

Property management company fined and managing director handed suspended sentence after death of 'brave, strong, and determined' teenage apprentice

- 18-year-old apprentice joiner Chloe Bidwell was fatally crushed by unsecured board materials at a renovation site in Bangor
- Chloe was working alone with no lone working policy, inadequate supervision, and no safe storage procedures in place for the boards that killed her
- An HSE investigation found the company and its director failed to provide safe systems of work, information, instruction, training and supervision

A property management company has been fined and its director handed a suspended sentence after an 18-year-old apprentice was killed whilst working at a property in Bangor, North Wales.

Chloe Bidwell was working for Varcity Living Limited as a joiner apprentice at a residential property on Deiniol Road, Bangor, on 20 December 2023. The property was undergoing a full renovation when a stack of wooden board material fell, fatally injuring Miss Bidwell.

Miss Bidwell had been working alone at the time of the incident and was found deceased at the property after she failed to respond to messages or return home. A mixture of board materials had been stacked vertically and unsecured against a wall. It is believed she may have been attempting to retrieve a plywood board from the stack when some of the boards fell on her, crushing her neck and causing fatal injuries. There were 28 boards in total, of large dimensions and potentially weighing up to 30kg each. No attempt had been made to secure the boards in their upright position, and the risk of them falling had not been identified.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Varcity Living Limited failed to provide safe systems of work and failed to provide adequate information, instruction, training and supervision, so far as was reasonably practicable. The investigation also found that these failures were attributable to the neglect of director David Horrocks.

Specifically, investigators found there was inadequate site supervision, no suitable lone working policy or procedure, no suitable policy or procedure for the storage of board materials, and inadequate risk assessment prior to the incident.

HSE guidance on [stacking materials](#) states that building materials must be

stored safely so they cannot topple or roll over. Boards should be stored horizontally on a level surface using suitable pallets or battens and must never be stacked on edge without adequate support. HSE guidance on [lone working](#) also states that where lone working is undertaken, there should be increased training, supervision and monitoring, including procedures to confirm a lone worker has returned safely once their task is complete.

Varcity Living Limited, of High Street, Bangor, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 2(1) and 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay £10,080 in costs at Llandudno Magistrates' Court on 9 July 2026.

David Horrocks, of Felinheli, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. He was sentenced to 26 weeks imprisonment suspended for two years and ordered to pay £7,886 in costs.

Chloe's mother, Clare Stephenson-Brown, speaking on behalf of the family, said:

"Chloe was only 18, full of life, energy, and determination. She had so many talents and dreams: a skilled joiner, a rugby player, a surfer, a skydiver, and a young woman who was about to travel the world and begin her journey towards becoming a firefighter. She was wise beyond her years, brave, and incredibly grounded."

Mrs Stephenson-Brown described the devastating impact of losing Chloe in the way that she did:

"Chloe died instantly and alone. The fact that she was by herself in those final moments is something that causes us unbearable pain and something we will carry forever. Knowing how full of life she was and how much she had yet to experience makes her loss impossible to accept."

She added:

"As a family we feel like Chloe was let down at work, and because of that, we have lost her forever. Our lives will never, ever be the same again. We just hope that those responsible truly understand the enormity of what has happened, not only the loss of Chloe's life, but the devastation caused to her family, her friends, and her community."

As a family, we hope this case is not viewed simply in terms of the outcome in court, but as a stark reminder of the real human cost behind it. The impact of losing Chloe reaches far beyond any sentence and will stay with us forever. We urge employers to look beyond compliance and truly consider the responsibility they hold for the lives in their care. Safety must be meaningful in practice, ensuring risks are properly managed, lone working is safe, and that everyone who goes to work returns home."



HSE inspector Rachael Newman said:

“Chloe Bidwell was a young apprentice joiner at the very beginning of her career. She had every right to expect that her employer would take the basic steps needed to keep her safe at work. Her family had every right to expect that when Chloe went to work, she would come home.

“The tragedy of Chloe’s death is made all the more jarring because it was so wholly avoidable. Apprentices should not be working alone on a construction site, and Chloe died in circumstances which should never have been able to happen.

“Chloe’s employer, Varcity Living Limited, had no safe storage system in place for the dangerously heavy boards which were stacked upright and completely unsecured. Furthermore, they had failed to provide the necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision for their young apprentice.

“Today’s result cannot bring Chloe back, but we hope the sentence handed down brings some solace to her family, whose lives carry on without her. They remain in our thoughts, and we offer them our deepest condolences.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyer Arfaq Nabi and paralegal officer Lynne 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 on the HSE website.
3. Further details on the latest HSE news releases are available on the HSE website.
4. Relevant guidance can be found at:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg150.pdf>,
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis2.pdf> and
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>.
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 are available on the Sentencing Council website.

Cwmni rheoli eiddo wedi’i ddirwyo a’i gyfarwyddwr rheoli wedi’i ddedfrydu i gyfnod o garchar wedi’i ohirio ar ôl marwolaeth prentis ‘dewr, cryf, a phenderfynol’ yn ei harddegau

- Cafodd Chloe Bidwell, prentis saer coed 18 oed, ei gwasgu’n angheuol gan ddeunyddiau bwrdd heb eu diogelu mewn safle adnewyddu ym Mangor
- Roedd Chloe yn gweithio ar ei phen ei hun heb bolisi ar gyfer gweithio ar ei phen ei hun, goruchwyliaeth annigonol, a dim gweithdrefnau storio diogel ar waith ar gyfer y byrddau a’i lladdodd
- Canfu ymchwiliad gan yr HSE fod y cwmni a’i gyfarwyddwr wedi methu â darparu systemau gwaith diogel, gwybodaeth, cyfarwyddyd, hyfforddiant a

goruchwyliaeth

Mae cwmni rheoli eiddo a'i gyfarwyddwr wedi cael dedfryd o garchar wedi'i ohirio, ar ôl i brentis 18 oed gael ei ladd wrth weithio mewn eiddo ym Mangor, Gogledd Cymru.

Roedd Chloe Bidwell yn gweithio i Varcity Living Limited fel prentis saer mewn eiddo preswyl ar Ffordd Deiniol, Bangor, ar 20 Rhagfyr 2023. Roedd yr eiddo yn cael ei adnewyddu'n llwyr pan syrthiodd pentwr o ddeunydd bwrdd pren, gan anafu Miss Bidwell yn angheuol.

Roedd Miss Bidwell wedi bod yn gweithio ar ei phen ei hun ar adeg y digwyddiad a chafodd ei darganfod yn farw yn yr eiddo ar ôl iddi fethu ag ymateb i negeseuon na dychwelyd adref. Roedd cymysgedd o ddeunyddiau bwrdd wedi'u pentyrru'n fertigol ac heb eu sicrhau yn erbyn wal. Credir ei bod hi o bosibl wedi bod yn ceisio nôl bwrdd pren haenog o'r pentwr pan syrthiodd rhai o'r byrddau arni, gan falu ei gwddf ac achosi anafiadau angheuol. Roedd 28 o fyrddau i gyd, o ddimensiynau mawr ac o bosibl yn pwyso hyd at 30kg yr un. Ni wnaed unrhyw ymgais i sicrhau'r byrddau yn eu safle unionsyth, ac nid oedd y risg y byddent yn cwmpo wedi'i nodi.

Canfu ymchwiliad gan yr Awdurdod Gweithredol Iechyd a Diogelwch (HSE) fod Varcity Living Limited wedi methu â darparu systemau gwaith diogel ac wedi methu â darparu gwybodaeth, cyfarwyddyd, hyfforddiant a goruchwyliaeth ddigonol, cyn belled ag yr oedd yn rhesymol ymarferol. Canfu'r ymchwiliad hefyd fod y methiannau hyn yn ganlyniad i esgeulustod y cyfarwyddwr David Horrocks.

Yn benodol, canfu ymchwilyr nad oedd goruchwyliaeth ddigonol ar y safle, nad oedd polisi na gweithdrefn addas ar gyfer gweithio ar ei phen eich hun, nad oedd polisi na gweithdrefn addas ar gyfer storio deunyddiau bwrdd, ac nad oedd asesiad risg digonol cyn y digwyddiad.

Mae canllawiau'r HSE ar bentyrru deunyddiau yn nodi bod rhaid storio deunyddiau adeiladu yn ddiogel fel na allant ddymchwel na rhoio drosodd. Dylid storio byrddau'n llorweddol ar arwyneb gwastad gan ddefnyddio paledi neu estyll addas a rhaid peidio byth â'u pentyrru ar eu hymyl heb gefnogaeth ddigonol. Mae canllawiau'r HSE ar weithio ar eich pen eich hun hefyd yn nodi, lle mae gweithio ar eich pen eich hun yn digwydd, y dylid cael mwy o hyfforddiant, goruchwyliaeth a monitro, gan gynnwys gweithdrefnau i gadarnhau bod gweithiwr sy'n gweithio ar ei ben ei hun wedi dychwelyd yn ddiogel ar ôl i'w dasg gael ei chwblhau.

Plediodd Varcity Living Limited, o Stryd Fawr, Bangor, yn euog i dorri Adrannau 2(1) a 3(1) o Ddeddf Iechyd a Diogelwch yn y Gwaith ac ati 1974. Dirwywyd y cwmni £50,000 a gorchmynnwyd iddo dalu £10,080 mewn costau yn Llys Ynadon Llandudno ar 9 Gorffennaf 2026.

Plediodd David Horrocks, o Felinheli, yn euog i dorri Adran 37 o Ddeddf Iechyd a Diogelwch yn y Gwaith ac ati 1974. Dedfrydwyd ef i 26 wythnos o garchar, wedi'i ohirio am ddwy flynedd, a gorchmynnwyd iddo dalu £7886 mewn costau.

Dywedodd mam Chloe, Clare Stephenson-Brown, yn siarad ar ran y teulu:

"Dim ond 18 oed oedd Chloe, yn llawn bywyd, egni, a phenderfyniad. Roedd ganddi gymaint o dalentau a breuddwydion: saer coed medrus, chwaraewr rygbi, syrffiwyr, neidiwr awyr, a menyw ifanc a oedd ar fin teithio'r byd a dechrau ei thaith tuag at fod yn ddiffoddwr tân. Roedd hi'n ddoeth y tu hwnt i'w hoedran, yn ddewr, ac yn hynod o gadarn."

Disgrifiodd Mrs Stephenson-Brown effaith ddinistriol colli Chloe yn y ffordd y gwnaeth:

"Bu farw Chloe ar unwaith ac ar ei phen ei hun. Mae'r ffaith ei bod ar ei phen ei hun yn yr eiliadau olaf hynny yn rhywbeth sy'n achosi poen annioddefol i ni a rhywbeth y byddwn ni'n ei gario am byth. Mae gwybod pa mor llawn bywyd oedd hi a faint nad oedd hi wedi'i brofi eto yn gwneud ei cholled yn amhosibl i'w derbyn."

Ychwanegodd: "Fel teulu, rydym yn teimlo fel pe bai Chloe wedi cael ei siomi yn y gwaith, ac oherwydd hynny, rydym wedi ei cholli am byth. Ni fydd ein bywydau byth yr un fath eto. Rydym yn gobeithio y bydd y rhai sy'n gyfrifol yn deall maint yr hyn sydd wedi digwydd yn wirioneddol, nid yn unig colli bywyd Chloe, ond y dinistr a achoswyd i'w theulu, ei ffrindiau, a'i chymuned."

Fel teulu, rydym yn gobeithio na chaiff yr achos hwn ei ystyried o ran y canlyniad yn y llys yn unig, ond fel atgof llym o'r gost ddynol wirioneddol y tu ôl iddo. Mae effaith colli Chloe yn ymestyn ymhell y tu hwnt i unrhyw ddedfryd a bydd yn aros gyda ni am byth. Rydym yn annog cyflogwyr i edrych y tu hwnt i gydymffurfiaeth ac ystyried yn wirioneddol y cyfrifoldeb sydd ganddynt am y bywydau yn eu gofal. Rhaid i ddiogelwch fod yn ystyrlon yn ymarferol, gan sicrhau bod risgiau'n cael eu rheoli'n iawn, bod gweithio ar eich pen eich hun yn ddiogel, a bod pawb sy'n mynd i'r gwaith yn dychwelyd adref."



Dyweddodd arolygydd HSE, Rachael Newman:

“Roedd Chloe Bidwell yn brentis saer ifanc ar ddechrau ei gyrfa. Roedd ganddi bob hawl i ddisgwyl y byddai ei chyflogwr yn cymryd y camau sylfaenol oedd eu hangen i’w chadw’n ddiogel yn y gwaith. Roedd gan ei theulu bob hawl i ddisgwyl, pan fyddai Chloe yn mynd i’r gwaith, y byddai hi’n dod adref.

"Mae trychineb marwolaeth Chloe yn cael ei gwneud hyd yn oed yn fwy ysgytwol oherwydd ei bod mor gwbl osgoadwy. Ni ddylai prentisiaid fod yn gweithio ar eu pen eu hunain ar safle adeiladu, a bu farw Chloe mewn amgylchiadau na ddylent fod wedi gallu digwydd byth.

"Nid oedd gan gyflogwr Chloe, Varcity Living Limited, system storio ddiogel ar waith ar gyfer y byrddau peryglus o drwm a oedd wedi'u pentyrru'n unionsyth ac yn gwbl heb eu diogelu. Ar ben hynny, roeddent wedi methu â darparu'r wybodaeth, y cyfarwyddyd, yr hyfforddiant a'r oruchwyliaeth angenrheidiol i'w prentis ifanc.

"Ni all canlyniad heddiw ddod â Chloe yn ôl, ond rydym yn gobeithio y bydd y ddedfryd a roddwyd yn dod â rhywfaint o gysur i'w theulu, y mae eu bywydau'n parhau hebddi. Maent yn parhau yn ein meddyliau, ac rydym yn cynnig ein cydymdeimlad dwysaf iddynt."

Dygwyd yr erlyniad hwn gan y cyfreithiwr gorfodi HSE Arfaq Nabi a'r swyddog paragyfreithiol Lynne Thomas.

Nodiadau i Olygyddion

1. Yr Awdurdod Gweithredol Iechyd a Diogelwch (HSE) yw rheoleiddiwr cenedlaethol Prydain ar gyfer iechyd a diogelwch yn y gweithle. Rydym wedi ymrwmo i amddiffyn pobl a lleoedd, a helpu pawb i fyw bywydau mwy diogel ac iachach.
2. Mae rhagor o wybodaeth am y ddeddfwriaeth y cyfeirir ati yn yr achos hwn ar gael ar wefan yr HSE.
3. Mae rhagor o fanylion am y datganiadau newyddion diweddaraf gan yr HSE ar gael ar wefan yr HSE.
4. Gellir dod o hyd i ganllawiau perthnasol yn:
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg150.pdf>,
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/wis2.pdf> and
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg73.pdf>.
5. Nid yw'r HSE yn rhoi dedfrydau, yn gosod canllawiau nac yn casglu unrhyw ddirwyon a osodir. Rhaid dilyn canllawiau dedfrydu perthnasol oni bai bod y llys yn fodlon y byddai'n groes i fuddiannau cyfiawnder gwneud hynny. Mae'r canllawiau dedfrydu ar gyfer troseddau iechyd a diogelwch ar gael ar wefan y Cyngor Dedfrydu.