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17 JAN 2019

11 January 2019

Dear Sir

Re Inquest into the Death of Christopher Lewis McGuffie

In response to your letter of 12 December 2018 and the findings of the inquest into the suicide of Mr McGuffie please find below both an explanation of the work we undertake at Arriva Rail North (ARN) to address suicides on our network and a response to some of the specific issues you raise.

Addressing suicides and trespass on the Northern network are two key strands in our overall Safety Health Environment and Crime strategies. We recognise the societal impact that suicide has on the railway and in particular on our staff, customers and the communities we serve. We are committed to working together with industry partners including Network Rail (NWR), British Transport Police (BTP) and other Train Operating Companies (TOCs) to develop plans and approaches to address suicide on the railway and the trauma it can cause staff, customers, families, friends and others.

I have strategic responsibility for suicide prevention at Board level. I am supported by [REDACTED] our Workplace Health and Wellbeing Manager who acts as our suicide prevention coordinator. Ann is a member of the National Suicide Prevention Working Group (NSPWG) and the Railway Industry Suicide Stakeholder Group (RISSG). We are actively engaging with the Samaritans in their current 'Small Talk Saves Lives' campaign.

We have developed our Suicide Prevention Plan in line with the Rail Industry Suicide Prevention Duty Holders Group's guidance for a 9 point plan and Leading Health and Safety on Britain's Railways. The plan sets out how staff across ARN support the delivery of our plan and initiatives including:

- operational and station staff in identifying vulnerable individuals, carrying out interventions and supporting Samaritan promotions;
- control staff who coordinate the response in the event of the notification of vulnerable people, attempted/actual suicides and trespass;
- crime and resilience teams who deploy our 55 Travel Safe Officers (TSO) on an intelligence led basis working alongside BTP and Network Rail VITAL teams. We also have two community safety managers who work together with the local communities and schools to discourage trespass;

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- operational managers who will provide support to staff following an incident;
- training teams to develop and deliver material to frontline staff on suicide interventions and trespass;
- media teams to support the development of communications material;
- performance and planning on time champions to identify ways of reducing how suicide and trespass introduce delay onto the network.

The plan also outlines how we interact with external parties such as BTP, NwR, Station Operator (where not ARN), Other TOCs, Samaritans, Local Authorities and Public Health Authorities.

All frontline staff (drivers, conductors and station staff) receive training on suicide intervention as part of their initial training for their role. We are currently revising our induction training for all staff to further include a module in this area.

Staff are encouraged to attend the Samaritans Managing Suicidal Contacts course. The one-day course is specifically tailored to people working within the rail industry. This course focuses on the benefits of a short conversation with someone who may have suicidal feelings and the techniques required to sensitively support that person and help begin their recovery – known as 'emotional first aid skills.' The courses which take place in one of our two training centres in Leeds and Manchester and are advertised on our internal Learning Management System (LMS) and through a variety of internal communication channels. These courses can also be accessed by other railway industry stakeholders. Over 300 staff have attended this training since we launched it in 2010. In addition all our TSOs have undertaken this training. We are also in the midst of a programme to train all our staff in Mental Health Awareness using a bespoke one day course. Nearly 200 managers have been trained since July 2017.

Post incident support is coordinated and offered to staff and customers by station staff in conjunction with the Samaritans. Trauma Awareness training using a bespoke in house course is available to all managers- to date 79 managers have attended this training. We are also arranging a course for Trade Union representatives together with the Samaritans to provide post incident trauma support.

Following a suicide or attempted trespass multi-disciplinary meetings involving NwR, BTP, ARNs station manager and the Samaritans take place to identify any local actions that need to take place. Suicide awareness briefs from NwR are distributed to station managers on the anniversary of an event. TSOs are also actively deployed to these locations at this time to assist the station managers. We actively work with NwR to implement any BTP recommended measures following an incident such as signage, platform end protection.

Current initiatives we are undertaking internally and together with industry partners are as follows:

- Inclusion of suicides and trespass prevention measures as part of our station bow-tie risk assessment and Planned General Inspections
- Using data to identify hotspot locations and identify additional measures such as CCTV coverage. In the longer term we want to upgrade our CCTV network such that a live feed could be seen in a central control room offering greater potential for proactive intervention.
- Exploring ways to engage the wider communities at our hot spot locations;
- Working with a broader group of stakeholders to identify measures to address hot spot locations such as in South Manchester and South Yorkshire.
- Improving the tracking of interventions and staff recognition;
- Update briefings to all frontline staff using RISSG videos and presentations to staff during 2019.
- Development of a campaign to be deployed using a range of media- PIS screens, twitter, Facebook, multimedia screens and posters using a local poet;

- Bespoke training for customers service controllers on how to handle calls/help point usage by potentially suicidal customers.

Regarding the specific points you raised:

1. As with many of our stations Chester le Street is only staffed part time. Staff are located in the booking office and not on the platform. Staff are rarely located on the platform and only at those larger stations where they are involved in the despatch of trains.
2. There is a help point at the station this is the responsibility of Durham County Council. We understand that this is currently not working. We are installing Ticket Vending Machines across our network and phase 2 of the software installation includes a help point. The software is currently being trialled.
3. The station does not classify as a hot spot under British Transport Police's definition which is used nationally to focus the work of cross industry working groups. Such locations are defined as having 3 or more suicides/attempted suicides in 12 months. This is the only fatality at Chester le Street since the commencement of National data collection in 2015.
4. Unfortunately there is no technology that could detect persons on the line.

I have attached the BTP report on the station following the incident for your information.

We are looking to bring forward our planned installation of CCTV on the station and we will continue to work with industry groups to develop solutions to reducing suicide on the railway.

I hope this provides you with the required information.

Yours sincerely



Safety Health and Environment Director