

Top HSE scientist honoured by the King

A leading scientist at Britain's workplace regulator has been recognised in the King's New Year Honours List 2023.

Professor Andrew Curran, Director of Science and Chief Scientific Adviser at the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has been awarded a CBE – a Commander of the Order of the British Empire – for his significant contribution to public service.

With a career spanning more than three decades, Professor Curran – who is also the Deputy Head of the Government Science & Engineering Profession – has led crucial research into protecting people's health and safety at work – from occupational diseases, to reducing carbon emissions and exposure to harmful substances.

He also led the largest study in the world to better understand the transmission of Covid-19, which helped support the UK's response to the pandemic.

Reacting to his award, Professor Curran said: "I am absolutely delighted, honoured and extremely proud.

"I see it as recognition of the contribution HSE's scientists, engineers and analysts make to providing a strong evidence base for our policy and regulatory activity.

"I joined the Health and Safety Executive in 1991, where I began researching the causes of occupational lung disease including exotic materials such as shellfish, insects (used as food for pet reptiles) and henna (used for hair dyes). I then moved into different management and leadership roles which have all led to me being recently appointed as the HSE's Director of Science, where I am also Chief Scientific Adviser – a role I have held since 2015.

"My thirty-year career has been focused on understanding how exposure to nasty materials in workplaces can cause harm and how to effectively manage those risks in large-scale hazardous facilities – protecting people in work or affected by work.

"Given the HSE's wide remit, the variety of my job is incredible. It varies from large-scale, explosive tests using hydrogen to see how we can use it to help reduce our carbon emissions, deliberately damaging batteries to see how they behave under these conditions, to being an active SAGE participant and leading the largest study in the world into understanding the transmission of the Covid virus.

"All of this work has been delivered by scientists, engineers and analysis in both HSE and beyond, and I see this honour as recognising their efforts and the impact it has had on keeping Great Britain as one of the safest places to work in the world.

“I love my job because I genuinely learn something new every day. I believe I have one of the best jobs in science in the country. Our science really makes a difference. I can think of no greater motivator in what I do.”



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As the HSE’s Director of Science and Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Curran is constantly monitoring where more evidence is needed to understand new risks in the workplace. The major focus areas were recently published in [the HSE’s new strategy](#).

Looking to the HSE’s future, Professor Curran said: “I would highlight mental ill health in the workplace and the transition to a net-zero economy as being particularly important to understand.

“Through high quality research, and learning where things go wrong, we can hopefully help to enable the innovation required to deliver these challenging goals.”