

From: Members Correspondence <>
Sent: Wednesday, February 5, 2025 5:22 PM>
Cc: London Greens <Greens@london.gov.uk>;
Subject: RE: New Year's Eve

Dear Andree,

Thank you for sharing Helen's letter with us, we have been asked to respond on the Mayor's behalf. We are very sorry to hear about her distressing experience on New Years Eve (NYE) and want to reassure you, and Helen, that the safety of customers using London's transport network is our number one priority.

Following the 2023 fireworks, the Mayor and his team reviewed all aspects of the event in collaboration with partner agencies, including the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), other emergency services, Transport for London (TfL), and local authorities. This formed the basis of planning the 2024 event.

Network Rail (NR) has a robust station event plan in place for NYE, which London Underground (LU) feeds in to. This applies to busy stations, including Waterloo and Charing Cross, and includes details on efficient crowd management, queuing systems and changes from normal operations at the stations.

The stewards Helen interacted with are managed by a third party contractor. These stewards are contracted by the production company, who produce the event on behalf of the Mayor of London and Greater London Authority.

We can comment on the concerns raised by Helen from a TfL and LU perspective, however, Network Rail oversees the closure of railways stations, such as Charing Cross and Waterloo, and we would recommend also reaching out to them to get further clarity on the incidents mentioned at these two stations.

Charing Cross

Access to Charing Cross main station was managed by stewards, who are not managed by TfL. The Network Rail-managed station remained open throughout but an extensive querying system was implemented after the firework event.

Charing Cross Underground station was pre-scheduled to close at 18:00, as per the event plan. The station was due to reopen after midnight following an assessment by the British Transport Police and the event manager. Based on an evaluation of crowds the station did not reopen until 01:45. A number of posters were put up in impacted LU stations from 27 December to 31 December notifying customers of the opening and closing times of the LU stations on the 31 December. We also put out a press release over the Christmas and New Year period to advise customers to avoid the area around Victoria Embankment.

Across the network, operational messages were carried across various channels, including over 2,000 posters across the Tube, bus, and Docklands Light Railway network, with an estimated reach of ten million people, plus live station announcements. This was in addition to both ongoing social media activity and on-the-ground messaging around the event site.

Waterloo

Regarding Waterloo LU station, one of the exits into Waterloo main station was closed as per Network Rail's contingency plan. It was pre-agreed that from 22:30 the only way to enter London Waterloo Station for passengers using South Western Railway would be via Exit 3 via Spur Road and Cab Road. Bakerloo Line entrance to the Underground was closed from 23:00. Exit 1 was used as an alternative exit if required or otherwise directed by the Station Incident Officer.

NR closed their entrance from both the Jubilee and Northern ticket halls to facilitate their one way systems. Customers were directed via Exit 7, where we were facilitating LU to NR interchange directly onto the NR concourse via a route close to the Waterloo & City line platforms, without customers walking the route around the outside of the station to re-enter at street level.

This ensured passengers were split into two appropriate groups, with those for the Underground being directed via Waterloo Road and those for South Western Railway being directed down Baylis Road to Spur Road.

Customers interchanging from LU to NR were directed using announcements, directional posters and staff. This was done to ensure the safe management of crowds using both Waterloo NR & LU stations. I can confirm that all TfL communication channels were used to transmit the station plans for LU and there were no significant deviations from the planned operations on the night.

Information was also provided at stations in the form of public announcements, signage and staff presence to assist, with safe operation on the night considering the volume of people using the station. LU stations closer to the fireworks event that were closed were all planned and advertised in advance.

Regarding the lift at Waterloo, it is important to us that our network is accessible for all. We investigated the incident raised by Helen and can confirm the lift broke down earlier in the day and could not be fixed in time for the evening on New Years Eve, which we apologise for, however, the event organiser was informed and they advised ticket holders and step free users entering the station. Announcements were made to notify customers on trains that Waterloo station had no step free access. The customer in a wheelchair was assisted via our emergency lift.

We are glad to hear Helen made it home safely but we are sorry to hear about her experience in trying to do so. I hope the above information provides some clarity regarding LU operations on NYE.