

PRESS RELEASE – 19/10/2022

Heritage Railway Safety Service Launched

www.hrailsafety.org

Following the discussions and encouragement from many UK heritage railways, we are delighted to launch the **Heritage Railway Safety Service**.

The heritage railway sector has been encouraged to cultivate a safety co-ordination and standards organisation to promote safety development, research and standardisation across all heritage railways, partially a result of the Croydon tram crash in November 2016.

Recognising the unique, and often predominantly-volunteer, management arrangements at heritage railways, the Heritage Railway Safety Service will not be an organisation that simply sets standards that increase the burden on already-stretched heritage railways to follow. Instead, it will work with railways to deliver safety tools and services that become the obvious choice for railways to voluntarily adopt and hence naturally work to a common standard where appropriate, while still allowing sufficient manoeuvrability within the structure to adequately manage local risks and requirements. The measure of the HRSS's success will be in the number of organisations that voluntarily use its services.

HRSS will aim to achieve a standardised safety management *structure* across heritage railways as has been done through the mechanism of HOPS with other administrative management processes. The structure will be supported by online SMS management tools, risk assessment and briefing materials, and a network of subject matter experts that everyone will be invited to be part of.

The Service's work will meet the objective of a safety co-ordinating body for heritage railways.

Danny Scroggins, HOPS Heritage Railways Director said:

“We are pleased to have enabled railways to exploit great benefit from a common structure and systems for staff management, competence management, asset management, risk assessment, and many other management processes over the last 13 years, and we are delighted to continue to follow the needs and requests of our community by rising to this next challenge.

“Many of the HRSS's services will be administered through the vehicle of HOPS, which is already in use at over 120 UK heritage railways, so there won't be a need for a duplicate website or maintenance of duplicate user records. Some existing HOPS services will transition to the HRSS, such as the Working at Height materials, Spot Report hazard reporting, etc”

“Thank you to all railways for your encouragement that has led to the creation of HRSS. We look forward to continuing to work with you all!”

Although the creation of this new service is being managed by HOPS, it is intended that HRSS becomes its own, organisation that eventually takes ownership of HOPS as just one of its many heritage railway safety tools. This also achieves the goal of ensuring a robust long-term future for the HOPS tools that are business-critical to many railways.

You can read more about the Heritage Railway Safety Service at www.hrailsafety.org

(end)

FAQs

Isn't this the same as what HOPS already does?

HOPS has some safety services, and separating these out into the HRSS will allow HOPS to concentrate on developing software *tools*, while the HRSS reaches further than HOPS has done previously into safety management systems and *services*.

The two will work hand-in-hand, until ultimately HRSS takes over HOPS.

How will this be funded?

HOPS has funded the startup of the HRSS.

In the long term, the services will be funded by the railways that make use of each particular product, as already happens with the ID Cards, Drugs & Alcohol Screening, and other safety services. Unlike HOPS's 'one fee and you get everything whether you want it or not' model, the HRSS will have a number of products which railways can choose from.

In the same way as HOPS, however, the model will be followed that a number of railways contributing a small proportion of the cost of a service together means all can reap the benefit.

What are the Next Steps?

As we start up the Service we are inviting railways to nominate their HRSS rep or reps. These will be the key points of contact for each railway.

Existing services such as e-learning etc are transitioning to HRSS over the coming weeks, users will start to see these appear with HRSS branding rather than HOPS branding.

You can also keep up with developments over the coming weeks and months at www.hrailsafety.org

News is also shared on social media outlets at /hrailsafety

More information for Editors:

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