



Oliver Longstaff  
HM Assistant Coroner for County Durham and Darlington  
HM Coroners Office

By email only to: [REDACTED]

Your ref: [REDACTED]

5 March 2021

**Re: Regulation 28 Report - Clive Oxley**

Dear Sir,

I refer to your report dated 24<sup>th</sup> December 2020 made under paragraph 7, schedule 5, of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 and regulations 28 and 29 of the Coroners (Investigations) Regulations 2013.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere condolences to the family of Mr Oxley. Please be assured that we take all incidents of this nature on the railway incredibly seriously and have carefully considered the matters raised in your report.

**Platform barrier at southbound platform**

Durham station overall and, as noted in your report, the viaduct at the station (particularly on the southbound track) has attracted a number of attempts by members of the public to harm themselves or sadly end their lives, including Mr Oxley. As a result, and to reduce the potential for these events, my team has extensively reviewed the possible intervention measures at this location.

As part of that exercise, in December 2019, we undertook significant alteration to the end of the southbound platform to deter pedestrian access and to obscure the view of the viaduct from the platform. This was done by removing the sloped nose of the platform and installing a lockable gate and robust fence at the platform end. The fence itself is 1.8 metres high with a coarse infill to limit any view of the viaduct from the platform. The platform end also has an audible warning system, signage making clear that pedestrians are prohibited from passing the end of the platform and Samaritans signage. Anti-trespass flooring was also installed either side of the fencing the full width of the platform to further discourage pedestrians from passing the fence. Photographs showing the original platform arrangement and the works completed in December 2019 are included in Appendix 1 to this letter.

Decisions in relation to the location and design of these measures took into account Network Rail's relevant mandatory standards. Standards prohibit fencing to be constructed the full width of the platform due to gauging requirements (i.e. the need to consider the potential for a train to come into contact with the fence when passing the platform). The fence has been placed as far along the platform as standards allow. Consideration was also given to a derogation from standards but it was recognised that a determined individual could in any event access the track by climbing down from the platform edge.

Works are currently ongoing to install similar closed fencing and anti-trespass flooring to the northbound platform end (although the sloping nose of the platform is not being removed at that location due to the proximity of signalling and telecommunications equipment).

### **Anti-trespass flooring**

In addition to the measures referred to above, immediately following the death of Mr Oxley, we installed 80 metres of anti-trespass flooring to both sides of the viaduct (i.e. northbound and southbound) to further prevent access to the structure. The works were completed in the week commencing 12 April 2020. The flooring is intended to act as both a physical and a visual deterrent to accessing the parapets. A photograph showing this is also included at Appendix 1.

### **Parapet fencing**

Significant parapet fencing has previously been trialled at this location. However, the viaduct has Grade II listed status, which introduces constraints in this respect. Our mandatory fencing standard was therefore applied. Following receipt of your report we are liaising with relevant stakeholders and appropriate planning authorities to consider whether additional measures can be taken over and above what is required in the fencing standard. Specifically, we are considering whether a wire mesh fence can be installed along the parapet to restrict individuals from climbing over the existing structure. This is something that we have done at other Grade II listed structures. In the meantime, the fencing at the viaduct is compliant with and will continue to be maintained as required by our mandatory fencing standard.

### **Further suicide prevention work**

Network Rail and the British Transport Police (**BTP**), together with Train Operating Companies, are committed to preventing suicide on the railway and are working together to actively try to reduce suicide attempts across the East Coast Route and specifically at Durham.


Following successful trials, Network Rail implemented Samaritans-trained patrollers for suicide prevention at Durham and this has been in operation since October 2018. In October 2019, we increased the patrolling presence. These patrollers are present at the station 5 days per week for 12 hours per day (based on an assessment of suicide attempts determining deployment times and days for maximum impact). This has sometimes been increased on a temporary basis to 16 hours a day where risk assessments have shown an increase in incidents or risk prior to the normal shift pattern. Since April 2020, these teams have made four lifesaving interventions at Durham station.

In addition to these patrols, we also fund a team of BTP dedicated officers who provide extra focus north of York on the East Coast Main Line (including Durham station). This is headed by a dedicated Network Rail funded BTP Embedded Inspector who works with our own suicide prevention lead to identify risks and provide plans for deployment of resources and liaison with local authorities and charities. We are also supporting LNER (who operates Durham station) to assess the potential for camera systems which may help to detect suicidal individuals moving into positions where they may harm themselves.

I hope that this response answers your concerns but if I can be of any further assistance, or if you would like further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

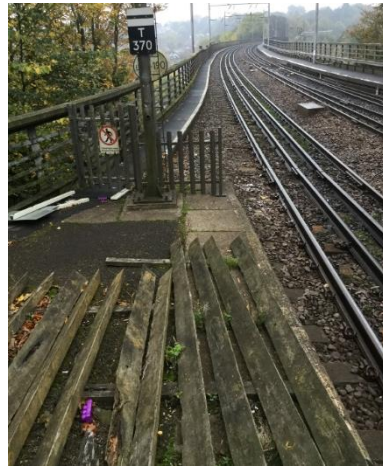
Yours sincerely,



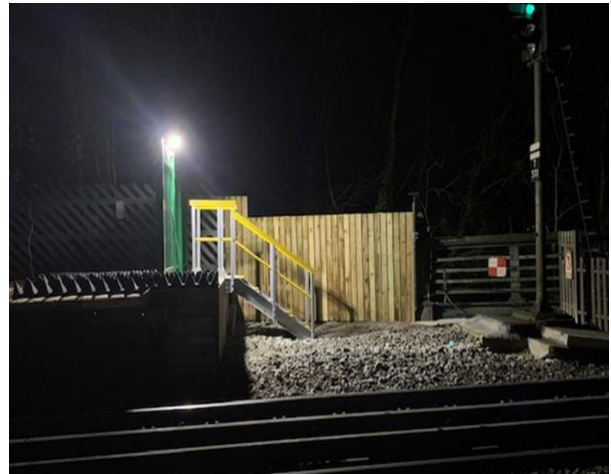
  
Route Director, East Coast Route

**Appendix 1**

*Southbound platform end – original arrangement*



*Southbound platform end – current arrangement (since December 2019)*



*Anti-trespass flooring viaduct installation*

