

National Apprenticeship Week 2022: Meet one of our apprentices!

I'm Jack Mellor and I've been part of HSE's Science Division – Health Capability Group for almost seven years. Our group provides scientific expertise and an analytical service to not only HSE but also our external customers with the extensive laboratory and world experts we have based in Buxton.



I'm currently studying towards a BSc in Chemical Science at Manchester Metropolitan University, which is being fully funded by HSE through the apprenticeships scheme. Not only is this a degree in itself but also a Laboratory Scientist Degree Apprenticeship, which means it additionally involves the practical laboratory skills/training element necessary for working within the chemical sciences sector. I'm able to put what I have learnt during my degree apprenticeship into practice at HSE during my typical working day, which is so rewarding. My course is heavily chemistry based and has given me the ability to now answer some of the questions that I have always wondered, such as, 'so why does that actually happen?'

The degree course is informative and can be extremely challenging at times, which is just how I like it. I currently spend twenty percent (one day) of my working week studying as part of the apprenticeship agreement with HSE and now, in my final year, I feel as though I know exactly how to blend it in with my work-life balance. From my experience over the last few years I believe this is one of the keys to success when undertaking a course such as this.

Northern Gas Networks Ltd fined after fatal gas explosion

Northern Gas Networks Ltd were sentenced today for safety breaches after a fire and gas explosion at residential premises in Mirfield resulted in the death of the homeowner.

Leeds Crown Court heard that, on 11 February 2019, West Yorkshire Fire service were called to a fire and explosion in Huddersfield Road, Mirfield, West Yorks. The occupier, Elena Frunza, was discovered during a search of the property, whilst it was still on fire. She was taken to Pinderfields General Hospital where she died the following morning.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the source of the gas escape was identified as being from a fractured six inch cast iron main running under the carriageway to the front of the property. The investigation found that the main did not appear on Northern Gas Networks drawings and had therefore not been maintained in accordance with the Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996.

Northern Gas Networks Ltd of Thorpe Business Park, Colton, Leeds pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £5 million and ordered to pay costs of £91,487.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Neil Casey said: "This incident, that put the lives of the elderly residents of a care home at risk and cost a homeowner her life, has highlighted a failure by Northern Gas Networks Limited to follow their own safety procedures, in this case requiring the prompt and effective investigation and correction of anomalies in their records. Other gas network operators should take the opportunity to learn from this tragic incident."

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. www.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>^[3]
4. For further guidance on pipeline safety visit: [A guide to the Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996](#)

Company fined after employee injured by a forklift truck

A company specialising in interior and exterior stonework has been fined after an employee sustained serious injuries when he was struck by a forklift truck.

Peterborough Magistrates' Court heard how on 22 January 2019, an employee of Tudor Stonework Limited was injured whilst moving stone slabs during a lifting operation. The system of work required two operatives to walk in front of the forklift truck to steady a suspended load. However, during this operation the forklift truck ran over the foot of one of the operatives resulting in an open fracture to his left leg as well as crush injuries to his foot.

An investigation by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident found that the system of work for transporting stone slabs was not safe, as it required the operatives to be in close proximity to the moving forklift truck.

Tudor Stonework Limited of Silver Street, Enfield, Middlesex pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company was fined £466 and ordered to pay costs of £5,570.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Tom Pouncey said: "Industry practices should be reassessed where other stonemasons may be transporting stone slabs in a similar way.

"Companies should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against those that fall below the required standards."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations \(LOLER\) \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://www.hse.gov.uk/lifting)

3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Farmer sentenced after walker killed by cattle

Christopher Paul Sharpe, partner in J H Sharp and Son, has been sentenced for safety breaches after an 83-year-old man was fatally attacked by cattle.

Leeds Magistrates' Court heard how on 30 May 2020, David Tinniswood and his wife were attacked by cattle whilst following a public right of way across Ivescar Farm at Chapel-Le-Dale in Carnforth.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the couple were walking on a footpath that passed through the yard at Ivescar Farm, following a right of way that runs from the farm down to the road. They were accompanied by two border terriers. The couple were attacked by cattle that were grazing in the field with calves at foot. The 83-year-old man was trampled and pronounced dead at the scene and his wife sustained serious injuries.

Christopher Paul Sharpe of Ivescar Farm, Chapel le Dale, Carnforth, Lancashire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (2) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He received a prison sentence of 12 weeks, suspended for 12 months, and was fined a total of £878 and was ordered to pay £7820.30 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Julian Franklin said: "A number of measures could have been taken to safeguard walkers using the path, while cattle and calves were grazing in that field.

"Firstly, not using that field for cattle and calves. Most farmers will have other groups of stock that can graze fields containing rights of way, so can reduce the risk of incidents by putting sheep in them, or they could take fodder crops from them. Cattle with calves can be put in fields without rights of way, away from members of the public, or can be segregated from walkers.

"Farmers should ensure they take all reasonably practicable precautions to protect walkers on public rights of way, especially when they are grazing cows and calves together, or bulls are present."

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2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: [Cattle and public access in England and Wales \(hse.gov.uk\)](https://www.hse.gov.uk/cattle-public-access)^[2]

Roofing contractor sentenced after worker falls from height

A roofing contractor has been sentenced after an unpaid casual labourer fell through a skylight during the renovation of an old asbestos cement roof, at an industrial building in Exeter.

Plymouth Magistrates' Court heard that on 23 October 2018, the labourer, who wanted to gain industry experience having never previously worked on roofs, was instructed by Ian Davey (trading as Exe Fibreglass) to cut fibreglass for the roof of the building. Once the fibreglass was cut, the labourer went up onto the roof to observe the fitting by Mr Davey and another colleague. He stepped on a fragile skylight, which gave way causing him to fall five and a half metres to the floor below. He suffered multiple fractures to his hand and wrist, which required surgical wiring to repair, and also fractures to his ribs.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the work had not been properly planned. There was a lack of training or experience in the supervision of others working at height. There were no preventative safety measures in place for the skylights such as netting, crawl boards or safety harnesses in use.

Ian Davey trading as Exe Fibreglass of Beacon Hill, Exmouth pleaded guilty to breaching Section 9(2) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. He was given a 12 month community order, which includes 80 hours of unpaid work, and has been ordered to pay costs of £3,000.

Speaking after the hearing, HSE inspector Peter Buscombe said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply using correct control measures and following safe working practices.

"Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related injury and fatality in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known."

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