

**Trains overspeeding between Laurencekirk and Portlethen, Aberdeenshire, 4 December 2020**

**On publication of RAIB's report concerning trains overspeeding between Laurencekirk and Portlethen, Aberdeenshire, 4 December 2020, Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents, said:**

“RAIB is concerned at the number of overspeeding incidents which occur at speed restrictions on the mainline network. Network Rail's national daily report has recorded 7 cases so far in 2021, up from 5 in the whole of 2020, and some of these involved speed limits being exceeded by over 80 miles per hour.

“This report highlights some of the causes of overspeeding. It shows how important it is to convey information to train drivers about emergency speed restrictions in a way that they can understand and retain. This is particularly vital where, as in this case, there are no lineside signs to mark where the restrictions begin and end. As we saw in an incident at Sandy in 2018 (RAIB report 10/2019), it is possible for a driver who has not been given advance notice of a speed restriction to take their train through it much faster than is safe. Since then, the tragic accident at Carmont in 2020 has resulted in the introduction of a new process which Network Rail uses to impose speed restrictions over areas affected by severe weather, such as heavy rain, which might cause the failure of earthworks.

“The railway industry has more work to do to establish a suitable method for the imposition of speed restrictions which are needed in response to extreme weather that has the potential to endanger infrastructure. In this case the industry's processes were ineffective, and it is fortunate that the weather was not as bad as feared and that no accident occurred.”