

Rail Delivery Group



Interview with Paul Plummer, CEO, RDG

Hi Paul, please tell us a bit about your role and the work you do?

I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Rail Delivery Group (RDG) and have held that position since October 2015. RDG's purpose is to help make Britain's railway better, by bringing rail companies together to drive reforms and influence change, whilst delivering key services to our members and customers. As Chief Executive, I am responsible for bringing together passenger and freight operators with infrastructure managers and their supply chains. We deliver and strive to make improvements in ticketing, settlement and information services and as the membership body, enable change across the industry.

This has been an extraordinary week, what has been your key focus over the last 7 days?

We still have important work to do at RDG and we can do that from home. We need our services running since the railway depends on them and we have a critical leadership role to play during this crisis and important work to do to prepare for the aftermath. In the past week RDG has provided leadership and a voice for the industry after the government announced of temporary support for the railway and as we rolled out a new reduced timetable which will allow us to operate trains over a prolonged period with fewer railway staff, ensuring key workers get to where they need to be, food is delivered to supermarkets and fuel gets to power stations. In a rapidly changing environment, we have had to be agile in providing guidance to our members so that they can communicate consistently to customers across the country on a range of new issues which have developed since the crisis began. This has included new arrangements for refunds, measures to support social distancing and travel advice, and all while our NRE call centre in Mumbai has transitioned to remote working. I keep in close contact with the DfT with calls with the Rail Minister twice a week, I co-chair the industry's joint executive operational team (JEOT) and daily crisis management meetings.

What is the key message you are giving staff at RDG?

Firstly, I am thanking staff at RDG for their resilience, professionalism and efforts to maintain critical services and operations during this challenging time. I have been very impressed with how quickly and effectively we have mobilised to remote working.

We recognise the variety of circumstances that our staff are facing and have made clear that people are welcome to work as flexibly as they need to, to meet both their work and family commitments. I and the whole leadership team are readily available to all staff and are hosting regular all staff briefings to ensure that everyone feels connected, informed and able to address any concerns or questions they have. We are also reiterating the key government message of stay home, protect our NHS and save lives

It sounds as though you are placing a great emphasis on staff well-being, is that correct?

Yes, absolutely. I am mindful that it is all too easy to work long hours when you are at home and that during this extraordinary time it is more important than ever to have balance in your day. We are supporting our staff by encouraging daily structure, having regular breaks, exercising or 'one-a-day' as I'm calling it and developing and pursuing hobbies. These are all vital to us feeling both physically and mentally well.