LOGISTICS UK

Standard Occupational Classification 2020 (SOC2020) revision consultation

Summary

From the perspective of the logistics industry, SOC2020 currently struggles to represent a set of fast-growing specialist logistics occupations driven by:

- automation and operational technology in warehousing
- logistics systems (WMS/TMS) ownership
- freight-specific analytics and network modelling
- fleet electrification and energy coordination
- increasingly data-driven compliance and ESG/carbon reporting

Based on the vacancy volumes and distinct skill content, Logistics UK considers the strongest candidates for new unit groups (or explicit unit-group level inclusion) to be:

- Logistics Systems Manager (WMS/TMS)
- Logistics Data Analyst
- Automation Engineer (warehousing/logistics operations)
- Fleet Manager (Electrification)
- Freight Compliance Manager
- Health, Safety & Compliance Manager (carbon/ESG)

Better representation of these roles in SOC would: Enable more accurate tracking of labour demand and shortages for modern logistics occupations, improve analysis of wage trends and workforce changes by ensuring these roles are consistently coded rather than dispersed into generic categories, and support skills planning and training alignment, as clearer occupational definitions help education and training providers and employers plan for the skills genuinely required in logistics operations.

About Logistics UK

Logistics UK is one of the country's largest business groups, and the only trade association which represents all of logistics. Our mission is to support, shape and stand up for a safe, sustainable and efficient logistics sector. Our membership of more than 22,000 includes global, national and regional businesses and SMEs spanning road, rail, waterways, sea and air freight, in ports, airports and warehousing, as well as the customers of freight services such as retailers and manufacturers. We deliver services, representation and thought leadership, helping members and policymakers to seize new opportunities for the sector and the economy as a whole, right across the country.

The logistics sector

Nothing moves without logistics. The sector employs 8% of the UK workforce in good jobs with strong career progression, contributes £170 billion in GVA each year, and underpins the resilience of the everyday economy.

Logistics plans and coordinates the movement and storage of the goods that businesses, public services and households rely on – using ports, airports, roads, railways, waterways, warehouses and smart digital systems to tie it all together.

With the right policies, logistics can drive up UK growth by £8 billion a year.[1] However, rising costs, red tape and poor infrastructure are holding the sector back, putting firms out of business, fuelling inflation, and undermining productivity and supply chain resilience. As a result, the UK has fallen from 4th to 19th in the World Bank Logistics Performance Index over the decade to 2023.

Consultation response

Logistics UK welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) consultation on revisions to SOC2020. From the perspective of the logistics industry, SOC2020 currently struggles to represent a set of fast-growing specialist logistics occupations driven by:

- automation and operational technology in warehousing
- logistics systems (WMS/TMS) ownership
- freight-specific analytics and network modelling
- fleet electrification and energy coordination
- increasingly data-driven compliance and ESG/carbon reporting

These roles are often included within general IT/engineering/consulting groupings or absorbed into broad logistics management categories, making it harder to track demand, pay, shortages, and skills needs over time using SOC-based datasets.

Roles Logistics UK recommends SOC should develop / represent more clearly

Logistics Systems Manager (WMS/TMS)

Logistics Systems Managers own, configure and continuously improve the operational systems that run modern logistics operations, typically Warehouse Management Systems (WMS) and Transport Management Systems (TMS). They translate operational requirements into technical delivery, manage integrations across sites and carriers, and ensure systems support live performance (inventory accuracy, pick/pack productivity, transport planning, and service reliability). This is a distinct occupational function in logistics because it combines operational accountability with deep system configuration and cross-system integration.

In practice this role is frequently pushed into IT specialists (SOC 2133) or Managers in logistics, warehousing and transport (SOC 1241). Logistics UK assesses under-representation because core operational system ownership is not explicitly recognised in SOC classifications, leading to digitally enabled logistics roles being absorbed into other occupational categories and masking sectoral growth.

Key skills include WMS/TMS ownership and configuration, systems integration across logistics operations, and translation between operational needs and technical delivery. Employers advertising similar roles include GXO Logistics, Network Rail, Sainsbury's and National Highways. Our vacancy snapshot indicates 2,543 UK postings (Adzuna, 11 May 2026) for this search string, indicating material labour market scale.

Links (examples):

- Adzuna search (UK)
- LinkedIn search example (Worldwide)

Automation Engineer (including warehousing)

Warehouse and logistics automation engineers design, integrate, maintain and troubleshoot automation embedded in live distribution and fulfilment operations (robotics, conveyors, automated storage and retrieval, and control/OT layers). These roles are operationally critical because they focus on uptime, safe operation, throughput and rapid fault resolution in 24/7 logistics environments and are distinct from production plant engineering contexts.

These roles are often coded into generic engineering groups such as Mechanical engineers (SOC 2122) or Engineering professionals n.e.c. (SOC 2129). Logistics UK assesses under-representation because

[1] Logistics Delivering a solution to the UK's productivity puzzle, Oxford Economics, 2023

automation engineering embedded in live logistics operations is subsumed within production-focused SOC categories, masking both the scale and operational criticality of these roles in the sector.

Skills include warehouse automation systems, controls and operational technology integration, and live operations troubleshooting in logistics settings. Employers include Ocado, GXO, Tesco, Royal Mail, Amazon. Our vacancy snapshot indicates 1,288 UK postings (Adzuna, 11 May 2026).

Links (examples):

- Adzuna search (UK)
- LinkedIn search example (Worldwide)
- CV-Library search example

Logistics Data Analyst

Logistics Data Analysts specialise in freight and logistics performance analytics, drawing on operational systems (WMS/TMS), telematics, and service/throughput data to forecast demand, identify inefficiencies, and build optimisation models. These roles are increasingly central to modern logistics performance management and network productivity.

These roles are frequently coded to IT business analysts (SOC 2135) or management consultants (SOC 3534). Logistics UK assesses under-representation because freight-specific analytics and operational data skills are absorbed into generic analyst classifications, masking the scale and strategic importance of data-driven capability within logistics operations.

Skills include freight performance analytics, telematics data extraction, forecasting and optimisation modelling. Employers identified include CEVA Logistics, Amazon, Just Eat. Our vacancy snapshot indicates 1,822 UK postings (Adzuna, 11 May 2026).

Links (examples):

- Adzuna search (UK)
- LinkedIn search example (Worldwide)
- LinkedIn landing page (role list)

Network Planning Analyst

Network Planning Analysts design and model multi-node logistics networks (hub-and-spoke, parcel networks, trunking/sortation, facility location, capacity planning) and run scenario analysis using digital planning tools and simulation. Their work drives strategic decisions that affect service levels, costs and resilience across the supply chain.

These roles are typically split between management consultants (SOC 3534) and design/development engineers (SOC 2126). Logistics UK assesses under-representation because network planning roles sit at the intersection of strategic freight modelling and applied analytics, causing them to be split across consultancy and engineering SOC codes and obscuring their importance within logistics operations.

Skills include network design modelling, scenario analysis, and digital planning/simulation tools. Employers identified include M&S, Evri and Hertz. Our vacancy snapshot indicates 194 UK postings (Adzuna, 11 May 2026).

Links (examples):

- Adzuna search (UK)
- LinkedIn search example (Worldwide)

Fleet Manager (Electrification)

Fleet electrification managers extend traditional fleet roles by coordinating electric vehicle (EV) transition strategy, charging infrastructure planning, operational readiness, depot energy management and alternative fuels. This is an emerging but increasingly critical logistics occupation as operators respond to decarbonisation requirements and the operational reality of depot charging and grid constraints, reinforced by recent government announcements on zero-emission vehicle and depot charging investment (*DfT, £1 billion to cut costs for businesses, drive growth and clean up UK roads, 25 March 2026*). The closest current SOC match is Managers in logistics, warehousing and transport (SOC 1241); however, electrification

introduces energy-system and infrastructure coordination skills not captured by traditional fleet definitions, and Logistics UK therefore assesses under-representation within the current SOC framework.

Skills include EV transitioning, alternative fuels management, and depot charging and energy coordination. Employers identified include Amazon, BYD, DPD, XPO. Our vacancy snapshot indicates 138 UK postings (Adzuna, 11 May 2026). Government policy is now directly incentivising fleet electrification via Zero Emissions Truck and Van grants and a boosted Depot Charging Scheme, reinforcing that this is a structurally growing work area for fleet leaders.

Links (examples):

- Adzuna search (UK)
- LinkedIn search example (Worldwide)

Freight Compliance Manager

Freight compliance managers increasingly operate in a continuous, data-led compliance environment: digital tachograph analysis, telematics evidence, auditing, infringement management, and risk controls supporting operator licence requirements and safe operations. This goes beyond 'document-based' compliance work and reflects the growing use of integrated compliance platforms and ongoing audit-readiness in road freight operations.

The closest match often used is Business and public service associate professionals n.e.c. (SOC 3539). Logistics UK therefore assesses under-representation because the shift to digital, continuous compliance activity results in these roles being absorbed into generic SOC categories, obscuring their operational importance and workforce demand in logistics.

Skills include HGV digital tachograph analysis, telematics evidence and auditing, and data-driven risk management. Employers identified include Uniserve, Willis Global, Wolseley Group. Our vacancy snapshot indicates 763 UK postings (Adzuna, 11 May 2026).

Links (examples):

- Adzuna search (UK)
- LinkedIn search example (Worldwide)
- DVSA earned recognition: operator audit standards (GOV.UK)

Health, Safety & Compliance Manager (carbon/ESG)

In logistics, health and safety leadership roles are increasingly combined with carbon, emissions and ESG reporting responsibilities (for example, establishing audit-ready carbon data across fleets and sites, and supporting ESG commitments alongside workplace safety). Warehousing and transport are safety-critical environments with well-established risk profiles, but the role scope has expanded meaningfully as sustainability and reporting requirements become operationalised.

A relevant occupational base exists (for example, Health and safety officers, SOC 3567). Logistics UK therefore assesses under-representation because the expansion of health and safety roles into carbon and ESG reporting is not reflected in unit group descriptions, resulting in these added responsibilities being statistically under-counted and undervalued within logistics compliance functions.

Skills include emissions reporting, audit ready carbon data, and ESG support. Employers identified include GXO and Kier Group. Our vacancy snapshot indicates 396 UK postings (Adzuna, 11 May 2026). The UK's official guidance on environmental reporting and Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting (SECR) provides the wider compliance context that is increasingly shaping these blended roles.

Links (examples):

- Adzuna search (UK)
- LinkedIn search example (Worldwide)
- UK Government environmental reporting guidelines (SECR) (GOV.UK)
- HSE warehousing guidance

Changes Logistics UK is asking ONS to consider

The ONS has stated that revisions may include creating new unit groups where job titles and roles have significantly grown, subject to evidence-based assessment and viability thresholds. Based on the vacancy volumes and distinct skill content, Logistics UK considers the strongest candidates for new unit groups (or explicit unit-group level inclusion) to be:

- Logistics Systems Manager (WMS/TMS)
- Logistics Data Analyst
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Where creation of new unit groups is not viable, Logistics UK recommends explicit descriptive updates so coders can assign these roles consistently. Also, the ONS has highlighted consideration of incorporating the 6-digit extended SOC structure into the four-digit SOC structure. Logistics UK supports using this mechanism where appropriate to prevent logistics-specific digital and decarbonisation roles being absorbed into broad IT/engineering categories, improving consistency across datasets and over time.

Why these improvements would be useful

Better representation of these roles in SOC would:

- Enable more accurate tracking of labour demand and shortages for modern logistics occupations (automation, systems, analytics, electrification, compliance) across SOC-based datasets.
- Improve analysis of wage trends and workforce changes by ensuring these roles are consistently coded rather than dispersed into generic categories.
- Support skills planning and training alignment, as clearer occupational definitions help education and training providers and employers plan for the skills genuinely required in logistics operations.
- Improve policy and operational insight, including for areas accelerated by policy interventions such as depot charging support and zero-emission truck/van grants.
- Reduce miscoding and improve comparability over time, supporting ONS's objective of facilitating comparison and statistical analysis across surveys and datasets.

In summary, Logistics UK recommends SOC updates that better reflect the modern logistics workforce, especially WMS/TMS systems ownership, warehousing automation engineering, freight-specific analytics and network modelling, electrification-focused fleet leadership, and data-driven compliance and ESG/carbon reporting. Either through new unit groups where viable or through explicit unit group description updates to support consistent coding and robust labour-market analysis. Access to the information that development of these classifications would be a key way for us to better assess and inform policy decisions.