

Woman 'lured online stranger into suicide pact'

Georgie Keate

A man killed himself after entering into a suicide pact with a woman he met online who reneged on the plan, a court has been told.

Natasha Gordon, 44, who was described as an "enthusiastic advocate" of suicide, is accused of encouraging Matthew Birkinshaw, 31, to end his life.

She is alleged to have persuaded Mr Birkinshaw to kill himself in his car at Rutland Water, a reservoir in the county, before leaving him to die on December 17, 2015.

The defendant told Mr Birkinshaw, a postman from Walsall, that she would

commit suicide with him within hours of them meeting online, the court was told. Timothy Cray, for the prosecution, said that Ms Gordon had encouraged six others to end their lives in the past and was talking to another alleged victim about suicide.

"Matthew was just 31 years old when he took his own life, very shortly after he met the defendant in December 2015," Mr Cray said.

"Within hours of having met Matthew via the internet, the defendant was telling him that she was prepared to commit suicide with him."

The court was told that in a message to Mr Birkinshaw the day before he

died, Ms Gordon wrote: "I really can't wait to go tomorrow, I hope you do not change your mind."

Mr Cray said: "This case is a million miles from any sort of mercy killing or act of comfort to a loved one in their last hours."

He argued that Ms Gordon was "quite prepared to say to people she hardly knew" that taking their own life was the right thing to do.

Despite feeling "disconnected with the world" for a long time, the alleged victim was someone who had a lot to live for, Mr Cray said.

After the incident Ms Gordon, from Peterborough, told police that she got

out of the car because she could not go through with it and that she had only tried to help him because she was in pain herself, the court was told.

Mr Cray said that Ms Gordon told police: "I didn't want to die, that is why I pulled out," and went on to explain that she "loved her partner" and "expressed regret" for what happened.

The defendant had allegedly told her partner that she was going to kill herself, leading him to phone the police.

A number of attempts were made to resuscitate Mr Birkinshaw but he was pronounced dead at the scene.

Mr Cray said: "The defendant has been active on a number of suicide

forums a year before this. She was seeking a suicide partner and made arrangements with a number of different people. She was uber-interested, if there is such a thing, in suicide."

He said that she had made another person "feel like a failure for not committing suicide" before her encounter with Mr Birkinshaw.

The court was told that Mr Birkinshaw's girlfriend, Sophie Davies, had received a text from him hours before his death saying "I love you so much".

Ms Gordon denies a single charge of encouraging Mr Birkinshaw to take his own life.

The trial continues.