

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.

[Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Montenegro](#)

2015 – present FC0, Temporary duties in the Middle East & North Africa, Finance and Prosperity Directorates 2013 – 2015 Sana'a, Deputy Head of Mission 2013 Full time language training (Arabic) 2010 – 2012 FC0, Head of Policy Unit, National Security, Middle East, North Africa & South Asia 2008 – 2010 FC0, Deputy Director Estates & Sustainability, Estates and Security Department 2007 Kurdistan Region & Northern Iraq, Consul General 2006 – 2007 Liberia, Political Chargé 2004 – 2005 FC0, Near East Team Leader, Arab, Israel North Africa Group 2002 – 2004 FC0, Head of Political Team, Afghanistan Unit 1999 – 2002 Colombo, Second Secretary Political 1997 – 1998 FC0, Desk Officer Greece and Cyprus 1997 Joined FC0

[Press release: HS2 marks National Apprenticeship Week by launching its search for apprentices](#)

Work can now begin on Britain's new railway after the first phase of the route between the Midlands and London secured Royal Assent last month. High Speed Two (HS2) will create around 25,000 jobs during construction as well as 2,000 apprenticeships. It will also support growth in the wider economy, worth an additional 100,000 jobs.

HS2 apprentices will develop skills in areas such as engineering and project management, while getting paid to play a part in building Europe's largest infrastructure scheme which will create more space on our congested railways for passengers and freight and improve connections between the biggest cities and regions.

The launch of the HS2 Ltd apprenticeship scheme comes as former apprentice and newly appointed CEO, Mark Thurston joins HS2 Ltd. As a former Transport for London apprentice, Mark is understandably a strong advocate of the apprenticeship scheme.

Commenting on HS2 Ltd's apprenticeship scheme, Mark said:

My own career path demonstrates that apprenticeships can lead to a rewarding career, and I'm delighted that HS2 is playing its part in creating a talent pool for the future. Our commitment to creating

2,000 apprenticeships across the project will play a key role in the development of a highly-skilled workforce in the high speed rail industry.

HS2's apprenticeship scheme marks a commitment by the company to bring new people into the business and create meaningful career opportunities that combine work experience with recognised qualifications.

The application process for the first 26 Level 3-4 vacancies opens today, with career opportunities in project planning, project management, project controls and procurement. Twenty of the posts will be based at HS2 Ltd's headquarters in Birmingham, with the remaining 6 positions based in London.

HS2 Ltd is keen to encourage a diverse range of candidates. The vacancies are open to everyone from school leavers to parents returning to work, or those looking for a new challenge. To qualify, candidates must hold 5 GCSEs, including English and Maths.

All successful candidates will start in post from September 2017.

HS2 is playing a key role in implementing the Transport Infrastructure Skills Strategy, delivering 30,000 apprenticeships in roads and rail by 2020 and gender parity by 2030.

Fairer finding for schools

I along with MPs with similarly placed constituencies urged the Coalition government to narrow the large gap between the money going to schools in some parts of the country and the much smaller sums going to schools in places like West Berkshire and Wokingham. Conservatives were not able to get agreement in coalition, but did put a commitment to fairer funding in the Conservative 2015 Manifesto.

Ministers have since been working on a scheme. This is currently out to consultation. The request for people to write in on the "National Funding Formula" was first issued on 14 December. The closing date is 22 March. I am writing to remind those interested as they might like to send in their thoughts.

I have put the case to Ministers along with other MPs on several occasions. I will be having another meeting with the Secretary of State shortly about it again. The case is very simple. The main cost of education for each pupil is similar around the country, as it is based on teacher pay and other staff wages paid at national rates. Of course there should be extra money for pupils that require more support, and to recognise problems in deprived areas. There also needs to be some recognition of higher property and support

costs in expensive parts of the country. The current gap between the highest and lowest funding, at more than 100% of the lowest level, is too great.

I have asked for the introduction of a new system as soon as possible, and for further transitional increases in money whilst we are awaiting a fair funding answer. The total support per pupil needs to be sufficient for decent provision. Individual schools may have other budget problems. If a school is unable to recruit sufficient pupils then its total funding will drop, and that may force it to reduce the number of subject options as it adjusts its teaching numbers to the lesser number of pupils.

In 2014-15 the per pupil funding of English schools ranged from £8595 per head in the City of London to just £3950 in the lowest funded authority. The average was £4550. Wokingham received £4125 and West Berkshire £4367.

The contact is SchoolsNationalFundingFormula.CONULTATION@education.gov.uk

Captcha

Some object to this entry test. I have changed server for a variety of good reasons. I was getting a large number of computer inspired nonsense contributions and some advert contributions which I need to keep out, and am told this is the best way to do so. I will make enquiries to see if there is any other way to stop this material.

Some also query how I select which items to post. Let me repeat I delete

1. Any unduly long post unless well written, relevant and easy to approve
2. Any post with unproven allegations or prejudicial language about people or institutions, whilst allowing more latitude in criticisms of government
3. Frequent posts from the same person on the same topic, unless they are easy to post
4. Any post with a cited reference to other websites unless they are to official ones or ones I know. I am always happy to see a citation to the ONS or the Fed etc.

I do not delete posts that disagree with me or the Conservative government, and do delete posts that are personally disobliging about people in all political parties whatever the merits of the case.