

PRESS RELEASE

Heavy duty vehicle sector must adapt to embrace once-in-a-generation recruitment opportunity, Volvo study finds

NEWS SUMMARY:

- *Volvo-led research identifies the transition to zero-tailpipe emission heavy duty vehicles as a major opportunity to attract a broader and more diverse workforce*
- *Study highlights key barriers to entry, including low visibility of roles, assumptions around qualifications and experience, and limited representation across the sector*
- *Research outlines clear actions to attract a broader range of candidates to ensure the sector has the skills required to support emerging technologies*

Volvo has published the findings of independent research exploring how women and ethnic minorities perceive careers in and around zero tailpipe-emission buses, coaches and trucks, as part of a project aimed at making the sector feel more visible, accessible and inclusive.

Commissioned with funding from [Transport Scotland's Skills Challenge Fund for HDV \(heavy-duty vehicle\) Decarbonisation](#), the research was carried out by [DJS Research](#) across Scotland and the North of England.

Participants took part in focus groups and interviews exploring perceptions of the sector, to better understand how under-represented groups view the industry, what influences their career choices, and what may be holding them back.

Dan Tanner, Service Market Director, Volvo Bus UK & Ireland, says: "For too long, recruitment in our sector has been limited by a lack of diversity in the talent pipeline, making it harder to build teams that reflect the communities our buses serve. It's something we are working with our colleagues at Volvo Trucks to address across the dealer network, because outdated perceptions risk narrowing the talent pool just when we need a broader mix of skills and perspectives to support growth."

Key findings from the research

The research revealed a generally low awareness of the sector as being a major barrier, with many people outside the industry struggling to picture the organisations, roles and career pathways involved in zero tailpipe-emission commercial vehicles, despite the industry's rapid advances in battery electric, fuel cell electric and hydrogen solutions.

However, when the sector was framed around 'future technologies', the reaction from the target groups shifted. Participants quickly connected the work to sustainability,

innovation and climate goals, with the idea of working in a business which has the potential to impact the future so positively becoming more appealing for many.

The research also found that stereotypes still dominate first impressions, with participants imagining careers in the sector as being dirty, highly physical and associated with male-dominated workshop environments. It also found that the language and image associated with the industry felt technical and inaccessible, creating an immediate barrier for those without a background in heavy vehicle mechanics.

Priorities for jobseekers

Across all groups which took part, priorities for career choices centred on work-life balance, fair pay and transparency, as well as working for an organisation with a supportive and inclusive culture. Growth opportunities, and an opportunity to carry out meaningful work with purpose was also rated highly.

Amongst women and ethnic minorities, there was a strong desire to see evidence of people like themselves succeeding in the sector through authentic employee storytelling and the types of imagery used in recruitment.

Furthermore, jargon-heavy job descriptions, inflated job titles and long lists of 'essential' requirements were also identified as undermining applicant confidence and helping to drive self-exclusion, and prevent interested parties from applying.

Tanner adds: "The findings highlight a significant opportunity for our sector: the transition to zero tailpipe-emission buses and coaches can act as a catalyst to attract a broader, more diverse workforce.

"Across the Volvo Truck & Bus dealer network, we're well placed to support this shift – but it's not a challenge any one organisation can solve alone. As an industry, we need to create clearer, more visible pathways into the passenger transport sector, backed by communication that helps people from all backgrounds see the role they can play in delivering more sustainable, inclusive public mobility."

Both Volvo Trucks and Volvo Buses will use the findings to inform ongoing work to strengthen early careers engagement, improve the clarity and inclusivity of recruitment materials, and support structured development routes into the sector. This work will support Volvo Group's global diversity targets, with the business aiming for 35 per cent women employees by 2030.

A 10-page report containing a summary of key findings and recommendations from the study is [available to download here](#).

Warwick
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