

Lord Freud
Department For Work And Pensions
Caxton House
Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9NA

5th February 2015

Access to public conveniences for mobile workers

Dear Lord Freud,

I am writing to you in your capacity as Minister responsible the Health and Safety Executive and health and safety in the workplace.

As you will know, mobile workers (such as transport workers and utility maintenance staff) are often forced to spend large proportions of their working day without access to toilet facilities.

Unlike workers in the construction industry, mobile workers are dependent on facilities being available through local businesses or funded through their local authority . There is increasing evidence that reductions in investment in toilet facilities by local authorities means that mobile workers are unable to access these facilities. In the past four years millions of pounds in funding has been cut from public spending on public conveniences.

For those who suffer as a result, this is a serious issue. Workers who have to wait long periods to access toilet facilities can suffer from long-term health problems such as urinary tract infections, renal damage and incontinence. In addition, some mobile workers are forced to limit their liquid consumption in order to avoid the need to go to the toilet. This can lead to other health problems associated with dehydration.

Our union is calling for a change in Government policy which would enable free, convenient and safe access to public conveniences for mobile workers. We believe that funding and a strategy needs to be put in place to address this problem.

Clearly this is an issue which crosses a number of Government Departments and Agencies. I would be grateful if you would tell me what action you are taking to address this problem which is raised by many of our members.

Best Wishes



Gavin Edwards
UNISON National Officer
Water, Environment & Transport