

Our ref:

Your ref:

Mr Graham Danbury

Hertfordshire Coroner's Office  
The Old Courthouse  
St Albans Road East  
Hatfield  
Hertfordshire  
AL10 0ES

████████████████████  
████████████████████  
Bridge House  
1 Walnut Tree Close  
Guildford GU1 4LZ

Direct Line: ██████████

22 February 2017

Dear Mr Danbury

**Response to Regulation 28 Report to Prevent Future Deaths  
Kevin Andrew Heffernan 27<sup>th</sup> March 2016**

I refer to your Regulation 28 Report resulting from the inquest into the tragic death of Kevin Andrew Heffernan on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2016 which was received by Highways England on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017.

Highways England Company Ltd (throughout referred to as "Highways England") accepts the circumstances of the death as outlined in paragraph 4 of the Regulation 28 Report dated 25 October 2016. Highways England would like to extend sincere condolences to the family of Mr Heffernan for their sad loss.

We note your concerns outlined in paragraph 5 of the report regarding a flow of water across the westbound carriageway at or near the point where Mr Heffernan's vehicle began to veer to the left.

The section of carriageway where Mr Heffernan's incident occurred was subject to a range of major improvements which widened the M25 to four lanes between junction 16 and junction 23; these works were completed in the spring of 2012. These improvements were designed to the specification and standards applicable at the time and were subject to a range of design and safety checks/audits. Where it was found that the design specification could not be met then a "departure from standard" would have been approved at the time.

**Action taken or to be taken by Highways England**

We have undertaken an initial investigation of the section of carriageway in question with the following findings:

### Pavement Condition

An analysis of surface characteristics at this location did not find any issues in relation to rutting, longitudinal profile or skidding resistance and is therefore considered within design tolerances. It should be noted that the skidding resistance (SCRIM) is measured using a method designed to mimic wet road conditions.

### Carriageway Geometry

Our records for this section show that the crossfall (the slope of the carriageway perpendicular to the direction of travel) of the road surface changes direction prior to the point where Mr Heffernan's vehicle started to move out of lane. The gradient (the slope of the carriageway parallel to the direction of travel) before and after this point is within normal design parameters. It is a characteristic of highway design that crossfall change will result in an increased depth of water flowing across the carriageway, in more extreme periods of rainfall. This is not an uncommon feature in highway geometry and is taken into design consideration.

### Drainage Condition

On 15<sup>th</sup> March 2016 the gully gratings in this location were cleared of debris to ensure no obstruction to water flowing from the carriageway. On 19<sup>th</sup> April 2016 a full clean of the gullies on the anti-clockwise carriageway of the M25 between junctions 23 and 22 was carried out, along with sweeping of the v-channel; no issues affecting the operation of the drainage were identified at this time.

Following your report we will undertake a further review of the design of this section of carriageway. This will include analysis of the design considerations that were made as part of the major improvement scheme and this is due to be completed in the spring of 2017.

### Publication

Highways England is content for this response to be published in full.

Please advise if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted Signature]

Asset Delivery Manager

[Redacted Contact Information]

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27 FEB 2017  
BY: \_\_\_\_\_