

Shinfield Eastern Relief Road

I had previously taken up the question of delay to completion of the Shinfield by pass. The Council has now provided the following explanation:



The failure to resolve this industrial dispute is bad news for both staff and passengers – Andy McDonald

Andy McDonald MP, Labour's Shadow Transport Secretary, commenting on reports that Aslef members have rejected a deal with Southern rail, said:

"Southern services are abysmal even without strike action, but the failure to resolve this industrial dispute is bad news for both staff and passengers.

"The Government and Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) have failed to guarantee passenger safety or accessibility for disabled passengers who face a loss of independence with the expansion of Driver-Only Operation services.

"For the sake of long suffering passengers, all parties need to get back around the negotiation table and thrash out a deal that delivers a safe, reliable and accessible service."

China plans smart health and elderly care

China plans to develop the smart health and elderly care industry in the next four years to grants universal access to health management services and home-based elderly care, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT) said Thursday.



China will build a smart health and elderly care industry with more than 100 industrial leading enterprises and a number of brands by 2020. [Photo: Xinhua]

According to an action plan jointly made by the MIIT, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and the National Health and Family Planning Commission, China will build a smart health and elderly care industry with more than 100 industrial leading enterprises and a number of brands by 2020.

The country will also have more than 100 model bases for the industry in the next four years, said the plan.

Efforts should be made to make breakthroughs in core technologies and promote the development of intelligent analysis technologies such as real-time health status analysis and health trend analysis based on big data, so as to provide more types of health-care services to the public.

The government will also encourage the development of advanced health devices such as health management wearables, portable health monitors and home service robots, it said.

The MIIT said it will build a unified information sharing system to improve the quality and security of the service network of the smart health and elderly care industry.

Agency worker traps hand in machine

A polythene film manufacturer was sentenced for safety breaches after a worker trapped his hand in machinery.

Huddersfield Magistrates' Court heard how the injured person broke the little finger on his right hand while operating machinery in March 2014 at Total Polyfilm Ltd.'s Brighthouse plant.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to adequately manage the risk of workers being injured when operating machinery. Also it was found the workers failed to operate in the correct way of working when using this equipment.

Total Polyfilm Ltd of Walton Summit Estate, Bamber Bridge, Preston, Lancashire pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and have been fined £6,000 and ordered to pay costs of £697.

After the hearing HSE inspector Jacqueline Ferguson commented: "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."

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. hse.gov.uk^[1]
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: legislation.gov.uk/ ^[2]
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.

Green Party: List of employers named and shamed for underpaying workers is

just the tip of the iceberg



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The Green Party is appalled by the revelation 360 employers underpaid thousands of workers almost £1 million [1] but believes it is just the tip of the iceberg as the Government process for naming and shaming employers is extremely flawed [2].

The current system means that large, profitable companies are only being named and paying penalties for a small part of all the arrears identified by HMRC [3].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Employers must be held to account if they fail to pay their workers properly. It might seem like an insignificant amount of money to the businesses but to the individual workers who need it to pay their rent or buy food it has a huge impact. In this age of insecurity everyone deserves to be able to make a living to support themselves and their families.

“It’s absolutely right these employers are being named and shamed but the Government needs to make sure this is not the only action it takes to prevent the exploitation of workers. There is still a lack of transparency in the process as errors that are self-corrected by businesses are not included in the list. It means most of the back payments remain a secret and the public might never find out the true scale of the problem.

“The Green Party believes the introduction of a minimum wage of £10 by 2020 is a necessary step towards tackling inequality and poverty and we have long campaigned for the minimum wage to be raised to the living wage level.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-38979368>
2. <https://www.carolinelucas.com/latest/minimum-wage-enforcement-ministers-making-a-mockery-of-%E2%80%98naming-shaming%E2%80%99-scheme>
3. For example, if two workers owed £500 each bring a complaint, HMRC will investigate and decide the employer owes total of £1,000. The employer will be named and shamed for that amount and pay a penalty of £2,000. However, if the employer reveals it actually has 200 workers in the same position and HMRC agrees, HMRC will allow the employer to self-correct in those 200 cases. But the employer does not get named and shamed for this £100,000 error and no penalty is imposed – because the employer self-corrected.

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