Equality Information and Objectives 2025

Railway safety

Disability, age, and **pregnancy and maternity** are protected characteristics with particular relevance to railway safety. Our regulatory work contributes to **eliminating discrimination** and promoting **equality** by ensuring the railway is safe to use for groups sharing protected characteristics.

Enforcement

The **protected characteristics** of workers, rail users and members of the public are taken into account where appropriate. Our Enforcement Management Model (EMM) and Enforcement Principles also reflect the effect of protected characteristics on safety risk when discussing the strategic impact of any proposed enforcement action on vulnerable groups. The protected characteristics are mentioned in the EMM guidance on strategic factors. When developing new policies or procedures, we consider groups with protected characteristics when selecting stakeholder consultees and take their responses into account, recording how this has been done.

Any investigation decisions give due regard to the effect upon groups sharing protected characteristics by requiring the application of the EMM as part of the decision-making process. We respond to all complaints that relate to matters covered by the accessibility legislation that we enforce using Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 powers and follow up breaches of legal requirements. Improvement notices, prohibition notices and prosecutions will refer to equality issues where relevant, again through the application of the EMM.

Accident and investigation

We have a policy on mandatory investigations of certain types of incidents and follow up recommendations from Railway Accident Investigation Branch. When investigating incidents, accidents, and complaints we take **protected characteristics** into account if relevant as a reasonable line of inquiry.

Where appropriate, equality analysis will be included when following up recommendations and as action is taken. If relevant, we will record our findings in the investigation report and take action as necessary.

Guidance

We are committed to ensuring that our policies and guidance promote equality of opportunity and reflect the diverse needs of the communities we serve. Our approach is to seek the input and views of groups sharing protected characteristics during the development of policies and guidance. This helps us identify and consider any specific impacts on those groups, ensuring their needs are addressed. Where possible, we use this input to actively advance equality of opportunity through our decisions and recommendations.

When reviewing existing or developing new guidance equality is considered at an early stage, and we use equality impact assessments to identify any areas of concern where appropriate.

Examples of our published guidance, which reference consideration of groups who share protected characteristics, include Principles for Managing Level Crossing Safety, Railway Safety Principles on Driver Controlled Operation, Goal-setting Principles for Railway Health and Safety and ORR's Health and Safety Crowding Position Statement.

Inspections

Inspection procedure and practice pays explicit attention to the safety of groups sharing **protected characteristics**, and specifically to the potential impact on them. Assurance of risk assessment procedures ensures that that groups sharing protected characteristics are included. Any enforcement action arising from inspection activity will be subject to the application of the EMM referenced above.

Where relevant, any concerns are recorded within a case management system and are acted upon where appropriate. Any systemic concerns are reported in an annual health and safety report and raised with industry via the Railway Industry Health and Safety Advisory Committee.

Safety certification

People with all **protected characteristics** may seek safety certificates or authorisations. It is important to ensure that regulation and certification do not unduly discriminate against groups sharing protected characteristics, and this can contribute to **eliminating discrimination** and **promoting equality of opportunity**. To help in **fostering good relations** it is important to explain cases of lawful discrimination.

Certificates and authorisations are issued in accordance with the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 (ROGS) guidance, which includes specific references to equality. Equality analysis is included in regulatory impact assessments.

Train driving licences

ORR is responsible for issuing licences to drivers and keeping the national register of licences. This can be relevant to people with **all protected characteristics**.

As part of this work, we review operators' arrangements, such as their training and examination, medical examination, and monitoring arrangements for drivers. These reviews can identify any equality concerns. The conditions for a train driving licence are set out in legislation and include specific medical standards (e.g. vision and hearing requirements which drivers are examined against by doctors who are registered by ORR).

The Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010 were amended this year to enable a train driving licence to be issued from the age of 18, reducing the minimum age by 2 years. We will monitor the number of licences issued to drivers in the 18-20 age band. The Rail Delivery Group (RDG) are compiling statistics and research in the area which will assist in highlighting any discrimination.

We issue guidance and keep a register of each licence we issue. The Department for Transport published a Post Implementation Review (PIR) report in 2023 which recommended that the regulations for train driving licences and certificates be reviewed. ORR is supporting that review

and any changes to the regulations will include an equality impact assessment.

- ← Previous Regulation of Network Rail
- → Next Highways