

Suicide Prevention – Period End Report for P7 2013/14



The work being undertaken by the UK rail industry to manage suicides on the network is becoming increasingly recognised both at home and abroad. Last period the work of East Midlands Trains, ASLEF, Network Rail and Samaritans was recognised with the Safety Award at the National Rail Awards. This period by invitation Network Rail was asked to speak at the International Rail Safety Conference on behalf of the industry to share our knowledge and understanding of this complex issue. At a separate event sponsored by Canadian Railways we were able to share best practice with delegates from around the world. Of particular interest to them was the work we are currently doing on mid platform fencing which is well illustrated on Western, LNE and LNW routes. Our proposed adoption of smart camera technology was also seen as a significant advance in the field of prevention. Currently there are eight high risk sites on the network at which the installation of such equipment is proposed. The first site to go live will be Wedgewood (LNW) and we are well advanced in deploying the necessary equipment there. As of 14 October all the technology was in place and being tested ahead of the alarm circuitry being installed in Stoke IECC. Suicides are a problem for all the world's railways and those involved in preventing them here should be proud that their work is being spoken of so highly overseas.

Ian Stevens, Programme Manager (Suicide Prevention)

Route activity

East Midlands Area are now implementing their second round of model station work and have recently fitted large banners, featuring the Samaritans campaign material, at three stations. The work at Attenborough, Chesterfield and Mill Hill Broadway has involved working closely with both of the route's lead TOCs East Midlands Trains and First Capital Connect and the Samaritans. The banners have been very well received at all of the stations and the work completed by the contractor, M360, has been commended. Hayley Bull, Performance Improvement Coordinator for East Midlands and Suicide Prevention Programme route representative, is now hoping to install additional banners at Spondon, which would provide good coverage of the main East Midlands



Samaritans banners in place at stations in the East Midlands area.

Trains lines through the East Midlands area. Hayley is very pleased with the banners and hopes they will provide more opportunities for people who need support to contact the Samaritans, as Hayley said 'these are the first steps into our second round of model station work, and hopefully they will inspire a vulnerable person to pick up the phone'.



On Wednesday 25th September, the second Community Engagement Day was held in Wimbledon. Ellie Reilly, Project Manager – Fatality Mitigation and Amy Stebbings, Samaritans Project Officer teamed up to coordinate two groups of volunteers, including Samaritans from the Putney branch, Community Safety Officers from South West Trains and Network Rail staff, to increase awareness of the Suicide Prevention Programme in the area. The aim of the day was to build on the positive outcomes of the first Community Engagement Day, held in May. Two teams of volunteers went on foot, into the local community, visiting businesses and handing out 4000 Samaritans' contact cards.

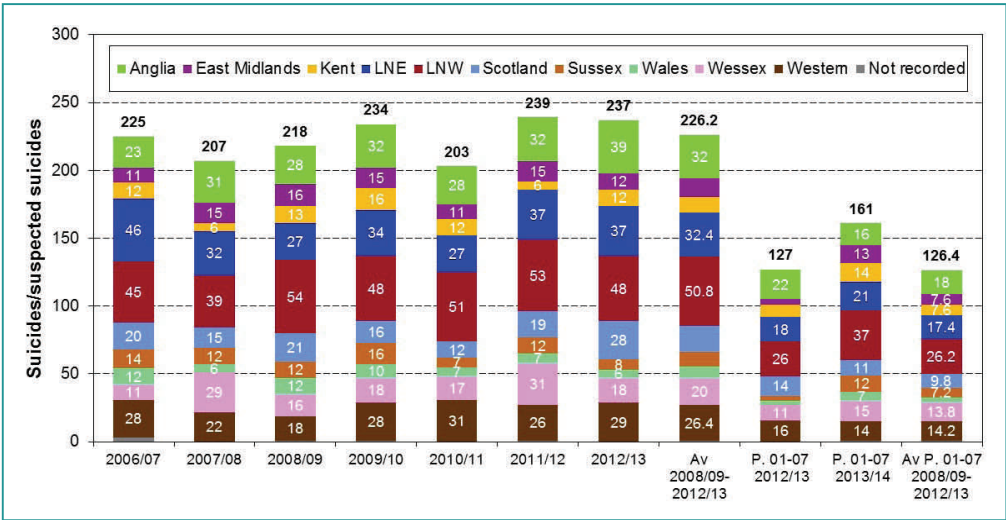


Samaritans, Network Rail and South West Trains staff and Samaritans volunteers at the Wimbledon Community Engagement Day.

A third team stayed behind at Wimbledon signalling centre, to develop a database of contacts and a community engagement and communications strategy which will help target future work.

Ellie Reilly said 'I would like to thank everyone for contributing their time to what was a very successful event; if even one of the contact cards that were delivered is picked up by someone in need then it will have been worth it, and we are now in a great position to take forward our Community Engagement and Communications strategy to increase awareness of the Suicide Prevention Programme across Wimbledon and beyond'.

The Numbers

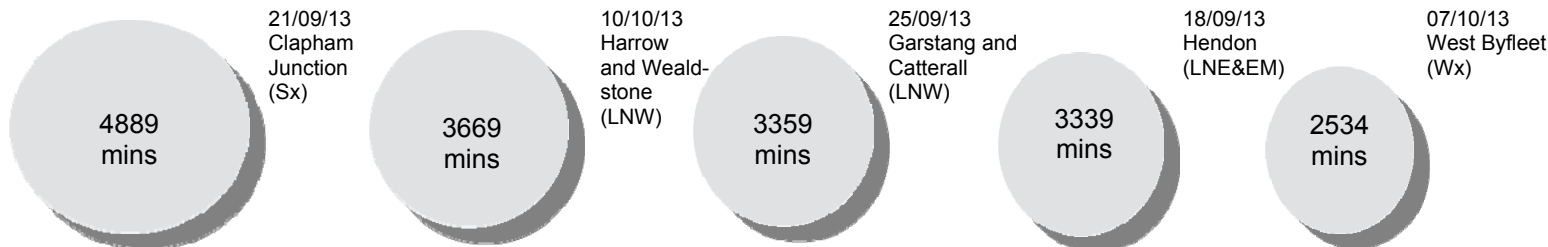


Suicides/suspected suicides

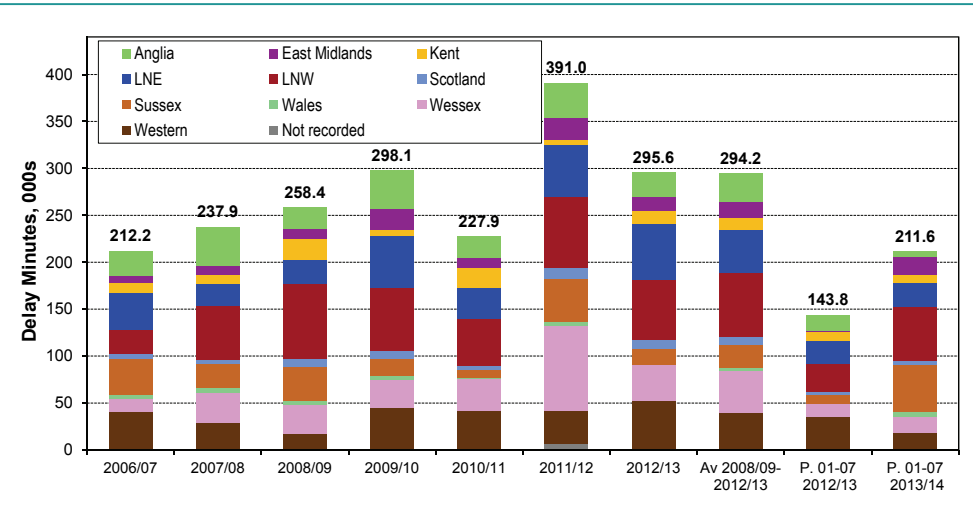
There were 26 recorded events in P7, bringing the total for the year to 161, 34 more than at the same point in 2012/13, an increase of 26%. 10 of the events occurred at stations and the remainder on the running line, a 38/62% split. All but four of them involved men of which nine (where the ages are known) were in the recognised vulnerable age group of 30 – 55. The youngest person taking their life was a 23 year old male whilst the oldest was a 72 year old man. All routes bar Wales experienced at least two suicides/suspected suicides in the period. LNW and LNE&EM experienced the greatest number recording six each.

The key events in P7

The following are the top five delay events for P7



There have been two suicides/suspected suicides recorded at Clapham Junction this year. The first was on 6 July and accounted for 2550 delay minutes. Both involved men who had accessed the track from the platform. The station is one of the routes' priority locations for suicide mitigation activity.



Delay Minutes

The 26 recorded events accrued circa 34,000 delay minutes between them. Against the same period last year (P1—P7), the total number of minutes delay is up by 68,000 an increase of 47%.

What the tables illustrate

The tables show data by route from 2006/07 onwards, average rates for the last full five years, cumulative period comparisons current year versus last (and in the case of suicide events a cumulative period comparison over the last five years). It should be noted that these figures are subject to change through time due to event reclassification and coroner's verdicts.

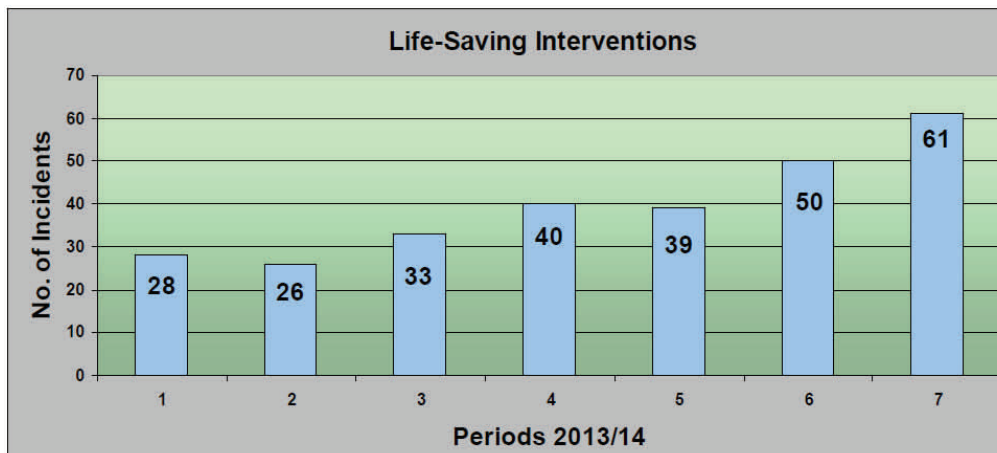
Life Saving interventions

There were 61 life-saving interventions in the period bringing the total for the year to 277. These have taken place at 258 different locations and average around 1.5 per day.

It should be remembered that each intervention is a suicide prevented with all of the associated costs and trauma avoided. In financial and performance terms alone had these interventions not been made the cost to the rail industry would have been circa £43m¹ and 368,000² delay minutes.

¹ based on an average of £157K per event – derived from RSSB T845 project data

² based on the average delay per event of 1,329 minutes – derived from Network Rail performance data



The UK rail industry is becoming recognised as a world leader in suicide prevention. In recognition of this, Network Rail were asked to speak at the 23rd International Rail Safety Conference in Vancouver recently, the only infrastructure operator afforded the privilege to speak of the work it is doing in this area.

The programme manager (suicide prevention), who represented the company, took the audience of more than 200 rail professionals from around the world through the work the industry is doing together and the mitigation measures it employs to prevent suicides. He also spoke of the unique partnership Network Rail has forged with Samaritans.

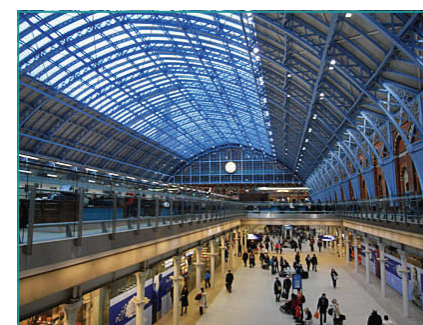
Also presenting at the conference from the UK was Dr. Ann Mills. Her presentation on behalf of the Rail Safety and Standards Board focused on the research work they are carrying out to measure the effectiveness of the Network Rail/Samaritans partnership. Known as Project T845 the findings to date can be found on RSSBs website.

Taking the time to listen

It is not always easy to approach a person showing signs of distress, but having the confidence to make contact and taking the time to listen can make a huge difference at a crucial point in someone's life.

Leo Pagliuso, Customer Services Assistant at St. Pancras Station found himself in this position in August. Leo spotted a member of the public behind the barriers at St. Pancras Station who appeared to be very upset and, because he felt that something was not right, he approached the man to see if he could help. The man complained of severe back pain, but Leo was unsure that this was the only reason for his distress and on striking up a conversation, found that the man had worked on the railway for 36 years before having to leave work, after the traumatic death of his wife, and was feeling very low. As a result of Leo's intervention, the man agreed to leave the platform, contact was made with a previous colleague and the man was assisted in returning home – he expressed gratitude that Leo had taken the time to listen to him and ensure his well being.

Shane Bailey, Safety Systems Manager – Stations said 'Leo acted admirably in preventing what could have turned into a bad situation – he was highly praised by the public for how he dealt with the situation and for the fact that he saw something he was not entirely comfortable with and intervened'.



St. Pancras Station

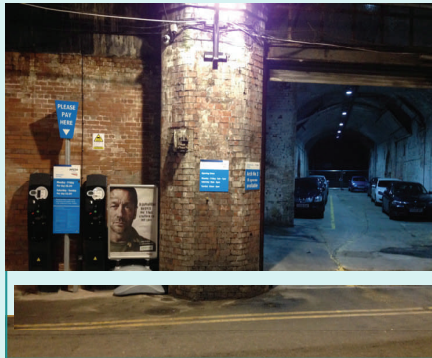


The end of Period 7 marks the midway point of Operation Avert, the joint BTP / Network Rail Operation which seeks to minimise disruption over the autumn period, targeting the two biggest causes – trespass and fatalities. Results to date have been positive, please continue to support the British Transport Police with their endeavours.

Samaritans Managing Suicidal Contacts (MSC) training can help you to develop the skills and confidence to respond to a distressed person at the initial point of contact and get them to a place of safety.

For more information on the MSC training please contact
railcompanies@samaritans.org

Car Park Campaign



Samaritans campaign poster at Network Rail owned car park.

Suicide Prevention campaign materials can now be seen at 21 Network Rail owned car parks across the UK – providing another opportunity for vulnerable people to make the decision to contact the Samaritans and get help before reaching the network.

The National Suicide Prevention Programme Team, the Network Rail Car Parks Team and APCOA (who manage the car parks) are working together on a project with dual aims - preventing suicide incidents in car parks and providing information on how to get help to vulnerable people who may use the car parks before accessing the railway.

The first stage of the project is now complete and the APCOA managers are looking forward to welcoming Samaritans volunteers from their local branches who will advise on the positioning of additional campaign materials. They will also be attending the Samaritans Managing Suicidal Contacts training.

Philip Attersall, Network Rail Car Park Specialist said 'this is a great opportunity to work together to achieve a shared aim – reducing suicidal incidents and increasing the opportunity to reach out to vulnerable people. Installing suicide prevention campaign materials in our car parks, making links with local Samaritans branches and Managing Suicidal Contacts training for car park staff will help us to achieve this aim'.



The 2013 Rail Staff Awards were held in Birmingham on the 5th October and there were many excellent nominations for the Samaritans Lifesaver award, now in its second year, which aims to recognise the pre-emptive actions of train staff, train crew, track workers and many railway staff who by timely intervention prevented a potential fatality. There were 20 Finalists for this year's award, many of whom had prevented a potential suicide by intervening when they saw a person in distress or suspected that something was not quite right. Congratulations go to them, as well as to Tracey Young, Community Safety Manager in Wales, and Suicide Prevention Route Representative, for her first runner up place in the 'Rail Safety Person of the Year' category.

If you have seen any item in this report that you would like to comment on or discuss please contact Ian Stevens (077 99 33 72 11)