



Cllr Steve Pitt  
Civic Offices  
Guildhall Square  
Portsmouth  
PO1 2AL

Network Rail Southern region  
1 Puddle Dock  
LONDON  
EC4V 3DS

1 December 2023

Dear Cllr Pitt

**Ref: SPOUT049(b) Rail Safety Awareness in Portsmouth**

I would like to begin by thanking you and your colleagues for your letter which I received last week, and for your decisive action to improve railway safety within your community in Portsmouth. As you rightly point out, the death of Jake Norman at Cosham is a tragedy and we send our thoughts to everyone in the community. We would absolutely welcome the opportunity to work together with the shared aim of preventing any further loss of life or injuries to young people in the Portsmouth area.

We recognise rail safety awareness is important and over the last number of years we've launched a number of campaigns at both a national and local level to educate young people. For instance, in response to the increase in youth trespass on the railway, the "You vs Train" campaign was launched nationally in 2018. You can find the campaign site here, and we would appreciate your support in sharing it across your local networks: [The facts - You vs. Train \(youvstrain.co.uk\)](https://youvstrain.co.uk)

More locally, Portsmouth is part of the Wessex route (which links Waterloo and the South) and we have been working to educate young people about the risks associated with the rail network since 2017, in close partnership with our train operating company colleagues at South Western Railway. We've produced a suite of Wessex bespoke materials, which are available for download here: [Community Safety \(nrwessex.co.uk\)](https://nrwessex.co.uk). We're very pleased that since the site was launched it has been visited 5,000 times by schools across the local area.

But we want to do more to address these challenges, and to make sure our customers and communities stay safe in and around our railway. So, in June 2023 we wrote to all 2196 schools across the Wessex Route which are within a 5-mile proximity of a railway station requesting schools help us educate young people about the dangers associated with the rail network. We offered to deliver free face to face rail safety sessions, gave schools access to our materials and offered schools the opportunity to join a remote rail safety session. 67 of these schools are located in Portsmouth. In November we further followed this up with an e-mail to all schools who received the letter requesting details on the action that the schools had taken to educate their students about the risks associated with the railway.

Of the 67 schools contacted in Portsmouth via letter and follow up e-mail 5 have responded – 3 have booked a face-to-face safety session, 1 school reported they had downloaded remote materials and a final school have said they will take action.



We have also contracted Learn Live to deliver a remote session to secondary schools and colleges across Wessex during the academic year 2023/24. 15 of these are located in Portsmouth – of the 15 schools contacted by Learn Live, 3 have booked a session and 12 have yet to respond.

As I hope you can see, we are working hard to do all that we can to educate young people about the railway – but we need your help to encourage uptake, promote engagement and improve the reach of our campaigns. We already work with various local authorities across Wessex and we would be more than happy to share best practice with the aim of promoting rail safety awareness with young people in and around Portsmouth.

I've copied in Matt Pocock, the interim route director for Wessex, and his head of route health and safety Eric Woodward, who will be in touch with you shortly to set up a meeting to discuss all of this in more detail. We hope that together we will be able to work on engaging schools in the Portsmouth area and successfully increase their involvement in our various outreach initiatives. We would also value any feedback you may have on our campaigns and how we can most effectively reach the local community in Portsmouth.

Thanks again for your letter – and if we can be of any further assistance, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ellie Burrows". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ellie Burrows  
*Regional Managing Director – Southern region*

Cc Matt Pocock, Interim Route Director (Wessex)  
Eric Woodward, Head of Route Health and Safety (Wessex)