

# Union leader says Government 'caught out' as it fails lorry drivers

A multi-million pound [Government](#) scheme to improve toilet facilities for lorry drivers is "entirely unspent" after a year, according to a leading trade union.


[Unite](#) said that in the October 2021 [Budget](#), then chancellor [Rishi Sunak](#) allocated £32.5 million to the Department for Transport (DfT) for roadside facilities at service stations and truck stops for lorry drivers.

The union said that in a Freedom of Information (FoI) request, the [DfT](#) admitted: "No companies have as yet received funding from the £32.5 million match funding scheme."

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Unite said the FoI also showed that the £32.5 million was over a three-year period and that only £5 million was allocated for the current financial year.

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Unite general secretary Sharon Graham said: "The Government has been caught out in failing to deliver for lorry drivers. It promised to make improvements to facilities but after 12 months not only have no improvements been made, the budget is entirely untouched.

"Access to clean toilets, when required, is a basic human right. Not only are lorry drivers being routinely denied this right but problems are getting worse not better."

Unite said poor facilities were a key reason why there has been a crisis in lorry driver numbers and why the industry has both a recruitment and retention problem.

A survey by the union found that around two in five lorry drivers believed access to toilets had got worse since the pandemic

We are working closely with operators on allocating the funding and provide more details in due course

Unite national officer for road haulage Adrian Jones said: "Lorry drivers will be incensed to learn that despite all the Government's spin on improving facilities it has not spent a penny for over a year. This is a fresh stain on the Government's record.

"Lorry drivers can't hold out any longer, the promised funding needs to be allocated and spent now and not at some far off point in the future. Equally, highly profitable companies shouldn't be waiting for government cash, they should be investing in their facilities and their drivers."

A DfT spokesperson said: "Hauliers are vital to this country and deserve a good supply of facilities that are safe and clean.

“That’s why we’re investing over £52 million to improve roadside facilities, enhance security and improve welfare for HGV drivers.

“We are working closely with operators on allocating the funding and provide more details in due course.”

John Rowe, head of operational strategy at the Health and Safety Executive, said: “Drivers must have access to toilet facilities to sites where they deliver – any failure to do so is unacceptable and should be reported to us.”

Road Haulage Association managing director Richard Smith said: “Commercial vehicle drivers continue to put up with poor facilities out on the road and it’s just not good enough. People at work should feel respected; our drivers expect better and deserve better.”