

Contingencies fund advance: 22 February 2020

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Track worker struck by a train near Surbiton

News story

Investigation into a track worker struck by a train near Surbiton station, south-west London, 9 February 2021.



Aerial view of the area.

At around 11:35 hrs on Tuesday 9 February 2021, a track worker was struck and fatally injured by a passenger train near Surbiton station, south-west London. The train, which was travelling from London Waterloo to Salisbury, was travelling at around 76 mph (112 km/h) on the down fast line.

The track worker was part of a group of four staff who were undertaking a planned inspection of switches and crossings (points). The work was planned to take place while the lines were open and with arrangements in place to protect staff from train movements.

Our investigation will aim to identify the sequence of events which led to the accident and will include consideration of the actions of those involved, the planned protection arrangements, the planning of the work relating to the inspection of switches and crossings where lines are open to traffic, and any relevant underlying factors.

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry, the British Transport Police or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

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Published 22 February 2021

Prime Minister to publish roadmap for cautiously easing COVID restrictions

The Prime Minister will today set out the government's roadmap for cautiously easing lockdown restrictions in England.

Cabinet will meet virtually this morning to discuss the plan, the Prime Minister will give a statement to Parliament in the afternoon, and host a televised press conference in the evening.

He will set out the latest data on infection rates, hospitalisations and deaths, as well as early data showing the efficacy of vaccines.

The roadmap for leaving lockdown, which will be published on gov.uk on Monday, will seek to balance health, economic and social factors with the very latest epidemiological data and advice.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Today I'll be setting out a roadmap to bring us out of lockdown cautiously. Our priority has always been getting children back into school which we know is crucial for their education as well as their mental and physical wellbeing, and we will also be prioritising ways for people to reunite with loved ones safely.

Our decisions will be made on the latest data at every step, and we

will be cautious about this approach so that we do not undo the progress we have achieved so far and the sacrifices each and every one of you has made to keep yourself and others safe.

We have therefore set four key tests which must be met before we can move through each step of the plan.

The roadmap outlines four steps for easing restrictions. Before proceeding to the next step, the government will examine the data to assess the impact of previous easements. This assessment will be based on four tests which are that:

- The vaccine deployment programme continues successfully.
- Evidence shows vaccines are sufficiently effective in reducing hospitalisations and deaths in those vaccinated.
- Infection rates do not risk a surge in hospitalisations which would put unsustainable pressure on the NHS.
- Our assessment of the risks is not fundamentally changed by new Variants of Concern.

The four tests are currently being met so the first step will proceed from 8 March, at which point the top four priority cohorts for vaccinations – as determined by the independent JCVI – will have received a degree of immunity, three weeks after being offered their first dose.

Due to the current, relatively uniform spread of the virus across the country, restrictions will be eased step-by-step across the whole of England at the same time.

The roadmap seeks to balance between social and economic impacts, whilst preserving the health and safety of the country.

Outdoor settings are known to be lower risk than indoor, so outdoor activities will be opened earlier than indoor ones.

MPs will have an opportunity to vote on the regulations that will enable this roadmap in Parliament in the coming weeks.

We continue to work closely with the Devolved Administrations as we have throughout the pandemic. They are setting out approaches for easing for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

[Surge testing to be deployed in an](#)

area of Brentwood

Press release

Additional testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed to the CM13 postcode in Brentwood, Essex.



A further targeted area will have additional testing made available to control and suppress the potential spread of a COVID-19 variant.

Working in partnership with the local authority, additional testing and genomic sequencing is being deployed to the CM13 postcode in Brentwood, Essex, where a single case of the COVID-19 variant first identified in South Africa has been found.

Extra testing is being introduced in addition to existing extensive testing, and in combination with following the current lockdown rules and remembering Hands Face Space advice, will help to monitor and suppress the spread of the virus. Positive cases will be sequenced for genomic data to help understand COVID-19 variants and their spread within these areas.

People living within the CM13 postcode area are strongly encouraged to take a COVID-19 test when offered, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

People with symptoms should book a test in the usual way, and those without symptoms should visit their [local authority website](#) for more information.

Published 21 February 2021

Increased support for fishing and

shellfish businesses

The Government has announced [enhanced financial support](#) for the seafood industry with cash grants for seafood and aquaculture businesses across the UK.

In January, the Government made available [£23 million for seafood exporters](#) that suffered a financial loss because of delays related to the export of fresh or live fish and shellfish to the EU during January 2021.

Having listened to concerns from fishing businesses across the UK, Defra will now be expanding the eligibility criteria to target catching and shellfish aquaculture businesses which have been affected by a reduction in demand from the hospitality sector in the UK and abroad, as well as disruption of exports to the EU. These expanded criteria will mean more businesses can get the support they need.

[The scheme](#), which is similar to last year's Fisheries Response Fund set up in response to the coronavirus pandemic, will open in early March and provide a grant payment to cover up to three months of average business fixed costs incurred between January and March 2021. It will help catching and shellfish aquaculture businesses with costs such as insurance, equipment hire and port fees.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

Our fishermen are at the heart of many of our coastal communities and we recognise the impact of coronavirus and the end of the transition period on them. This expansion of our £23 million support package will ensure many more businesses can benefit from government support.

The coronavirus pandemic has led to the closure of critical markets, and this has been exacerbated by issues faced by exporters at the border. We will continue to ensure we are listening to our fishing and seafood industry as we work to resolve these issues, and work with them to build up the industry in the months and years ahead.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, David Duguid said:

Over the last few months, we have been listening to the seafood industry and have continued to monitor the impacts that the pandemic and export disruption has played on prices, exports and the market.

I am confident in the quality of Scottish fish and seafood but for many fishing businesses the lack of demand in the hospitality trade in the UK and further afield has had a real impact on market prices.

While we continue to take steps to beat this virus and work with the sector to resolve export issues – this expanded support scheme will help the many small and medium sized fishing businesses that support so many of our coastal communities.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis said:

The fishing industry plays an important role in Northern Ireland for its people and communities, supporting around 2,000 jobs.

This expansion of the government's £23 million response fund will ensure that the fisheries and aquaculture industry in Northern Ireland receives the financial and practical support it needs.

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart said:

The expansion of the Seafood Disruption Support Scheme highlights the UK Government's commitment to Welsh exporters who are currently facing a uniquely challenging period.

We want to back our fantastic Welsh businesses and I encourage all who are eligible to apply for this support.

The main features of the scheme are:

- For the UK catching sector, the fund will be open to under 40m vessel owners with fishing licences and who have a track record of fishing in the winter months.
- The scheme will offer support to UK shellfish aquaculture businesses, support will be provided on average ongoing costs based on Full-time equivalent (FTE) employees per business. Businesses who have received a grant under the recent Seafood Producers Resilience Fund in Scotland will not be eligible for the UK scheme.
- The Marine Management Organisation will administer the fund across the UK on behalf of Defra, contacting eligible registered owners and licence holders directly with details of how to apply, starting in early March.
- A single payment will be made to cover a proportion of fixed costs over a three-month period from January to March 2021.

The funding follows targeted support to help exporters with new processes. This includes the Seafood Exports Working Group, meeting twice a week to troubleshoot issues raised by the industry; and a newly established [Scottish Seafood Exports Task Force](#).

The UK fishing and seafood sector is also set to benefit from significant government investment with a £100 million fund to help modernise fishing fleets, the fish processing industry, and rejuvenate an historic and proud industry in the UK, on top of the £32 million that will replace EU funding this year.

The Government also continues to seek urgent resolution to export issues, including the EU ban on the import of class B live bivalve molluscs and will explore further ways producers can continue to export this valuable seafood. UK mussels and oysters are highly sought after, at home and abroad. The sector has been highly impacted by Covid restrictions, and now barriers to trade imposed by the EU.

There is also wider support from the Government to the sector including the on-going Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the furlough scheme and the recently launched [SME Brexit Support Fund](#) to help businesses deal with export requirements.

Information about the Seafood Response Fund and scheme guidance is [published on GOV.UK](#).