

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP  
Home Secretary  
Home Office  
2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF

30<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Dear Home Secretary,

I am writing to you to bring to your attention a significant concern surrounding HGV driver shortages which is currently causing disruption to the waste and recycling sector in the UK. As you may be aware, FCC Environment is one of the UK's leading waste and resource management companies. We provide a range of services, from the generation of green energy from waste (EfW) to recycling and processing, and at the core of our business, collecting municipal waste from hundreds of thousands of homes as we are paid to do by taxpayers across the country.

Our staff have been working tirelessly throughout the Covid-19 pandemic to maintain our services and ensure household waste continued to be collected but, as we return to normality and adjust to a post-Brexit world, the sector is facing new challenges. This includes a severe shortage of HGV drivers which has been exacerbated by both changes to immigration regimes and a backlog of training and testing. As a result, vacancy rates for driving roles are currently at an average of 15 per cent and a recent survey by the Road Haulage Association estimated that there is a shortage of more than 100,000 drivers in the UK, with 30 per cent of HGV driver vacancies taking over eight weeks to fill.

Whilst we were pleased to see the Government include the waste industry in its list of essential workers exempt from self-isolation, unfortunately this does not resolve the structural issues we are seeing in the UK's labour market. HGV drivers are essential for the waste and recycling sector and, if vacancies remain unfilled, we could see a situation where bins across the country go unemptied, representing a serious issue for public health.

Therefore reducing the vacancy rate is crucial for our sector, but we are aware that fixing the structural problems in the labour market will not happen overnight. We appreciate the Government is aware of these issues, and is implementing visa changes for high skilled workers to continue to attract the skills the country needs. However, we remain concerned that other crucial skilled workers, including HGV drivers, are not being given the same recognition they deserve.

Therefore we are adding our voice to the growing number of concerned organisations in the sector to ask you, as Home Secretary, to introduce a temporary worker visa for HGV drivers and for this occupation to be added to the Shortage Occupation List, until such a time that there are enough qualified UK nationals available to fill these positions. In a post-Brexit economy it is crucial that the UK continues to attract all of the skills the country needs to maintain our essential services. We believe this would go some way to help waste and recycling companies like FCC Environment have access to the skills we need to keep our services going for the future.

We very much hope you will consider our proposals and look forward to working with you to resolve this crucial issue.

Yours sincerely,



Paul Taylor  
Group Chief Executive