



ASLEF's Response to the Consultation on Rail Operations Group's Application for A License to Operate Charter Services

1. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train driver's union representing approximately 20,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems.
2. ASLEF opposes Rail Operations Group receiving a license for safety reasons. The union has no agreements with Rail Operations Group over safety matters in the way we do with established operators. These agreements enable us to safeguard the wellbeing of our members and all users of our network.
3. ASLEF has strong concerns regarding the operation of charter services. Whilst drivers will have to have relevant route knowledge, the nature of charter services means that they will not get the detailed route knowledge that drivers from other passenger and freight operators will.
4. ASLEF also had concerns over the drivers they seek to employ. Two years ago, Rail Operations Group advertised in Penfriend, the magazine for Railway Pension Scheme pensioners, looking for retired drivers to work for them. ASLEF believes that in a role as safety critical as driving trains, this is potentially a dangerous prospect.
5. In addition, the firm looks for drivers who may well be employed on a permanent contract with another established train operator or freight

operator. When this is the case, it becomes difficult to monitor how many cumulative hours a driver has worked. Once again this has significant safety implications as it becomes impossible to monitor fatigue.

6. ASLEF has concerns over Rail Operations Group's use the Institute of Professional Train Drivers. ASLEF does not support the concept of individuals paying to pre-qualify for driver training. Nor does the union support an individual then paying to train as a train driver, and then paying again to maintain route and traction knowledge. The only driver training courses ASLEF will recognise are those that have been negotiated by the union with the TOC's or FOC's, and ratified by the Executive Committee.
  
7. ASLEF believes that the casualised and ad hoc nature of Rail Operations Group presents a real threat to both those working for them, and other workers on our Network. The union is therefore unable to support the application and hopes the ORR will consider our objections when making their decision.

Mick Whelan  
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