April 2020



Thank you for contacting me about road haulage and the impact of the coronavirus outbreak.

I appreciate your concerns and as a Transport Minister and someone who, before politics, was a heavy user of road haulage (I used to import and wholesale fruit and vegetables) I recognise that the present situation is causing real difficulties for the sector. I also understand that the sector has a vital role to play in the national effort to combat the spread of the disease.

As the virus has hit the sector a range of measures have been put in place to offer some support. For example, drivers’ hours rules have been relaxed as an exceptional contingency measure, as outlined in Government guidance, to enable journeys to be undertaken which are necessary to protect people's health and lives and qualification requirements for the Driver CPC have been amended so that drivers in Great Britain whose DQC expires in the period from 1st March 2020 to 30th September 2020 can continue driving.

The Transport Secretary also announced that it will be easier for bus and lorry drivers to renew their expiring driving licences. This latest action taken by the government and DVLA will ensure that bus and lorry drivers can continue their vital work and keep the country moving. As NHS staff rightly focus on the nationwide response to coronavirus, the government has temporarily relaxed the requirement for bus and lorry drivers to provide a doctor’s medical report in order to renew their licence.

Under the scheme, drivers will be able to receive a temporary 1-year licence, providing they do not have any medical conditions that affect their driving and their current licence expires in 2020.

This temporary change will not only keep 30,000 drivers on the road each month, but will also relieve pressure on NHS staff who are working hard on the frontline to tackle coronavirus and help parts of the emergency services to deliver their critical role.

I know that military drivers will be allowed to drive in civilian situations during the period outlined above too and we are looking at options for drivers with HGV or PCV entitlements but who have never held a CPC and who want to start driving professionally.

In terms of financial support, interventions such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, business rates exemptions, the deferral of VAT payments and Government-backed loans and guarantees all apply to road hauliers. I would encourage any road hauliers experiencing difficulty to explore how they could take advantage of these measures.

Further information on all the support available can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>

I know the Government and the RHA have been in regular contact about the issues COVID-19 is causing for road hauliers. I will also follow the industry’s situation closely going forward.

Thank you again for taking time to contact me.



Yours faithfully,

**CHRIS HEATON-HARRIS MP**

**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR DAVENTRY**