

# DB Cargo UK successfully trials a 'combi-consists' method for customers

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DB Cargo UK is trialling the use of 'combi-consists' to increase capacity, improve customer service and drive up efficiency.

The idea was to run a unique jumbo train from Belmont Yard in Doncaster to Barking, East London. It carried a mix of wagons for two completely different types of customers.

The train comprised two sets of empty wagons – 21 x MBA wagons for Ward Recycling and 18 x JNA wagons for FCC Environment – with an isolated DIT (dead-in-train) locomotive – in the middle.

The MBA wagons had previously been discharged at Immingham in North Lincolnshire and the JNA wagons discharged at FCC Environment's new waste transfer facility at Tinsley in South Yorkshire.

Both sets of wagons were then taken to DB Cargo UK's Belmont Yard depot in Doncaster, where the jumbo train was assembled. The train travelled from Belmont Yard to Barking via Lincoln Central, Spalding, The East Coast Mainline, Hertford North and Canonbury Tunnel.

Chief sales officer, Roger Neary, said DB was delighted with the results of the trial, which had numerous benefits for both the rail freight company and its customers.

“Combining two customers’ services into one train allowed us to reduce the required number of traincrew, freeing up resources to use on other services,” he said. “It also enabled us to significantly reduce our fuel consumption, making the train not only leaner, but greener too.”

He added: “We had to obtain special permission to run the service with a locomotive in the middle dead-in-train, but this reduced the need for complicated shunting at both ends of the journey. It enabled us to hook FCC Environment’s wagons on to the back of Ward’s wagons without having to remove the locomotive and run it round. It’s much more efficient in terms of yard management.”

Roger said that the initiative would drive greater reliability on a rail corridor that has recently seen very strong growth, with new services from the ports of Felixstowe and London Gateway for Maritime and new services for FCC Environment from DB Cargo UK’s London aggregates terminals to two new terminals located at Tinsley and Peterborough.

DB now intends to take the trial one step further by proving the concept on a greater portion of the East Coast Mainline & Midland Mainline, further improving the efficiency of the service.

“At DB cargo UK we are continually looking at ways to challenge the norm and further improve the reliability and efficiency of our services, and this is a great example of innovation in train-planning,” said Roger.