

ORR Business Plan 2026 to 2027

A Healthier and Safer Railway

ORR has important day-to-day responsibilities to drive continuous improvement in health and safety on Britain's railways, to safeguard passengers, the public and workers.

We will continue to engage with **Network Rail** as it delivers the safety commitments in its CP7 Delivery Plan, including a focus on asset management and renewals. We will take a **safety by design** approach to influence the capability of GBR's management to deliver all aspects of health and safety, supporting preparation of an effective health and safety management system in advance of assessing GBR's safety authorisation in 2027.

We will conduct a **targeted workforce Health and Safety Inspection** initiative focused on how Network Rail and its contractors manage multiple hazards during possessions.

Addressing the risk of **catastrophic train accidents** remains a priority, with work continuing on the following: securing necessary improvements to industry's approach to managing **overspeeding** risk; understanding the causes of **trains passing the end of their movement authority** (including Signals Passed at Danger 'SPADs'); and managing **fatigue** risks. Following a spike in fatalities, we will continue to engage with industry on safety at **level crossings**. **Asset management** forms an important part of our work, and we will continue to pursue improved compliance with structures and operational property examination and assessment requirements.

Occupational health and the safety and welfare of rail workers is a strong focus. We will develop a new occupational health strategy and initiatives will include **hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS)**, which we will monitor following our enforcement notice; and **welfare** provision for railway workers, including progress on a national intervention project.

Violence against rail staff has long been a concern across the sector, particularly towards

customer-facing roles such as revenue protection officers and train crew. We continue to work with the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), trade unions and others to reinforce our regulatory presence in this area, promoting awareness of employers' legal obligations and how we expect them to manage risk, and sharing information and best practice.

Extreme weather events are now a permanent feature of running the railways and our work this year will focus on reviewing Network Rail's delivery and implementation of its Weather Resilience & Climate Change Adaptation (WRACCA) plans and supporting systems.

A key output this year will be the delivery of our **digital safety strategy and new strategic risk chapter**, setting out how we intend to drive improvements across industry as new technologies and advanced digital systems become more prevalent.

Our focus with **Transport for London (TfL)** will include Platform-Train Interface (PTI) risks; how TfL manages its civil assets and ageing infrastructure; and delivering their safety authorisation renewal.

We continue to support and influence safety in the **tramway sector** and will focus on earthworks and highway crossings. Our engagement with the **heritage sector** will include delivering six further risk management workshops with the Heritage Railway Association and our inspections will target derailments, occupational health, SPADs and the general safety of selected railways.

We continue to input on **industry policy, legislation and guidance**. This year we will work with the Department for Transport (DfT) and stakeholders to prepare for, and implement, the legislative change to reduce the minimum age for licensed train drivers to 18. We will engage with DfT to develop firm consultation proposals to secure wider reform of the train driving licensing regime and assist with proposed DfT-led reviews on interoperability and standards. We will also publish guidance for using 14 to 16-year-old volunteers on heritage railways, as required by the UK Government's Employment Rights Act 2025.

We will deliver our report following our **Post Implementation Review of the Railways and Other Guided Transport Systems (Safety) Regulations 2006 (ROGS)** conducted last year on behalf of the Secretary of State. We will start work to improve ROGS and its supporting guidance, if our recommendations are accepted.

Our important **day-to-day proactive and reactive work** continues, including frontline inspections, investigations, enforcement and statutory activity, such as issuing of safety certificates and

authorisations, level crossing orders, RAIB recommendation follow-ups and significant volumes of train driving licences and renewals.

We will continue to embed the recommendations from our review into how duty holders assess the costs and benefits of health and safety interventions.

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