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By Fred
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Cold chain needs 'fresh approach' to attract young talent



Cold Chain Federation president calls for urgent action to attract more young people to cold chain jobs amid labour crisis

Tim Moran has been re-elected as CCF president

A new approach is needed to secure future cold chain skills and attract more young people to the industry, president of the Cold Chain Federation, Tim Moran, has urged.

His message comes as businesses across the cold chain experience a labour shortage that threatens to jeopardise the industry's efforts to revive temperature-controlled supply chains as restrictions ease on the hospitality and foodservice sectors.

The Cold Chain Federation represents more than 270 companies across the UK, which store and move chilled and frozen food in temperature-controlled storage facilities and refrigerated vehicles.

The organisation's AGM took place virtually on 23 June with discussions on red diesel changes coming into force in

2022, the roadmap towards a net zero UK cold chain, and the impacts of the post-Brexit processes for UK-EU and UK-NI trade, as well as the current labour shortage.

Moran said: "We should be truly proud of what our industry and our people have achieved during this global pandemic, but the cold chain now faces another urgent challenge.

"As restrictions ease for our customers, we need to ramp up dormant supply chains and reconfigure networks, but this is being hindered by a labour shortage.

"Lots of people's lives have changed in the past 18 months and employees coming off furlough are deciding to retire or take time off, at the same time that many non-UK nationals are unable or reluctant to work away from home under current restrictions.

"These issues are exacerbated by the IR35 tax changes limiting our ability to draw on agency and sub-contract capacity.

"To ease current workforce pressures the Cold Chain Federation will work for continued common sense extensions to CPC renewals, speeding up driver testing and extending medicals, but the current situation also shows why we need to take action on longer-term cold chain skill shortage issues.

"It is time for us to come together, as an industry and with government, to take action to attract more young people into our industry and to identify how best to invest in the cold chain skills which are already in short supply and will need to evolve for a net zero future.

"I have no doubt that an important part of the jigsaw will be greater recognition of driving as a skilled and valued career

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which should be reflected by government in the provision of training opportunities and by cold chain customers in the provision of good driver facilities on site.”

Moran, who is regional vice-president of Lineage Logistics UK, was elected for the third time and will continue to serve as president of the Cold Chain Federation for the next two years.

Andrew Baldwin, MD of Reed Boardall's cold storage division, will sit alongside him as vice-president for a two-year term.

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