

Report 01/2021: Person struck by a train at Eden Park station

On publication of RAIB's report concerning a person struck by a train at Eden Park station, Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents said:

“This tragic accident resulted in the death of someone who had impaired vision and mobility, and relied on the railway to transport him safely. My thoughts are with his family, and others who knew and were close to him, as we publish our investigation report.

“Our investigation concluded that the absence of a tactile strip along the platform edge may have been a factor in this accident. These strips are used to provide visually impaired passengers with an indication that they are approaching the platform edge. Eden Park is far from unique: around half of all mainline stations in the UK are also not equipped with this valuable aid to the visually impaired.

“Our investigation found that government and the railway industry have policies in place to make rail travel more accessible for people with disabilities. However, there appears to have been no coherent strategy for the provision of tactile strips, despite their obvious importance to visually impaired people who value the opportunity to travel independently, without reliance on staff.

“Although RAIB recognises that the immediate provision of tactile strips across the network would be very expensive, there is a need to develop a new policy to guide decision makers. This would inform the development of a programme for installation of tactile strips, particularly at places where the risk is likely to be higher, such as busy unstaffed stations. It cannot always make sense simply to wait until platforms are refurbished to install the strips.

“While accessibility has rightly been promoted in recent years, it is important that safety is properly considered when the industry is looking at the arrangements and facilities that they provide for disabled or impaired passengers. The well-established principle that additional measures should be provided to protect rail passengers, where reasonably practicable to do so, applies to all. It is for this reason that we are urging a re-think on the approach to provision of tactile strips to ensure that they are installed where most needed.”