



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Paul Davies MS

Economy, Trade & Rural Affairs Committee

25 March 2022

Dear Paul,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 February regarding arrivals from Afghanistan with HGV driving experience.

Officials are working closely with Working Wales (Careers Wales' adult guidance service) to ensure that refugees who settle in Wales can access the ReAct programme and its successor programme ReAct+. The programme can provide up to £1500 towards the cost of acquiring a UK lorry driving licence and associated qualifications such as the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (DCPC).

Officials have already established the evidence requirements for entry to the ReAct programme, in consultation with agencies who are supporting refugees and the Welsh European Funding Office; we expect that refugees from Afghanistan will have little difficulty in meeting these requirements.

The new ReAct+ programme will introduce a Personal Development Support grant which is designed to remove barriers to employment that are not skills-related; this grant may be used to assist with the cost of 'conversion' to UK driving licences.

Working Wales can arrange for interpreters to assist with the information, advice and guidance process. Working Wales is also working closely with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership and local authorities to ensure that refugees have full access to employability and skills support.

I have asked officials in skills division to get in touch directly with displaced People in Action to promote the Welsh Government's free HGV driver training programme to support Afghan people and others based in Wales looking for employment within the industry.

Yours sincerely,

Vaughan Gething

Vaughan Gething AS/MS

Gweinidog yr Economi
Minister for Economy

28 February 2022

Dear Vaughan and Jane,

Following publication of the Committee's report A New Direction for HGV Drivers I was contacted by Displaced People in Action who informed me that many of the Afghan people who arrived in Wales in 2021, have experience of driving very large vehicles, which often comes from military service. Displaced People in Action have told me that many of those with experience would be keen to become HGV Drivers here in Wales. They also refer to the provision of free training to get HGV licenses which is being provided in England by the UK Government.

Recruiting arrivals from Afghanistan as HGV drivers seems as if it could help to alleviate the current drivers shortages we face. Please could you let me know the following:

- Has the Welsh Government considered promoting the **HGV driver apprenticeship programme** directly to refugees in Wales, including those who arrived from Afghanistan last year?
- The UK Government's website describes **HGV Skills Bootcamps** as "free training courses in England." Please can you clarify whether refugees in Wales can access these, and whether you would consider supporting them to access the training either via transport to an English course or by running a similar course in Wales?

I am copying this letter to Jenny Rathbone MS in her capacity as the Equality and Social Justice Committee and to Delyth Jewell MS in her capacity as Chair of the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport and International Relations Committee.

Kind regards,



Paul Davies MS

Chair: Economy, Trade and Rural Affairs Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.