



## Key Partnerships

For a number of years the logistics industry has been concerned about the combined impact of an ageing professional LGV driver workforce and the lack of new entrants coming through to replace those who leave the sector as a result of retirement or to pursue different careers.

With new driver licence acquisitions in 2013 25 per cent lower than in 2008, there is a lack of people filling the void left by those leaving the industry. While the recession meant that there was a delay in the consequences of this lack of fresh recruits being felt, with the recovery the issue is now coming to a head. Sadly, not enough young people are considering driving as a career option. There are several reasons for this, including: the cost of licence acquisition, lack of understanding of the sector, poor sector image, driver medical requirements and low quality driver facilities.

The impact of the driver shortage is also being exacerbated by other factors, including the implementation of the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC), which appears to be acting as the trigger for some older drivers to retire early. Changes to medical requirements for vocational driver licensing in respect of health issues such as diabetes and sleep apnoea are also likely to disproportionately affect the industry, with nearly half of national LGV drivers over 50 years old.

The logistics industry yet again delivered a fantastic 2015 but the shortage of qualified and experienced LGV drivers is now a fundamental problem for road freight operators, the problems experienced in the run-up to Christmas will persist into 2016 and beyond as reported by the FTA.

With the news the collaborative bid from St Helens College and Knowsley Community College to develop a specialist Logistics Academy gaining successful approval from Liverpool City Region's Growth Deal fund.

Employers such as Wincanton will be central to the Logistics Academy, steering the development of skills and working with both colleges to meet the changing needs of the sector from data analytics to warehousing and distribution.

With the news of the successful funding having several media outlets, Wincanton have already experienced and benefited from the media attention in regards to enquiries about possible future recruitment and enquiries from existing employees regarding gaining external logistic qualifications.

Key relationships of this nature can only benefit Wincanton many ways, such as for the progression of existing employees, establishing key fundamental career opportunities for students of the Academy and providing a key link for HGV driving training for the next generation of drivers.

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