely to leave the sector in the next 10–15 years. Industry must scale up its efforts. The Government should assess the effectiveness of all of the steps it is taking to support recruitment and consider whether they represent good value for money. The road freight industry should also assess the impact of any steps to alleviate the driver shortage on other parts of the logistics sector. (Paragraph 92)

The value for money and effectiveness of individual programmes are assessed in their individual contexts. So for example Jobcentre Plus (JCP) monitors the effectiveness of placement programmes and the Trailblazer scheme has been designed to provide value for money. The Government response to recommendation 9 is relevant to this recommendation (in respect of monitoring the scale of the steps being taken).

For example Government support for the logistics sector is regularly assessed to ensure that it provides value for money. In particular the support JCP provides through DWP's Flexible Support Fund is dependent on an analysis of current local vacancies, the scale of funding required and whether there are sufficient candidate jobseekers interested in taking up such opportunities. The JCP Districts that have developed LGV driver training and recruitment programmes have done so in response to demand from local businesses and jobseekers.

8. The Government's primary responsibility in addressing the driver shortage is to ensure public safety is not compromised; the high standards expected of drivers

must be maintained. It can do this using its policy and regulatory framework around licensing of drivers and operators, the registration and inspection of vehicles, and the periodic training of drivers. (Paragraph 93)

We agree. The Government intends to maintain high and proportionate standards in this area, including in relation to drivers, vehicles and operators. It continues to consider how the framework can be applied most effectively, recognising the consequences of failures on public safety can be severe. It has also focussed on service standards, including quicker service delivery.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has reduced waiting times for vocational driving tests. Demand for vocational practical tests continues to rise with current 2016/17 demand at levels 10% higher than those experienced in 2015/16, 33% higher than 2014/15 levels and 54% higher than 2013/14 levels. At the end of March 2016, the weekly waiting time figure stood at 5.5 weeks, with a monthly average for March of 6.4 weeks. By 1 August this had been reduced to a weekly waiting time of 1.3 weeks. This resulted in a monthly average waiting time figure for July of 2.0 weeks.

As of 5 August 2016, over 10% of slots were available at the vast majority of DVSA vocational test centres within one week. This is the lowest weekly waiting time recorded for vocational tests since its records began in 2000.

The Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA) is continuing to make progress on dealing with LGV licence applications and renewals with complex medical conditions. A triage service has been set up, with a filter team directing and prioritising cases and requesting additional information where appropriate to minimise delays. In addition DVLA has recruited over 100 new staff in the past year and is currently recruiting five new medical advisors, to increase capacity significantly.

9. The Government should ensure that the measures it has told us it is taking to address the driver shortage bear fruit and deliver new drivers committed to a career in logistics in the kinds of numbers needed. We believe there are four steps the Department for Transport can take. It should:

- **ensure activity across Government affecting LGV drivers is well coordinated and mutually reinforcing;**

We agree and the Department is setting up an industry/inter-departmental group to track the scale of progress and co-ordinate activity. The Rt Hon. John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Transport is to convene a logistics industry roundtable on 17 November with the aim of identifying a programme of work to tackle the current shortage and future recruitment. Rather than focus solely on LGV drivers, the group will encompass the wider logistics sector, including rail, sea and air freight, and warehousing and distribution.

The aim is to use the industry's three Trailblazer apprenticeships to attract jobseekers and those looking for a change in their career by highlighting the range of options and career paths available. It is important that the industry promotes itself as offering a range of career paths to school leavers and jobseekers, and that these may include LGV driving.

The Department for Transport has already been working in cooperation with the Department for Work and Pensions; the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial

Strategy; the Department for Education; the Ministry of Defence and the Government Equalities Office. This joined up approach ensures that the Government can provide solutions for a number of industry issues which also assist in achieving Government aims including supporting jobseekers, assisting service leavers and developing Trailblazer apprenticeships.

The Select Committee report rightly identifies a lack of apprenticeships as a key barrier to entry to the sector. We hope that these new apprenticeships, which have been designed and developed directly by employers, to meet the needs of the sector, will lead to a greater take up. These apprenticeships, combined with the existing leadership and management apprenticeship standards, will be key in promoting logistics as a career with a defined development path for staff from warehouse to LGV driving and on to management.

Jobcentres will continue to support the industry where appropriate through DWP's Flexible Support Fund. A number of JCP Districts have developed LGV driver training and recruitment programmes which, although not available everywhere, has delivered around 1,000 training places across England, Scotland and Wales.

JCP promoted the Road Haulage Association's (RHA) National Lorry Week in September 2016. National Lorry Week is an industry shop window encouraging members to showcase their business to the public. This will be incorporated into this year's 'Feeding Britain's Future' campaign, which is led by the Institute of Grocery Distribution in partnership with DWP.

While it is for employers and the industry to fund the cost of training new drivers, DWP can share the good practice of JCP schemes; for example, a scheme in Manchester saw DWP bulk-buying tailored LGV training at a significantly lower cost than the industry average and with higher pass rates. JCP and the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) are working together to ensure that sufficient resource is made available to ensure that those undertaking LGV training through JCP schemes can routinely access test appointments.

To ensure the industry can access LGV tests for its Trailblazer apprentices DVSA is promoting the use of delegated examiners for companies carrying out at least 40 tests each year.

- **encourage the logistics sector, insurers and those involved in the delivery of driver training to improve apprenticeships, promote the industry, improve the delivery of careers advice, and raise awareness of road freight sector in colleges and schools and among jobseekers. The Department should assess whether the funding for such activities is sufficient and sustainable;**

The industry/inter-departmental group referred to above will consider further steps to meet this recommendation.

The Department for Transport has already taken some steps to encourage the promotion of the industry, including encouraging activity by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, the Road Haulage Association and the Freight Transport Association. JCP has similarly encouraged the promotion of the industry. The Trailblazers scheme has been designed to provide good quality apprenticeships, including a process to check quality before standards are approved.

We are exploring opportunities to raise awareness of the sector with young people and jobseekers. Possibilities include encouraging Logistics companies to offer work experience to schools in their locality, and encouraging companies to visit schools to offer advice on careers in the sector. We will work with the National Careers Service to ensure that the industry is promoted to school leavers. In addition we will be working with JCP to see how the industry can provide opportunities for male and female jobseekers through work placement schemes. We will encourage the industry to promote opportunities more proactively to under-represented groups and to report publicly on progress towards a more diverse workforce.

We intend to use the roundtable on the driver shortage to discuss with the Department for Education and industry bodies the possibility of designing and delivering a GCSE level vocational qualification. We believe that schools would benefit from a broader range of vocational courses and the logistics industry could benefit greatly through offering a qualification in logistics that would open up the sector to children and provide a progression from school into an apprenticeship or to a graduate level course.

Jobcentre support for employers in the logistics sector includes a tailored recruitment service (including the sifting of candidates), backed up by a range of other services. Employers are encouraged to deliver information sessions about their business/sector to JCP Work Coaches or direct to claimants. Jobcentre offices are equipped to host employers to conduct interviews or sessions. Each Jobcentre has a Twitter account to advertise vacancies or host digital employer sessions, and will keep employers informed of any upcoming job fairs or events of interest.

There are also a range of DWP schemes designed to help claimants find work, such as work experience, pre-employment training and sector-based work academies (training, work placement and guaranteed job interview), plus locally-procured support using the discretionary Flexible Support Fund. Jobcentres also help employers who are looking to recruit apprentices or offer traineeship placements. We are already working with DWP to help place jobseekers on work placements with logistics companies as a precursor to an apprenticeship in the sector. This provides jobseekers with an insight into the industry and employers with the assurance that they investing their time and money training committed individuals.

JCP has been supporting National Lorry Week and working with the RHA in a national campaign called 'Driving Britain's Future', which encourages RHA members to offer work experience opportunities to JCP customers as a route way into employment within the industry.

- **continue to improve the Driver CPC, raising the standards of the training delivered and demonstrating the benefits of the periodic training to a sometimes sceptical audience; and**

Action has been taken and we plan more to improve the Driver CPC process and promote its benefits. The aim of Driver CPC is to raise the standards of new drivers and to maintain and enhance the professionalism of existing lorry and bus drivers. The rules for Driver CPC are outlined in EU legislation. When the implications of the UK's new position

outside the EU for the road haulage sector are clearer, we will consider the way forward on Driver CPC. For example it may provide opportunities to allow drivers to obtain their training in a more flexible way.

Continuing professional development is the norm in many professions providing an opportunity to maintain and develop professional knowledge and skills. A survey of drivers found that 85% of those questioned about the Driver CPC said the course made them a safer driver.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has invested considerable resource in assuring the quality of training and the training centres by having in place a robust audit system. It will work with the industry to promote it as worthwhile.

The DVSA has amended its procedures to allow drivers with acquired licence rights (those who have held the entitlement prior to 1997) to choose to take two of the four modules in the Driver CPC instead of acquiring their first Driver Qualification Card (DQC) on completion of their periodic training. This is designed to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and flexibility of Driver CPC.

- **provide clear, accessible guidance on skills, funding and support, employer standards, regulation and insurance for young drivers.** (Paragraph 94)

We will consider the potential demand and scope for clear, accessible guidance in the industry/inter-departmental group. Some material is already provided by trade associations and representative bodies and they may be the more appropriate sources of guidance. Guidance on some issues has already been produced by Government.

For example on 12 August the Department for Education published updated guidance on the Apprenticeship Levy and the new system for funding apprenticeships. They will publish further guidance on the Levy in October and December 2016. We will use the logistics working group to assist the industry bodies in communicating these opportunities to their members.

In March 2015 DfT published simplified guidance on drivers' hours, working time and breaks to help drivers and employers navigate the rules in this area. The guidance reflects the joint understanding of DfT, DVSA, industry and union representatives, which gives it extra weight and will make it a useful addition to the DVSA comprehensive guidance.

10. The Government is right that the provision of roadside facilities is principally a matter for the private sector, but it can take steps to encourage investment in better facilities. We welcome the Government's commitment to a survey of roadside facilities. It is important that this review looks not only at the quality of the facilities but at their spatial distribution. It must be based on qualitative and quantitative measures and involve consultation with the users of the services. It needs to look not only at current facilities but should and examine the planning guidance and building regulations to ensure any new facilities cater properly for the needs of the drivers who will use them. It is not sufficient to look just at the roadside facilities on the strategic road network. Many of the problems arise at depots and customer facilities where drivers collect or deliver goods and materials. The Government should work with the FTA, RHA and

trade associations representing the customers of road haulage operators to discuss the issues around the treatment of drivers and to consider the merits of a good practice standard or code of conduct. (Paragraph 100)

We confirm the survey of roadside facilities will consider not only their quality but also where they are. There has been, and will continue to be, consultation with users of roadside facilities.

We will consider the issue of planning guidance and building regulations in the industry/inter-departmental group. We intend to consider first whether more information to local authorities responsible for planning would contribute to improvements. There is a local, public interest in ensuring new developments provide adequate facilities for drivers, as failure to do so can affect the areas near developments.

The specification for a survey of lorry parking facilities is being drawn up in consultation with the trade associations to check coverage and the balance between supply and demand. We plan to do the survey later this year. It is important that any new facilities are provided in the appropriate locations to ensure that supply meets demand.

The Rt Hon. John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Transport is to chair a meeting of interested parties on 2 November to seek to identify and solve the wide range of issues affecting the supply of facilities, their quality and use. Representatives from freight trade associations, motorway service area and independent lorry park operators, employee representatives, local authorities, Highways England, the Police and other interested parties will be invited to attend the meeting chaired by the Minister.

We will work with the industry bodies to consider whether and if so how to establish a good practice standard or code of conduct for businesses when receiving visiting drivers. We believe that the provision of access to facilities for visiting drivers at depots and customer facilities should not require specific Government regulation. It is in the interests of companies to treat visitors in the manner they would wish for their employees while off-site. A good practice standard combined with an identifiable “charter mark”, promoted by industry bodies could provide a visible commitment to drivers which could then be promoted to customers outside the logistics sector.

The department recognises the importance of facilities in any investment in future infrastructure projects. To that end the Department will incorporate consideration of facilities, including accommodating lorries at the roadside, in forthcoming Roads Investment Strategies.

11. Insufficient attention is being given to the retention of LGV drivers. Simply recruiting drivers is not a sustainable solution if road haulage companies do not deal with issues affecting retention. Efforts to improve retention will not only help to secure investment in the recruitment and training of new drivers but could also help to attract back those who have recently left the industry and make the sector appealing to under-represented groups. We recommend that the Government consider whether any further investment it makes in helping the road haulage sector with recruitment should be contingent on action by the sector to address retention; to do otherwise will be to continue to try to top up a leaking bucket. (Paragraph 102)

We agree with the recommendation and that Government and the sector should work together on the issue as a whole.

It is already important for the success of Government funding that it leads to sustained employment in the industry. For example the Trailblazer scheme is designed to provide quality training and enable apprentices to stay in the sector. Interventions for Jobseekers are designed to lead to opportunities for sustained employment.

The Government agrees that an effective response to the driver shortage requires action from the industry to retain LGV drivers.