New research aims to make train driver psychometric assessments fairer

February 1, 2019

Research by rail industry body RSSB has confirmed that the process used for train drivers' psychometric assessment remains fair, valid and reliable, but further improvements should be explored.
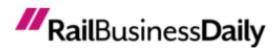
Just as happens in recruitment and training in many industries, prospective drivers undertake a psychometric assessment to test whether the way they think and behave will suit the demands of the role and align with the nature of train driving.

Concerns had been raised that the way the psychometric assessment is set could unconsciously discriminate against female, black or ethnic minority candidates.

The latest study by RSSB has shown that the process remains reliable, valid and fair and provides some pointers for further research and action to improve it even further.

Lead Human Factors Specialist Paul Leach, who worked on the research, said, "I'm confident the current process is valid, reliable and fair. It's crucial that the railways continue to do all they can to attract talent from all backgrounds and walks of life. To make that happen, those recruiting train drivers need to have confidence that the industry process for psychometric assessment helps select future drivers that are focussed on safety and customers, with the pass marks set appropriately, and the assessments undertaken in a way that ensures candidates are not compromised because of their background, age or gender."

RSSB has made the findings available to its members to help inform the selection processes and the Driver Selection Governance Group, which is an industry group, to identify recommendations for updates and

improvements to the process in the future.