

Academy Trust site supervisor left wondering if he would survive after fall from height

- Site supervisor suffered life-changing injuries after falling from school roof
- Academy Trust responsible for 16 schools and no working at height risk assessment in place
- Falls from height remain the leading cause of fatal injuries in the workplace

Romero Catholic Academy Trust, which is responsible for 16 schools across the North West of England, has been fined £32,000 after an employee fell from the roof of a school in Burnley.

Robert Baker was working as a site supervisor at St Mary's Catholic Primary School during an inset day when the incident occurred on 2 September 2024. He had climbed up to the roof on an unsecured ladder to collect footballs when he fell from the roof and onto the concrete playground.



Ladders leading to roof

A short time later Mr Baker was found on the ground by a member of the public. As a result of the fall Mr Baker suffered traumatic injuries including bleeding on the brain and fractures to his face, hand and foot. Since the incident he continues to experience memory problems, difficulties with speech, and challenges carrying out every day cognitive tasks, such as using the washing machine or microwave.

Latest statistics from HSE show that falls from height are the most common cause of fatalities in the workplace, accounting for over a quarter of all [work related deaths in 2025/26](#).

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the roof had no edge protection or other means to prevent or mitigate a fall from height. The Trust did not have a standalone work at height risk assessment or safe system of work, outlining how this sort of task should be done safely.

HSE guidance states what an employer must do to protect their employees from [falls from height](#). There is also guidance for employers on the simple and sensible precautions they should take to keep workers safe when using [ladders in the workplace](#) which has been produced in collaboration with the Ladder Association.

During a statement received from Mr Baker, he said: "The effects of the subdural hematoma have had a significant and ongoing impact on my daily life. My recovery has been extremely difficult. At one point, doctors were unsure whether I would survive and if I did they couldn't say if I would ever walk again."

Before the incident Mr Baker was part of a car club and used to organise for the group to attend shows. He no longer attends due to difficulties with concentration. He is also concerned about finding work in the future and the implications this will have on him and his family.

Romero Catholic Academy Trust of Padiham, Burnley pleaded guilty to breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act, 1974. The Trust was fined £32,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,360 at Warrington Magistrates Court on the 14 July 2026. The fine was significantly reduced from its original starting point due the Trust being a non-profit charitable organisation.

HM Inspector Derek Mclauchlan said: "This was a tragic incident that will have a lifelong impact on Mr Baker. Proper planning, assessment of the risks and control measures should be implemented.

"This incident could have been avoided had these been in place. The harm in this case was traumatic and life changing for Mr Baker. There are clear lessons that should be learned from this when working at height."

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Matthew Reynolds and Paralegal Officer Hannah Snelling.

Notes to Editors

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. Where the fine will fall on public or charitable bodies, the fine should normally be substantially reduced if the offending organisation is able to demonstrate the proposed fine would have a significant impact on the provision of its services.
3. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
4. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
5. Relevant guidance can be found here <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg401.htm> & <https://ladderassociation.org.uk/la455/>
6. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).