

# Isle of Wight farm owner hit with fine after disease outbreak infects hundreds of visitors

- More than 200 people infected with disease.
- Victims' described experience as 'the worst diarrhoea and vomiting ever they had ever had'
- Extensive HSE and industry guidance is available.

A farm owner on the Isle of Wight has been fined £8,000 after an outbreak of resulted in 264 people being infected with *Cryptosporidium* – a zoonotic disease.

Sharon Wheeler, 60, ran an animal bottle feeding activity at a petting farm at Hazelgrove Farm in Ryde in April and May 2023. This activity infected more than 30 per cent of attendees with the highly infectious illness, cryptosporidiosis, more than half of those were children.



The animal feeding area in barn, located next to car park

*Cryptosporidium* is a form of zoonotic parasite (a tiny organism) that causes an illness called cryptosporidiosis affecting people and some animals, particularly farm animals. Symptoms in people can include abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, and nausea.

The Hazelgrove Farm outbreak was declared following reports of gastrointestinal illness among visitors who had attended the animal bottle feeding activity, where visitors could purchase a bottle of milk to feed to a lamb or goat kid.



## Cold washing facilities in a dirty condition

A joint investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) traced the infections back to the farm, identifying that approximately 2,400 tickets were sold between 4 April to 1 May 2023 for animal feeding event.

The investigation established failings in the way the animal feeding activity was run, including:

- Failure to properly assess the risks to workers and visitors.
- Inadequate washing and drying facilities (reusable cloth towels should not be used).
- Insufficient information and instruction to employees and visitors (visitors were not given sufficient information about zoonotic risk and controls).
- Inadequate control and supervision of visitor contact with animals (children were observed kissing both goats and lambs which were visibly contaminated with faecal matter).



The animal pens

As a result, 264 attendees suffered some form of symptoms, however, five per cent of cases were admitted for overnight hospital stays due to prolonged or severe symptoms, including children.

Many adults had to take time off work and school, amounting to 1,254 lost days, because of illness or caring responsibilities. Several victims have reported continuing gastrointestinal issues affecting their day to day lives since attending the event, with some having multiple hospital stays over 2024. Victims' state that their experiences were among the worst diarrhoea and vomiting they had ever had, fearing for their children's health, leaving lasting aftereffects and putting their families off ever visiting farm animals again.

In his judgement, District Judge Galloway, summarising the victims statements, said: "There is no doubt that that the events to which they refer are and were serious" and reflected on the victims "psychological toll experienced, and PTSD" and "the fact that the illness was life threatening" and "the fear that a child affected would not recover".



The animal pens at the farm

Sharon Wheeler of Hazelgrove farm, Ryde, Isle of Wight, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(2) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. She was fined £8,000 and ordered to pay costs of £9,528.35 in costs at a hearing at Southampton Magistrate's court on 11 November 2025.

Speaking after the hearing HSE inspector Francesca Arnold said: "It is extremely important that farmers understand the risks on their farm, and they should ensure that visitors are protected when inviting the public onto their farms.

"Health risks from contact with the animals need attention and must be controlled. If the zoonotic risks had been properly controlled this incident could have been avoided, but the failures during the animal feeding activity meant a large number of visitors became ill and some suffered lasting effects.

"As with most activities, visits to farms and farm attractions can never be considered free from risk. However, it is possible to reduce the levels of risk by implementing control measures and safe practices to ensure that workers and members of the public are not put at risk and still provide a valuable and enjoyable recreational and educational experience."

All animals naturally carry a range of microorganisms, some of which can be transmitted to humans. Diseases passed from animals to humans are known as zoonoses. Some zoonotic diseases are more serious than others. Young children and those with deficient immune systems are amongst those more likely to suffer serious effects from zoonotic disease. Some zoonotic diseases can potentially be life-threatening. Those operating animal visitor attractions have a legal duty to assess the risk and put in place suitable control measures.

While the risk of contracting a zoonotic disease is generally considered to be low, such risk may be significantly increased without adequate control measures being in place.

Only small numbers of cryptosporidium are required to become ill, and it is capable of surviving for a long time in the environment. People can become infected by consuming contaminated food or drink or by direct contact with contaminated animals. Infection can also occur when people come into contact

with animal faeces or saliva, even in very small amounts, such as by touching or kissing infected animals, during bottle-feeding, or touching contaminated fences and other items such as contaminated cloth towels. Good control measures, including handwashing with soap and water are therefore essential.

Industry guidance to assist dutyholders to control zoonotic risk to farm visitors is freely available from the Access to Farms website. The HSE was consulted in the production of the [Industry Code of Practice \(ICOP\)](#) "Preventing or Controlling Ill Health from Animal Contact at Visitor Attractions".

The ICOP provides sensible, proportionate and balanced advice to farms on how to comply with health and safety law and keep visitors safe and well, including the reasonably practicable measures available to reduce the risk of exposure to micro-organisms and a useful checklist for farmers to use.

This prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyers Robert James and Kate Harney and paralegal officer Stephen Grabe.

#### **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. Zoonoses are diseases caused by micro-organisms that can be transmitted from animals to humans, these illnesses include those resulting from infection with the organisms *Escherichia coli* 0157(E coli 0157) and *Cryptosporidium parvum*.
5. Relevant guidance can be found here [Preventing or controlling ill health from animal contact at visitor attractions or open farms – HSE and Industry Code of Practice | Access To Farms](#) and [Cryptosporidium: public advice – GOV.UK](#).
6. 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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## **[Plastics firm fined following fatal](#)**

# machinery accident

- Employee became trapped in unguarded machine and died at the scene.
- Company failed to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessment.
- Reflex Flexible Packaging Ltd fined £277,500.

A plastics conversion company based in Derbyshire has been fined £277,500 after an employee sustained fatal injuries when he became trapped in the moving parts of an unguarded machine.

Paul Whalley, 46, was employed by Reflex Flexible Packaging Ltd at their factory on Amber Drive, Langley Mill, when the incident occurred.

On 29 May 2020, Mr Whalley entered an opening in the side of a plastic conversion machine that permitted whole-body access to dangerous moving parts. The area contained several unguarded mechanisms, and Mr Whalley became trapped in the machine.

Despite efforts by the emergency services, including cutting conveyor belts and rollers to free him, he sadly died at the scene from crush asphyxia.



Reflex Flexible Packaging machine

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Reflex Flexible Packaging Ltd failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment for operation of the machine.

The company had not installed appropriate guarding to prevent access to dangerous parts and had no written safe systems of work or isolation procedures in place.

HSE guidance states that employers must take effective measures to prevent access to dangerous parts of machinery.

This typically involves fixed guarding, but where routine access is required, interlocked guards may be needed to stop movement before a person can reach the danger zone.

Further information is available in HSE's Safe Use of Work Equipment –

Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER) and its Approved Code of Practice: [Safe use of work equipment \(PUWER\)](#).

Reflex Flexible Packaging Ltd, of Hamilton Way, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

The company was fined £277,500 and ordered to pay £20,000 in costs at Derby Crown Court on 5 November 2025.

Following the hearing, HSE Inspector Lee Greatorex said:

“This tragic incident could have been easily prevented had a suitable and sufficient risk assessment taken place and the actions identified implemented. The accident is made worse by the fact that the company’s own internal health and safety department had identified a lack of risk assessments 18 months before the accident, but no follow-up action was taken to remedy this failing.

“This wholly avoidable incident was caused by the failure of Reflex Flexible Packaging Ltd to guard the dangerous parts of the machine Mr Whalley was operating. It was obvious that these moving parts were not guarded and presented a clear risk of injury. Had the company fitted suitable guarding, this fatality would not have occurred.”

This prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Edward Parton 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 are available at [press.hse.gov.uk](https://press.hse.gov.uk).
  4. Relevant guidance can be found here: [Safe use of work equipment \(PUWER\)](#).
  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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# Construction client sentenced after worker found dead on site

- HSE inspectors called in after man's body found on site.
- Multiple failings found at site risking workers to falls from height.
- HSE guidance is available.

A construction client has been handed a suspended prison sentence after a worker was found dead on a building site in London.

Moses Meisels received a 12-week prison sentence, suspended for one year, and was ordered to pay £10,000 in costs City of London Magistrates Court due to his role in the incident.

The Metropolitan Police discovered the man's body at the site of a synagogue development at Upper Clapton Road, in Hackney, in December 2018.

Although the worker had died as a result of natural causes, subsequent inspections by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) revealed multiple life-threatening safety failures at the site.

Moses Meisels was overseeing major structural work to enlarge the synagogue, but he repeatedly ignored warnings about dangerous practices – putting construction workers at serious risk of fatal falls.

Following the discovery of the man's body, HSE inspectors conducted four separate visits in a five-month period, where they uncovered a catalogue of serious failures including:

- Workers operating on the roof beyond the protection of scaffolding edge barriers
- Large, unprotected holes in the ground floor creating fall risks into the basement below
- A single unsecured ladder as the only access to the first floor, which didn't extend far enough to provide a safe handhold
- Construction waste dangerously stacked in the front garden

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 Regulation 2 defines a client as "any person for whom a project is carried out". HSE guidance states that commercial clients have a crucial influence over how projects are run, including the management of health and safety risks. Commercial clients must make suitable arrangements for managing their project, enabling those carrying it out to manage health and safety risks in a proportionate way.

At City of London Magistrates Court, Meisels of Gilda Crescent, Stoke Newington, pleaded guilty to breaching Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. He received a 12-week prison sentence, suspended for one year, and was ordered to pay £10,000 in costs.

HSE inspector David King said: “It is essential that clients must make suitable arrangements for managing a project, including the allocation of sufficient time and other resources.

“Clients should be aware that HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action them if fail to ensure their construction projects meet the required standards.”

Further information:

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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 can be found here [Commercial clients: roles and responsibilities – HSE](#)
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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## **Construction company fined £33,500 after man dies following fall from height**

- Worker died after falling through unprotected skylight opening at domestic property.
- Company failed to take measures to prevent falls from height.
- HSE reminds employers of guidance for safe working at height.

Skyladder Construction Limited has been fined £33,500 after a man died when he fell through a skylight opening at a domestic property.

The company was constructing a single-storey extension with a flat roof at a property in Farnborough. On the evening of 20 July 2022, it began to rain, and the company director and an employee returned to the site at approximately 11pm to cover the new roof with a blue plastic tarpaulin, securing it with logs of wood.

Bhakta Rai accompanied the employee to the site that evening. At some point,



Mr Rai went onto the roof to assist and fell through a hole intended for a skylight, falling approximately 2.5 metres onto the concrete floor below.

In an attempt to recover Mr Rai, he was lifted back through the roof opening, carried across the roof, and then brought down a ladder at the front of the property. No ambulance was called, and Mr Rai was transported to hospital in a van. He died a few days later after sustaining significant injuries, including a spinal fracture, fractured skull, possible bleed on the brain, and swelling to the head.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) attended the scene on 21 July 2022. Between the police leaving the site (at around 4am) and the HSE's arrival later that day, the tarpaulin had been replaced, covering the roof.



Tarp following the fall when police attended

An HSE investigation found that Skyladder Construction Limited failed to take suitable and sufficient measures to prevent, so far as was reasonably practicable, any person from falling a distance liable to cause personal injury. There were no physical measures in place at the edges of the building or around the skylight openings to prevent a fall, and no measures to mitigate the distance or impact of a fall.



Tarp covering roof/hole when HSE attended

Skyladder Construction Limited also contravened a requirement imposed by an HSE inspector. During the investigation, HSE requested information from the company under Section 20 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, which it is an offence not to provide. No response was received.

HSE guidance sets out measures for planning and carrying out work at height safely. It includes practical controls that can be implemented to remove or reduce the risk of a fall. Following this guidance would have identified the risks from the unprotected roof and shown that the risk could have been eliminated entirely by changing how the work was undertaken. Further guidance can be found here: [Work at height – HSE](#).

Skyladder Construction Limited, of 8 Harbour Close, Farnborough, GU14 8HT, pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005 and Section 33(1)(e) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 for failing to provide information requested under Section 20 of the Act.

The company was fined £33,500, ordered to pay £8,472 in costs, and a £2,000 victim surcharge at Basingstoke Magistrates' Court on 31 October 2025.

Following the hearing, HSE Inspector Jenny Morris said:

"Falls when working at height remain the most common kind of workplace fatality, accounting for around a quarter of all worker deaths. In this case, this was a wholly avoidable incident – Mr Rai died in a fall which should never have been able to happen."

This prosecution was brought by HSE Enforcement Lawyer Rebecca Schwartz and Paralegal Officer Helen Hugo.

#### **Further information:**

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  4. Relevant guidance can be found here [Work at height – HSE](#)  
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/work-at-height/index.htm>
  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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# HSE seeks views on proposals to enhance worker and public protection from asbestos exposure

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has today launched a consultation on proposals to improve the application of the Control of Asbestos Regulations and guidance around asbestos management to help protect workers and building users.

Great Britain already has one of the best workplace health and safety performances globally, with some of the lowest rates of occupational injury and fatality in Europe. These proposals build on this strong foundation to enhance protections in areas where asbestos remains a significant health risk.

The consultation aims to seek stakeholders' views on three proposals:

1. To ensure the independence and impartiality of roles in the four-stage clearance process to further minimise the risk of exposure from asbestos to workers and building users after the removal of asbestos
2. To drive up the standard of asbestos surveys to ensure dutyholders have the information they need to safely manage asbestos risks
3. To clarify the type of work that constitutes work with asbestos known as Notifiable Non-Licensed Work (NNLW)

The consultation is particularly relevant to dutyholders, asbestos analysts, asbestos removal contractors, asbestos surveyors, and associated professions including facilities management and construction.

Rick Brunt, Director of Engagement and Policy at HSE, said:

"Asbestos continues to be a significant risk to workers in Great Britain. While we have made significant progress in managing asbestos risks, these proposals represent an important step towards further strengthening protections for workers and the public.

"We want to hear from all stakeholders involved in the asbestos regulatory system to ensure our approach is both effective and proportionate, supporting HSE's commitment to protecting people and places whilst enabling innovation and economic growth."

Minister for Social Security and Disability, Sir Stephen Timms, said:

"The dangers of exposure to asbestos are well known. Its legacy is that it remains the biggest cause of work-related deaths in the UK – responsible for 5,000-plus deaths per year, with many more people living with the impact of asbestos-related disease.

"In Britain we have a mature and well-established approach to the management

of asbestos in buildings: the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, enforced by the Health and Safety Executive and other regulators.

“This consultation aims to improve these regulations and enhance worker and public protection from asbestos exposure.”

The consultation runs until 9 January 2026. The full consultation document, including detailed proposals, background information and how to respond, is available on the HSE website at:

<https://consultations.hse.gov.uk/hse/proposals-control-of-asbestos-regs-2012>.