

Nicola Sturgeon MSP
First Minister
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
E99 1SP

15th July 2021

Dear First Minister,

I am writing to you today at the request of the RHA's Scottish and NI Council. The Council is made up of around 30 haulage and logistics companies along with a couple of industry partners and they in turn represent the views of 900 members companies within the two countries.

I am sure you are aware that the industry is suffering from a driver shortage that is hampering deliveries, endangering supply chains, and risking contracts that were hard fought for. The RHA, along with many other bodies from other sector's have brought these issues to the attention of all the UK administrations for some time and the Council has asked me to write to you with a specific request.

During the early days of the pandemic when the country was locked down for the first time, road hauliers were the ones who ensured PPE and pharmaceuticals got to their destinations and that food was on the shelves, despite the prevalence of panic buying at the time. Governments from all parts of the UK were happy to praise the hauliers and categorise their employee's as "key workers". Our ask is that our employees are given the same status as other key workers in one respect.

The current driver shortage felt in Scotland is being exacerbated by the requirement for fully vaccinated healthy drivers having to isolate after potentially coming into contact with someone who has tested positive for Covid 19. This is putting additional strain on hauliers and the already reduced numbers of overstretched drivers who have to cover for those isolating. What the Council ask is that for fully vaccinated logistics employees (just like "Test and Release" proposals for NHS staff), isolation be replaced by daily lateral flow tests, and that as long as the test remains negative, that they be allowed to work. Drivers spend the greatest proportion of their day alone in their cab's, effectively isolating anyway and the latest figures from DfT's weekly tests for UK hauliers show a positivity rate of only 0.02%, so this would clearly be a low risk option. In the case of a positive test, normal protocols would be observed.

Although many of the issues surrounding the driver shortages will need intervention from Westminster this is one solution that we hope is within the gift of the Scottish Government to grant and that you will give this request due consideration. The RHA in Scotland are in the process of moving offices and we hope to be fully operational at our new office by the end of the month. For the purposes of any potential response our address will be:

RHA
Blackburn Road
Bathgate
EH48 2EY

Should you have any questions about this request, or indeed any matters surrounding the sector, please feel free to contact me directly using the details below.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Reid
Director for Scotland and NI
RHA
m.reid@rha.uk.net
07801 500713