

Council fined after worker diagnosed with HAVS

Wrexham County Borough Council has been fined after a 57-year old man was diagnosed with Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS).

Mold Magistrates' Court heard how the employee of the council's StreetScene department had been diagnosed with HAVS in September 2015.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the council failed to address the issue of HAVS following an audit in February 2011 which identified a failure to assess the risk to employees from vibration. The council had developed a number of policies dating back to 2004 to tackle the risk of HAVS, however it was found these policies were not implemented.

Following the introduction of HAVS occupational health surveillance for users of vibrating tools a further eleven diagnoses of HAVS or Carpal tunnel syndrome have been reported.

Wrexham County Borough Council of the Guildhall, Wrexham pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

The council has been fined £150,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,901.35

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Mhairi Duffy said: "This employee now suffers from a long term, life changing illness. The council should have implemented the policy they devised following the audit in 2011.

"Workers' health should not be made worse by the work they do; all employees have the right to go home healthy at the end of the working day."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It helps Great Britain work well by applying a broad range of regulatory interventions and scientific expertise, to prevent 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.