



Department  
for Transport

Iain Stewart MP  
Chair of the Transport Select Committee  
House of Commons  
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From the Parliamentary  
Under Secretary of State  
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23 May 2024

Dear Chair,

**Changes to the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence qualification for commercial drivers in the United Kingdom one of the Government's 33 measures to address driver shortages.**

I am writing to inform you that a Statutory Instrument (SI) was laid in Parliament on the 16 May 2024, to implement previously consulted on legislative changes to the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) regulations in the United Kingdom (UK). This delivers one of the last of the 33 measures to be implemented. This letter provides an overview.

Background

The DCPC is a requirement for those who wish to drive lorries, buses and coaches for many commercial purposes, in addition to a driving licence. After obtaining the initial qualification, drivers are required to maintain it by undertaking 35 hours of periodic training every five years. The purpose of the DCPC is to increase safe and fuel-efficient driving and maintain the professionalism and high standards of drivers of goods and passenger service vehicles.

Purpose of the reforms

As part of the Government's 33 measures to deal with the shortage of lorry drivers in the UK, a review was launched in 2021 on ways to streamline DCPC. The reforms brought by this SI tackle dissatisfaction with the current qualification by increasing flexibility for those working in the sector and improving the attractiveness of the sector to new and existing drivers. This will be one of the last of our 33 measures to be implemented and will help

attract and retain drivers to the sector which will ultimately increase resilience in the sector against future driver shortages. It will also provide a boost to the bus and coach sectors who have reported more recent driver shortages affecting services.

It is necessary to change the law to implement a number of these proposed changes because professional standards requirements for lorry, bus and coach drivers are defined in some detail in regulations.

### Reforms to be implemented

Proposed changes will introduce a National DCPC (N-DCPC) qualification alongside the existing, international one, which will be known as the International DCPC (I-DCPC). In practice, the N-DCPC will differ from the I-DCPC through the introduction of the following reforms.

From August 2024:

- The minimum course length for periodic training will be reduced from 7 down to 3.5 hours, making training less burdensome and providing drivers more choice on when to take courses.
- E-learning will be decoupled from trainer-led courses, allowing greater flexibility in when e-learning courses can be taken.

From February 2025:

- An accelerated pathway will be introduced for drivers returning to the sector in the form of a return to driver training module, reducing burdens on those wishing to return to the industry.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is also developing, alongside the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), more core course content and informal assessment at the end of modules will be encouraged.

### Scope

The introduction of the N-DCPC will benefit drivers operating within the UK. The existing (I-DCPC) regime will remain in place for UK drivers operating internationally due to commitments in the UK/EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) and other international agreements which prescribe the DCPC regime for international drivers. It will also continue to be recognised for UK driving operations, so international drivers will not be required to acquire more qualifications.

### Wider interest

The changes being delivered by the SI are positive having been developed through significant consultation with the industry. I am delighted that we have delivered on one of the last, and eagerly awaited, of the 33 measures so drivers renewing their DCPC qualification this year will be among the first to benefit.

A copy of this letter has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Guy Opperman', is centered on the page. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Guy' written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name 'Opperman'.

**GUY OPPERMAN MP**

**MINISTER FOR ROADS AND LOCAL TRANSPORT**