

Care home fined after boy drowned in disused quarry

A Kettering based care home company has been fined after a 16-year-old boy drowned at a disused quarry on a day trip.

The Old Bailey heard how two 16-year-old boys who were residents at Castle Lodge Home near Ely, Cambridgeshire, were taken on a day trip to Bawsey Country Park near Kings Lynn, Norfolk.

The park is a disused sand quarry containing parkland and flooded pits, and the two boys went into the water at the pits despite the no swimming signs. One of the two boys became trapped in weed on the bottom of the pit and drowned. His body was recovered later.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident which took place on 16 July 2013 found the two residential support workers who accompanied the boys had very little experience and did not attempt to prevent the children entering the water.

No risk assessment was carried out prior to the trip and Castle Homes' procedures were ineffective in ensuring the safety of the children while on trips outside of the home.

Castle Homes Limited, of High Street, Rothwell, Kettering, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £20,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Anthony Brookes said: "This boy's tragic death was entirely preventable if the Care Home had planned properly and managed the risk of taking residents to the abandoned quarry."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. 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>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.