

Addendum

Health and Adult Care Social Care Scrutiny Panel Suicide Prevention Report

6th November 2018

Scammonden Bridge

Following an inquest in May 2018 into the death of a 28-year-old man in September 2017, the Coroner requested a review of safety at Scammonden Bridge over the M62. The man died after jumping from the 120 foot high bridge.¹

The Inquest heard that between 2010-2015 there had been four fatalities. Between May 2016 and 2017, while there had been no deaths, there had been 10 incidents for police to attend. Between May 2017 and May 2018 three deaths had been reported, and of the 32 police incidents on Scammonden Bridge from May 2014-2018, there had been two incidents of people talked down from the bridge.

A recent international review of research has shown that barriers and safety nets at suicide 'hotspots' such as high bridges can reduce rates by 90% and other prevention methods (e.g. placement of signs or crisis telephones), which encourage people to seek help or increase third-party intervention are also effective. Although restricting access at one site could shift the problem in part to other locations, it still results in a significant overall reduction in deaths by the same method.²

Following the Inquest in May 2018, the Coroner wrote to Highways England and asked that further precautions are considered to try to deter people from using that bridge to end their lives.

Recent correspondence from Highways England confirms that they have completed a feasibility study to identify options for an improvement to prevent suicides on Scammonden Bridge, which they are going to take into detailed design this financial year. Current proposal is to look at construction next financial year (April 2019) but this isn't yet confirmed as need to bid for funding to deliver. Works can only be programmed when funding confirmed.

Current proposals for Scammonden include:

- 2.4m high guardrail
- Vehicle restraint barrier
- Footway mounted uplighting
- Helpline phone
- New crisis signs
- Removal of the hardstanding / unofficial parking area.

¹ Huddersfield Examiner, 24th May 2018 <https://www.examinerlive.co.uk/news/west-yorkshire-news/coroner-calls-action-over-suicide-14703673>

² Pirkis, J., Too, L.S. and Cheung, Y.T.D. (2015). Interventions to reduce suicides at suicide hotspots: a systematic review and meta-analysis, The Lancet. 2(11):994–1001.