



Department
for Transport

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Transport Committee
House of Commons
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Dear Huw,

Road Freight Inquiry

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence on the road freight supply chain at the Transport Select Committee hearing on 26 January 2022. Please find below my responses to the additional information requested by the Committee members.

Sir Dave's Lewis's role and recommendations

As announced in October 2021, Sir Dave Lewis was appointed as the Prime Minister's Supply Chains Advisor on a temporary basis until the end of the year. During his time in this role, Sir Dave worked across Government and with industry, meeting over 100 businesses from a range of sectors, to help resolve a number of acute, short term issues. He advised the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on both immediate improvements that could be made, and potential long-term changes to UK supply chains.

Sir Dave's final recommendations included ensuring that the Government continues to build and embed departmental capability and collaboration on supply chains policy; builds stronger capabilities to horizon scan, spot risks early, and collate and utilise data to determine and solve supply chains data; works with industry to consider how best to optimise existing infrastructure capacity; improves cross-modal connectivity; ensures the UK has the right tools in place to support resilience and capacity of supply chains; and consider how to improve the recruitment and retention of HGV drivers and other staff critical to supply chains.

Work on supply chains continues to be a focus for the Government.

Monitoring of the temporary cabotage relaxation and enforcement by DVSA

We are gathering evidence on use of the additional cabotage rights in two ways. First, an ongoing survey of HGV drivers using the Department's Information and Advice Sites is collecting information on drivers' awareness, and use, of the additional rights. Secondly, research using mobile phone data is providing information on foreign HGV driver arrivals, duration of stays, and number and length of movements within Great Britain. This work is ongoing and an assessment of the uptake of cabotage should be published in March.

DVSA traffic offence data shows that the number of driving offences recorded by non-UK HGV drivers from when the cabotage relaxation started in late October 2021 to early January 2022 is similar to a baseline over the same period in 2019-2020.

Skills Bootcamps

Skills Bootcamps in HGV driving are free, flexible, intensive courses designed to train drivers to be road ready and gain their licence, offering people the chance to launch well-paid careers in the logistics sector. The following pathways are offered:

- Pathway A: Novice to CAT C – CAT C licence
- Pathway B: Novice to CAT C then CAT C+E
- Pathway C: Novice to Cat C or Cat C and Cat C+E + employer specific elements
- Pathway D: Existing CAT C upgrade to CAT C+E
- Pathway E: Existing HGV upgrade to ADR Packages
- Pathway F: Existing HGV upgrade to ADR Packages and Tankers
- Pathway H: 'Back to wheels' Refresher into previous existing Category
- Pathway I: 'Back to wheels' Refresher with upgrade to CAT C+E

Delivery of the programme began in December 2021. Pathways A to C are contracted to run to 30 November 2022, and pathways D to I to 31 March 2022. Decisions on whether to extend the HGV Skills Bootcamps programme will be taken in due course.

Funding for Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) renewal and return to HGV driving

HGV licence holders who are currently unemployed or in receipt of Universal Credit can, at the discretion of local Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) advisors, access the DWP Flexible Support Fund to renew their Driver

CPC. Licence holder seeking to return to driving can also apply for refresher training through the HGV Skills Bootcamp.

Individuals who apply for Skills Bootcamps are subject to a variety of recruitment processes determined and carried out by Skills Bootcamps providers. The providers may choose to include tests, such as skills, knowledge, and psychometric tests, and interviews to assist the selection process. Applicants are offered places based on the outcomes of these and the availability of places.

Applicants who were considered for a Skills Bootcamp but were unsuccessful can contact the provider they applied for a course with to request further feedback on the decision. They may also wish to apply for a course with another provider, or for future Skills Bootcamps opportunities. Course availability is regularly updated on [Find a Skills Bootcamp](#).

Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) tests taken by female drivers

Driving test data for LGV tests and pass rates by gender is published quarterly on [gov.uk](#). According to the most recent published data, the annual average LGV practical test pass rate for female drivers was slightly higher than for male drivers at 61.3% in 2021-22, compared to 57% for male drivers. The next data release is due in March 2022 covering the period up to the end of December 2021.

Drivers forced to park in laybys

Local highway authorities have a duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980, as amended, to maintain the highways network and associated assets, including laybys, in their area. The Act does not set out specific standards of maintenance, as it is for each local highway authority to assess which parts of its network need repair and what standards should be applied, based upon their local knowledge and circumstances.

Encouraging industry to make better use of existing rail freight infrastructure

The Government works closely with Network Rail (NR) and the rail freight industry to maximise the use of rail freight to ease supply chain pressures and environmental outcomes.

The Secretary of State wrote to Andrew Haines, NR's Chief Executive, before Christmas welcoming NR's constructive engagement with the rail freight industry to increase capacity. He also requested regular updates on progress to run longer trains from our key container ports including Felixstowe to relieve the pressure on the road haulage sector.

Working alongside NR and freight operating companies (FOCs), we have recently increased capacity from Felixstowe port from 37 to 40 paths per day. Path 38 launched on Monday 10 January and NR continues to work with industry to ensure the two additional paths are utilised. New intermodal services launched from Liverpool and Immingham Ports before Christmas, and a new service from Doncaster to Mossend (Central Scotland).

As part of the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, Great British Railways will be producing a 30-year Whole Industry Strategic Plan for the railways which will reflect on current challenges and provide options for meeting future opportunities. The Government continues to engage with industry and across Whitehall to explore ways to transport more goods via rail and make the best use of existing capacity and improve connectivity.

EU Entry/Exit System

The EU Entry/Exit System (EES) is a planned EU-wide system for centrally registering details of non-EEA citizens each time they cross an EU external border, replacing the stamping of passports. It will also require non-EEA citizens to periodically enrol fingerprints and a facial image. It is the responsibility of France to implement EES at the juxtaposed controls, as the EU Member State operating that border.

The UK is engaging with our European partners at an operational level and where we operate juxtaposed controls, to ensure our respective border arrangements work and interact as well as possible. The Home Office, Border Force, Cabinet Office, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and my Department continue to work together to reduce any impact on border fluidity of the planned EU Entry/Exit System, including engagement with France on the subject.

The Department's priority is to ensure that critical goods can be imported and exported through the effective management of roads in England. The Port of Dover operates a 'turn up and go service' meaning HGVs will be placed on to the first available ferry when they arrive at the Port. There may be an occasion when hauliers have to wait and this could be due to peak periods of traffic at the Port.

The Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) is responsible for traffic management in Kent. The Dover Traffic Access Protocol (TAP) is the first measure in HGV traffic management to control any mild disruption to flow of traffic to Dover port area. The Department continues to work with the KRF and the Port of Dover to ensure that both local traffic and freight continue to flow freely. More extensive disruption is mitigated by the Operation Brock traffic management plan and the wider Operation Fennel contingency plans, which include driver welfare issues.

A proposed lorry park at Stanton was mentioned during the evidence session, however, I believe this should in fact have been a reference to Stamford West. Stamford West was previously considered for lorry parking in 2016 to ease congestion and assist as an alternative for Operation Stack near the M20. A judicial review ruled that the proposed lorry park for about 3,600 lorries could not go ahead because no environmental assessment was carried out prior to the review. Instead, since 2016, Operation Brock has been developed by the KRF to replace Operation Stack during cross-Channel traffic problems.

Port Infrastructure Fund

The £200 million Port Infrastructure Fund (PIF) was created specifically to enable building and upgrading of infrastructure at our border locations in time for new controls on EU imports, predominantly the introduction of checks on animal and plant products. Dover submitted a £33.5 million bid for a longer-term project and its focus was reordering and expanding outbound border controls, including traffic lanes and passport control booths. Therefore, the project was out of scope for the PIF.

A further £470 million was allocated by Government to provide Inland Border Facilities delivering goods-checking and customs facilities off-site to service ports where there is insufficient space for these facilities on-site. The Port of Dover, Getlink (Eurotunnel), and the Port of Holyhead are the primary beneficiaries.

Closure of the driving test centres

Grahame Morris MP, asked about the closure of a driving test centre (DTC) in South Shields. The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) is committed to providing its customers with the best service possible. The DVSA continually reviews its estate to identify any test centres that could be closed and services relocated to an existing site. The closure of eight DTCs has been agreed and testing will cease at the following on 10 April 2022:

- Ashford (Middlesex)
- Croydon
- Elswick
- Hyde (Manchester)
- Newbury
- Southampton (Forrest Hills)
- South Shields
- Whitchurch

The decision to close South Shields DTC, which is the subject of Early Day Motion 886, was made as there are other centres nearby that can absorb capacity. The closure of South Shields will not affect the availability of tests

and no tests will be cancelled. The nearest test centre is Sunderland, which is 5.6 miles away.

I trust this clarification will stand as part of the official record of the evidence session.

Yours,
Charlotte

BARONESS VERE OF NORBITON