

RHA Briefing | Introduction to the road freight industry

Road haulage is essential for keeping the UK economy and our supply chains moving. It includes the transportation, loading, tracking and delivery of goods. Goods can range from food supplies to machinery to vehicles. Helping to move such goods are Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), with more than 406,000 HGVs in Great Britain.¹ A Heavy Goods Vehicle is a lorry with a plated weight of 3.5 tonnes or more.

Everything we eat, drink, wear and consume depends on road haulage services and the companies and drivers that operate them. **In the UK, 98% of all food and agricultural products are transported by road freight.** The productivity and competitiveness of the UK economy is dependent upon having an efficient road haulage sector and road infrastructure that works for all users.



£13.5

billion industry

There are around 305,000 HGV drivers in the UK, with 98% being male and 2% being female.⁵ There has been a general decline in the number of heavy goods vehicle (HGV) drivers, with the number of drivers falling by 53,000,⁶ between 2016-21 due to the impact of the pandemic and the UK's departure from the EU. A larger proportion of HGV drivers come from older age groups than the total working population. 29% of HGV drivers are over 56 years of age or older, compared with 19% for the overall employed population. This is in comparison to 20% of HGV drivers aged 16 to 35 years (compared to 36% of the total working population).⁷

■ About the RHA

The RHA is a major trade association representing 8,500 road haulage, coach, and van operators across the UK, 85% of whom are SMEs. Our members operate around 250,000 HGVs (half of the UK fleet) out of 10,000 operating centres and range from a single-truck company to those with thousands of vehicles.

To find out more, please visit: www.rha.uk.net

For further information, please contact: policy@rha.uk.net

For a list of references, please visit: www.rha.uk.net/News/Guidance/Road-Haulage-Facts-and-Stats

Road transport is a highly competitive and low-margin business. It is a highly skilled, service-driven industry, responding to fluctuating customer demand. It operates under a tightly regulated operator licensing regime to promote road safety.

1.57 million people work in the transport and storage industry² and the road haulage industry is worth £13.5 billion to UK economy,³ with around 61,303 road freight businesses in the UK.⁴

305,000

