



for Freight
and Logistics

Delivering Inclusion

Strengthening Diversity in
UK Freight and Logistics

Nov 2025



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This report has been written from evidence collated by the Road Haulage Association during a meeting of the APPG held on 24th June 2025 and through written submissions throughout the period of 24th June to the 24th July 2025. Involvement in this process does not constitute an endorsement of the report or its asks. Attendees and submitters include:

ABE Ledbury
Anabranh Plus
ASLEF
British Airways
Department for Transport
Fagan and Whalley
GXO
HS2

Logistics UK
Maersk
National Highways
Road Haulage Association
Road to Logistics
Tesco
Transport Research Laboratory
UK Chamber of Shipping

UK Warehousing Association
Unite the Union
Veterans into Logistics
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Women in Bus and Coach
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Chair’s Foreword



Rachel Taylor MP, Chair

Companies have long recognised that diversity and inclusion are good for business. Employers who open doors to women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, those with disabilities, veterans and other people returning to work or changing careers are not only doing the right thing — they are tackling workforce shortages, bringing fresh ideas, addressing skills gaps and driving innovation.

As Chair of the APPG for Freight and Logistics, I regularly meet people who embody how a push for diversity is delivering a better freight and logistics sector. One apprentice I met was thrilled to be receiving their first training opportunity, while a young woman from my constituency proudly told me she had taken on her first management role thanks to career development support provided by her logistics company. These stories show how both employers and employees gain from the sector’s growing focus on inclusivity.

We know that there is still more work to be done. Earlier this year, a transgender lorry driver told me she was considering leaving the job she loves because of the lack of appropriate bathroom facilities at truck stops. The industry must go further, and parliamentarians must do more to champion diversity because we all benefit.

My constituency of North Warwickshire and Bedworth is a freight and logistics heartland, with more than 20% of workers employed in the sector. Over the past two years I’ve met freight-forwarding apprentices, tested electric HGVs and seen first-hand the ingenuity that powers this industry. From the rail-connected parks at Hams Hall and Birch Coppice to family-run hauliers like LTS Global, AMG Logistics and Fagan & Whalley, logistics runs deep through my community.

Building a more inclusive freight sector means good jobs and secure wages for the people I represent — and nationally, it’s vital to our success story. The UK’s logistics industry generates £170 billion for the economy and employs over 8% of the nation’s workforce. The government has rightly recognised its value in the Industrial Strategy, pledging to work with industry to deliver prosperity across the country.

Reports like this one are crucial for turning commitment into action. We saw this after the APPG’s Securing Our Supply Chains report on freight crime – since it was launched I’ve introduced my Freight Crime Bill to Parliament, a major BBC documentary has raised awareness, and momentum for stronger action is building.

This report highlights businesses already reaping the rewards of a more diverse workforce and shows how going further will deliver even greater competitive advantage. It identifies challenges facing the sector and proposes long-term solutions that I and my APPG colleagues will continue to pursue.

Throughout my career, I have pushed for the UK to be a more equal society, from championing action on hate crimes, pushing for miscarriage bereavement leave and an increase in paternity leave. Time and again, I’ve seen that diversity is a source of strength.

Greater inclusivity in logistics is long overdue, so I want to thank all the organisations who are helping deliver that shift. I hope the evidence they have provided in this report and the solutions they have offered are the starting point for driving positive change across the sector.

Progress Made, Improvement Needed

The logistics sector is by its nature, diverse in terms of the kind work it can offer. Complex, international networks require frontline work over land, sea and air, supported by warehousing, administrative and management jobs controlling flows and storage of freight. However, areas of the sector have failed to welcome a broad pool of people, both depriving individuals of opportunity and the industry of a diverse workforce.

The logistics sector as a whole has made large progress in promoting diversity in its workforce over the last few decades. This is particularly true in the area of gender representation, with 40% of the international supply chain workforce being women, according to a 2024 Gartner report¹. However, huge shortcomings in gender representation can be seen in the frontline workforce. Fewer than 2% of UK HGV drivers are women² and only 1.2% of the international seafaring workforce³. Statistics on the percentage of female rail freight drivers are unreliable, however in 2018 only 33 rail freight drivers were female, representing just 1.4% of the industry at that time⁴. These are roles for which gender should play no role in ability. In 2023, the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport found women aged 20-29 have the highest HGV license pass rate of 67.9% against a test average of 58.7%⁵.

Age is also an issue across frontline roles, with insufficient numbers of new entrants meaning an aging workforce threatens to turn the current staff shortage into a crisis. Again, this problem is seen worst in blue collar jobs, with 55% of HGV drivers aged between 50 and 65⁶ and 30% of current freight train drivers hitting retirement age by 2029⁷.

It should be noted that the aim of this report is not to perfectly align each demographic in each role with that of wider society, nor should it be treated as an exhaustive account of the diversity issues facing the sector. Its purpose is to address the clear imbalances where peoples' traits are clearly influencing them into or away from particular jobs, to the detriment of everyone. Indeed, what some of our findings indicate is that more can be done to create pathways to skilled employment and make adjustments to allow for wider entry into the workforce.

Most importantly, this report aims to overcome inertia in solving these long-known issues and break the cycle of complaint without action that has allowed for the shortcomings causing them to continue.

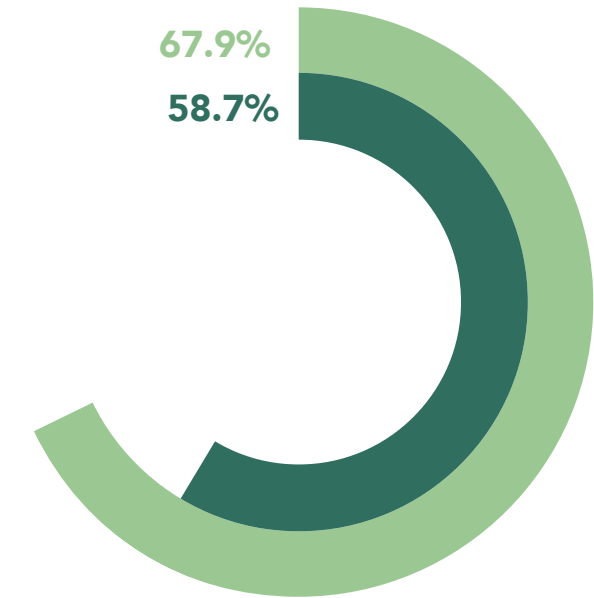
There was wide acknowledgment from both APPG attendees and respondents to the call for evidence that many of the issues discussed have been well known for a long time and that the struggle has been initiating action towards positive change across government and industry.

The APPG is committed to following through in campaigning on the asks detailed in this report, as it has done on previous reports. We encourage all those involved in the process so far to raise awareness of the report's asks and apply pressure to government and wider stakeholders to see them fulfilled.

Fewer than 2% of UK HGV drivers are women



Women aged 20-29 have the highest HGV license pass rate



Women aged 20-29
Test average

55% of HGV drivers are aged between 50 and 65



Drivers aged 50-65
Drivers aged 49 and below

1 <https://www.gartner.com/en/supply-chain/trends/women-in-supply-chain-survey-highlights>
2 https://www.rha.uk.net/Portals/0/PolicyCampaigning/RHADriversReportFINAL.pdf?ver=vG6TFg-Q32gRrG9_DHqv9g%3D%3D
3 <https://www.bimco.org/products/publications/titles/seafarer-workforce-report/>
4 <https://www.transport-network.co.uk/Mind-the-gender-gap/15253?>
5 <https://ciltuk.org.uk/News/Latest-News/ArtMID/6887/ArticleID/37119/Research-reveals-women-aged-20-29-achieve-highest-HGV-pass-rates>
6 https://www.rha.uk.net/Portals/0/PolicyCampaigning/RHA_ATandR%20document_230721.pdf
7 <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/lowering-the-minimum-age-requirement-for-train-drivers-from-20-to-18/outcome/lowering-the-minimum-age-requirement-for-train-drivers-from-20-to-18-outcome>

The Workforce Shortage

Creating conditions that allow for everyone to feel comfortable and welcome in the workforce is a worthy goal in and of itself. But there is also a pressing economic need to widen the pool of talent available as firms struggle to find workers. Memory of the HGV driver shortage during the pandemic might seem distant to some, but its underlying causes continue to simmer, and a worsened crisis is forecast if action is not taken to address them. Similarly, for rail operators there is a looming shortage which the government has recently begun to put pressure on industry to alleviate.

These problems are more than just an overhang from Brexit and its corresponding reduction in the size of the UK labour market. Europe itself is facing similar issues, with the European Transport Workers' Federation highlighting the acute labour shortages being faced across transport in the EU⁸. This shows that improving the quality, awareness and perceptions of logistics jobs is needed to encourage new generations into the workforce.

As demonstrated by the evidence submitted by stakeholders to this report, many areas of logistics also experience high turnover of staff. These retention issues both show the need for improved conditions and highlight an additional cost to the industry: the cost and inefficiency of constant rehiring and retraining. UKG research found the average cost of replacing a logistics worker is £12,200⁹.

As will be detailed in this report, there is also chronic lack of access to the industry for new starters, with expensive fees to qualify in many roles and few places to gain that accreditation.

It is therefore an economic necessity that steps are taken to welcome a wider range of people into the logistics workforce. A natural question which follows from this discovery is over where the change should come from. It is no secret that sectors across the country are struggling as a result of lasting challenges from the pandemic and 2022 emergency budget, and logistics is no exception to this.

Average profit margins have recently been as low as 1.58% in road freight¹⁰ and have been estimated to be around 2% for rail freight¹¹. Fierce competition within and between the subsectors of logistics mean resources to invest from industry are thin. Indeed, the highest levels of investment in diversity initiatives could be seen among respondents to the APPG's call for evidence within higher margin areas, such as international shipping and large retailers with their own logistics function. This does not negate the many commendable examples seen in evidence submissions of independent initiatives and individual operators taking steps to encourage diversity in their workforce, but it does illustrate the need for government impetus to meaningfully shift the dial and overcome the massive discrepancies that can be seen, particularly in gender diversity.

In this report we explore a number of action areas to improve the recruitment and retention of workers, including facilities, working patterns, culture, and training. We also outline a number of recommendations which, alongside progress driven by industry, aim to alleviate this workforce shortage through several areas. These include improving conditions for workers, providing better training opportunities, and raising awareness of the sector and the variety of roles available.

8 <https://www.etf-europe.org/labour-shortage-quality-jobs-and-strong-unions-are-crucial/>
9 <https://www.ukg.co.uk/sites/default/files/2025-09/ukg-logistics-distribution-industry-outlook-2024-report-uk.pdf>
10 <https://www.rha.uk.net/Portals/0/Membership/Annual%20Cost%20and%20Pay%20Surveys/RHA-Haulage-Cost-Movement-2024.pdf?ver=Cz4wQ2TxjQSPXPGVlqEBMQ%3D%3D>
11 https://www.railpartners.co.uk/images/documents/Rail_Partners_The_facts_about_rail_operator_profit_in_the_pandemic.pdf



Action Area: Facilities

Why facilities matter for diversity and inclusion

Everyone deserves working conditions that are safe, hygienic and accessible. But as demonstrated by evidence submitted for this report, facilities are a critical yet overlooked barrier to inclusion across all areas of logistics (road, rail, warehousing, maritime). Poor facilities, especially a lack of toilets and rest areas, perpetuate the stereotype that logistics roles are inherently tough, dirty, and physically demanding, and therefore unsuited to women or others who might not fit in with that stereotype. challenge that image.

While recruitment initiatives and schemes have helped alleviate this issue, inadequate welfare and rest facilities continue to act as a deterrent to both recruitment and retention in logistics, in particular of women and individuals with accessibility needs.¹²

Challenges and impacts

The quality of workplace facilities shapes the recruitment and retention of a workforce, particularly among women and younger workers who increasingly assess employers on welfare standards and workplace culture¹³.

The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) identified poor welfare provision as a major barrier to diversity in rail freight. With only around 3% of drivers being women, the union argues that the workforce “does not reflect the communities it serves.”¹⁴ A lack of basic amenities, such as toilets on freight trains effects all drivers but especially female drivers or for those with medical conditions such as Crohn’s disease requiring stoma accessibility, not only undermines dignity at work but actively deters new entrants from underrepresented groups. ASLEF also notes that some operators have even proposed replacing proper welfare facilities with mobile urinal bags or period pants, illustrating a culture that prioritises profit over dignity.¹⁵

Similarly, Road to Logistics and the Road Haulage Association highlighted that female drivers frequently report inadequate or hard-to-access facilities at truck stops, such as women’s bathrooms that require separate keys which are often unavailable or poorly signposted.¹⁶ Such conditions fail to provide drivers with a genuine opportunity to rest and recover, reinforcing the perception that the profession does not prioritise the welfare of its workers.

A lack of adequate facilities also poses a direct risk to the safety of those working in the industry. Both Unite the Union and ABE Ledbury cite cases of women not feeling safe sleeping in services, the need for pregnancy risk assessments, and how many depots and lorries lack gender-inclusive or accessible amenities.¹⁷

Investment in high-quality and accessible facilities and amenities not only sends a clear message that all workers are valued and supported, but promotes recruitment into the sector and increases long-term retention – all the while building a resilient supply chain.

12 ABE-Ledbury’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
13 <https://www.benenden.co.uk/media/10551/bh-gen-alpha-workforce-report.pdf>
14 The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen’s (ASLEF) submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
15 Ibid.
16 Road to Logistics’ submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
17 Unite the Union’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
ABE-Ledbury’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics

Recommended Actions for Government:

1. **Link facility standards to planning and licensing** by requiring new logistics developments, industrial estates, and service areas to meet accessibility, hygiene, and gender equity standards as a condition of planning approval or operating licence.
2. **Establish a national funding programme for driver and depot welfare facilities** through a dedicated Welfare Facilities Improvement Fund, delivered through the Department for Transport and local authorities to upgrade and expand facilities at depots, truck stops, and ports.
3. **Set national minimum welfare standards for all logistics workplaces and depots**, including accessible toilets, showers, and rest areas.



A typical holding area typically found at Regional Distribution Centres (RDCs), where HGV drivers are required to wait—sometimes for hours—before being allowed to deliver their goods.

Action Area: Working Patterns

Why Flexible Working Patterns Matter

Logistics has long been associated with unsociable hours and difficult shift patterns resulting in poor work-life balance. With logistics operating 24/7, rigid shift structures and long hours have historically excluded women, those with disabilities, and those with caring responsibilities.¹⁸ Employers such as Tesco have recognised that adapting work patterns is essential for wellbeing and retention, trialling four-day weeks and consecutive rest periods for drivers to combat fatigue and improve work-life balance. The shift towards home-working that has occurred since the Covid-19 pandemic inspired this change, and it has clearly had an effect – in January 2025, 84% of UK Distribution Centre colleagues strongly or slightly agreed that they would recommend Tesco as a ‘Great Place to Work’, an increase of 11 points since January 2021.¹⁹ Road to Logistics

and Unite the Union also highlight that modern workers, particularly younger generations, value autonomy and purpose as much as pay.²⁰ Without evolving working models, the sector risks alienating new entrants and worsening already acute labour shortages.

Flexible and inclusive working practices also strengthen supply chain resilience. Warehousing and parcel operations, for instance, have shown that flexible or part-time shifts can attract parents, carers, and neurodiverse workers, while term-time or weekend-only contracts have opened the door to underrepresented groups.²¹ Embedding flexibility into shift design is therefore not only important for equity, but it is also an operational necessity for an industry under pressure to deliver around the clock.

Challenges and Impacts

Despite some progress, working patterns across much of the sector remain inflexible and incompatible with family or wellbeing needs. Long and unpredictable hours are common in HGV and rail freight roles, with night or weekend shifts seen as unavoidable. ASLEF notes that the lack of family-friendly scheduling means some train drivers, particularly women, leave freight for passenger operations, where parental leave and shift policies are more progressive.²² Unite the Union adds that “burnout” and “digital surveillance” through telematics and productivity tracking further alienate younger workers seeking trust and autonomy at work.²³

In road haulage, ABE-Ledbury and Road to Logistics both report that outdated assumptions about working hours, combined with limited rest facilities, deter women and new entrants.²⁴ Many operators still rely on older models of employment, namely

long-distance driving shifts and irregular pay structures, reinforcing the perception that logistics is a “man’s world.” At the same time, employers face a demographic crunch: the average HGV driver is 49 years old, with few younger replacements entering the workforce.²⁵ The UK Warehousing Association warns that if inflexible working continues, the exodus of senior managers to retirement will coincide with a lack of diverse mid-career successors, threatening productivity and innovation.²⁶

These patterns have a direct commercial impact. Evidence submitted for this report shows that inflexible, exclusionary cultures are linked with high turnover and reduced productivity, with younger and more diverse workers more likely to judge employers by welfare standards and flexibility. Without modernising working arrangements, the sector risks falling behind.

18 Unite the Union’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
19 Tesco’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
20 Unite the Union’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
21 Road to Logistics’ submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
22 The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen’s (ASLEF) submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
23 Unite the Union’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
24 ABE-Ledbury’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
25 Road to Logistics’ submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
26 ABE-Ledbury’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
The UK Warehousing Association’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics

Recommended Actions for Government:

1. **Review the Working Time Regulations** to make them more adaptable to 24/7 industries like logistics, and the expectations of modern workers, allowing innovative rota models (e.g. compressed weeks, split shifts, job-shares) while protecting rest and safety standards.
2. **Promote family-friendly scheduling pilots** through the Department for Transport and the Department for Business, encouraging employers to test flexible shift models that maintain productivity while improving wellbeing.

Recommended Actions for Industry:

1. **Strengthen collective frameworks:** Unions and employer associations should negotiate sector-wide standards for rest, overtime, and work-life balance that support retention and equality.
2. **Pilot flexible shift systems:** Following examples from Tesco, introduce rota models that allow predictable hours, consecutive rest days, and part-time or job-share options for operational roles.
3. **Align technology with wellbeing:** Digital tools should empower, not police, workers. Transparency in monitoring and data use is vital to treating people with dignity and building trust.
4. **Reframe the narrative:** Public campaigns and internal communications should show that logistics offers adaptable, modern careers compatible with family and personal wellbeing.



Action Area: Culture

Why Workplace Culture Matters

Workplace culture determines whether people feel valued, safe, and able to succeed across the logistics sector – to put it bluntly, culture is make or break for workforce inclusivity. A positive culture that prioritises respect and inclusion will drive engagement and retention. Alternatively, a poor culture rooted in outdated attitudes or hierarchical management reinforces the perception that logistics is unwelcoming or “old-fashioned.”

Evidence from Women in Logistics and Unite the Union shows that inclusion must go beyond compliance or HR policy; it has to be embedded in everyday behaviours and leadership values.²⁷ Where organisations foster open communication and support for others, diversity flourishes. This is reflected in large employers such as Tesco, where 82% of UK Distribution Centre colleagues report they can “be themselves at work without fear or judgement,” highlighting how inclusion directly influences morale and performance.²⁸

Challenges and Impacts

Despite progress, many workplaces in logistics are still dominated by legacy cultures of exclusion. ABE-Ledbury described an industry “stuck in the 1980s and 1990s,” with entrenched gender norms and resistance to change among older leaders.²⁹ Women in Logistics reported subtle but persistent biases that undermine authority and confidence, for example, female managers having their decisions and knowledge questioned or contributions dismissed.³⁰ Such behaviours, even if they are subtle, perpetuate inequality and deter women and minority groups from advancing.

Unite the Union highlighted that discrimination, bullying, and harassment remain common, particularly in freight depots, with limited HR support in smaller firms.³¹ Toxic cultures, including “banter” that crosses boundaries or excessive surveillance of workers, contribute to burnout and high turnover. For underrepresented groups, including women, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ employees, and disabled workers, this can translate into isolation or fear of speaking up or reporting behaviour that crosses the line.

Rigid hierarchies and a “command and control” mentality also alienate younger workers who value autonomy and purpose. As the workforce ages, such cultures risk eroding innovation and deepening the skills crisis.

27 Women in Logistics submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
Unite the Union’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
28 Tesco’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
29 ABE-Ledbury’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
30 Logistics UK’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics
31 Unite the Union’s submission to the APPG for Freight and Logistics

Recommended Actions for Government:

1.

Promote diversity and inclusion standards in public-sector logistics contracts: Women in Logistics proposed that all bidders for government contracts demonstrate active inclusion strategies, using examples from the EU and Canada where similar policies have driven cultural change among SMEs.
3.

Incentivise equality audits before procurement or licence renewal, ensuring companies meet inclusion and welfare standards, as supported by Unite the Union and Women in Logistics.
2.

Encourage voluntary national diversity benchmarks and reporting frameworks to support sector-wide transparency on representation of women, ethnic minorities, and disabled workers, modelled on Australia’s ATA benchmarks.

Recommended Actions for Industry:

1.

Empower employee voices: Establish safe, accessible channels for feedback and reporting, such as staff networks or union equality representatives, to address issues early and transparently.
3.

Modernise management styles: Move away from hierarchical, compliance-driven models toward coaching-based leadership that values empathy, autonomy, and wellbeing.
2.

Recognise and reward inclusive behaviour: Integrate inclusion metrics into performance reviews and leadership development.



Action Area: Training and Skills

Barriers to Entry

One of the biggest barriers to workforce entry for all demographic backgrounds is a national shortage of training opportunities. Many jobs in logistics are skilled roles, requiring expensive training. Respondents consistently cited a lack of training opportunities or skilled individuals as a key inhibitor of recruitment.

The governments Industrial Strategy has identified 8 priority sectors (IS-8) although logistics was recognised as a foundational sector, the exclusion from the IS-8 also limits the sectors importance for Department for Education is focused on the IS-8. It is critical for the industry that Skills Bootcamp funding is reinstated nationally.

Ongoing initiatives are also not providing value to the sector. The wider logistics sector has contributed over £1.25bn to the Apprenticeship Levy and accessed less than a quarter of this for logistics specific apprenticeships training. The fact that many prospective workers are required to foot the bill for their training upfront while these funds go untapped implies significant action is required.

Young, low-income, or ethnic minority groups are in many cases unable to afford training and therefore choose other industries where training on the job or subsidised or funded qualifications are available.

While government support is needed, there are areas where industry can change its own practice to improve the situation. In road haulage, it is common for job adverts to require 12 months or even 2 years of experience. While this may be a fair requirement in a minority of specialist roles, in the majority of cases this policy induces self-inflicted damage on the wider industry by reducing the number of opportunities for early career individuals to increase their experience, all while reducing the number of capable workers.

Training programmes themselves are also in need of review, with high dropout rates and low pass rates, though these have been improving recently³². While high standards are a must, it is clear more support can be given to trainees in meeting these.

Logistics subsectors such as rail freight have also had recent drives to increase workforce entry from young people. This has been seen in a lowering of the minimum age of training drivers, aimed to get more entrants before they have been lost to other sectors³³. Moves like this should be considered in other subsectors reliant on an older workforce.

Training and Awareness as Drivers of Diversity

Logistics training opportunities need to be actively presented to school children in the same manner as university and vocational routes. Many young people pursue jobs in hospitality or retail, unaware they may be better suited to and better remunerated in a logistics job. Wider availability of training opportunities will not shift the dial without wider visibility of the options available.

Without adequate exposure to the wide variety of options and opportunities presented by the logistics industry, the few workforce entrants there will be will come from the small portion of the UK that already makes up most of the industry.

Respondents also highlighted the need for better diversity-specific training within the existing workforce, particularly for managers who may be required to make reasonable adjustments for individuals under their management. This is essential for ensuring maximum rate of entry into the workforce, with several success stories of reasonable adjustments being implemented shared by those who submitted evidence for this report. Of particular note here is the opportunity for some neurodiverse individuals who have previously struggled to find employment securing themselves well matched with logistics roles, particularly in warehousing and HGV driving.

Recommendations to Government

1.

Continue driver bootcamp funding: Maintaining bootcamp funding will protect a stream of new logistics professionals and give opportunity for people of all backgrounds to join the workforce.
2.

Preserve funding for the Support for Maritime Training (SMarT) Scheme: Maintaining the SMarT Scheme will continue to provide opportunities for UK workers to develop their skills and become seafarers.
3.

Extend national insurance contribution relief beyond under 25s for employers who invest in long-term training: Creating tax incentives will provide opportunities for employers to carry out training and develop skilled, well-paid workers. The tight margins faced by much of the industry means internal training is often unviable.
4.

Make student financing available for vocational qualifications: Creating better financing options for vocational qualifications of all levels will mean a wider pool of individuals will be able to train for the jobs they really want. It is the barrier of cost which obstructs most people from entering skilled logistics roles.

Recommendations to Industry

1.

Invest in partnerships with training centres: Operators who want to widen their workforce should pursue such arrangements. Several respondents provided case studies of successful recruitment of top employees via partnerships with training providers, colleges and initiatives.
2.

Encourage ongoing internal training, particularly in managers on how best to make reasonable adjustments for workers: The better managers are at adjusting and managing working conditions to suit workers' needs, the larger the pool of potential workers will be.
3.

Create clear internal progression routes: Creating clear routes to promotion and highlighting the success stories of individuals will encourage new generations into the sector.

32

<https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships/2024-25>

33

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/lowering-the-minimum-age-requirement-for-train-drivers-from-20-to-18/outcome/lowering-the-minimum-age-requirement-for-train-drivers-from-20-to-18-outcome>

Changing Perceptions

Where perceptions meet reality

While many of the recruitment challenges faced by the logistics sector are due to the various material problems already mentioned in this report, many false perceptions also hold back its recruitment potential. So, work needs to be done to improve the industry where negative perceptions match the reality, and work needs to be done to fight the

perceptions themselves where these perceptions do not match reality. Certainly, once improvements are made to elements like facilities, working conditions, and wider culture, work will also need to be done to communicate to the public that these changes have happened.

Debunking the physicality myth

Across sub-sectors, respondents near unanimously spoke of difficulties in fighting misperceptions around the nature of frontline work, and particularly its discouraging effect on women wanting to enter the workforce. Seafaring jobs are a prime example of this, with little public knowledge of how the job actually looks day-to-day and what kinds of tasks are carried out, with assumptions made about work being physically gruelling and suited only to “men from manual labour or military backgrounds” as one respondent put it.

However, misconceptions of how “physically demanding” and therefore “male-suited” logistics jobs are damage recruitment across the sector, including in warehousing, rail freight and road freight jobs. Action needs to be taken, therefore, to showcase the wide array of roles available and demonstrate what day-to-day activity actually looks like.

Playing to logistics’ strengths

There is already work to be done in tackling perceptions where they are wrong. Respondents were keen to highlight comparisons to other lines of work which have a better reputation, despite the reality of working conditions and pay often being worse than frontline logistics. Some APPG attendees stressed that salary levels in many logistics jobs, particularly HGV drivers, are higher than many jobs from which many “career changers” come. While it is common for later joiners of the logistics workforce to come from the military via groups like Veterans into Logistics.

Recommendations to Government:

1. **Publish and signpost statistics to average salaries by profession on gov.uk and government careers sites:** Giving the public better access to pay data will showcase the high earning potential of some jobs in logistics. This will help drive workforce entry from a diverse group of people.
2. **Engage with education providers to showcase jobs more prominently in schools:** Awareness of the range of opportunities in logistics is vital, particularly for driving youth workforce entry. Young adults need to be shown their options in this industry at the same time as other careers.

Recommendations to Industry:

1. **Implement internal ambassadorship schemes:** Celebrating the successes of your employees will show your wider workforce what is possible, counteracting any self-limiting false perceptions.
2. **Work with local schools and colleges:** Industry should reach out to local schools and colleges to offer work placements and taster days, and introduce a pre-16 introduction to logistics certificate that combines work experience and classroom work over a 3-day period.



Conclusion

The logistics industry has made demonstrable progress in cultivating diversity in the last few decades. However, much progress remains to be seen, particularly in areas of facilities, training opportunities, and culture change. This report aims to serve as a stock take of the progress to date and a deep-dive into the areas where further action is needed.

The APPG for Freight and Logistics will not allow this report to stand alone and we commit to ongoing action to ensure our asks are heard by policymakers and to improve the level of opportunity this sector is able to provide.





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and Logistics

About the APPG for Freight and Logistics

The APPG for Freight and Logistics was founded to promote and represent the interests of the UK logistics and freight sector and provide a forum to discuss opportunities and challenges facing the sector. The APPG is Chaired by Rachel Taylor MP, Member of Parliament for North Warwickshire and Bedworth.

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.