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Dear Dr Mitchell

Kings Cross Fire

Further to your letter of 24 October, referencing the recent King's Cross fire I would like to assure you that a range of contingency measures are available to be called upon for a wide range of events.

As Mr Salique's letter to you of 15 August indicates, the event to which you refer was operational in its nature. In this instance, a fire in a neighbouring property that raised the risk of a building collapse, resulted in the fire brigade issuing an exclusion order that encompassed our infrastructure and required the evacuation of the signal box and the closure of the line.

Unfortunately the network is regularly subject to disruption from a range of external factors including, but not limited to; fires, bridge bashes, vandalism, floods, and lightning strikes.

In each case, the key to implementing contingency arrangements lies with good communications between all the industry bodies, especially ourselves and the train operating companies. Each incident should result in the most effective arrangements to deal with its specific conditions: For example, the incident in question was handled by turning services around at Peterborough, the provision by the train operators of substitute bus services, and agreement from train operators at Euston, Marylebone and Liverpool Street to accept tickets on their routes.

Where disruption affects passenger journeys, it will usually be the train operators who will be immediately responsible for the provision of alternative transport arrangements to their customers. Network Rail will work with the train operator to restore services as efficiently as possible, and working arrangements are in place to facilitate this. I am afraid, however, that it would not be possible to speculate on the engineering aspects, and infrastructure operating solutions, of a theoretical event.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. White".

Garry White
National Public Affairs Manager