

South Devon engineer sentenced for unregistered gas work

An unregistered plumber has been sentenced after conducting gas work and leaving it in a dangerous state.

Torquay Magistrates heard how Stephen Barton undertook the installation of a gas cooker and gas boiler at two separate properties in Dawlish and Exeter during January and May 2016. Gas Safe Register who inspected his work at the homes classed it as dangerous.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Stephen Barton wasn't Gas Safe Registered at the time he conducted this work.

Stephen Barton of Park Road, Dawlish pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 3(3) of the Gas Safety Installation and Use Regulations 1998 and breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. He has been sentenced to undertake 300 hours of unpaid community work and to pay £3,600 in costs.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Simon Jones said: "Stephen Barton undertook gas work which he knew he was not registered to do.

"All gas work must be done by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met to prevent injury and loss of life."

Further information about gas safety can be found at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/gas/>

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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.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.

Today's productivity figures again confirm the Tories' abject failure on productivity growth – John McDonnell

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on today's ONS productivity figures, said:

"Today's productivity figures again confirm the Tories' abject failure on productivity growth, with growth slowing significantly over the last year and undershooting even the pessimistic forecasts from the Bank of England and others.

"Productivity growth, as an enabler of higher pay, is a crucial component of rising living standards. Today's figures are yet more worrying news for working people who face a slump in their standard of living under this Tory Government.

"The ONS today said there is 'little sign of an end to the UK's 'productivity puzzle' and there is no sign of the UK closing the record productivity gap with other G7 economies.

"Philip Hammond has previously admitted that the UK's productivity gap is 'shocking'. Yet the Tories lack a serious plan to tackle the problem.

"Only Labour has a serious plan to invest in our future to raise our productivity and deliver on jobs, prosperity and rising living standards."

Press release: Environment Agency warns landowners in East Anglia about illegal storage of waste

The warning comes from the Environment Agency after a spate of incidents across the country.

Businesses are being targeted by waste criminals looking to dispose of waste

by dumping it in warehouses, industrial units and some open spaces. They can be very convincing in persuading landowners to allow them to use their properties and are able to fill the sites with waste which would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds to clear, ultimately leaving the landowner with an expensive clearance bill.

The Environment Agency is urging all landowners to use reputable agents and brokers, carry out suitable checks and due diligence before allowing potential criminals to use buildings or property.

Kevin Rutterford, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

It's crucial that all businesses understand their duty of care responsibilities for the waste they produce, who they allow to transport it and ultimately where it goes.

Too often, when these responsibilities are misunderstood or ignored, we see the impact of waste crime where waste is deliberately dumped on land illegally. This can cause serious pollution, put communities at risk and undermine legitimate businesses that are doing the right thing.

Even if the landowner has no involvement, legally they may still be responsible for that waste and that could mean a large clear up bill.

Waste stored inappropriately can create issues for neighbours through smells and pests. It can also have a detrimental effect on the environment and impact on rivers and streams. There is a high risk of waste fires due to the waste not being stored correctly.

Recent survey statistics released by the Right Waste Right Place campaign <http://www.rightwasterightplace.com/news/> show that agricultural businesses and rural land owners throughout the UK are bearing the brunt of waste crime. More than a third of those in the East of England (39%) have suffered incidents of fly-tipping on their land in the past 3 years with almost half (48%) of them disposing of the waste themselves at their own cost.

In recent years a man was sentenced to prison for dumping hundreds of thousands of tyres at sites he had leased across the country, including in Essex and Norfolk, which he failed to clear.

Fires involving mixed baled waste can be hard to extinguish and pose a risk to public health and the environment as they often contain hazardous materials. In extreme cases this can lead to the loss of the property in which the material is being stored.

Dumping commercial waste like this is a crime. Individuals involved in such illegal activity can be hostile and the Environment Agency urge members of the public not to put themselves in any danger if they encounter any such activity and to avoid any direct contact with the culprits.

Anyone suspecting any illegal waste activities, who has been approached to store waste or may currently be storing such waste are urged to contact the Environment Agency via a 24 hour incident hotline 0800 807060. Alternatively they can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Scotland halfway to recession under the SNP

5 Apr 2017



Scotland's economy contracted over the last quarter, meaning the country is now on the path to recession under the SNP.

Statistics released today showed a 0.2 per cent dip in the fourth quarter of 2016.

If that performance is mirrored in the first three months of 2017, Scotland will officially be in recession.

In contrast, the rest of the UK's economy grew by 0.7 per cent in the final quarter of last year.

It comes as First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has been accused of neglecting the day job by touring the US to talk about Scotland's place in the world, and predicting separation from the UK in years to come.

Today's figures also revealed that Scottish GDP per person contracted by 0.3 per cent during October, November and December, while production and construction were the main sectors to struggle.

The statistics do not take into account revenues from North Sea oil.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

"These are deeply worrying figures which show that Scotland under the SNP is now on the brink of a recession.

"Nicola Sturgeon's Scottish Government must take responsibility for this mess.

"She has made Scotland the highest-taxed part of the UK and created more instability and uncertainty with her threat of a second referendum.

"Now we see the real-life impact of her mismanagement.

“These figures also smash the SNP’s claim that Brexit is to blame for a slowdown.

“If that was the case, why is the rest of the UK powering ahead, while Scotland comes to a standstill?

“More than ever, Scotland needs a First Minister in charge who gets back to her desk, ends her obsession with a second referendum, and focuses on her day job.

“Scotland’s economy is facing a crisis. We need a Scottish Government in charge, not a campaign for independence.”

Notes to editors:

For more on the figures, visit:

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00516361.pdf>

Tories’ promise to be “most family friendly Government we’ve ever had” lies in tatters: one third of Sure Start Children’s Centres have been lost since 2010

Jeremy

Corbyn will, on Wednesday 5 April, set out how Labour will stand up for working

families. He will contrast Labour’s commitment with new evidence that the Tories have broken their promise to support families, slashing Sure Start schemes nationwide.

The Tories famously pledged to be the

“most family friendly Government we’ve ever had” before the 2010 election. As part of this claim they said they would protect Sure Start, the transformative

early years programme introduced by Labour to give young children the best start in life. But new research, based on Freedom of Information requests to councils, reveals the Tories have broken their promise. It shows:

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There are now over 1,240 fewer designated Sure Start children’s centres than when the Tories took office – a fall of around 34 per

cent since 2010.

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Over 230 have been lost in the last year alone.

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The North East and London have seen the biggest fall in numbers, with over 40 per cent of Sure Start Centres lost.

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Two local authorities, Swindon and Solihull, reported that they have no designated Children's Centres in their areas left.

Jeremy
Corbyn will highlight these figures as he sets out how Labour will stand up for working families during a visit on Wednesday.

**Angela
Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary**, commenting on the closures, said:

"The Tories claim they're protecting Sure Start, but they're not. They use tricky accounting methods – like pointing to buildings which are still open but which are running much reduced services – to try to pull the wool over people's eyes. But the facts speak for themselves. On the same measure that was used in 2010, Sure Start has been slashed.

"There are a third fewer designated centres than there were when the Tories came to office. We know that because we asked local authorities, those tasked with running these vital services, and that's what they told us.

"The Tories are taking us backwards. It's a scandal that parents and children are paying the price."

Ends