

# Driver Skills Shortage

## Briefing note

The transport and logistics sector unfortunately is suffering from a skills shortage across all levels from Drivers, warehouse operatives, transport planners, managers. This Skill Shortage is having an impact on business expansion and growth opportunities and makes dealing with issues posed by Brexit very difficult. Industry must take the lead in pursuing solutions that can alleviate the problems they are faced with. Competitive issues must be set aside to work collaboratively towards industry wide solutions that everyone can benefit from. To come up with solutions requires understanding what the issues are in the first place! This briefing note will focus on the driver shortage for the commercial heavy goods vehicle drivers. This profession is challenged with an image problem that does not promote a good career choice. This must change if we are to recruit young people to take up driving positions not only in the haulage sector but in the own account sector as well. We are on the verge of the biggest shock to the supply chain in decades and on the cusp of an automated revolution. Getting people interested in a career in transport and logistics is of vital importance. Training and education, upskilling and continuous professional development must become the norm not the exception if our sector is to succeed into the future.

## The Freight Distribution and Logistics Industry

The freight distribution and logistics industry is a vibrant and vital sector for the economy of Ireland. Contributing in excess of €1 billion a year to the exchequer in the form of PAYE PRSI and road taxes. Irish goods and service exports have increased by over a third between 2011 and 2016 from €175 billion to €258 billion and the economy is now ranked 12th most competitive in the world<sup>1</sup>. For many reasons this sector is currently unattractive to young people. This is evidenced by the number of people applying for driving jobs, applying for third level supply chain courses and by the results of the driver survey outlined later in this briefing note. The transport sector in particular has been less successful than others in recruiting younger workers due to many factors including a perception that it is made up of predominantly low skilled jobs and long hours. This perception must change! A real way to deal with change is to invest in Training and Education.

The labour needs of the Freight, Transport, Distribution and Logistics sector are developing as forecast in the 2015 EGFSN report<sup>2</sup>. At the time of 2016 Census there were 49,470 people working in this field. In the absence of a major external shock the labour needs of the sector are expected to increase to 66,204 by 2025. Given the age profile of people working in the sector,

approximately 13,752 of those currently working in the sector are expected to retire by 2025<sup>3</sup>. In summary, a total of 30,486 individuals will have to decide to take up careers in the sector and receive all the necessary training between now and 2025 in this baseline scenario.

Table overleaf is page 103 of the report <http://www.skillsireland.ie/Publications/2015/18022015-Freight-Skills-Publication-pdf.pdf>

The 2015 report highlights that there will be a requirement for between 7125 and 8406 new entrants into the occupation of HGV driver by 2020.



## Driver Perception Survey

Following an FTA Ireland Council Meeting it was decided to conduct a Driver perception survey. A key objective was to understand what current drivers think of their profession, what are the key issues for them, and use this information as the basis for developing solutions on how to attract new entrants to the profession. Between December 2018 and February 2019 TUDublin developed the study and carried out the survey. 115 questionnaires were completed, and data collected from drivers operating in Ireland, of which 111 were deemed valid following data screening. Analysis of the collected data was conducted by Dr Chao Ji-Hyland utilizing SPSS – an advanced statistical software analysis for usage in an academic paper in-progress, as previously detailed (Ji-Hyland & Allen, 2019).

1 <https://dbe.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Skills-needs-potential-trade-implications-Brexit.pdf>

2 <http://www.skillsireland.ie/Publications/2015/18022015-Freight-Skills-Publication-pdf.pdf>

3 <https://dbe.gov.ie/en/Publications/Publication-files/Skills-needs-potential-trade-implications-Brexit.pdf>

**Table 7.9: Baseline employment, forecast demand and shortfall by core FTDL occupations**

	2011	2020 Demand		Shortfall 2020	
	Baseline	Recovery Scenario	Delayed Scenario	Recovery Scenario	Delayed Scenario
HGV drivers	19,758	25,201	23,920	8,406	7,125
Mobile machine drivers and operatives n.e.c.	5,426	6,921	6,569	2,230	1,879
Managers and directors in storage and warehousing	4,071	5,193	4,929	1,430	1,166
Managers and directors in transport and distribution	3,497	4,460	4,234	1,381	1,154
Fork-lift truck drivers	3,074	3,921	3,722	1,135	935
Transport and distribution clerks and assistants	2,767	3,529	3,350	951	772
Aircraft pilots and flight engineers	1,622	2,276	2,117	765	606
Other drivers and transport operatives n.e.c.	1,278	1,630	1,547	583	500
Air transport operatives	1,135	1,593	1,482	529	417
Rail transport operatives	999	1,274	1,209	393	329
Train and tram drivers	670	855	811	229	185
Ship and hovercraft officers	623	747	719	230	202
Marine and waterways transport operatives	543	651	626	190	165
Importers and exporters	332	423	402	148	126
<b>FTDL-14</b>	<b>45,795</b>	<b>58,676</b>	<b>55,636</b>	<b>18,601</b>	<b>15,562</b>

The FTDL-14 encompasses four categories of road freight drivers: HGV vehicle drivers, fork-lift truck drivers, mobile machine drivers and operatives, and other drivers & transport operatives. These four categories comprise approximately 60% of the total baseline supply.

The shortfall as a percentage of 2011 employment conveys the quantity of labour needed relative to the baseline quantity. The results are set out in Table 7.10 below. The occupation-level shortfall rates range from 28% to 37% in the Delayed Adjustment Scenario and from 34% to 47% in the Recovery Scenario.

The demand for HGV drivers also ranks highly in terms of relative shortfall: 5th highest, at 43%, in the Recovery scenario and only one point lower than the highest, at 36%, in the Delayed Adjustment Scenario. This reinforces the need for additional drivers in almost any economic scenario. Indeed, even with no change in output, there would be a shortfall of some three thousand HGV drivers resulting from retirements.

## The Results

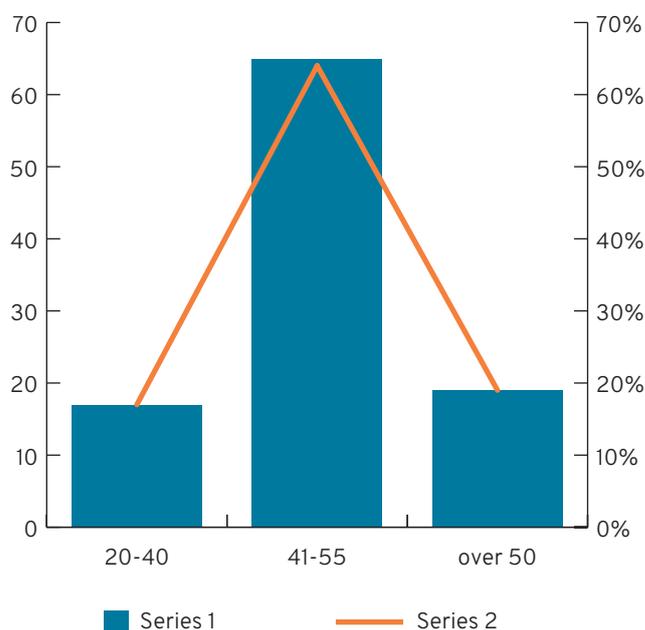
Over 60% of drivers survey were between the ages of 41 and 55 with 19% over the age of 50. As can be seen there is a huge age gap with less than 20% between the ages of 20 and 40 years of age. If the driver shortage issue is not dealt with now and the profession is made more attractive for young people whatever the issues we face today will be multiplied in less than 10 years' time.

Over 75% of drivers surveyed are in the same employment for more than 4 years. This is very positive and indicates that there is job security in the industry and that there is a good employer employee relationship.

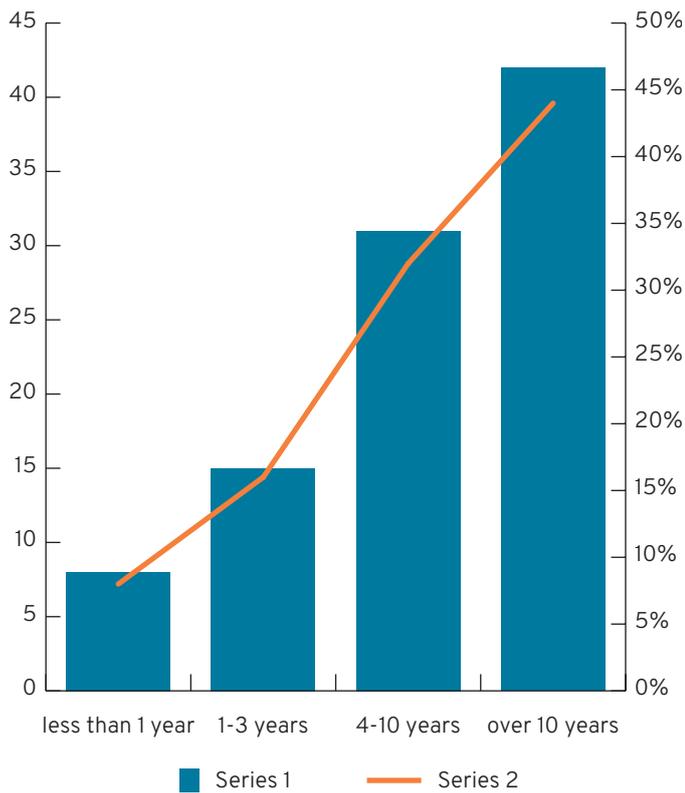
41% of respondents cited that the main reason they got involved in professional driving is that they liked driving. Interestingly 20% became involved because they viewed driving as a secure employment. Salary, working hours and family business reasons are way down the pecking order.

75% of drivers are working between 40 hours and 60 hours per week. With 15% working more than 60hours per week. Cross-case tabulation analysis found that 33% of those working in excess of 60 hours a week were doing so for monetary reasons. This is

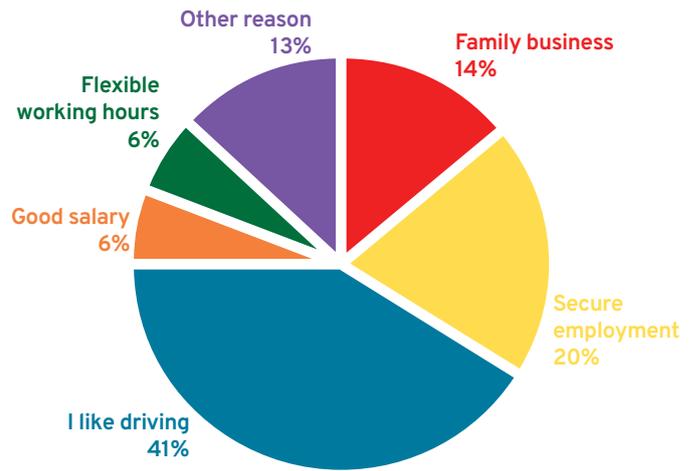
**Age Group of Driver**



**Length of Employment**

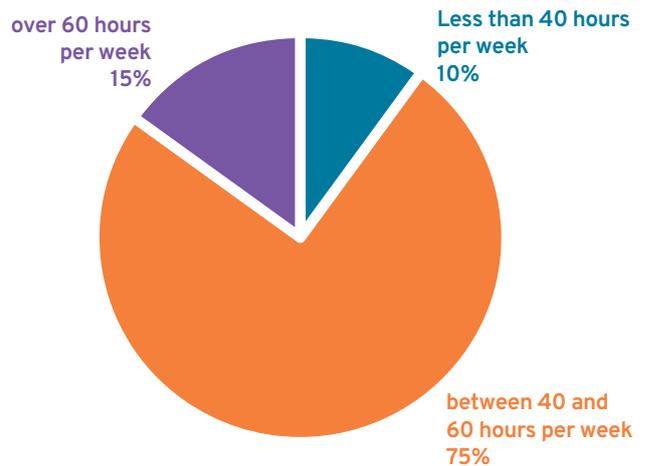


**Reason for becoming a driver**



concerning and must be addressed by industry to help change the perception of driving as a profession. Working time is governed by national work time Acts for mobile workers and also by the Working Time Directive. This coupled with Tachograph regulations are designed to ensure that drivers can only work on average 48hours per week.

**Weekly hours worked**



## Additional findings

### Main issues facing drivers

**Pressure to fulfil on-time deliveries**

**Low pay**    **Respect afforded to them by colleagues and members of the public**    **Extensive regulations**

**Long hours away from home**

**Facilities made available to drivers**    **Irregular work schedules**    **Loneliness**    **Terms and Conditions**

## In summary

The information provided by the survey highlights that there is support for structured training programmes that can attract young people into the industry. It also highlights that industry itself needs to do a lot more to make their businesses attractive to drivers and that a focus needs to be on 'terms and conditions' of employment.

- More must be done to create awareness of career progression and driver wage structures.
- The poor standard of facilities provided to drivers, namely the country's service stations, was an issue prominently mentioned throughout the interview process. The substandard amenities encountered by drivers contributes to unsatisfactory operating conditions.
- Many of those who chose to become a driver do so for the freedom involved or their personal enjoyment of driving. Very little opportunity for career advancement is presented to drivers, reflecting negatively on the 'motivators' present within the role of opportunity for progression, personal achievement and recognition from superiors (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959).
- The lack of 'soft skills' provided to drivers in regard to training can severely negatively affect the need to belong as a driver,

failing to provide drivers with the skills required to maintain family relationships and to facilitate social interaction due to the nature of the role can be seen as detrimental to providing drivers with what is deemed a quite basic human need.

- Drivers suffering from a lack of respect externally and from within the industry was noted repeatedly throughout qualitative data collection with mention given to the dehumanized view the public can hold of drivers.

## Commercial Driver Apprenticeship



The apprenticeship is designed to ensure that employers understand and work to their legal and moral obligations

and that their engagement in the apprenticeship programme will support the future attractiveness of the profession which in years to come will rely on the 'Commercial Driver Apprenticeship' as a source of drivers that are loyal, competent and safe.

The Commercial Driver Apprenticeship is an undergraduate programme at level 6 on the QQI National Framework of Qualifications.

The proposed apprenticeship programme is directly in response to the recommendations in the 2018 Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation report on Addressing the skills needs arising from the potential trade implications of Brexit.

- It is offered on a day – release basis over two years, the apprentice will attend one day in college and four days in the work place.
- This programme is at undergraduate NFQ Level 6 and carries 120 ECTS credits. Each ECTS credit equals a notional 20 learning hours.
- Each module will require self-directed learning and will also entail a student-centered approach. There will be a high level of apprentice interaction, active and peer learning in the classroom.
- Each module has assessments that are outlined in each module descriptor. In addition to classroom contact, students will be required to undertake self-directed independent learning. This will include individual assignments, reading, reflection, preparing for in-class activities, group work, and online activities.
- Driver Licence – DDLETB will undertake to prepare the apprentices for the Driving Test and Driver CPC test
- The training will be on bloc release in period of 2 weeks
- The driving test and Driver CPC test will take place following the completion of the first academic year
- The consortium will define guidance for employers to follow once the apprentice has received his/her driving licence covering the following areas:
  - Driver supervision
  - Driver assessment
  - Professional certified Defensive Driver Training

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\*Calls may be recorded for training purposes.

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