Thank you for your letter of 3 December 2014, about the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC) and the shortage of HGV drivers. I am sorry not to have replied before 12 December.

We have had a number of discussions with the freight industry about the shortage of drivers. Their estimates of the actual number vary considerably. The Road Haulage Association has put the number at 45,000. However, the Labour Force Survey by the Office for National Statistics reported there were 285,000 HGV drivers employed in April-June this year (although this does not include all of those where driving is part of their job who may be included in other employment categories). This is an increase from the figure of 259,000 for the equivalent period in 2013.

We are working with the industry to identify ways to improve the situation. There are a wide range of issues contributing to this problem, including the high age profile of the driving workforce, lower levels of recruitment of younger drivers and rising levels of demand. We welcome the steps the industry is taking to try to recruit a new generation of hauliers.

We do not consider that CPC training is the only cause of a driver shortage and sections of the industry, such as the trade associations recognise this. The industry also recognises that CPC training can be helpful in raising safety standards and skills within the sector.
Around 770,000 drivers (including bus/coach and some van drivers) had completed CPC training by the September 2014 deadline for HGV drivers to complete the training. This figure is above the industry’s estimates of the number of professional drivers. We did take action on driver CPC training last year to exempt an estimated 75,000 drivers (such as mechanics and valets).

You may also be interested in the fact that the European Commission is undertaking a review of Driver CPC, and consulted on how effective it was in October 2013. Officials from the Department recently hosted a meeting for representatives from the bus and coach and road transport industries, and other sectors impacted by the Driver CPC. Stakeholders were invited to provide evidence to inform the UK Government response to the consultation.

\[ \text{Patrick} \]

THE RT. HON. PATRICK McLoughlin