



# Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for The Train Driving Licences and Certificates (Amendment) Regulations 2026

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## Section 1: Summary and relevance to the Public Assessment Equality Duty (PSED)

The Government is planning to implement a change in legislation that will lower the minimum age requirement to be a licenced train driver on the mainline in Great Britain from 20 to 18 years. This will be made by making amendments to the Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010 (TDLCR). This follows the findings and recommendations of the second post implementation review (PIR) of TDLCR that was published on 19 May 2023.

This proposal sits within a wider programme of reform looking to review and revise assimilated EU law that we have inherited from the EU following EU Exit. It is also consistent with the aims of the Smarter Regulation agenda initiated in September 2023.

The lowering of the minimum age requirements will be the first stage in a two-phased approach to reforming the train driving regime in Great Britain from 2026. This first stage approach is being taken because the Department believes the case for lowering the minimum age requirements for train drivers is sufficiently advanced and compelling to be pursued at the soonest opportunity.

## Section 2: Evidence Summary

We have quantitative and qualitative evidence to support our assessment, including both primary and secondary data. This data comes from a number of sources, including:

- Qualitative data from emails and meetings with external stakeholders, such as the ORR.
- Qualitative data from emails and meetings with the unions, including Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) and the Transport Salaried Staffs' Association (TSSA).
- Quantitative data from external stakeholders, such as the National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR) and Rail Delivery Group (RDG).
- Both quantitative and qualitative data from our consultation responses.
- Both quantitative and qualitative data from external stakeholders, which is both primary and secondary.

The full consultation findings and de minimis assessment can be found on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk).

## Section 3: Assessment

The Department has gathered evidence from the National Skills Academy for Rail (NSAR) and ORR on the profile and demographics of train drivers to better understand current trends in the industry. According to NSAR's December 2025 workforce survey, there are 27,000 licenced train drivers in Great Britain. The average age of a train driver is 47, 88% are male, 89% are White (includes White British and Other White) and 3% are under the age of 30. NSAR project 25% of



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train drivers will reach the average retirement age in the industry (62) by 2030 and this is set to increase as the average age is skewed towards the older age range.

To understand the level of support for this policy and identify any potential risks or impacts, we conducted a consultation with the rail sector which ran from May 2024 to June 2024.

The rail sector was broadly supportive of lowering the minimum age requirement for train drivers, with positive responses from train operators, trade unions and the rail safety regulator, the ORR. Across the industry, stakeholders recognised that reducing the minimum age to 18 removes an unnecessary barrier that previously discriminated on the basis of age.

Lowering the age threshold is expected to improve access to the profession for school leavers, who at 16 to 18 are required to be in education, employment or training. They will now be able to apply directly for apprenticeships and entry-level roles, opening new opportunities for young people as they begin to make decisions about their future careers or higher education. For industry, this creates an opportunity to engage potential drivers earlier, before they commit to alternative routes.

This change is anticipated to help expand the train driver workforce, establish a clearer pathway into the profession, and support greater diversity, ensuring the workforce better reflects the communities it serves. Due to the level of support for the policy, this policy is expected to foster good relations by promoting age inclusivity with the workforce and challenge stereotypes around capability and maturity linked to age.

We have assessed the impact of policy against the three PSED aims, which are:

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010. We have identified opportunities and benefits from our proposed policy in respect of eliminating discrimination. Our proposed policy encourages people under 20, specifically 18 and 19 year olds, who were discriminated against on the protected characteristic of age. This policy removes the disadvantages experienced by people who share this protected characteristic by the inclusion of those younger than 20 years of age.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it, which means having due regard to the need to: remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people who share a protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it, and this includes particular steps to take account of the needs of disabled people; encourage people who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which their participation is low. Our proposed policy removes and/or minimises the disadvantages experienced by people who share the protected characteristic of age. By progressing with the policy, it will allow equality of opportunity for people aged 18 and 19, and those who are already eligible to qualify to become a train driver, which is currently from the age of 20.
3. Fostering good relationships across all characteristics and promoting understanding between people from diverse groups.



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We have identified that there will be no negative impact on those with a protected characteristic, specifically with regards to:

- age
- disability
- sex
- gender reassignment
- marriage or civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sexual orientation

### **Section 4: Decision and Conclusions:**

It has been decided to proceed as planned with the policy. No adverse impact has been identified on any of the protected characteristics. The new policy of changing the minimum age to be a train driver in GB is likely to improve outcomes for those with a protected characteristic.

### **Section 5: Monitoring and Review Summary**

This industry will be undertaking a longitudinal study on the onset of the change in law to collect data and monitor the experiences of young train driving cohorts to understand the impacts, build knowledge and collect lessons to feedback improvements to the system. Alongside this, we will be reviewing the Train Driving Licences and Certificates Regulations 2010 in 2028 (and periodically every five years) in accordance with the statutory review requirement to complete post implementation reviews every five years.

### **Section 6: Sign off**

I am satisfied that the above assessment demonstrates that full and appropriate regard has been paid to the PSED.

#### **SCE sign off**

Name: Ben Llewellyn  
Role: Director, Rail Sponsorship and Performance Directorate  
Grade: Director  
Date: 20/01/2026

Signature: