

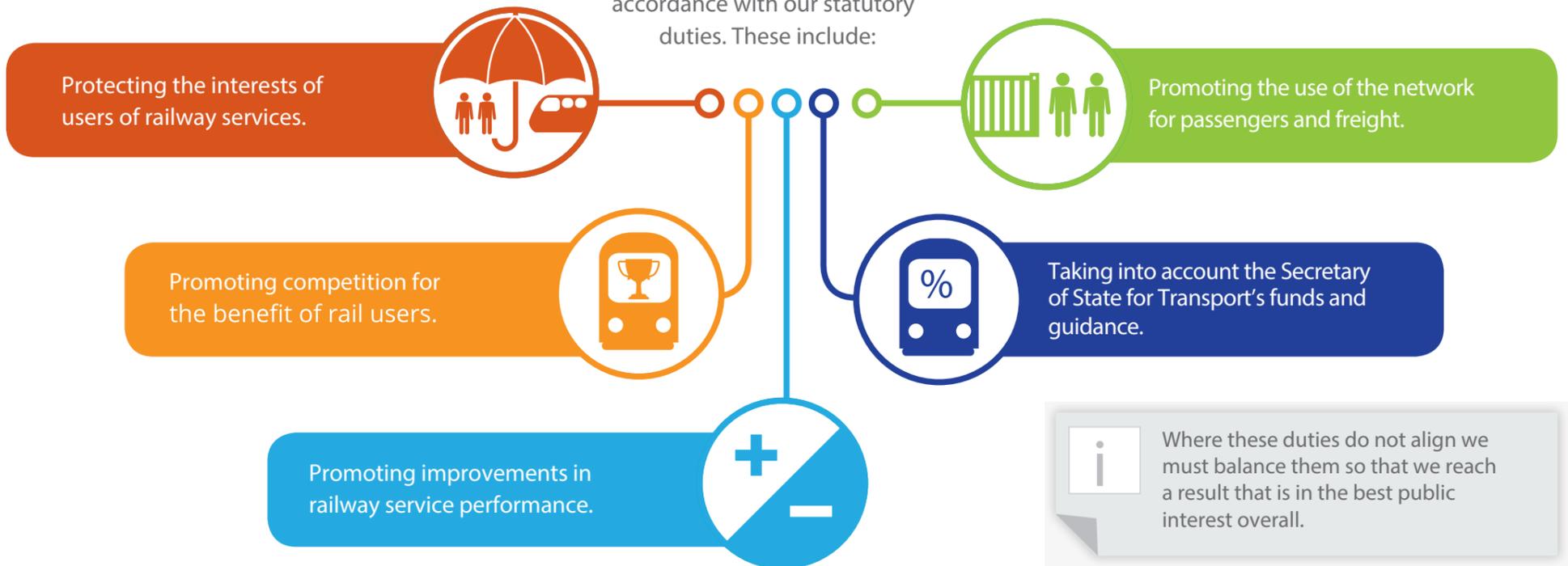
How We Make Decisions On Track Access

If a railway operator wants to run trains on the rail network, it must seek the Office of Rail and Road's approval for a track access agreement with Network Rail.



How do we make our decisions on track access?

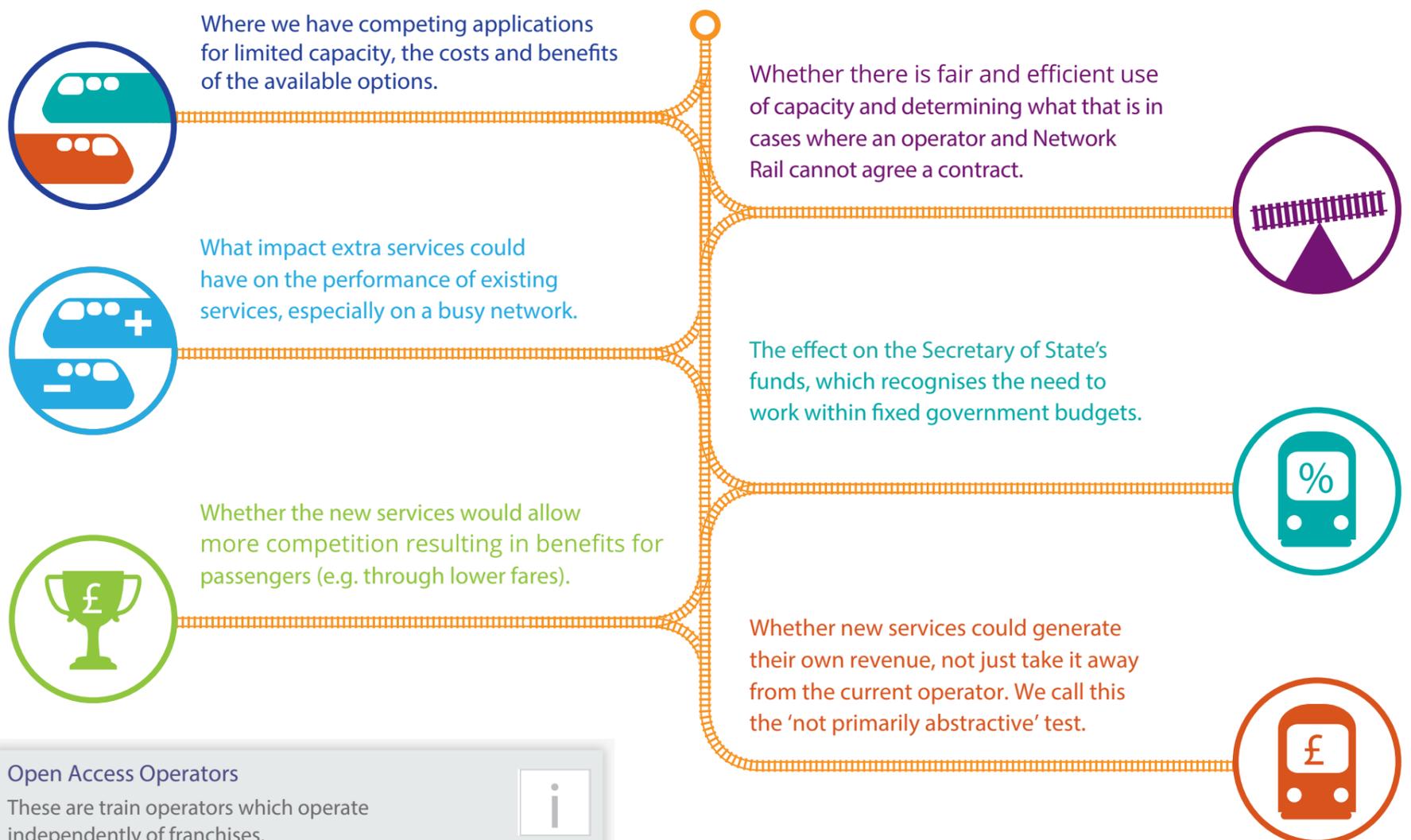
When we consider track access applications, we must do so in accordance with our statutory duties. These include:



i Where these duties do not align we must balance them so that we reach a result that is in the best public interest overall.

What factors do we consider when making track access decisions?

We look at the following things before we grant approval:



Open Access Operators
 These are train operators which operate independently of franchises.
 The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) values the benefits of competition and supports the introduction of new 'open access' services, or the continuation of existing services, where they meet our published criteria and bring real benefits to passengers.

Economic Equilibrium Test
 We will also undertake the Economic Equilibrium Test on new open access services where the test is requested by a relevant party. This test looks at the overall impact of proposals on existing franchises.