

# Dounreay's first 'home grown' health physics surveyors qualify

News story

Dounreay's first batch of home grown health physics surveyors have qualified with flying colours and ahead of schedule.



Health physics surveyors trainees display their certificates

Dounreay's first batch of home grown health physics surveyors have qualified with flying colours and ahead of schedule.

The 7 trainees were the first to be trained by DSRL and Nuvia Ltd jointly in a programme that was due to take 2 years, but due to the hard work and commitment of both trainees and their supervisors, they completed the course in 19 months. They are now all working at Dounreay.

DSRL Health Physics Service Manager Eann Plowman said:

This is a very encouraging result for both the trainees and their instructors, and shows that hard work really pays off. The health physics surveyors now have formal qualifications that are widely recognised in the nuclear industry.

Workers involved in the Health Physics Service carry out monitoring on and off the Dounreay site, 24 hours a day, to ensure the radiological safety of the workforce, the public and the environment.

The 2020 intake of 8 DSRL health physics surveyor trainees are now working on site after completing their initial courses and exams off-site in Thurso with an external training provider. These trainees are scheduled to qualify in March 2022, while interviews for the 2021 intake of trainees is now taking place.

Dounreay is Scotland's largest nuclear closure project and the centre of the UK's fast reactor research and development. It is being decommissioned by Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

Published 23 December 2020

---

## [Report 16/2020: Runaway and derailment of a wagon at Clitheroe](#)

[R162020\\_201223\\_Clitheroe](#)

PDF, 5.97MB, 49 pages

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology.

Request an accessible format.

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email [enquiries@raib.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@raib.gov.uk). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

### **Summary**

At about 08:16 hrs on 9 March 2020, a loaded wagon ran away from a siding located within the Hanson UK cement works in Clitheroe. It travelled a distance of about 0.75 miles (1.2 km) on a falling gradient, before it derailed at Horrocksford Junction, where the freight only branch line from the cement works connects to the main railway lines.

As it ran away, the wagon broke through the gates at the exit from the works and then ran over a level crossing on a public road, causing two cars to stop. Soon afterwards, the wagon passed over a second level crossing on a private road, which leads to a chemical works. Neither level crossing had its manually activated warning equipment switched on before the wagon passed over it.

On arriving at Horrocksford Junction, the wagon derailed at a set of trap points. As intended, this arrangement prevented the wagon from reaching the main lines. The derailed wagon stopped clear of the nearest main line and no trains were nearby at the time of the derailment. No one was injured in the accident, although there was minor damage to the wagon and severe damage to the track where the wagon had run derailed.

The investigation found that the wagon ran away because its handbrake was not

effective at holding it in place on the gradient where it had been stabled. This was due to a combination of insufficient brake force being provided by the applied handbrake and the fully laden wagon being stabled on its own and on a gradient falling towards the exit from the cement works. The staff who stabled the wagon did not know the handbrake would not hold the wagon in place after they applied it, as the wagon's brakes were already pneumatically applied when they did this, and over time, the air in the brake system leaked away until the air brake was released. It is possible that a maintenance examination that was due before the accident, but which was not carried out, would have found the problem with the handbrake's effectiveness.

An underlying factor was that the parties responsible for the operation of trains at the cement works had not adequately assessed or controlled the risk of a rail vehicle running away from the cement works. RAIB also observed that the risks to users at one of the level crossings concerned were not being managed by Network Rail, and that potential evidence, which might have explained why the handbrake provided insufficient force to hold the wagon in place, was lost to the investigation.

### **Recommendations**

RAIB has made three recommendations. The first is that GB Railfreight should work with the owners of industrial premises to improve its assessment of the risks of runaway vehicles. The second recommends that Hanson UK should assure itself that a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been undertaken for all rail operations taking place on its site. The third recommendation is that freight operating companies review the adequacy of the processes followed for stabling vehicles on a gradient using handbrakes, particularly if a laden vehicle is to be left on its own. RAIB also identified two learning points. The first is a reminder of the importance of scheduled examinations of wagons taking place on or before their due dates. The second is a reminder about the importance of preserving items of evidence required for safety investigations.

### **Notes to editors**

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner. While our investigations are completely independent of the railway industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.
3. For media enquiries, please call 07814 812293.

**Newsdate: 23 December 2020**

---

# [Dame Glenys Stacey appointed as chair of the Office for Environmental Protection](#)

Press release

The Environment Secretary George Eustice has appointed Dame Glenys Stacey as the Chair of the new Office for Environmental Protection (OEP).



The Environment Secretary George Eustice today appointed Dame Glenys Stacey as the Chair of the new Office for Environmental Protection (OEP).

The appointment follows [a pre-appointment scrutiny hearing by the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Environment Audit Committees](#) and Dame Glenys will take up the role in February 2021 working with [the Interim Environmental Governance Secretariat before the OEP is established](#).

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

I am delighted to appoint Dame Glenys to Chair the OEP. She has an outstanding reputation of being an independent voice, establishing regulators and being able to hold government to account.

The Office for Environmental Protection will be a world leader in environmental regulation – setting how government will have to stand up to its pledge to protect and enhance the environment as we build back better and greener.

Dame Glenys said:

The OEP will one of the most important organisations of our time, dealing with the most pressing issues of our time. We have a hefty job to do, on behalf of the public and our future generations – making sure environmental law works and develops as it should, to

truly protect and improve our environment, and holding government and public authorities to account without fear or favour.

I am thrilled have the opportunity to lead and develop OEP, so that it becomes the unstinting and resolute watchdog we all want it to be.

The Office for Environmental Protection:

- The [Environment Bill](#) will create a new, independent statutory body with the principal objective of contributing to environmental protection and the improvement of the natural environment. It will provide the necessary legal authority to implement long-term environmental governance.
  - The OEP will provide scrutiny and advice on the implementation of environmental law. It will also monitor and report on progress against Environmental Improvement Plans and targets.
  - The OEP will be able to receive and investigate complaints on alleged serious breaches of environmental law by public authorities. It will also be able to take legal action in serious cases if necessary as a last resort.

The role of Chair:

- The Chair of the OEP will provide leadership and strategic vision for the board, ensure good governance and, with the board, hold the executive to account.
  - The Chair will promote a positive and constructive relationship with everyone that works with the OEP including Parliament, government Ministers, departments, and public authorities; along with a wide range of interest groups as well as others.
  - The Chair is appointed by, and is accountable to, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs.

Biographical details of Dame Glenys Stacey:

- Dame Glenys Stacey is (until 31 December) acting Chief Regulator at Ofqual, having re-joined in late August 2020. Dame Glenys has previously served as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Probation and as Chief Executive at Animal Health (now part of the Animal and Plant Health Agency).
  - In 2019, Dame Glenys chaired an independent review of farm regulation at the request of the then Secretary of State for Defra. Most recently, Dame Glenys served as chair of the Professional Standards Authority.
  - A solicitor by profession, she has a wealth of CEO and regulatory experience, having led the start-up or development of a number of public-sector organisations responsible for legal or regulatory services.
  - Dame Glenys was appointed Dame Commander of the British Empire in the New Year's honours list in 2016 recognising her services to

Published 23 December 2020

---

## [Cat microchipping consultation launched](#)

Compulsory microchipping for cats could be introduced as early as next year, helping to reunite thousands of cat owners with lost or stolen pets.

An eight-week [public consultation](#) on the proposal to make it mandatory for pet owners to microchip their cats has launched today (23 December) and will seek views from vets, owners and members of the public as part of a renewed effort to further raise the UK's world-leading animal welfare standards. An earlier [call for evidence](#) showed 99% support for microchipping.

It is estimated that over a quarter of the UK's pet cats aren't microchipped, meaning that [up to 2.6 million cats will benefit from the new measures](#).

The process of microchipping involves the painless insertion of a chip, generally around the size of a grain of rice, under the skin of a pet. The microchip has a unique serial number which can be read by a scanner. When an animal strays or is lost, scanning the microchip means the registered owner can be identified on a database and the pet can quickly be reunited with them.

Since compulsory dog microchipping was introduced in 2016, around nine million dogs are now microchipped, meaning that thousands of displaced dogs have been reunited with their owners more quickly, reducing the time they spend in rehoming kennels and reducing owner and animal distress.

Animal Welfare Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

It is hugely important that cats and kittens are microchipped as this is often the only hope owners have of seeing their lost cat returned safely to their home.

These plans to make cat microchipping compulsory build on our actions to improve our already world leading animal welfare standards, including taking steps to end live animal exports and ban the practice of keeping primates as pets.

UK Chief Veterinary Officer Christine Middlemiss said:

Microchipping is a very important part of cat ownership. As we have seen already with dogs, compulsory microchipping is crucial in helping reunite owners with their treasured pets if they are lost or stolen.

While the festive period is not the best time to introduce a new cat or kitten to your home and family, if you do buy a pet over Christmas, then on top of making sure they are microchipped, I would advise people to ensure they have checked the readily available advice on how you can buy your pet safely and responsibly.

Cats Protection reported that 8 out of 10 stray cats handed in to their adoption centres in England during 2018 were unchipped, leading to longer and sometimes unsuccessful efforts to reunite them with their owners. Stray cats lost this way include Larry the Cat, the brown and white tabby who was found in London without a microchip and taken to Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, before being adopted as Chief Mouser to 10 Downing Street and the Cabinet Office.

Cats Protection's Chief Executive James Yeates said:

Cats Protection, as the leading cat charity, has campaigned for many years for microchipping to be made compulsory for owned cats, giving them the same protection as dogs if they get lost. Cats are a much loved part of the family in millions of homes, and it is heart-breaking if they go missing without a trace.

Sadly, it is not uncommon for cats to stray and go missing. Having a microchip gives a lost cat the best chance of being quickly reunited with their owner. We regularly hear heartwarming stories of the huge joy and relief when a missing cat is returned home thanks to the details of their microchip.

Battersea Deputy Chief Executive Peter Laurie said:

At Battersea we see strays being brought to us every day, many of which have clearly been much-loved pets that have perhaps just wandered too far from home. Unfortunately we are often unable to trace their previous owners as they have either not been microchipped or the details on the chip are not up to date.

We support compulsory microchipping of pet cats and we microchip every cat before they go to their new home. We would always recommend that owners not only get their cat microchipped but also ensure their contact details are kept up to date, so that if their pet does go missing, local authorities and rescues like Battersea can quickly reunite them.

The government is also taking this opportunity to consult on three separate mandatory scanning campaigns:

- Tuk's Law – which would make it mandatory for vets to scan cats and dogs for microchips before putting them down;
- Fern's Law – which would require vets to microchip cats and dogs when brought into a vet practice for the first time;
- and Gizmo's Legacy to make it mandatory to scan for microchips when a cat or dog is found dead by the roadside.

This announcement continues the renewed efforts from the government to raise standards on animal welfare even further now we are outside the EU, including [taking steps to end live animal exports](#), [ban the practice of keeping primates as pets](#), and crack down on the illegal smuggling of dogs and puppies, with further proposals to improve standards and eradicate cruel practices expected to be set out in the coming months.

[You can respond to the eight-week consultation by clicking here.](#)

---

## [£23 million boost for British businesses through referral scheme](#)

News story

British businesses are getting more financing to help them expand and create new jobs thanks to government support, new figures show today.



- securing credit to grow is often a barrier for small and medium sized businesses
- the Bank Referral Scheme has helped over 880 businesses to access the investment they need to grow in the last 12 months
- funding through the scheme has increased by over a third in the last year to £23 million



Since its creation in 2016, the Bank Referral Scheme (BRS) has helped hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses to access finance after they were turned down by their bank. New figures out today show that over the past 12 months, 889 businesses have raised more than £23 million through the Scheme, which matches them with alternative sources of finance such as revolving credit and asset finance. This is a significant increase on the previous year and the initiative, introduced four years ago, has now raised £56 million for businesses all over the UK.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen, said:

It's great to see businesses across the UK getting the investment they need to protect jobs and grow. By matching small businesses with alternative finance providers, this important scheme has delivered £23m in funding since July 2019.

The scheme was launched in November 2016 in response to evidence which suggested that after being turned down for a loan by their bank, small and medium-sized businesses rarely sought other options for financing.

It requires nine of Britain's biggest banks to pass on the details of businesses they have turned down for loans to online credit brokers. These platforms are, in turn, required to share their details, in anonymous form, with alternative finance providers, helping to facilitate a conversation between the business and any provider who expresses an interest in supplying finance to them.

### **Further information**

- The British Business Bank administer the scheme on behalf of HM Treasury. This involves collating the data from platforms, as well as carrying out due diligence for platforms that apply to be designated.
- Businesses which have their loan application turned down by their bank are now automatically offered the opportunity to be referred to three government designated finance platforms: Alternative Business Funding, Funding Options and Funding Xchange. Each platform provides access to a range of lenders and products, including business loans, revolving credit, asset finance and invoice finance.
- Other finance providers with different business models are often more willing to lend to these SMEs. The Bank Referral Scheme helps to address this by giving businesses that are viable, but do not fit the risk appetite of the traditional banks, access to the finance they need to grow and thrive.

Published 23 December 2020