

Registered charity fined after resident of care home fell down a set of stairs and was fatally injured

Nazareth Care Charitable Trust, a registered charity, was today fined after an elderly resident of one of its care homes was fatally injured when she fell down a set of stairs.

Edinburgh Sheriff Court heard that on 16 May 2017, Sheila Whitehead, an 87-year-old resident at Nazareth House, Hill Head, Bonnyrigg, Midlothian, a care home operated by Nazareth Care Charitable Trust, fell down a stairwell. She suffered a fractured skull and subdural haemorrhage, which ultimately resulted in her death.



An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Nazareth Care Charitable Trust failed to identify and implement adequate measures required to control the risk of care home residents falling down the stairs. The stairwell involved in the incident consisted of a flight of six steps, which descended from the main corridor on the ground floor down to the entrance of the boiler room. It was found to lack an effective physical barrier that prevented access to the stairwell, in an environment where many residents, due to their conditions and ailments, were at an increased risk of suffering a fall.

Nazareth Care Charitable Trust of East End Road, East Finchley, London pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and was fined £40,000.

Speaking after the hearing, Nikki Jack of HSE said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures.

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

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>

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