Rt Hon Keir Starmer MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA

11th March 2026

Dear Prime Minister,

Lorry drivers deserve better: It's time to fix parking and rest facilities

The HGV driver shortage in 2021 brought into sharp focus an issue that has been overlooked for decades: the severe lack of lorry parking and driver facilities and our shameful national reputation as having the worst in Europe. The shortage of proper facilities forces drivers to rest in insecure lay-bys, leaving them vulnerable to freight crime. Where facilities do exist, they are substandard, often unsafe, and unhygienic.

There is an estimated national shortage of 11,000 lorry parking spaces across the country[1]. Many areas including the South East, East Midlands and East of England are exceeding critical levels of parking capacity. Drivers, forced to stay in unsafe locations like lay-bys and industrial estates, have no access to even the most basic facilities like toilets, showers, and catering. Poor facilities are unfortunately getting worse. Year on year dissatisfaction with the quality, and quantity of roadside facilities have increased to 62% and 61% respectively, both up from last year's 49%.[2]

This shortage has created a race to the bottom: truck stops and service area owners and operators know that there are more drivers than there are spaces and have no commercial incentive to invest properly in their sites. At many stops and service areas, facilities are barely better than at lay-bys – with many lacking catering, toilets, or showers. There is little security – once again making drivers vulnerable to freight crime committed by organised criminal gangs, forcing a vigilance that greatly affects the rest a driver can take while stopped, risking road safety.

The severe parking shortage continues to exacerbate poor basic working conditions for lorry drivers at a time when we need to train and recruit 40,000 new drivers a year just to maintain supply chains.[3] These poor working conditions are a serious drag on driver recruitment, retention and diversity, which can lead to supply chain failures and depressed economic conditions. This puts at risk the Government's chances to meet its house building and economic growth objectives.

The Department for Transport has run a grant scheme to improve driver facilities. However, the future of this scheme is uncertain and much more needs to be done to improve both the quality and quantity of facilities. The planning system, which the Government has already taken steps to reform, remains a major blocker for increasing the number of parking spaces and helping to drive up standards. Planning guidance on HGV parking is limited, disaggregated and unclear.

We therefore ask that you consider the following measures to help improve lorry parking standards and capacity:

- Adopt additional wording in the National Planning Policy Framework and release a National Policy Statement outlining the infrastructure required by logistics with a particular emphasis on HGV parking provision.
- Support motorway service area operators to implement minimum security standards - particularly those operating on government-owned land as a condition of their lease.
- Provide a central source of information on lorry parking, hosted on GOV.UK and regularly updated by MHCLG and DfT.
- Require local planning authorities to identify sites for lorry parking, alongside a presumption in favour of development for planning applications for lorry parking where sites have not been identified.
- Mandate HGV parking provision as a consent condition for all major infrastructure schemes, including Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, as well as any local projects which are likely to increase the movements of goods vehicles, such as new logistics parks, distribution centres and major improvements to the local road network.

Lorry drivers move over 80% of all freight in the UK[4]. They are critical in keeping the country moving. We urge you to seize the opportunity to give lorry drivers the dignity and conditions they deserve, which for too long have not been addressed by successive Governments.

1 Road Haulage Association - Facilities Campaign https://www.rha.uk.net/Campaigns/Roadside-Facilities
2 Transport Focus - Lorry Drivers' Facilities Survey – Year two summary report https://www.transportfocus.org.uk/publication/lorry-drivers-facilities-survey-year-two-summary-report/
3 Road Haulage Association - Lorry Drivers: the vital link https://www.rha.uk.net/Portals/0/PolicyCampaigning/RHADriversReportFINAL.pdf?ver=vG6TFg-Q32gRrG9_DHqv9g%3d%3d
4 Department for Transport Transport Statistics Great Britain https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-statistics-great-britain-2024/transport-statistics-great-britain-2023-freight

Rachel Tayor MP
Sarah Edwards MP
Amanda Hack MP
Antonia Bance MP
Rachael Maskell MP
Gurinder Singh Josan CBE MP
Phil Brickell MP
Bill Esterson MP
Kirsteen Sullivan MP
Terry Jermy MP
David Baines MP
Lillian Jones MP
Jonathan Brash MP
Margaret Mullane MP
Sarah Champion MP
Paula Barker MP
Dame Nia Griffith MP
Samantha Niblett MP
Lee Baron MP
Ian Byrne MP
Grahame Morris MP
Elsie Blundell MP
Jim Dickson MP
Kate Osborne MP
Neil Duncan-Jordan MP
Julia Buckley MP
Dave Robertson MP
Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP
Marsha de Cordova MP
Afzal Khan MP
Peter Prinsley MP
Michelle Scrogham MP
Oliver Ryan MP
Johanna Baxter MP
Sarah Smith MP
Simon Opher MP
Lee Pitcher MP
Mohammed Yasin MP
Sir Christopher Chope

Anneliese Midgley MP
Toby Perkins MP
Steve Witherden MP
Rebecca Long Bailey MP
Tonia Antoniazzi MP
Mary Foy MP
Nadia Whittome MP
Kerry McCarthy MP
Andrew Ranger MP
Josh Newbury MP
Clive Betts MP
Graeme Downie MP
Chris Webb MP
Jacob Collier MP
Ruth Jones MP
Luke Akehurst MP
Luke Murphy MP
Sir Desmond Swayne MP
Sir John Hayes MP
Mark Garnier MP
Richard Holden MP
Greg Smith MP
David Mundell MP
Dame Harriet Baldwin MP
Mims Davies MP
Bradley Thomas MP
Martin Vickers MP
James Wild MP
Carla Lockhart MP
Adrian Ramsay MP
Wera Hobhouse MP
Pippa Heylings MP
Lee Dillon MP
Christine Jardine MP
Steve Darling MP
Andrew George MP
David Chadwick MP
Ben Lake MP
Sarah Pochin MP

Dave Doogan MP
Graham Leadbitter MP
Seamus Logan MP
Jim Allister MP
Robin Swann MP
Rt Hon. the Lord Taylor of Holbeach CBE
Baroness Blower
Lord Hendy KC
Rt Hon. Lord Kinnock
Rt Hon. Lord Spellar
Lord Mann of Holbeck Moor
Baroness Golding
Lord Bradshaw
Lord Griffiths of Burry Port
Lord Sikka
Baroness Hoey
Baroness Bakewell DBE
Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick
Lord Watson of Invergowrie
Lord Moylan
Baroness Meyer CBE
Earl Attlee
Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach
Baroness Verma
Baroness Redfern
Lord Bird MBE
Lord Carrington
Baroness O'Loan DBE MRIA
Rt Hon. Baroness Foster of Aghadrumsee
Rt Hon. Lord Dodds
Lord Browne of Belmont
Baroness Harris of Richmond
Lord Tope CBE
Baroness Thornhill MBE
Lord Storey CBE
Lord Goddard of Stockport