

September 2021

The start of September, with the 'back to school' period, is always a pressurised time for the whole food supply chain, as the majority of all schools in England go back within a few days of each other. This year it will unfortunately be even more challenging.

The Road Haulage Association estimated at one point that the country was devoid of over 100,000 HGV drivers. Unfortunately, this is a national skills shortage and a multi-industry challenge, heavily impacting just-in-time supply chains like food, and therefore all types of catering and foodservice operations, from education to workplace dining, from leisure to healthcare. It has had ramifications on both the inbound logistics to our catering suppliers and their own outbound delivery capabilities.

We are working closely with suppliers to understand, and where possible ease, pressure points. Naturally there was a reduction in demand over the school summer holidays and we are aware that many suppliers have plans in place to recruit drivers in the short term. However, we are advising that there will be disruption and recommend:

- That ongoing orders are again placed with as much lead time as possible
- If you have space, to increase stock holding to mitigate any delivery shortages
- Where possible, order full cases rather than splits
- To remain as flexible as possible to manage change at short notice.

Foodservice operations now and throughout the autumn are very likely to be disrupted. We understand the challenges that this will bring and aim to support our clients in every way we can. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any of the team.

Best wishes,



Oliver Hall  
Managing Director