

Places for People Homes fined after five employees developed Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)

A property management and development organisation has been fined after five employees developed Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS).

Aylesbury Crown Court heard that between 2009 and 2014 five employees of Places for People Homes Limited used vibrating powered tools to carry out grounds maintenance tasks at sites in Milton Keynes, Rotherham and Hull.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company failed to assess or manage the risks associated with vibrating tools. It also failed to provide suitable training or health surveillance for its maintenance workers and failed to maintain and replace tools which increased vibration levels.

Places for People Homes Limited of Cheapside, London pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The company has been fined £600,000 and ordered to pay costs of £13,995.06

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Andrew McGill said: "Companies must manage the risks associated with vibrating tools. Hand arm vibration can be a significant health risk wherever powered hand tools are used for significant lengths of time.

"HAVS is preventable, but once the damage is done it is permanent. Damage from HAVS can include the inability to do fine work and cold can trigger painful finger blanching attacks. Health surveillance is vital to detect and respond to early signs of damage."

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. www.hse.gov.uk
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/; www.hse.gov.uk/vibration/havs
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

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