

Huge lack of lorries as Xmas shopping looms

Britain short of 45,000 lorries in the lead up to Christmas

By Sebastian Jenkins

Britain is short of over 45,000 lorry drivers in the build up to Christmas, which could cause disruption to the influx of orders and deliveries.

This is a serious problem as more than 85 per cent of British goods are transported by lorry at some stage in the supply chain.

A spokesman for nationwide recruitment specialists, QuickTemp, said, "We can confirm that the requests for lorry drivers has certainly increased since the CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence) was introduced in September last year.

"There are a number of reasons as to why there is a driver shortage but lack of pay is the main one."

The Freight Transport Association have stated that Britain need another 60,000 new drivers; only getting around 20,000 per year currently.

It has been warned that shelves may be empty towards the festive period as delivery companies are stretched thin. Richard Burnett, chief executive of the Road Haulage Association, describes the situation as "grave" and one which "presents a real threat to Christmas and economic growth."

The RHA represents around 8,000 companies, all of which are feeling the effects of this drought in new heavy-goods-vehicle drivers.

Mr Burnett added, "Thousands of older drivers are leaving the industry and younger people can't afford the £3,000 it costs to get a truck licence. The Government could help but won't.

"They should support a truck driving apprenticeship but are refusing to do so; even though they are forcing the larger trucking firms to pay the new



British lorry drivers prepare for a busy Christmas as the shortage of new drivers puts a massive strain on the delivery industry

apprenticeship levy. As far as the RHA is concerned, that amounts to little more than just a tax on payroll. What young person can find £3,000 without some help?"

With 2.2 million people employed in the associated warehousing operations, it is not just lorry drivers who will feel the strain. With fewer goods coming through the warehouses, a

large workforce will simply not be needed this year.

A group of employers, called a trailblazer, are now working together to develop a high standard of apprenticeship in the logistics industry.

A spokesman for the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills said "We are still working closely with the Logistics Trailblazer group and have

provided feedback to help them develop their LGV (Large Goods Vehicle) Driver apprenticeship standard."

Whilst the shortage of lorry drivers is being addressed, the short-term issues still remain as shoppers begin to order their first Christmas presents. The Government has now committed to delivering three million apprenticeship starts, but not until 2020.

This does however highlight the fact that a lack of government intervention until this point has resulted in a shortage in the first place. Many will be asking why the situation allowed to reach this point in the first place.

This does however mean that shops, both in store and online, will struggle to supply and deliver goods to the British public for this year at least.

Gambling with teen health

The rate of high school gambling problems has surpassed adults 2 to 1, as teenage gambling is rising in Britain.

The birth of internet gambling in the 90's has created an ease of access for young teenagers wishing to gamble online. Gambling has evolved into a common pass time among a generation of young adults.

Elliot Macey, 19, Bedfordshire said, "When there is nothing else to do, I can

always gamble", and he admitted that he has lost "up to £300" in one night playing online poker, before "using my dad's card when I ran out of money and lost another £100."

Mr Macey added, "I was eight when I learned how to play poker, and ten when I first played online."

The recent glamorisation of betting across TV and films has only fuelled this modern image of gambling being

a 'cool' pastime. Mr Macey described how "When your friends are all gambling it makes you want to join in."

Mr Macey went on to say, "I think the adverts on TV definitely have a big impact, especially the football ones."

"I don't think that I would gamble anywhere near as much if there were not advertisements on TV."

Potentially the most worrying thing for parents is the fact that their children can gamble under-age. GamCare, the national organisation for gambling, released the figures that 40 per cent of under 16's who gamble do so in betting shops, and a further 33 per cent of those aged between 16 and 17 follow the same trend.

A representative from Paddy Power, a leading betting organisation, said, "We conduct daily checks in all of our stores", which leaves parents wondering how children as young as 16 are slipping under the radar.

The manager of Paddy Power Gillingham said, "Anyone should know the risks, but teenagers are more vulnerable due to a lack of life experience."



Teenage gambling addiction on the rise across Britain; as young as ten

NI prison named as unsafe for all

Inspectors say that Northern Irish high security prison, Maghaberry is 'unsafe and unstable' for inmates and staff. It is one of the most critical of any prison in the UK and it said there were significant failures in leadership.

MI5 secret phone data collection

MI5 has secretly been collecting vast amounts of data about UK phone calls to search for terrorist connections. The programme has been running for 10 years under a law described as "vague" by the government's terror watchdog.

Volkswagen's UK October sales fall

Sales of VW branded cars fell 9.8 per cent, Skoda dropped 3 per cent and Seat sales sank 32.2 per cent. However, sales of Audi, Porsche and Bentley cars all rose.

Morrisons' sales slide once more

Supermarket chain Morrisons has reported another fall in sales, partly due to cutting back on promotional vouchers. In the 13 weeks to 1 November, like-for-like sales excluding fuel fell by 2.6 per cent.

Live worm pulled from man's brain

A California man is recovering after he had a live tapeworm removed from his brain during emergency surgery. Luis Ortiz was admitted to a hospital in Napa with what he called the worst headache of his life.

Collins' picks its word of the year

Collins English Dictionary has chosen binge-watch as its 2015 Word of the Year, meaning "to watch television programmes in succession"