

Policy Bulletin #1: A Response to the Department for Transport (DfT) HGV parking and driver welfare grant scheme



15 March 2024

The £16m that the DfT has recently allocated under Round 2 of a scheme aimed at [upgrading facilities](#) at [38 truck stops](#) in England is to be welcomed. This is making a start on an issue that has been in the political spotlight since a [2016 Select Committee Inquiry](#). The infrastructure supporting truck driving work in the UK is woeful, certainly when compared with comparator countries. Its lack, and general state of neglect, flies in the face of attracting, and retaining, a truck driving workforce. To finally see money flowing in this direction is to be commended. Yet below we highlight two ongoing concerns:

First, it needs to be recognised that upgrading facilities doesn't automatically equate to those facilities being used by drivers. Survey after survey shows that when haulage companies pass on the costs of using facilities to their drivers, they don't use them. If drivers are to use these facilities then the costs incurred for using them need to be fully included as part and parcel of doing the job. Just as with any other job, the cost of necessary expenses need to be borne by the employer.

Facilities need to be clean for them to be used. Dirty facilities signal a [lack of respect for drivers](#). The upgraded facilities for truck drivers need to be staffed, and this should include regular cleaning. Capital grant schemes need to include a mechanism to ensure that businesses are putting the additional recurrent costs into upgraded facilities to make them fit for purpose.

Second, the problem of truck stop facilities has been framed by DfT (and others) as a parking problem, specifically as a problem of secure, over-night parking, and as a capacity problem, with existing facilities identified as exceeding critical thresholds.

This framing relates to a legacy methodology: the [DfT's Lorry Parking audit](#), a night time audit, conducted originally in 2017, and updated for the [2022 National Lorry Parking Survey](#). Framed this way, the identified solution becomes more overnighting spaces (and better facilities), with a focus on adding more spaces to existing facilities. Rather than seeing this as a parking/capacity problem, it's more useful to see this as an interface problem.

Truck driving schedules, and stops, are not just shaped by driver's hours regulation but also by logistics in the form of software systems that demand increasing temporal accuracy from suppliers. It is common for supply chain management solutions to require truck drivers to hit a 15 minute delivery window at a DC or warehouse or risk being turned away, and/or fined. A consequence is that trucks are found parked up on local roads in geographical proximity to DCs/warehouses.

By concentrating funding on upgrading facilities on the primary road network, DfT is putting money into an old understanding of economic infrastructure. For many truck drivers, the key pressure point for facilities is not what's available on the roadside, but the interface with the places they're delivering to – places like DCs, fulfilment centres and warehouses, where they're frequently excluded from facilities.

A key site for future policy intervention has to be to make planning approval for new warehouse space conditional upon the provision of additional truck parking and attendant facilities. Without this, businesses such as Amazon continue to pass the externalities on to the local areas where they choose to locate, whilst leaving truck drivers literally in the lurch.