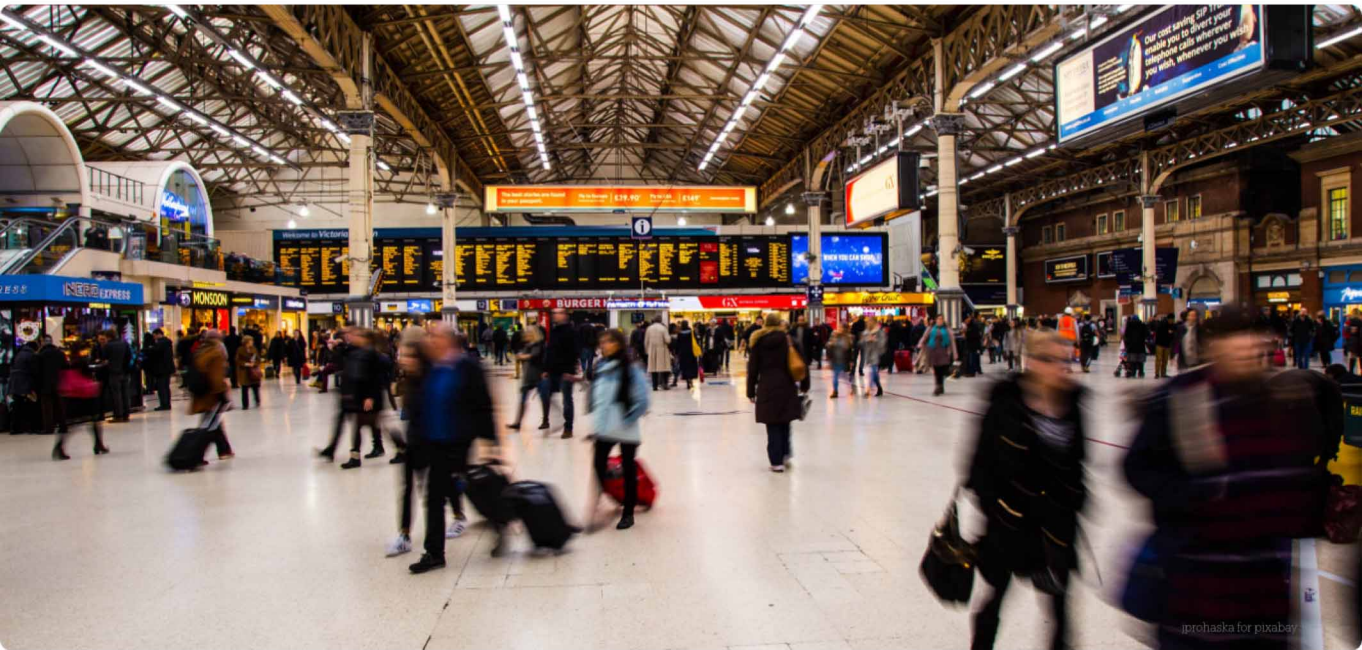




Railway Mission

Post-Incident Support Report 2021

Post-Incident Support is the care offered and given to railway or police staff following serious incidents such as sudden deaths, suicides or attempted suicides, fatal or non-fatal accidents, homicide or attempted homicide that may have a traumatic or disturbing effect on mental wellbeing of rail industry colleagues.



Support on life's journey



Post-Incident Chaplaincy Support Report 2021

Post-Incident Support 2021

Railway Mission chaplains are trusted chaplains with British Transport Police (BTP), Network Rail (NR) and the Train and Freight Operating Companies (TOCs, FOCs) of England, Scotland and Wales.

Also officially known as BTP Chaplains, we have consistently served the railways of Britain since 1881, having developed a strong reputation for professional welfare and care within the industry.

Chaplains provide post-incident support to those who are engaged in the immediate and subsequent response to rail incidents. All support is confidential, impartial and independent.

This support is offered and given to responders, train crew, signal centre or station staff or witnesses following rail incidents. Occasionally chaplains are asked to support surviving family members by the coroner's office following fatalities. However, our primary support is for the welfare of rail industry staff.

The Report

This report is based on numerical evidence that helps quantify the support given or offered to rail staff, but it should be pointed out that the numbers represent people, either as individuals or as groups, so it should be noted that there is a personal element to the data provided.

This report covers incidents followed up during 2021, from January to December.

It does not include information on response to Major Incidents, which are covered in our Annual Report.

An incident is not considered complete until all designated staff have been at least offered

support via the various means at our disposal, including face to face meetings, emails, phone conversations, texts, or support offered and passed on via line managers.

Rail chaplaincy is both proactive and reactive. Our primary information on each incident is provided through rail industry reports and proforma which aid in a professional and sensitive approach to each incident.

We are grateful to the rail industry and BTP who see the value of the support provided through post-incident support by Railway Mission chaplains and provide information we can act upon.

Railway Incidents

It is a sad fact that there are around 350 attempted or completed suicides using rail infrastructure every year.

There are also unfortunate accidents, as well as sudden deaths that contribute to the figures in this data, which means that more than 400 incidents are

recorded annually. On rare occasions homicide or attempted homicide is a factor.

BTP Chaplains endeavour to cover every incident, providing support to responders and potentially affected staff. In recent years, due to vital information provided by BTP and the rail industry, chaplains have been able to provide support following every recorded incident.

This illustrates our commitment to supporting staff following rail incidents.

In 2021, **439** incidents were recorded that resulted in support being offered or received through the rail chaplaincy on post-incident support. Of these, **277** were recorded as suspected suicides, with **86** as attempted suicides. There were **11** fatal accidents during 2021, with **33** non-fatal accidents. **31** sudden deaths were reported, and one attempted homicide.

Suicide on the railways

In 2021, **86** out of **363** attempts did not result in a loss of life, but many individuals were left with life-changing or life-threatening injuries.

This equates to **23.7%** of all attempts and would more than confirm the percentage from previous years, where, in our previous report, it was observed that around **one in five** attempts did not result in the loss of a life.

During 2021 the figure is closer to **one in four**, which demonstrates that even where a suicide attempt has not been completed, there is still a significant risk of life-altering injuries as a result of the attempt.

It is a conversation we should have, though, in regard to dissuading people from considering the railways as a place for ending their lives.

Accidents on the railways

This report is mainly concerned with the support offered to rail staff following incidents, but the levels of accidents, fatal and non-fatal, during 2021 should be noted.

Fatal accidents were slightly lower than the previous year, but non-fatal accidents more than doubled. This at a time when fewer patrons were travelling due to the pandemic. There were eleven fatal and 33 non-fatal accidents during 2021.

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439

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Railway Mission Rail Staff Support Following Incidents 2021										
2021	F/TOC Train Crew			TOC Station Staff		Network Rail/TfL		British Transport Police		
Month	DM	Driver	OBM	Manager	Staff	T/L/MOM	Signaller	BTP OIC	BTP RU	Total Staff
January	36	36	20	19	19	42	33	45	47	297
February	25	25	15	13	13	28	23	31	31	204
March	32	32	10	27	26	35	31	36	37	266
April	27	26	13	20	20	27	26	34	34	227
May	33	34	16	27	27	37	31	40	41	286
June	28	28	7	23	23	30	26	36	35	236
July	30	29	10	25	21	33	30	37	36	251
August	25	23	4	19	17	27	23	29	29	196
September	31	31	14	20	20	38	29	40	40	263
October	30	30	20	22	22	34	30	38	40	266
November	23	23	11	17	16	28	22	33	33	204
December	34	34	15	24	22	42	34	44	43	292
Year	354	351	155	256	246	399	338	443	446	2988

DM: Driver Manager • OBM: On-Board Manager • T/L/MOM: Mobile or Local Operations Manager (Train Operations Manager on TfL) • OIC: Officer in Charge • RU: Response Unit • F/TOC: Freight or Train Operating Company • TfL: Transport for London



Staff Support 2021

Who receives post-incident support?

We have a set criteria for care provision, which involves four sections of support:

- ▷ **The train crew**, which relates to the driver via the driver manager, and the on-board crew, through their manager.
- ▷ **Station staff.** Where an incident takes place at a station, the train station staff via their line-manager or supervisor are offered support.
- ▷ **Network Rail or Transport for London (TfL) staff;** that is, MOMs and Signallers via the Local Operation Managers (LOMs), or Train Operation Managers (TOMs) on TfL, and could include other participants.
- ▷ **BTP Responders**, via the Scene Commander and duty officers, plus other officers, including SOCO, Fatality Investigation Teams, Medics, etc.

Railway Mission provides a high level of accountability and confidentiality regarding information.

Teams and Individuals

Our data mostly concerns support for rail industry teams, although individuals are, of course, given support within those teams.

For instance we offer support for a train driver through their line manager, which means two persons at least have been offered support. Similarly, we offer support to a train crew via their manager. BTP Response Units may come from a number of stations for an incident.

Each team is offered support, usually through their duty officer or scene commander.

During 2021, we offered 2988 teams or individuals support.

The actual individual number is higher, of course, as there could be between two and five or more members to each team, and all will be offered support following an incident they attended.

Some of our data can be identified as referring to individuals. For example, we offered support to **354** driver managers as part of our follow-up procedure.

It is important to note that, whilst we go through the manager to offer support to their team members, the manager is also potentially impacted by the incident.

Management Support

One issue for the rail industry to consider is who manages the managers when it comes to support following rail incidents. Mostly, when we ask them, they will tell us that they deal with the

situation either amongst themselves, or 'by getting on with it.'

Chaplains' support is always available to all members of staff, so we will always enquire after their wellbeing, and often have extended conversations regarding prior incidents and how they were coming through the effects those incidents had on them at the time.

Responders

We offered support to 443 BTP Response Unit Scene Commanders, and 446 of their teams.

This reflects the fact that more teams go to incidents than Officers in Charge.

Again, regarding individuals, we contacted **399** Mobile Operation Managers (MOMs) and **338** Signals teams. MOMs are often the first on scene following an incident and responsible for the infrastructure and dealing with the delicate time during which the area must be cleared and reactivated. Although signalling teams are not at the site, they too can be affected by incidents.

There are also other teams at signalling centres such as the CCTV staff who view the incident as part of the process of determining what has taken place. Although the information about CCTV staff is not recorded in our data, they are part of signals teams operations. CCTV teams also work with BTP to provide evidence.

All of these staff members need wellbeing follow-up. Railway Mission is well positioned and able to support rail staff Post-incident.

Station Staff

Not all incidents take place at stations, many being line-side.

However, we did support **256** station supervisors and their staff. Often a supervisor will refer a staff member who was on duty at the time of the incident and we will speak with them, either at the station during a visit or by phone.

Dealing with a serious incident such as a death at the station, especially a suicide or attempted suicide, is rarely what a customer support staff member anticipated

During 2021 we supported...

2988 teams and individuals

865 train crew and managers

446 BTP Response Units

737 NR MOMs & Signallers

...following rail incidents





That is why wellbeing support is so important to the railways.

when they joined the railways, although they would have been made aware of the possibility during training. These situations can be very affecting.

Whilst BTP Responders and Network Rail MOMs can also potentially be traumatised, they expect to attend incidents as a part of their vocation, and have a level of preparedness or experience in dealing with them, but train station staff are rarely in this position. That is why wellbeing support is so important to the railways.

All rail operators and responders have debrief processes and wellbeing teams who are responsible for the care of their staff members and officers. Railway chaplaincy is another, independent, strata of available support that many find invaluable.

Multiple interventions

Bear in mind that, for instance, a BTP station visit may encompass contact with several officers, and conversations will often go to previous incidents they have attended as well as the one being followed up.

This is a form of intervention as it allows staff to recall situations that may have affected them for which they still require closure at some level and possibly ongoing support.

The same occurs when speaking to TOC and Network Rail line managers and colleagues of staff members who had some kind of involvement in dealing with an incident.

One incident may yield a number of conversations that are helpful to staff members in coming to terms with difficult incidents they were required to handle at some level.

Contact

Our contact begins with a call to BTP First Contact, then senior TOC or NR Control Duty Staff and stretches through all staff potentially or actually engaged in the incident.

Initial contact is by phone, sometimes via email, and by visits to the various connected response points, depots and stations.



Support after the traumatic event from chaplaincy and TRiM practitioners at an early stage can help reduce the risk of developing more severe reactions to trauma such as PTSD.

Chaplains and TRiM practitioners are non-medical personnel who have undergone training to help them understand the effects that traumatic events can have upon people and aid in the prevention of symptoms escalating to the point of the need for clinical intervention.

Liam Johnston • Executive Director



This follow up visit is arranged once the required level of support is established.

Valued Support

All degrees of response are important, from phone call to visit, because the wellbeing of each person is paramount to the successful continuation of the railways.

Mental health has become a major issue that is increasingly being addressed by rail-connected organisations. Prevention is better than cure.

Being able to talk to people with active listening skills is part of the process of recovery for many.

In many cases, if a rail worker knows there is an outlet for their concern that doesn't affect their vocation or career pathway they can be more open with a care professional about their situation and, as a result, are better able to function in their job.

Whilst our data indicates a numerical value, there are often far more people who receive or are offered support along the chain, following each incident, whose information doesn't appear here.

Railway Mission remains a dedicated and committed provider of post-incident support.

We endeavour to offer support to as many staff members as we can reach following every incident recorded via the BTP proforma.

A Healthy Future

During 2021 every recorded rail incident was attended in some way by chaplains through post-incident support for rail officers and staff.

Railway Mission chaplains are generally very well received by rail officers and staff.

As the rail industry considers its future, including looking at the economics of running what will become the Great British Railway, stakeholders should also bear in mind that the wellbeing of their staff is crucial to its continued efficiency.

This is a progressive opportunity to place wellbeing and mental health near the forefront of railway thinking across the board.

It would be a simple matter to place health and wellbeing at the bottom of the economic and productivity scale and lower its importance, but the welfare of staff is one of the great keys to a healthy railway.

Take care of staff, and they will take care of business.

Railway chaplaincy remains a key element in the existing and ongoing support system within the wellbeing sector in the rail industry.

It is our privilege at Railway Mission to work with the industry in this capacity.

Data compiled by Area Managers Andrew Hall & Stephen Rowe from reports submitted by Railway Mission chaplains.

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Railway chaplains

Railway Mission is a chaplaincy service to all staff and patrons of the railways of England, Scotland and Wales.

Our chaplains are equipped to come alongside rail staff to be a listening ear and comforting voice to those who are going through a challenging time.

Chaplains will also help find the right agencies to help continue with ongoing support should it be needed.

Railway Mission partners with BTP and railway industry companies to provide independent, impartial and confidential support to anyone affected by tragic incidents on the railway network, regardless of status, lifestyle, race or religious beliefs.

Call: 0203 887 7000

www.railwaymission.org



Railway Mission

Support on life's journey



In partnership with



Rail Delivery Group

