

Toilet troubles flaring up again

By **Carol Millett**

A HAULIER IS threatening legal action against DB Schenker in a dispute that flared up after he was refused access to toilet facilities at its Tamworth site.

Andy Garside, health and safety manager at Middlebrook Transport, who suffers from IBS, said staff at the site told him to use a toilet at a nearby pub.

Garside told *CM*: "It was upsetting and humiliating for me to have to beg to use a toilet on its site when I was clearly in a desperate situation, but they wouldn't listen. I have emailed the management, pointing out that it has a duty to provide these facilities to visiting drivers, but it insists it does not."

Asked if DB Schenker provides toilet facilities for drivers at its Tamworth site, QHSE quality, health, safety and environment manager Tiffany Argent told *CM*: "As a business, Schenker views the welfare of all workers (including visiting delivery drivers) as a priority and complies with all applicable health, safety and welfare regulations. Welfare

facilities are offered to drivers whenever it is safe and reasonably practicable to do so.

"There has been one incident in the last year where one individual was not permitted access to Schenker's premises due to inappropriate behaviour towards a female employee. This decision was not taken lightly and was made pursuant to Schenker's duty of care to its employees."

However, Garside told *CM*: "It is a disgrace that this company thinks it is above the law and can malign me."

He has made a formal complaint to DB Schenker denying the allegation of inappropriate behaviour, adding that the claim that he had been excluded from the site was also false.

A Health and Safety Executive spokesman told *CM* drivers denied access to toilet facilities should complain to its compliance unit. He added: "There is a legal requirement to provide visiting delivery drivers with access to toilets and washing facilities under the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992."

Haulier gives helping hand

A SUFFOLK HAULIER CAME to the rescue of residents in Ashborne, Derbyshire, after the UK's recent inclement weather led to pipes rupturing and left the area without drinking water.

Despite freezing conditions, Ipswich-based Kersey Freight reached the town and spent five days delivering bottled water.

Kersey director James Mainwaring received a call from Water Direct on 4 March at 1am asking for help with transport. Within hours, seven HGV drivers



were on the road. "We've been working with them all week, from Kent to the Severn Trent area," he said. "We braved the snow to help people."

The Red Line

Lesley O'Brien... on the gender gap

FOLLOWING ON FROM International Women's Day last week, I wanted to ask 'should these events have a place in a transport magazine?'

My view is that most certainly they should. The transport industry very much projects a male image, which is understandable, given that less than 10% of the workforce is female.

We all know that we have a skills shortage that will, unless we take action, only get worse. Gone are the days when sons went out in the truck with their fathers and then followed in their father's footsteps. Schools seldom promote transport as a career choice, especially for girls. We therefore have no natural flow of youth replacing our ageing workforce.

The transport industry needs to change its image and adapt and embrace change to attract employees. We live in a multicultural society, and so to be a more appealing industry and address our issues, the workforce should reflect the world in which we live, engaging with people of all genders, cultures and ages.

This need for a change in our workforce to ensure growth is no different to the need to adapt to changing technology. It is not surprising that companies that have embraced change, and with greater gender diversity, are performing better.

Change does not come overnight, but we, as an industry, must begin by promoting our industry in schools to both boys and girls, improving our image by better conditions on the roads for our drivers and creating an inclusive work culture.

Inclusion is simply about creating an environment in which everybody feels welcome, appreciated, motivated and able to contribute. This alone will attract a more diverse workforce. We cannot address our skills shortage unless we tackle these issues.

To equalise the demographic of our teams and remove the male stereotype perception, we need to celebrate, develop and empower the women within our industry – women of every age, job role and skill set – and create role models to attract others to make transport and logistics a career choice.



Lesley O'Brien is a partner at Freightlink Europe and Freight Train. She is a founder member of She's RHA. Follow her @freighttrainllp on Twitter.