

Innovation secures ETCS Testing during Covid-19

May 21, 2020



The first weekend in May saw a team drawn from Porterbrook, PCMS, Great Western Railway, Bombardier and DB Cargo (supported by ROG) successfully complete a further suite of European Train Control System (ETCS) tests on an eight car GWR Class 387 train operating on the main line between Reading and Heathrow.

The team were supported by Heathrow Airport Limited and Network Rail signalling teams along the route.

To enable the tests to go ahead whilst meeting Covid-19 Social Distancing requirements, innovative temporary remote monitoring equipment was installed, linking the driver's cab with the passenger saloon where the testing team was located.

Forward facing cameras were temporarily located in the train's cabs, above the driver's position, to relay the ETCS Driver Machine Interface (DMI) display back to the testing team located further down the train.

Under ETCS the DMI shows displays the train's speed and movement authority to the driver.

A second camera located in the traditional 'second-man's' position in the leading cab captured the infrastructure and signalling ahead to ensure there were no discrepancies between classic signals on the route and ETCS data feeds.

In total 20 specific tests of the ETCS on-train and lineside equipment were completed over the weekend of the 1st – 3rd May. This means that ETCS operation on the Heathrow route remains on target for introduction later this year.

Mary Grant, Porterbrook CEO, said: "The latest successful Class 387 ETCS proving run is a testament to what can be achieved when the railway industry works together. Despite the challenges of Covid-19, the team managed to safely maintain social-distancing and complete an exhaustive programme of tests in record time. My thanks to all our suppliers and partners for supporting this programme, which is a key to delivering enhanced capacity on services to Heathrow."

Photo credit: Porterbrook