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## An introduction to rail

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The Government's role in the running of the railways is to provide strategic direction and to procure rail services and projects that only it can specify. Responsibility for day-to-day delivery of railway services rests with the industry.

To fulfil this role, DfT's Rail Group is working in partnership with the industry to secure the railway the country wants at a price it can afford.

- In July 2007 the Government will, for the first time, specify what it wants to buy from the railway (in terms of safety, performance and capacity) - the five year "high level output specification", and will say how much money it has to spend - the "statement of funds available". This will be published alongside a long-term rail strategy that will consider the longer term challenges facing the railway such as increasing demand, environmental pressures and customer expectations and provide a sense of direction and continuity for the rail industry.
- DfT is responsible for specifying and letting contracts to train operating companies to run franchised passenger services in England and inter-city services to and from Scotland and Wales. Find out further information on current competitions.
- DfT works with its partners to deliver major projects in a cost-effective and timely manner. Further details of current projects.
- Key partners for Rail Group are: the consumer body, PassengerFocus; the infrastructure provider, Network Rail; the passenger train operators (ATOC); the independent economic and safety regulator, the Office of Rail Regulation; and the rail freight industry.
- We maintain strong relationships with Transport Scotland and the Welsh Assembly Government who have devolved rail responsibilities. We also co-operate with a wide range of local and regional bodies such as regional assemblies, regional development agencies, Transport for London and passenger transport executives.
- Rail Group also ensures the effective alignment between UK and EU rail strategies such as interoperability and the European Rail Traffic Management System.
- Who we are.
- Rail Group is also responsible for ensuring the alignment of GB and EU rail strategies, in particular on safety and standards, including interoperability.