

# Government 'floating' idea of allowing more EU HGV drivers to work here again, in bid to tackle mass shortages

Sign up to FREE email alerts from [BusinessLive – East Midlands](#) – the latest news, views and analysis direct every morning  
Invalid Email Something went wrong, please try again later.  Subscribe

We use your sign-up to provide content in ways you've consented to and to improve our understanding of you. This may include adverts from us and 3rd parties based on our understanding. You can unsubscribe at any time. [More info](#)

Thank you for subscribing We have more newsletters [Show me](#) See our [privacy notice](#)

The Government is apparently considering making it easier for EU lorry drivers to work in the UK again, in a bid to tackle the HGV driver crisis.

Parts of the UK freight network have ground to a halt due to [combination of Covid-19 and Brexit](#) leading to [mass shortages](#) in shops, restaurants and other suppliers.

For weeks senior figures in the transport sector have been [urging the Government to offer fresh support](#) to help the industry train up new drivers to fill the spaces and ease the deadlock.

The Road Haulage Association (RHA) recently revealed a shortage of 60,000 drivers – partly due to older drivers retiring and around 30,000 HGV driving tests being lost last year because of the pandemic.

Many European drivers also returned to their home countries during the pandemic, with Brexit restrictions dampening enthusiasm for returning to the UK.

As a result, hauliers have been forced to [ramp up wages to attract talent](#), with concerns that that and stock shortages are forcing end prices up.

This week the boss of the Co-op said food shortages were at the worst level he had ever seen.

McDonald's said it ran out of milkshakes while Nando's saw a shortage of chickens due to a combination of not enough drivers and fewer staff working in meat factories.

Now the Government is said to be considering bringing forward a review of its Shortage of Occupation list to make it easier for EU drivers to work here.

A review of the Shortage of Occupation list, which sets out jobs where [overseas workers can apply for visas](#), is not due until next year.

The PA news agency understands proposals have been floated for bringing forward the review so HGV drivers can be included to ease the problems facing the supply chain.

**Read More**

**Related Articles**

▪



[Co-op boss says Brexit and Covid-19 combining to create worst food shortages he has seen](#)

**BusinessLive**

**Read More**

## Related Articles

▪



[Brexit exodus – ‘EU workers have left and aren’t returning...we’ve never seen anything like this in 20](#)

[years’](#)

BusinessLive

Several Government departments are liaising over the supply chain issues, including the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy department, the Home Office, the Department for Transport, the Department for Education, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Home Office officials are said to be blocking the review being brought forward, amid concerns it could lead to other sectors demanding inclusion.

A source told PA: “It has been floated and seems like the obvious solution but there’s been a lot of pushback from the Home Office.”

HGV drivers are currently not included on the list but there is pressure from supermarkets to include them to help ease the shortfall whilst more UK drivers are trained.

The current average age of a UK HGV driver is 55 and ministers are concerned an aging workforce needs replacing.

Government officials are working with the DVLA to increase the number of tests taking place and have vowed to streamline the process.

They have also increased funding for apprentices to get more workers into the industry but want to ensure the UK is less reliant on overseas drivers.

Supermarkets and haulier groups have warned prices could go up as wages rise for drivers – having stagnated for the last five years.

Some drivers have already staged strike action because their pay has not risen whilst other colleagues have seen increases.

Retailers and suppliers such as Amazon, Tesco and Marks & Spencer have offered signing-on bonuses.

## Read More

### Related Articles

▪



[HGV driver crisis: Pall-Ex boss warns crippling driver shortages 'one of the greatest challenges of a generation'](#)

BusinessLive

## Read More

### Related Articles

▪



[Truck company offering free training worth thousands to help tackle chronic shortage of UK lorry drivers](#)

BusinessLive

The Government introduced a seasonal workers visa in December last year for 30,000 workers to come to the UK to primarily pick fruit, but there were exemptions on the jobs available – including meat processing factories and flower pickers.

The Government said this week: “The British people repeatedly voted to end free movement and take back control of our immigration system and employers should invest in our domestic workforce instead of relying on labour from abroad.

“We recently announced a package of measures to help tackle the HGV driver shortage, including plans to streamline the process for new drivers to gain their HGV licence and to increase the number of tests able to be conducted.

“We have also temporarily relaxed drivers’ hours rules to allow HGV drivers to make slightly longer journeys, but these must only be used where necessary and must not compromise driver safety.”

**Sign up for your free East Midlands newsletter and follow us on LinkedIn**



## **Email newsletters**

BusinessLive is your home for business news from across the East Midlands including Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire.

[Click through here to sign up for our daily email newsletter](#) and also view the broad range of other bulletins we offer including weekly sector-specific updates.

We will also send out 'Breaking News' emails for any stories which must be seen right away.

## **LinkedIn**

For all the latest stories, views and polls, follow our [BusinessLive East Midlands LinkedIn page here](#).