



## BRITISH PORTS ASSOCIATION

19 November 2021

Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee  
Welsh Parliament  
Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[SeneddEconomy@Senedd Wales](mailto:SeneddEconomy@Senedd Wales)

### **Response: The HGV Driver Shortage and Supply Chain Issues**

To whom it may concern,

The British Ports Association (BPA) is the national trade association for ports, harbours and terminals, speaking for members who own and operate over 400 ports, terminals and port facilities across the UK. We represent the interests of a diverse group of ports to all tiers of government. Representing 45 out of the 50 major ports in the UK, our membership also accounts for 86% of all port tonnages.

In this response, we will primarily be responding to the fourth question requested: '*What impact the shortage of HGV drivers will have on consumers and businesses in Wales?*'

We coordinate the Welsh Ports Group, a sub-committee that discusses and manages all business and developments that may affect Welsh ports. It is the only forum representing the views of this important sector in Wales and it regularly holds meetings with the Welsh Government and key decision makers across the planning, transport, and maritime sectors.

We have seen the call for views regarding the HGV driver shortage and supply chain issues and would very much like to offer our views.



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Container ports around the world are dealing with backlogs in containers. As a result, UK ports are experiencing particularly high volumes combined with additional traffic as businesses ready Christmas stock. Vessel schedules have been disrupted by global port congestion making planning more difficult and a shortage of HGV drivers and tight warehousing space both mean some traders are leaving goods at ports for longer.

Whilst some are extremely busy, the overwhelming majority of UK ports are currently operating normally. We have a variety of port gateways around the UK and they are continuing to keep the country supplied.

Although, a particular challenge UK ports are also experiencing surrounds the much publicised lack of haulage. This has meant that some freight is not being collected as rapidly as it would normally. The situation is impacting all types of ports, not just container terminals. It has resulted in some further delays for a range of ports and terminal operations are working with their customers to get these goods out of their ports to avoid further congestion. To compound this we are also seeing pressures on storage facilities which can make certain logistics operators unable to move goods away from ports as rapidly as you might normally see.

Whilst the HGV driver shortage is not helping the Welsh freight sector, it is mainly impacting unaccompanied cargo and 'Ro-Ro' ports where a domestic driver collects the load. As such, some Welsh ports are facing challenges, but other Welsh Ro-Ro ports are not, as their traffic is driver accompanied.

This a peak period in the freight calendar as the pre-Christmas order books create an additional surge in the demand for the ever import hungry British economy. The maritime sector is vital to the Welsh economy and the ports and shipping industry are working closely to keep Wales and the rest of the UK open for business.

Yours sincerely,

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British Ports Association