

BPF joins HSE campaign to tackle stress in Great Britain's plastics industry

The world's longest-running plastics trade association, the British Plastics Federation (BPF), has become the latest partner to join the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) Working Minds campaign.

The [latest statistics from HSE](#) show there were an estimated 914,000 cases due to work-related stress, depression, or anxiety in 2021/22. That's an 11% rise from the 822,000 cases in 2020/21. An estimated 17 million working days were lost to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2021/22, which covers more than half of all working days lost due to work-related ill health across the same period.

Since 2019, the total annual cost of poor mental health to employers has increased by 25%, costing UK employers up to £56 billion a year – [according to a report by Deloitte](#). Figures show employers can see a return of £5.30 on average for every £1 invested in mental health.

Graeme Craig, Senior Industrial Issues Executive at BPF, says: "When it comes to work-related stress, the link between wellness in the workplace and business performance is well documented but, for some smaller businesses, having the resource and capability to create a culture of inclusivity and engagement within their team can seem like a challenge.

"At every level, organisations and businesses are facing difficult questions in challenging times. And this is the clue to where we begin supporting employees – at every level. If employers don't do anything about it, it will cost. That cost might be productivity, sickness absence, losing a valued member of the team if they're not able to stay in work."

HSE research showed that many employers are not aware that they are required by law to carry out a stress risk assessment and act upon the findings to prevent work-related stress and support good mental health in the workplace.

[Working Minds](#) was launched by HSE last year and is aimed specifically at supporting small businesses by providing employers and workers with easy to implement advice and tools to help them recognise and respond to the signs and causes of stress and support better mental health in the workplace.

Together with partners such as the BPF, HSE invites businesses and organisations across the nation to support its campaign and become Working Minds Champions to help raise awareness and drive change.

Elizabeth Goodwill, Head of the Work Related Stress and Mental Health Policy Team at HSE, said: "We're calling for a culture change across Britain's workplaces so that recognising and responding to signs of stress become

as routine as managing workplace safety and we can't do it alone. We're delighted to be working with the BPF to help prevent stress and support good mental health.

"Working Minds helps employers to follow 5 simple steps based on risk assessment. They are to **Reach out** and have conversations, **Recognise** the signs and causes of stress, **Respond** to any risks you've identified, **Reflect** on actions you've agreed and taken, and **make it Routine**. It needs to become the norm to talk about stress and how people are feeling and coping at work."

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. [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
2. Details on HSE's work-related mental health campaign, Working Minds, can be found here [Working Minds – Work Right to keep Britain safe](#)
3. The British Plastics Federation (BPF) is the world's longest running plastics trade association. It was established in 1933 and has represented and promoted the UK plastics industry ever since. The BPF has more than 500 member companies that span the entire plastics supply chain. <https://www.bpf.co.uk/>
4. For media enquiries please contact rmills@bpf.co.uk or Jennie Atkins, HSE Senior Communications Manager, at Jennie.Atkins@hse.gov.uk or on 07880 425244

The Building Advisory Committee: Inaugural meeting

The first meeting of the **Building Advisory Committee** (BAC) took place this week. The BAC was established under the Building Safety Act, 2022 as part of the Government's reforms of building safety. The reforms are designed to create lasting change and make it clear how residential buildings should be constructed, maintained and made safe.

BAC will advise and inform the **Building Safety Regulator** (BSR) in its important mission to ensure the safety of residents in high-rise buildings, as well as the Regulator's other roles including keeping the safety and standards of **all** buildings under review.

The inaugural meeting was an introduction to BSR and the role of the committee before it starts preparing its workplan. It was chaired by the **Health and Safety Executive's Chief Inspector of Buildings, Peter Baker**, who

commented:

“I am delighted to welcome the first members to the inaugural meeting of BAC and look forward to working with them in tackling the challenges in the built environment, and in helping to drive culture change and ownership of building safety and standards by industry. BAC’s function is to support the Building Safety Regulator in its important work to protect residents and users of high-rise buildings, identify new and emerging risks affecting the safety and standards of all buildings, and to help develop sensible and proportionate solutions.”

“Establishing the Building Advisory Committee is another important milestone for the Building Safety Regulator and the introduction of the new, more stringent building safety regime following the Grenfell Tower tragedy.”

The BAC will be joined in 2023 by two other committees established by the Building Safety Act – the Residents’ Panel and the Industry Competence Committee. Both committees currently support the BSR in an interim, non-statutory form and will be constituted under the Act next year.

Notes to Editors

- The members of BAC are: Richard Blyth, Hywel Davies, Andrew Lawrence, Simon Lay, Nick Mellor, Paul Mooney, Andy Mullins, Paul Nash, Suzannah Nichol, Benjamin Ralph, Niall Rowan, Aman Sharma, and Martin Taylor.
- Members have been appointed on an independent basis on their ability to represent stakeholders across their respective areas of the built environment. They are not representing the company or organisation that they work for.
- Members of the BAC will serve for a period of three years and are drawn from diverse industry backgrounds. Their collective experience and knowledge will ensure that BAC provides insightful advice and information to the BSR to deliver sustainable, positive, and practical improvements across the built environment.
- The work of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC) – established to advise the Secretary of State for Local Government, Housing and Communities on matters relating to building regulations will continue until the committee has been consulted on the necessary secondary legislation. BAC will start to provide technical advice to BSR from this point onwards.

[Company fined £100,000 and director](#)

given suspended prison sentence after worker dies

A property development company has been fined £100,000 and building firm director handed a suspended prison sentence after a labourer was fatally crushed while demolishing a wall.

Jakub Fischer, a self-employed labourer, was hired as a sub-contractor by North West Facilities Limited to work on a house refurbishment project for Thorndyke Developments Limited on Mansell Street, Liverpool. The 41-year-old, who was originally from the Czech Republic, was tasked with demolishing a rear yard wall dividing the property from the neighbouring house on 5 June 2019.

That day, other workers on the job left the site at 3.30pm however, when a neighbour returned home from work at around 5.40pm they saw Jakub trapped between an outer kitchen wall and a collapsed section of the yard wall. He was pronounced dead at the scene by emergency services.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the demolition work was not planned nor accounted for in the construction phase plan. No risk assessment or method statement was provided and Jakub was not trained to carry out safe demolitions. There was also a lack of supervision as the system of work implemented by Thorndyke Developments Limited and North West Facilities Limited prohibited non-English-speaking workers from carrying out demolitions.

Thorndyke Developments Limited, of Rodney Street, Liverpool pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. They were fined £100,000 and ordered to pay £8,401.59 in costs at Wirral Magistrates' Court on 15 December 2022.

David Peter Hartley, a director at North West Facilities Limited, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 13(1) of The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, by virtue of 37(1) of the Act. Mr Hartley, of Trearddur Road, Holyhead, Anglesey was given 26 weeks imprisonment, suspended for two years, and ordered to pay £5,836 in costs at Wirral Magistrates' Court on 15 December 2022.

HSE Inspector Christine McGlynn said: "HSE will not hesitate to consider the roles of not only organisations when investigating serious incidents, but also those individuals such as directors and managers who are the controlling minds and best placed to direct work and ensure that it is carried out without risks to health and safety."

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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: [Construction – Resources – Construction law \(hse.gov.uk\)](http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction-resources/construction-law)
 3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
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Moving and handling materials in construction: early findings from HSE's latest health campaign

A snapshot of good and bad manual-handling practices on construction sites across Great Britain has been revealed in six weeks of inspections.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) carried out more than 1,000 inspections in October and November, checking how workers were moving heavy, bulky and awkward-to-handle materials.

The inspections by Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety revealed many examples of good practice.

These included the use of mechanical equipment to handle large glazing panes, using small inexpensive air bags to help to position heavy doors when being installed, and the use of all-terrain pallet trucks to move blocks and brick-lifters to carry bricks around site.

But HSE inspectors also found many examples of poor practice, including a worker lifting an 80kg kerb on his own without any assistance from machinery, lifting aids or colleagues, and a 110kg floor saw that had to be moved into and out of a work van by two operatives at a street works site, both of which resulted in enforcement action.

Working in construction is a physically demanding job and many construction workers suffer injuries to muscles, bones, joints and nerves that affect their health and ability to work.

HSE's Acting Head of Construction Division Mike Thomas said: "Lifting and moving heavy, bulky and awkward-to-handle objects on construction sites is harming the health of thousands of construction workers to such a degree every aspect of their lives is affected.

"The 1,000 plus inspections just completed took place across a range of construction sites to check the action businesses are taking to ensure their

workers' health is being protected.

"We know from early analysis that HSE's MAC Tool (Manual Handling Assessment Charts) was used by inspectors at a large number of inspections to improve duty holders' understanding of the risks and inform enforcement decisions.

"A full evaluation of the inspection data is underway, and we will release more information in due course."

HSE's MAC Tool helps to assess the most common risk factors in lifting, carrying and handling activities. It was developed to identify high-risk manual handling and points users towards the factors they need to modify to control these risks.

The law requires employers to prevent the ill health of their workers, which includes injuries to muscles, bones, joints and nerves that can develop over time, known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

Moving and handling risks should be considered and prevented where possible at the design stage. Once on site and before work starts, employers should talk to workers about controlling existing risks to make sure that the right handling aids, equipment and training are in place to prevent MSD injuries.

HSE Inspector Ian Whittles said: "How materials are moved around site and used in the construction process needs to be considered from the design stage right through to the construction stage.

"For example, planning for how materials are moved and handled from the point of delivery to the point of installation on all kinds of sites from small domestic projects with limited access, to large inner-city commercial sites."

Supporting the inspections, HSE ran a communications campaign 'Your health. Your future', which raised awareness of the inspections through media, social media, podcast and webinars to provide helpful advice, information, and links to guidance, for employers and workers.

Over a million connections were made to the campaign via the social media channels alongside extensive stakeholder and press coverage.

Notes to editors:

1. For further advice and guidance visit [WorkRight Construction: Your health. Your future – Work Right to keep Britain safe](#)
2. 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.

Firm fined after blind man falls into open manhole

A family-run plumbing business has been fined £4,000 after a blind man fell into an open manhole.

The 62-year-old registered-blind resident of Hanover Court, a sheltered housing development in Banchory, Aberdeenshire, suffered injuries to his left leg in the fall on February 19, 2020.

The manhole at the sheltered housing development had been left open by A & R Services while a blockage was being cleared.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) into the incident found that A & R Services failed to make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk posed by the open manhole.

The company had failed to put in place barriers, signage or other protective measures to prevent anyone from accessing the pathway leading to the open manhole.

In addition, other than leaning the manhole cover against a door, no signage, barriers, guarding or other protective measures were put in place to prevent pedestrians from falling into the manhole while using the door.

A & R Services, of Stonehaven, Aberdeenshire pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and was fined £4,000 at Aberdeen Sheriff Court on December 14, 2022.

HSE principal inspector Niall Miller said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided by simply carrying out correct control measures and safe working practices.

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

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2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is

available.

3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available