

HSE Chair Sarah Newton reflects on the past year

Welcome to the first HSE blog this year. We hope to make this a regular feature on the website. Other colleagues and I intend to share our thoughts and observations on a wide range of topics and subjects related to HSE's mission.

My overarching opinion of HSE since I became Chair in August last year, is a hugely positive one. My first impressions are of a regulator staffed by passionate, committed and expert individuals who are fully engaged with and behind HSE's core mission.

Today, as we reflect on the past year, the loss of life and impact in communities across Great Britain, it is safe to say that it has been a year unlike any of us have ever experienced.

As we think about the year ahead, and the anticipated emergence from the dark shadow of the pandemic, now is the time to apply renewed vigour to our work enabling Covid-secure workplaces. Drawing on what we are continuously learning from the data and science. With a focus on controlling risk, from identifying it to mitigating for it.

It's worth mentioning that from all the conversations I've had with our people, it seems we have found the vast majority of businesses and workplaces are willing to follow Government advice, make necessary changes promptly, without the need for enforcement action from us. Where we have needed to, we have taken that action.

HSE, working with Public Health bodies and Local Authorities has been at the centre of the Government response to Covid in Great Britain. Our people have worked tirelessly and selflessly to ensure workplaces are doing all they can to provide a Covid-secure working environment. HSE takes the Covid pandemic and the welfare of workers incredibly seriously. Of course, we do. That is written into our DNA and, since 1974, that has been our mission.

Over the past year, we've repeatedly demonstrated that making workplaces Covid-secure is an organisational priority. Let me highlight just a few of HSE's actions;

- We've shifted resource onto Covid related work from all around the organisation and also benefited from an additional £14m to add in new services to support workers and employers.
- Since the start of the pandemic HSE has completed over 165,700 Covid-19 spot checks and responded to over 210,000 concerns.
- This week we've carried out around 2,000 workplace checks a day and the number is rising constantly.
- We've supported Public Health bodies on 646 reported outbreaks.
- Spot checks have been targeted in those industries where workers are most

likely to be vulnerable to transmission risks.

- HSE is also leading a Covid-19 national core study funded by Government on the transmission of COVID-19 in the environment, which includes in workplaces, transport and other public settings and will look to answer essential policy and operational questions about the coronavirus pandemic.

All of the above, and more, has taken place against a backdrop of HSE continuing to regulate traditional, non-Covid related occupational health and safety in a multitude of industries. As well as setting up the new Building Safety Regulator and dealing with the complex regulatory responsibilities associated with the end of the EU transition period and the intake of new staff that these have entailed. I think that's a real achievement everyone in HSE can be proud of.

The post [HSE Chair Sarah Newton reflects on the past year](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).

[Illegal gas engineer sentenced for fraudulent gas work](#)

A gas engineer has been sentenced for conducting gas work while unregistered and producing false paperwork.

Exeter Crown Court heard how on 16 March 2019, Peter Strudwick completed a commercial gas safety check at a take-away business in Teignmouth. He undertook the work illegally using the Gas Safe registration number from his employer.

Concerns were raised when an officer from Teignbridge District Council attended the take-away premises regarding gas safety issues and found irregularities. Subsequent visits by correctly registered engineers found numerous concerns with the gas appliances at the takeaway.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Mr Strudwick was not registered with Gas Safe Register to carry out the gas safety check in his own right. He used a false gas registration number belonging to his employer on the paperwork submitted.

Peter Strudwick of Palk Close, Shaldon, Teignmouth pleaded guilty to

breaching Regulations 3(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and of Section 33(1)(l) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He has been sentenced to 10 months imprisonment for each offence, suspended for 12 months.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Simon Jones said: “Mr Strudwick undertook a gas safety check which he knew he was not registered to do. “He falsely used his employer’s Gas Safe Register details to deceive people into believing his work was legitimate. “All gas work must be done by a registered Gas Safe engineer to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life.”

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: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. Further information about gas safety can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/>

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[Spot checks and inspections on businesses are taking place in Manchester](#)

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is working with Manchester City Council to carry out spot check calls, visits and inspections on businesses in Manchester city centre to check they have COVID-secure measures in place.

To protect workers, visitors and customers, businesses must make sure they have put measures in place and everyone is following them to manage the risk from coronavirus.

HSE will be calling and visiting businesses from all different sectors in the area to check they are following the government guidelines, this will be starting on Monday 22 March.

These inspections will focus on office workspaces in the centre of

Manchester. HSE will work alongside local authority health and safety officers, to effectively assess the COVID-secure measures in place to protect workers.

Manchester City Councillor, Councillor Bev Craig, Executive Member for Adult Health and Wellbeing, said: "We will be talking to local businesses and visiting and inspecting sites across Manchester to understand how they are managing risks in line with their specific business activity.

"All business should have COVID-secure measures in place. It is a legal duty for businesses to protect their workers and others from harm and this includes taking reasonable steps to control the risk and protect people from coronavirus.

"This means making business adjustments to be COVID-secure. We advise employers to work with their employees when implementing changes, to help increase confidence with workers, customers and the local community.

"As changes come throughout the next few months and businesses reopen, our responsibility is to make sure that all measures continue to be taken to keep workers safe as they return to the workplace. Following the government roadmap, we can see how Manchester can and will reopen safely."

Being COVID-secure means businesses need to keep up-to-date with the latest guidance and put measures in place to manage the risk and protect workers, visitors and customers.

During the calls and visits, HSE provides advice and guidance, but where businesses are not managing the risk, immediate action will be taken.

Angela Storey, Director of Transformation and Operational Services at HSE, said: "Across the country we are working with local authorities, like Manchester City Council, to check businesses are COVID-secure and providing guidance and advice where needed.

"Our spot checks and inspections support the cross-government work in helping employers and employees at work during the pandemic.

"All workplaces are in scope for spot checks which means businesses of any size, in any sector can receive an unannounced check from HSE or an inspection from the local authority, to check they are COVID-secure.

"If you are contacted by the HSE or your local authority, please engage with us.

"By making sure that businesses have measures in place to manage the risks, we can benefit the health of local communities as well as support the local and national UK economy."

Please ensure your workplace is safe by following the guidance on [being COVID-secure](#). Further information on [spot checks and inspections](#) is available on our website.

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2. HSE news releases are available at <https://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. For HSE's working safely guidance see <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coronavirus/working-safely/index.htm>

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[Garage sentenced after mechanic suffers life-changing injuries in a fall](#)

A garage has been fined after an employee suffered life changing injuries when he fell into a vehicle inspection pit.

Portsmouth Magistrates' Court heard how on 3 September 2018, an employee of GP Motors Works Ltd on the Isle of Wight fell into a vehicle inspection pit more than five feet deep whilst carrying out mechanical repairs to a nearby vehicle. The vehicle inspection pit was partially covered with a small vehicle leaving around seven feet of the pit uncovered and without any other measures in place to prevent exposing employees to an unnecessary fall risk. The employee sustained serious head and shoulder injuries, which required surgery.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to ensure the pit had any physical measures, such as barriers or pit covers, in place to prevent a person falling into it.

GP Motor Works Ltd of Embankment Road, Bembridge, Isle of Wight pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. They were fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Kate Clark said: "Serious injuries or death can be prevented if basic safeguards such as barriers or pit covers

are put in place. There is clear guidance for garages about vehicle inspection pits.”

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/
3. HSE news releases are available at: <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
4. HSE guidance and information about vehicle inspection pits can be found at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg261.pdf>

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[Theme park fined following fatal water ride incident](#)

Drayton Manor Park Ltd (in administration) has been sentenced following the death of a schoolgirl on its Splash Canyon water ride in 2017.

Stafford Crown Court heard how, on the 9 May 2017, 11-year-old Evha Jannath was on a school trip when she fell out of a raft on the Splash Canyon water ride into the ride’s water trough. She was able to wade to the conveyer belt at the end of the ride and climb onto it, but then fell into a section of deeper water and drowned.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the risk assessment in place was not suitable and sufficient as it did not properly assess or address the risk of passengers being ejected/falling from the raft,

despite previous similar incidents. There were inadequate control measures in place to detect a person in the water as the CCTV covered only half the ride and the CCTV monitors were not suitable for observing passenger behaviour appropriately. In addition, there was no system at the park to rescue anyone who had fallen into the water.

Drayton Manor Park Ltd (in administration), Tamworth, Staffordshire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £1 million.

Drayton Manor Park has changed hands since the incident and is now owned and operated by Drayton Manor Resort Ltd.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE Principal Inspector Lyn Spooner said: "As a result of Drayton Manor's failings 11-year-old Evha Jannath, died at the end of what should have been a fun day out.

"The risks from ejection from the raft had been evident to Drayton Manor for some time, yet they still failed to take the action that could have prevented Evha's death.

"This tragic event should never have happened and my thoughts and the thoughts of HSE remain with Evha's family and friends."

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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. HSE enforces health and safety legislation at fairgrounds and theme parks across Great Britain. Safety at fairgrounds and theme parks also involves a range of duty holders and stakeholders working together. This includes;
 - ride owners and controllers
 - ride designers, manufacturers, importers
 - ride inspection bodies
 - industry trade associations and representatives.
5. HSE has designated a number of trained inspectors throughout the UK to be part of the National Fairground Inspection Team (NFIT).

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