

# Health Board fined for failing to manage patients risk of falling

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has been fined £250,000 following failures relating to patient falls in its hospitals.

Three elderly patients sustained falls in 2022 and 2023 and they all sadly died. The cause of death of two of them was identified as being as a direct result of falling.

Richard Hughes, 84 and Gwilym Williams, 74, fell at Ysybty Gwynedd in Bangor in January and June 2022 respectively, while Nancy Read, who was 93, fell at Wrexham Maelor Hospital in January 2023.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) was initially investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) following two other patient falls in 2020, one of which resulted in fatal injuries.

As a result, HSE took enforcement action against BCUHB that required it to implement an effective patient fall management system, including:

- ensuring patients had appropriate falls risk assessments (with clear risk controls detailed);
- that the risk assessments were reviewed and updated accordingly in the event of a patient's health deteriorating;
- that staff received training on patient falls.

The enforcement action also required BCUHB to review the patient falls policy and to ensure the entire system worked effectively. A follow-on inspection made in November 2021 identified that BCUHB were still not managing patient falls and this resulted in a further action being taken.

However, over the next two years, the three patients died and BCUHB had not implemented a system to identify and manage patient falls quickly, or provide staff with updated training.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health and Safety at work Act 1974 and have been fined £250,000 and ordered to pay costs of £11,766.

Speaking after the case HSE inspector Sarah Baldwin-Jones said "This is the second time this health board has been prosecuted in less than 18 months.

"These incidents could so easily have been avoided had the BCUHB followed their own adult falls policy. Effective management of patient falls includes thorough risk assessment, effective communication on risk management, monitoring and re-evaluation should the patient condition deteriorate.

"Staff and agency workers need to follow the same training pathway, ensuring those responsible for falls management have the skills to make appropriate

decisions.

“Unfortunately, these actions were not always followed and as a result some patients suffered falls, which resulted in two preventable deaths.”

The HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Gemma Zakrzewski and paralegal officer Sarah Thomas.

**Further information:**

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. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. 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](#).

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## [Contractor sentenced after uncontrolled spread of asbestos following roof replacement work at domestic garages](#)

A self-employed roofing contractor has been ordered to undertake unpaid work after the uncontrolled spread of asbestos in a back garden, putting two young workers and local residents at risk.

Doorbell-cam footage shows parts of an old garage roof being disposed of with a lack of control measures.

The footage has been released by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) at the start of Global Asbestos Awareness Week today, Tuesday 1 April, to highlight the dangers.

Stephen Wilks, trading as S Wilks Roofing, pleaded guilty to breaching asbestos safety regulations after work carried out under his control led to the contamination of a residential area with asbestos-containing materials.

The court heard how Mr Wilks had been commissioned by a property management

company to replace asbestos cement roof sheets on three garages off Green Walk in Bowden, Altrincham in February 2022.

HSE began an investigation after a local resident raised concerns about debris that had fallen into their garden during the work. Analysis confirmed the debris contained chrysotile asbestos.

HSE inspectors discovered ripped bags of asbestos waste stored in a publicly accessible area in front of the garages, with asbestos-containing materials spilling onto the ground and contaminating nearby undergrowth. Further investigation revealed that residents' personal belongings stored in the garages had also been contaminated.

The footage below shows two workers under the supervision of Mr Wilks improperly clearing asbestos debris from a neighbouring garden and disposing of it in domestic waste bins, highlighting the unsafe practices that led to this prosecution.

HSE's campaign "Asbestos and You" reminds tradespeople about the dangers of asbestos and the importance of working safely with it.

The regulator also provides comprehensive guidance for workers and employers about working safely with asbestos on its website. This includes information on how to identify asbestos, what to do if you find it, and the appropriate safety measures needed when working with or around asbestos-containing materials. Workers in trades such as construction, maintenance, demolition and installation are particularly at risk and should ensure they have appropriate training before starting work that might disturb asbestos. This guidance is available on the [HSE website](#).

The property management company subsequently arranged for a licensed asbestos removal contractor to safely collect the waste and thoroughly clean the affected areas.

Mr Wilks pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 11(1) and Regulation 16 of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, which require proper planning and precautions to prevent exposure to and spread of asbestos during non-licensed work. He was sentenced to a 12 month Community Order with 200 hours of unpaid work and was ordered to pay £3582.13 costs at a hearing at Ashton-Under-Lyne Magistrates Court on 28 March 2025.

HSE Inspector Phil Redman said: "This was a serious incident that put Mr Wilks, those working under his control, and members of the public, at risk from the potential harmful effects of being exposed to asbestos-containing materials. Duty holders are reminded to ensure they fully control the risks associated with the removal of asbestos-containing materials that do not require removal by a licensed asbestos removal contractor."

The prosecution was supported by HSE enforcement lawyer Kate Harney and paralegal officer Rebecca Withell.

## Further information:

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. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. HSE's campaign "Asbestos and You" reminds tradespeople about the dangers of asbestos and the importance of working safely with it. Asbestos can be found in buildings built before 2000 and is still the biggest workplace killer in Britain, causing around 5,000 deaths every year. When disturbed, asbestos releases tiny fibres that can cause fatal lung diseases and cancers. More information can be found at: [Asbestos & You – Work Right to keep Britain safe](#)
5. Guidance on working safely with asbestos-containing materials can be found at: [Asbestos – HSE](#)

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## [Annual Science Review 2025](#)

**The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has published its 2025 Annual Science Review, showcasing the work it has delivered in support of the five strategic objectives outlined in the HSE's 10-year strategy Protecting People and Places.**

The 2025 review features more than 20 case studies from HSE's science division with demonstrating how its extensive expertise, knowledge and capability delivers a positive impact on the working world.

The review highlights the range of research that HSE scientists are working on, from the safe introduction of hydrogen technologies and supporting the UK target to achieve net zero emissions, to assessing the evidence for safe levels of exposure to various toxicological hazards.

Professor Andrew Curran, Director of Science, Chief Scientific Adviser and Head of GSE Profession: "I'm proud of the important, innovative work that the scientists, engineers and analysts carry out, providing the evidence base to help deliver our strategy. The science review provides interesting examples of their important work as well as introducing you to some of the excellent people from around our organisation we are privileged to work with."

Innovative projects featured range from the use of drones to inspect safety critical structures, including recommendations on how and when to use remote

visual inspection (RVI) instead of in-person close visual inspection(CVI), to work on how lithium-ion battery power plant can be safely used within the confined space of a tunnel to remove diesel exhaust emissions – providing a positive health benefits to workers.

The [2025 Annual Science Review](#) is available for download from HSE's science and research website.

You can find out more about the [case studies on our YouTube Channel](#).

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## **Fines for company and director after man injured during excavation work**

A company and its director have been fined a combined £18,000 after a man was injured during excavation work in West Sussex.

JHE Construction and Jordan Hay-Ellis pleaded guilty to breaching health and safety laws following the incident on 23 February 2023.

The company had been contracted to complete a full barn conversion, which included the installation of a new septic tank. In order to install the tank, workers had to dig an excavation approximately three metres deep. Edward Keely, 30, along with two other men, had been tasked with doing the work at Lone Oak Farm.



The three men were working in this excavation when it collapsed

The three men were in the hole preparing to install a concrete base for the septic tank to sit on when the walls collapsed. Mr Keeley was struck by falling soil which resulted in multiple bone fractures and required for him

to be dug out.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that no precautions had been taken to prevent the collapse of the excavation, yet the men were expected to work in it.



The septic tank that the excavation was being dug to fit into

HSE guidance advises that all work of this nature should be correctly planned, including whether any temporary support structures should be used. This may also include battering the excavation sides to make it safer. You can [read more about HSE guidance here](#).

JHE Construction Limited, of Icarus Avenue, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 22 (1) of The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. The company was fined £16,000 and ordered to pay £2,612 in costs at Brighton Magistrates Court on 24 March 2025.

Jodran Hay-Ellie, 33, of Icarus Avenue, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, pleaded guilty to breaching regulation 22 (1) of The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. He was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay £1,000 costs.



No precautions had been taken to prevent the collapse of the excavation, yet the men were expected to work in it



After the hearing, HSE inspector Nathan Kent said: “The risk associated with excavation collapse is well understood within the construction industry and this incident was easily foreseeable.

“All excavation work should be supported or battered back.

“Failure to do so in this case resulted in a young man sustained very serious injuries.

“HSE will not hesitate to take action against companies which do not do all they can to keep people safe.”

#### **Further information:**

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. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Relevant [guidance on excavations](#) is available.
5. 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](#).

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## **[Wales: New partner joins HSE campaign to tackle stress in workplaces across Wales](#)**

The Health and Safety Executive’s (HSE) campaign aimed at preventing or combatting stress in the workplace has welcomed a new partner ahead of stress awareness month in April.

Healthy Working Wales has become the 36th organisation to join [Working Minds](#) as part of its mission to improve the health of employees across Wales.

In 2023/24, Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures revealed that in Wales alone there are an estimated 49,000 work-related stress, depression or anxiety cases annually – equating to 800k working days lost.

Kayleigh Roberts, work-related stress policy lead at HSE, has welcomed the addition of Healthy Working Wales to help businesses access important

information and tools they require.

She said: “Our statistics show that work-related stress affects many people across Great Britain and just like any other risk to health, employers have a legal duty to protect workers by including work-related stress in their risk assessment and acting on it.

“Failing to manage stress at work can lead to reduced productivity, sickness absence, or even losing valued members of the team if they are not well enough to stay in work. Our Working Minds campaign has all the resources you need to understand what’s required and to get proactive on prevention.”

Healthy Working Wales is a free programme that aims to improve health and prevent ill-health among the working age population in Wales.

Oliver Williams, consultant in public health and speaker for Healthy Working Wales, said: “Partnering with HSE allows us to support Welsh businesses in understanding the benefits of taking action on employee health and wellbeing. Managing work-related stress effectively not only enhances workforce wellbeing but also improves performance and reduces absence.

Through initiatives like our recent joint webinar—where 82% of attendees reported feeling ready to implement their learnings—we are equipping employers with practical steps to create healthier workplaces. Together, we are committed to helping organisations create safe, supportive environments where employees can thrive.”

To watch the Healthy Working Wales and HSE webinar visit HSE’s YouTube page.

[webinar: Stress and mental health at work – what Welsh businesses need to know](#)

Or, [watch a version of the webinar with Welsh language subtitles on YouTube.](#)

To help employers to prevent stress and support workers’ mental health, HSE launched the Working Minds campaign in November 2021, providing free resources for employers and managers.

Working Minds hinges on five 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.

There are six main areas that can lead to work-related stress if they are not managed properly. These are: demands, control, support, relationships, role and change. Factors like skills and experience, age, or disability may all affect someone’s ability to cope.

HSE has a free online learning tool for businesses with over 12,000 people already registered with over 90% saying it was easy to use and felt they could implement what they learned in their organisation.

Helpful resources:



- [register for our free online learning](#)
- [download a risk assessment template](#)

**Further information:**

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. During Stress Awareness Month this April, employers and managers are being invited to support the campaign and complete the five steps of Working Minds over the course of the month. To read more about HSE's Working Minds campaign click [here](#).
3. To read more about Healthy Working Wales click [here](#).
4. No matter whether you're a small business or a large corporation, the law requires all employers to prevent work-related stress to support good mental health in the workplace.
5. For press and media enquiries please contact [media.enquiries@hse.gov.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@hse.gov.uk).