

Blackburn building firm fined for multiple safety failings

A Blackburn building firm has been fined £116,666 after a long history of health and safety failings.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found Mullberry Homes Limited failed to plan, manage, and monitor health and safety work on construction sites across England.

Mullberry Homes Limited was given a series of Notification of Contravention (NoC) letters, official correspondence that outline how firms need to improve and provide advice on doing so. They also received a significant number of formal Improvement and Prohibition Notices due to unsafe work, yet the firm repeatedly failed to ensure the work being done on their sites, including in Aintree, Liverpool; Middleton, Rochdale and Thorncliffe Road, Barrow-in-Furness was carried out safely and without risks to health. The company failed to reach the required basic legal standards.

The HSE investigation also found that Alistair Wilcock, in his role as managing director at Mullberry Homes Limited, should have ensured measures were taken to comply with each concern when it was raised by HSE and these measures were maintained.

Mullberry Homes Limited of Old Hall Lane, Blackburn pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 13 of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £116,666 and ordered to pay costs of £8294.40 at Manchester Crown Court on 31 October 2022.

Alistair Wilcock of Deer Park, Accrington, was served with a formal caution after accepting he was guilty of breaching section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, in relation the company's failing of regulation 13 of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 on the basis of neglect. It is accepted by HSE that responsibility for compliance with the relevant legislation was not limited to Mr Wilcock.

HSE inspector Matt Greenly said: "Companies have a duty of care to those they employ and HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards. Mullberry Homes and their director, Mr Wilcock had every opportunity to improve standards and maintain these improvements but they sadly failed to do so and continued to put workers and contractors at risk.

"Mullberry Homes Limited, and its previous company name of Paddle Limited, has a long history of formal enforcement and prosecutions from HSE and it is hoped that this case will serve as a wake-up call for them to ensure that their management is robust enough to maintain any and all health and safety improvements they make in the future."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. More guidance can be found at: [Construction – Health and safety for the construction industry \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://hse.gov.uk/construction-health-safety)