

SERVICE DISRUPTION- UPDATE

Dear Customer,

I wrote to you all a few weeks ago now to advise on the delays the transport industry as a whole was suffering and those areas worst affected. Since this time Rachael has been updating you all every week of further restrictions or easings taking place across the UK.

As the industry is learning to deal with volumes the noise has lessened, however the problem still exists, the UK now has a LGV driver shortage of 80,000 drivers. This means that although members have resourced additional equipment to help with the volumes, we cannot get drivers to utilise them and therefore members abilities to run trunk vehicles to the hubs to collect freight and then source drivers to deliver it, is proving difficult.

The failure to deliver to schedule is causing informed customers to claim for failed services. The industry has frozen the ability for all members to claim costs back from another delivery member because of failures to service. However, customers continue to ask for Credits and threaten to take their business elsewhere.

This impact is now resulting in members suffering with driver shortages, increasing fuel costs and labour costs unable to sustain themselves and without warning are closing the doors and folding their businesses, further impacting customers nationwide.

My previous letter sent on the 15th April, stated. ***“Should you wish to attempt to send Next day freight to any UK postcode it will be at risk of not arriving. We will be unable to claim back any costs incurred to compensate customers for failures.”***

Despite this, customers are bombarding our accounts department with requests for credits.

I wish there was a fast fix to this. There isn't and we have to accept that service disruption across all networks could go on until the end of the year. I was hoping this week would be a turning point, however I am receiving at least two updates a day from the networks of further restrictions and members going bust.

It is important we address the expectation of our customers. So, to reiterate our position until further notice.

Sending AM or timed deliveries: If you wish to attempt to send any form of a timed delivery to anywhere in the UK. I suggest reaching out to our customer services department to see if it is achievable. I am confident in saying though, that this is a limited service across the UK. If you send this type of delivery although it may receive priority of sorts, there is still no guarantee of it arriving either on time or on the selected day. We will not be accepting requests for credits for any of these failed services or to downgrade costs to economy prices.

Sending Next day deliveries: Members will always try to prioritise next day deliveries. However, there is still no guarantee these will be made on the desired day. We understand if you wish to attempt to utilise this service. It is important you are prepared for it to potentially fail. As before our accounts department will not be accepting requests for credits for downgraded service costs on those deliveries not made to schedule.

Sending Economy freight: As stated before our Economy service that would ordinarily take between 2-3 working days, in some areas is taking up to 10 days. Requests for refunds on this service will not be accepted by our accounts department.

Its not our fault the industry is suffering, why should I make my customer suffer? This problem exists across every sector of transport, Pallet, Parcels, raw materials. It is a byproduct of the Covid-19 pandemic. No driver training has taken place over the last 18 months, during which time a high proportion of drivers have retired. The Government is now intervening to try to attract more drivers to the industry and to offer training incentives to bolster numbers; this however is being stalled by a six-month waiting list to even begin a driver's tuition.

It seems like one excuse after another! I get that completely, it does! But every issue we have faced has been a contributing factor of the next problem. It really is utterly frustrating.

We work hard to make sure we provide an achievable service for customers. So, it's important that we are open and honest to what is currently available to you.

We will continue to collect from you as normal and we will keep you informed as improvements are experienced.

Thank you for your understanding during this period. Your business is important to us.