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To: Attendees of the Welfare for Railway Workers
Roundtable event and All Train Operating
Company (TOC) and All Freight Operating
Company (FOC)

By email only:

29 July 2025

Dear colleagues,

**Provision of welfare for railway workers
Follow up to the roundtable event and next steps.**

Thank you for attending the Welfare for Railway Workers roundtable at our offices in London on 23 June 2025. I was encouraged by the positive engagement and shared commitment in the room to address the longstanding challenges around welfare provision for railway workers. Your recognition of the issues, feedback on examples of positive improvements already underway and engagement in finding practical solutions on this important topic was welcome.

I want to emphasise that access to clean, safe, and reliable welfare facilities is not a luxury - it is a basic requirement in any civilised society. The current situation, where some railway workers still lack adequate facilities or the time to use them, is unacceptable. This is a matter of human dignity, health, safety and respect to our people.

As I reflected at the event, if we are to evolve our culture and build a more diverse and inclusive railway workforce that is representative of the people we serve now and, in the future, we must make sure that the fundamental enabling foundations are in place. Access to appropriate welfare provision is one such feature.

The key themes and actions agreed at the roundtable are summarised in **Annex A** to this letter. These include a set of agreed strategic actions, including the development of a Welfare Charter coordinated by RSSB, mapping of existing facilities, expansion of the Network Rail app, adopting the principle that employees of one company should be able to use the facilities of another company and the piloting of practical solutions to facilitate shared access to existing facilities.

Next steps include:

1 of 6

- Launch of RSSB pilot projects.
- RSSB finalise and circulate the Welfare Charter (informed by the pilot projects).
- Industry commits to sign-up to the Charter by the next 'World Toilet Day' on 19 November 2025, and a set of actions with milestones, with full implementation within twelve months. (RSSB aim to have their final Charter issued and signed by those taking part in the trial by the end of September).
- Expansion of the Network Rail App updates and heat mapping.

I urge all industry partners to take ownership of this issue and work collaboratively to deliver tangible, lasting improvements, meeting legal duties as employers under the Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992. The development of a shared Welfare Charter, mapping of existing facilities, and practical pilots are important enabling steps—but they will only succeed if we embed a culture of shared responsibility and leadership at every level across the industry.

We plan to bring stakeholders together again to review progress and explore how the industry will lead this work into 2026 and beyond. Looking ahead, Great British Rail (GBR) as an integrated and simplified model can be part of the solution. In the meantime, ORR will be inspecting welfare provision as part of routine inspections.

I look forward to working with you as we take this agenda forward and work collaboratively to ensure that every railway worker is treated with the dignity and respect, they deserve.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Richard Hines', written in a cursive style.

Richard Hines
**Director of Railway Safety &
HM Chief Inspector of Railways**

Annex A

Summary Notes and outputs: Welfare for Railway Workers – Roundtable event

23 June 2025

This industry roundtable event was convened by HM Chief Inspector of Railways with a focus on securing tangible improvements to welfare provision for railway workers. It followed publication of the ASLEF [Dignity for Drivers Report](#) in 2024. ORR hosted representatives from across industry including train and freight operating companies, Trade Unions, the Department for Transport, Network Rail, and the Rail Safety and Standards Board. A number of colleagues presented their work on improving welfare facilities, the problems they face (including cultural barriers), and the recognition that further action is needed.

The Moral Case for Welfare Provision

Attendees were united in the view that the provision of welfare facilities is a matter of human dignity and basic rights. The current situation where some railway workers, especially freight drivers and those required to work in remote or unusual / unplanned locations, lack access to safe, clean toilets and rest areas and the time to use them, is unacceptable. The industry must collectively commit to change, recognising that:

- Failure to provide welfare is not acceptable.
- There are serious health and welfare issues associated with the lack of adequate welfare facilities.
- All railway workers deserve access to clean, safe, and reliable welfare facilities.
- This is a cultural and leadership issue, not just a practical one.

Barriers

- Cultural resistance and lack of shared responsibility.
- Contractual and liability issues around shared facilities.
- Maintenance and hygiene concerns, especially in low-use or remote locations.
- Legislative uncertainty for transient sites.
- Risk of unintended consequences if not carefully implemented (e.g., legionella).

What actions are proposed as a result of today?

The roundtable agreed to develop a 'Charter of Principles' supported by all dutyholders and coordinated by RSSB, to formalise the commitment to provide safe, clean and dignified facilities and drive consistent standards across the industry.

Top 5 Strategic Actions

1. Adopt and Promote a Welfare Charter

Based on the draft developed by RSSB and the 4 ASLEF principles (see below). All industry stakeholders sign up to the Charter, with ORR providing support and oversight. The Charter will include a commitment to shared access to facilities, maintenance responsibilities, and minimum standards.

2. Pilot Practical Solutions

- Use the RSSB Eastern region pilot as a test.
- Trial shared access, universal access arrangements, and pop-up welfare units.

3. Develop a map of existing facilities across the network and known gaps.

- Expand the Network Rail Welfare Facilities App. Build on the existing Network Rail app to map facilities, identify gaps, and provide condition updates. Include provision to provide feedback.

4. Take steps to embed welfare considerations in infrastructure planning and rolling stock procurement.

5. Promote a fair 'welfare' culture

- Cultural barriers need to be broken, people need to feel safe to talk about traditionally sensitive issues

Quick Wins

- Provision of universal access arrangements across operators.
- Expand the Network Rail app to include freight and on-track machine operators and third-party suppliers.
- Produce a database and heat maps of existing facilities to identify and address gaps.

- Adopt Simple interim solutions like pop-up units.
- Rostering adjustments - to allow for breaks, especially in freight.

Timeline

Action	Owner	Indicative timeline
Pilot projects RSSB use (and refine) the Charter as part of the upcoming trial outlined at the roundtable. The trial will inform the data that needs to be collected, and the guidance documentation required to support the Charter.	RSSB - Eastern region	By October 2025 (RSSB aim to have their final Charter issued and signed by those taking part in the trial by the end of September 2025)
Welfare Charter (with supporting guidance) finalised and circulated.	RSSB	January 2026
Industry commitment to Welfare Charter	All duty holders	Stakeholders sign up their commitment to the charter by 19 November 2025 (National Toilet Day)
Network Rail App update and 'Heat Map'. Longer term, the development of the Network Rail Welfare App to be the potential solution to providing the welfare related tool supporting the Charter.		March 2026
Charter Implementation	All dutyholders	July 2026 (within 12 months of date of this letter).

Next Steps

1. RSSB progresses the Pilot projects to develop and refine the draft and coordinate industry feedback.
2. ORR to support by engaging key stakeholders (e.g., RDG, DfT) and embedding welfare checks in inspections.

3. Dutyholders commit to the concept of the Charter and begin internal planning for implementation.
4. Trade Union collaboration to promote cultural change and frontline engagement.
5. ORR to reconvene industry to review progress and explore how the industry will lead this work into 2026 and beyond.

Annex B

ASLEF Dignity for drivers report 2024 – principles.

- A maximum period of 4 hours without access to toilet facilities as standard across the industry
- The provision of safe, clean, accessible and dignified toilet and welfare facilities
- Across the network:
 - i. Drivers must be able to go to the toilet based on their individual and personal needs without being subjected to management interference, discrimination or disciplinary action.
 - ii. All operators to provide free sanitary products in the workplace and for them
- Toilet provision available across the network for drivers who want to use them.