

06 NOV 2018

SCANNED



Private and Confidential  
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5 October 2018

Dear Sir

### **Regulation 28 Report – Taiyah-Grace Sharon Peebles**

I refer to your report dated 24 July 2017 made under paragraph 7, Schedule 5 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013 in relation to the inquest into the very sad death of Taiyah-Grace Sharon Peebles, who died on 25 July 2017 at Herne Bay railway station.

### **Background**

As noted in your report, the conclusion of the inquest was that Taiyah-Grace Sharon Peebles died on the evening of 25 July 2017 when, having dismounted from a train at the station in an intoxicated state, she turned in the wrong direction, became disorientated and made contact with the live rail carrying the electric current.

### **Response to Points of Concern**

*In your report, you state that "The absence of an end of platform barrier and the existence of a live rail at ground level that might [be] accessible to members of the public may in my opinion create a risk that future deaths will occur unless action is taken.... The Assistant Coroner understands that a barrier has since been constructed at Herne Bay Station to help prevent deaths in similar circumstances but that other platforms in the area have no such barrier. His further understanding is that in other parts of the country, trains are powered by electric current supplied by way of overhead cables rather than live rails at ground level, thereby making contact with the power supply less likely. In my opinion, action should be taken to prevent future deaths and I believe your organisation has the power to take such action."*

### **Ground level power supply**

I can confirm that the majority of the South East route rail network is powered by a ground level 750V d.c. conductor rail system. The UK rail network comprises of two main forms of

electric traction systems, 750V d.c. ground level conductor rail systems and 25kV a.c. overhead contact line systems. Both types of traction systems come with different risks which are key drivers of Network Rail's asset policies and standards.

The ground level conductor rail system on the South East route was installed in the 1950s and, although Network Rail has no future plans to install new conductor rail systems, it is not reasonably practicable to convert the system to an overhead contact line due to the complexity and cost to the railway industry. Whilst the ground level conductor rail cannot be replaced, Network Rail is committed to continue to develop reasonably practical solutions to improve the safety of the system wherever possible.

### **Platform-end fencing**

With regards to platform-end fencing, historically the fencing has not been installed as standard practice. The risks involved in intentional and unintentional accessing of the rail network were controlled via warning notices at the platform-end. The platform-end fencing and anti-trespass panels that have been installed at Herne Bay are part of a wider program of mitigations that are being applied to locations across the South East route to address the risks associated with members of the public either intentionally or unintentionally accessing the rail network. There are currently two programmes of activity which will see platform-end gates installed at over 50 stations on the South East route. We have already completed works on 30 locations over the Kent and Sussex areas. We expect the majority of works to be completed by the end of 2018 with some being finished in early 2019. There are also programmes to improve our fencing at areas we consider to be at higher risk of intentional or unintentional public access and this includes £800,000 of work which is due to be completed by April 2019.

Network Rail, Train Operating Companies (TOCs) and the British Transport Police continue to work together to manage this type of incident on the rail network. Our approach is a risk-based one using data (including data shared by the BTP) to identify areas where the public may access the line. Every week, joint BTP and Network Rail data is used to identify trends. This information is used to inform our patrolling plans which set out where the BTP, TOC or Network Rail should position their security resources throughout the week to best protect both members of the public and our infrastructure and stations from intentional or unintentional access. Monthly meetings are held with the BTP and TOCs (Southeastern and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)) to discuss our priorities around areas we consider to be at a higher risk of the public gaining access to the infrastructure.

I hope this response provides you with assurance that addresses your concerns. If I can be of further assistance, or if you would like further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally, on behalf of all at Network Rail, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to the family of Miss Peebles.

Yours faithfully,

  
  
**Route Managing Director**