


# “We don’t want another family to experience what we have been through” – bereaved parents urge others to talk to their children about the dangers of trespass

October 12, 2022



“I didn’t expect electricity to just *jump* at me.”

Watch Harrison’s story.  
[YouVsTrain.co.uk](https://www.youvsTrain.co.uk)

**You vs. Train**

Everyone loses when you step on the track.

The parents of a young boy who was electrocuted by overhead power cables have launched a new rail safety campaign film in conjunction with [British Transport Police](#), [Network Rail](#) and the wider rail industry.

Harrison’s Story – tells the story of 11-year-old Harrison Ballantyne, who tragically lost his life when he was electrocuted by overhead power cables after straying into a rail freight depot to retrieve a lost football. He was hit by 25,000 volts of electricity. There was nothing his friends or paramedics could do to save him. Harrison died at the scene.

Harrison lived in a small village, not served by a railway station. His mother, Liz Ballantyne, said: “I had never realised that I needed to educate my children about the dangers of the railway as I never realised how close the railway was.”

Drew Ballantyne, Harrison's father added: "Harrison didn't touch the overhead power cables on that day. I didn't know that electricity could jump and arc, and I doubt that he did either."

Harrison's Story is part of the [You vs Train](#) campaign, which aims to educate people about the dangers, both obvious and hidden, that are present on the railway and in doing so, deter trespassing.

Trespass is a huge problem on the railway with thousands of incidents recorded each year. Latest figures show that there were 19,408 trespass incidents on the British rail network in the last financial year (2021/22), the highest number recorded for five years. Some 25 per cent of all those incidents were involved young people under the age of 18,

Robert Wainwright, head of public safety at Network Rail, said: "Harrison's Story is a tragic reminder of why it is vitally important that we all know about rail safety and the devastating potential impact that trespass can have, not only on the trespasser - who risks serious life-changing, if not fatal injury - but also on their friends and family, and the wider community.

"The railway is full of danger, both obvious and hidden, and that danger is ever present as the electricity on the railway is always turned on. I urge people to watch this film, understand the risks, make the right decisions and stay away from the railway lines. Help us to keep you and your loved ones safe."

Superintendent Alison Evans said: "Telling Harrison's tragic story highlights how, by educating ourselves and others, we can make the railway a safer place.

"The hazards of trespassing on the railway are countless - trains travel at high speed and unlike cars, can't swerve to avoid people. You can't tell when the next train is approaching.

"High voltage electricity powers the overhead cables and the third rail 24 hours a day, seven days a week - you don't have to touch them to risk your life - the electricity can arc - just like it did in Harrison's case.

"The third rail looks just like an ordinary rail, but it carries 750 volts. The DC current that flows through it is three times as powerful as your home electricity.

"I can't emphasise enough how important it is to watch this film and spread the word - it might just save a life and avoid the devastation endured by Harrison's parents."

Harrison's Story will be pushed out across social media and used as part of the rail industry's school's engagement programme. To learn more about the You vs Train campaign, visit [www.youvstrain.co.uk](http://www.youvstrain.co.uk).

Harrison's Story has had a profound impact on the rail industry, especially as his case resulted in an investigation by the industry regulator - [the Office for Rail and Road](#).

Harrison's family have collaborated with the rail industry to create another film, building upon Harrison's Story, which will be used as a training tool to provide guidance on how to improve risk management processes. A huge amount of work has taken place in the rail industry since Harrison's death and the film highlights the progress that has been made, as well as serving as a reminder of the tragic consequences if

things go wrong.

Full details on the Harrison Ballantyne investigation by the ORR can be found [here](#).