

## Driver and Signaller Licensing: Areas that require further discussion

### a) *What should a licence cover?*

Lord Cullen recommended that licences for train drivers should cover the core competencies that include knowledge of the rules and regulations. In addition to these, licences might also need to include the following information:

- *Personal identification information* – this could comprise name, photograph and other personal information such as personal track safety information and formal qualifications that may be relevant to their duties.
- *Safety Critical Work ID* – a photograph, the employee's name and the name of the employer are required as a means of identification under the RSCW Regulations.<sup>1</sup>
- *Information on medical fitness* – The RSCW Regulations require all safety critical workers to be medically fit. Medical information could be included on a licence, such as a need to wear glasses.
- *Language competence* – this could become increasingly important as trains move more freely throughout Europe, although it could be limited to train operating rules etc.
- *Traction competence* – Information on the type of rolling stock that the licensee is considered competent to drive.
- *Signalling Equipment* - Information on the types of signalling equipment the licensee is considered competent to operate.
- *Information on any breaches of driving rules and standards.*
- *Route knowledge* – in developing this paper, many stakeholders did not feel it would be possible to include route knowledge as an element in licences.

### b) *What will a licence permit the holder to do?*

Discussions with stakeholders have identified two main models for licences that could be introduced for drivers and signallers. They are described below:

- *Model 1* –The licence would consist of only one section that would contain all the information outlined in (a) above. In the case of drivers, such licences would be specific to one train operating company and prior to obtaining the licence the licensee would have been assessed as competent to undertake

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<sup>1</sup> This would still be consistent with the policy options from the review of the RSCW Regulations (HSC Paper 03/09).

a particular task(s) e.g. to drive a particular class of rolling stock on a particular route. In the case of signallers, the licence would be specific to the employing infrastructure controller. The holder of such a licence would be able to undertake that task as a train operator or signaller for his / her employer.

- *Model 2* – The licence would consist of two sections. Section 1 would indicate that the driver or signaller was competent in ‘core competencies’ like knowledge of the rules and regulations and knowledge of specific types of traction. This part of the licence would be valid regardless of the employer of the driver or signaller. The licence holder would then have to be assessed as competent by the employer to undertake a specific task e.g. a driver would need to be competent in route knowledge. This would enable him / her to obtain Section 2 of the licence and to undertake that task for the employer.

*c) Who will undertake assessments?*

Evidence of an adequate assessment of an individual’s competence and fitness to undertake driving and signalling duties will be required before a licence could be issued. The ‘independent body’ could undertake such assessments. Another option would be for employers / training providers to submit evidence of a specific type to the ‘independent body’, who would then use it as the basis for issuing licences.

*d) Transitional provisions for drivers and signallers*

On the introduction of any new licensing system there will be a period of time when existing drivers and signallers will have to be assessed and issued with licences. Transitional arrangements will need to be considered to ensure that the railways can operate safely and with minimum disruption to services whilst drivers and signallers that are currently employed and are considered competent, are assessed and issued with licences.

*e) An appeals process*

One key factor in the success of a licensing system will be that the system is seen to operate in a transparent way that is consistent with the requirements of human rights legislation. There will have to be consideration of any sanctions placed on the employer or individual in the event of a driver or signaller working without a valid licence. The system is also likely to need an appeals process for drivers and signallers who fail their assessment, or who have licences taken away as a result of disciplinary action by their employer.

f) *Central recording system*

Lord Cullen called for a central recording system for data on driver and signaller licensing. At the Stakeholder Meeting a number of concerns were raised about developing a centralised system including the cost of introducing such a system and the bureaucracy associated with it. However, a centralised system should remove the need for existing recording systems being managed by TOCs and infrastructure controllers, which should ensure that their costs are reduced in the long term.

g) *Accreditation of training providers*

Lord Cullen called for training providers to be accredited to train and assess drivers and signallers. Further work on this will be needed in the light of RIAC / HSC's considerations on how to take forward Lord Cullen's recommendations on the accreditation of the supply chain (**HSC Paper 03/07**). Options could be for UKAS to accredit a 'independent body' to certify training providers or for UKAS to directly accredit the training providers.

h) *Competence standards*

Lord Cullen also called for train operating companies, infrastructure controllers and training providers to follow common national standards when assessing the competence of drivers and signallers. HSE has looked into the possibility of using NOSs as common standards by which training providers, infrastructure controllers and train operating companies could assess competence. The RITC in conjunction with the industry develops NOSs. They are the blocks that make up NVQs. NOSs could form a common basis for assessing competence. However, there is currently a limited degree of uptake of NVQs in the rail industry and further research is required before NOSs could be adopted as a common standard for assessment.

i) *How should licences be introduced?*

From information obtained from stakeholders, HSE has identified two possible options concerning the introduction of a licensing system:

- a) Voluntary licensing system – Railway Safety is currently looking at licensing as part of its Research Programme. A research taskforce has been set up to achieve industry consensus on the precise nature of a licensing scheme. The research finding could be used to inform the development of a licensing system run voluntarily by the industry via RSSB.
- b) Regulatory licensing system – a licensing system could be introduced through regulations. This would need to include all the issues discussed in the Commission paper.