

Views sought on options to streamline driver licensing and support jobs



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call for evidence launched on range of options to help more people access well-paid jobs in haulage

views will be used to help inform how post-Brexit freedoms could create more opportunities and support jobs

forms part of ongoing work to tackle driver shortage, support new haulage jobs and bolster UK supply chain

Views are being sought on how to make it easier to land a successful career in logistics, as the government continues to tackle the global driver shortage, support new jobs and bolster the UK's supply chain.

The views submitted by members of the public and industry professionals will help answer important questions and assist the government with ongoing research into how post-Brexit freedoms are used to remove red tape and create opportunities for people across the country.

Some of the potential options set out in the call for evidence – which was launched today (Friday 5 August 2022) – include creating a formal register of HGV driving instructors and publishing pass rates for instructors. This could help improve HGV driver training standards, raise the profile of the profession and enhance road safety.

The call for evidence will also seek views on whether the UK should permit mechanics who already hold an HGV licence to drive vehicles like buses or coaches for repair purposes and reintroducing other lost so-called 'grandfather rights' in the UK.

Questions around reintroducing grandfather rights explore whether the UK should allow those who hold a normal car driving licence to drive certain larger vans or smaller lorries up to 7.5 tonnes. Prior to 1 January 1997, people who passed their driving test for a normal car also obtained the right to drive heavier, larger vehicles up to 8.25 tonnes in weight and minibuses – these entitlements were removed by the EU.

No decisions have been made on whether these rights should be reintroduced and the government is keen for views from a wide range of stakeholders to inform its future approach to the issue, as well as the rest of the areas under consideration in the call for evidence. Any changes would need to ensure continued safe use of our roads and be economically proportionate. There could possibly be restrictions based on age or driving experience, which is reflected in the questions set out in the call for evidence.

It comes as part of wider government efforts to help more people into work, since this is the best way to support families in the long-term while growing the economy to address the cost of living.

This follows the government's 33 actions already taken to tackle the HGV driver shortage and protect the supply chain, which has seen record numbers of HGV driving test pass rates and positive reports from the sector of stable driver numbers.

Transport Minister Karl McCartney said:

Our country has a robust supply chain and our ongoing and unprecedented support for the haulage sector means that the number of HGV drivers is stabilising.

We continue looking for ways to make it easier and quicker to kickstart a rewarding career in logistics. That's why we're asking people for their views on how we could streamline the licensing process and remove any potential barriers – making the most of our post-Brexit freedoms.

The government's unprecedented actions to help the sector tackle the global shortage of drivers has included making

11,000 HGV driver training places available through Skills Bootcamps, injecting a major and sustained boost to the number of HGV driver tests available, and investing £52.5 million in improvements in roadside facilities and lorry parking.

Since then the sector has started to recover and industry bodies have said they're seeing HGV driver numbers stabilise. They indicate that the initiatives introduced by government and industry have started to yield results, showing that perceptions of the industry are changing as a result of government support and more people are looking to train and qualify are taking and passing their driving test in record numbers. Between March 2022 and May 2022, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) carried out 29,384 HGV tests – 54% more than the corresponding period in 2019 before the pandemic.

The government recently launched the future of freight plan, encouraging millions of people across the UK to kickstart an exciting career in logistics, with a new multi-million pound plan unveiled to bolster the supply chain and create a more resilient and greener haulage sector. The plan includes a major campaign, launched in June 2022, to recruit and retain a skilled workforce in the logistics sector.

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