

Report on the 33rd Hazards Conference held 29th – 31st July, 2022 at Keele University and Online

It's a Deadly Business but Decent Work is Safe and Healthy!



This year's conference was held at Keele University and online for those unable to attend in person or who wanted to be online. It created a few challenges but overall provided a great conference experience for all attendees. The conference was smaller than in previous years, which enabled us to ensure people were able to keep their distance around the venue and that ventilation was maintained at a safer level. It also enabled people who joined online to participate fully in debates, as much as possible. There were approx. 150 reps and activists who attended in person and more than 30 who attended online.

The first session on the Friday was workshops and there were 2 running online and 6 running in person at Keele. Some of these were repeated on the Sunday morning workshop and on Sunday there were 4 online workshops and 6 running in person. These included: Reps functions and employers duties with Julie Weekes, Mental health awareness with Nigel Williams, Resources and creative action for safety reps with Andrea Oates and Paul Holleran, Supporting health and safety reps and building up the safety organisation with Mike Hines, Workplace inspections with Tony Whelan, Violence faced by workers with Doug Russell, Ventilation and air quality at work with Hilda Palmer, Sex and gender sensitive health and safety with Cath Roberts and Helen Lynn, Influencing health, safety and fair work through public procurement with Ian Tasker and Kath Jenkins, Environmental and Green reps with Barry Faulkner and Investigating incidents and injuries at work with Alan McShane.

Saturday was the main day of the conference and was packed with fantastic speakers, great debate and fascinating and useful information. The Opening plenary was chaired by Doug Russell, USDAW National health and safety officer, with speakers: Owen Tudor ITUC Deputy General Secretary talking about the significance of the new ILO convention for health and safety as a fundamental right; Shelly Asquith TUC National health and safety officer on How safety reps have made a difference during the pandemic and beyond; Professor Phil James spoke about the case of regulatory failure and what needs to change; and finally FACK speaker Chris Cooper Unison W.Midlands Health and safety chair spoke about his cousin Terry Moore's workplace death.

Owen Tudor explained about the historic union campaign to add occupational health and safety to child labour, forced labour, discrimination and the right to organise which are the ILO's top priority universal labour rights. He said that it was the end of a long campaign by trade unions and health and safety professionals and that it will help us make real progress in workplaces. Trade unions have been arguing for health and safety to be a fundamental right since before the 1998 Declaration. Employers and/or governments had refused to accept it as a fundamental right but 3 years ago in the ground-breaking ILO Centenary Declaration the tripartite constituencies of ILO, Governments, employers and unions agreed it should happen and it took a further 3 years for it to happen. This decision is important because it is a core convention and Governments are obliged to follow it. In the UK it will continue to be a challenge to hold our Governments to account but it will be an important arm in ensuring that trade deals do not undermine health and safety. It will also be useful when looking at pension funds and ensuring they are invested in companies that abide by health and safety legislation. Finally, he spoke about the importance of strong union safety reps. See <https://www.hazards.org/deadlybusiness/fifthelement.htm> for more information - (control and right click to access links)

Shelly Asquith gave a presentation on the role of safety reps. She said that health and safety touches everything we do and that it is the gateway drug to wider trade union organising. She said that it was the most important trade union role and that we all owe a debt of gratitude to safety reps during the pandemic. A copy of her presentation can be found at: <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Shelly-Asquith-General-Health-and-Safety.pptx>

Phil James spoke about the 50th anniversary of the Robens Report and explained that there had been a systematic cutting of resources to HSE / LA enforcement and the result was a crisis of enforcement. See IER leaflet to purchase the booklet by Phil James and David Walters and the summary of the issues and challenges we face.

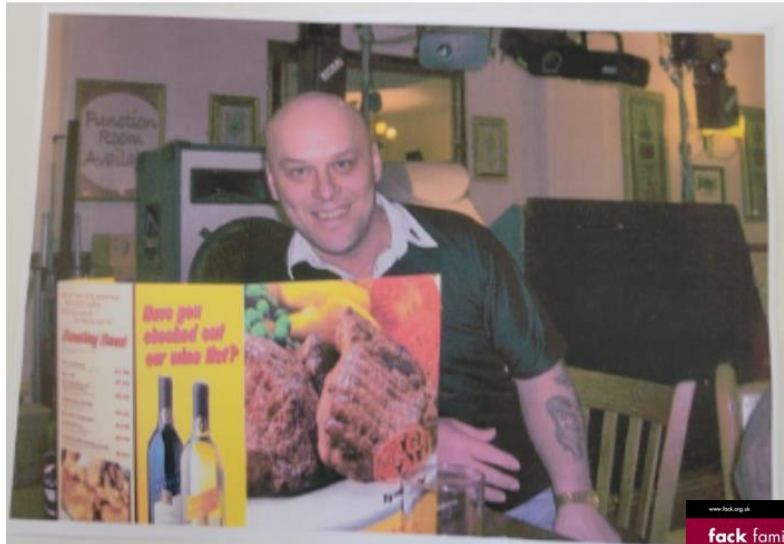
<https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/IER-Health-and-work-briefing-18-07-2022.pdf>

Finally, Chris Cooper gave a heart breaking account of the death of his cousin Terry Moore who was killed in a workplace incident on 25th April 2006. 'Unloading pallets of copper tubing from the truck with a forklift, Terry was on the last one, when "the driver came out of the office with his paperwork, didn't look, jumped straight into the cab and, as it was pulling away, the back end of the truck caught the forks and it tipped the forklift over," killing him.'

His contribution was emotional and brought home the suffering that families experience, years after these tragic events. But like most others, this was one that should have happened, that could have been avoided if the risks had been properly controlled. Chris also spoke passionately about his role as a safety rep and the enormous pride he got when he received an award from Unison for his health and safety work.

WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY • 28TH APRIL. Remember the Dead. Fight for the living
**Union workplaces
are safer workplaces!**

Terry Moore: killed at work, never forgotten **19th February 1965 – 25th April 2006**



<https://magazine.unison.org.uk/2022/04/28/i-dont-want-another-family-to-suffer/>

www.fack.org.uk about fack | news | resources | contact us
fack families against corporate killers

The rest of Saturday was broken into 3 meetings and a fringe meeting.

Meeting 1: Improving welfare at work, chaired by Sarah Woolley, BFAWU General Secretary looked at different aspects of welfare. Andy Hudd ASLEF EC member spoke about the dehumanising conditions train drivers experienced with unbearably hot cabs and the impact of this on their concentration and health and he also spoke about the lack of dignity of no toilet facilities for train drivers impacting on all drivers and also in particular on women when they are menstruating or going through the menopause.

<https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Final-copy-ASLEF-Better-Driving-Cabs-2021-Corrected-Report-2020-A4-24pp-for-emailing.pdf>

Rob Miguel then spoke about the need for trade unions to take up welfare issues. See his presentation <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Rob-Miguel-presentation-Welfare-what-is-it-what-does-it-look-HAZARDS.pdf> He also emphasised the importance of having more black safety reps and more women safety reps and talked about the importance of addressing women and men's health issues in the workplace.

The last speaker in the meeting was Hilda Palmer who emphasised the need to make air quality and ventilation visible and that clean air is good for all our health. Employers have duties under the welfare regulations. HSE 'Workplace (Health, safety and welfare) at work' Regulations covers general ventilation (LEV etc covered in COSHH)

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l24.htm> Regulation 6 Ventilation: (1) Effective and

suitable provision shall be made to ensure that every enclosed workplace is ventilated by a sufficient quantity of fresh or purified air. See her presentation at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/14DDWcniR9saHDjvfmr46tsZo3qMU4x-o/view?usp=sharing>

Meeting 2: The future of work and organising health and safety chaired by Barry Faulkner, UNITE National political education coordinator.

The first speaker was Kim Sunley, Unison National officer for Health and safety talking about hybrid working. She raised the challenges and concerns about working from home, not least the increased energy costs and the inequalities of access to home working. Her presentation can be found at: <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Kim-Sunley-HAZARDS-22-Hybrid-working.pdf> and a Unison document on hybrid working, which can be found at: <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Working-from-home-and-hybrid-working-bargaining-guide-and-model-policy-v7.pdf>

The second speaker was Paul Holleran, GMB NW & I Education and health and safety officer who replaced Dan Shears GMB. Paul presented Dans presentation and it can be found at: <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Paul-Holleran-Preparing-for-the-future-workplace-July-2019.pdf> Paul spoke about the dangers of AI being used to replace workers, to place unacceptable work pace or workload and the need for it to be used to support and improve conditions for workers.

The final speaker was Phil Taylor who talked passionately about the precariousness of work for all workers. He said that lean working and intensification of work had been introduced on the myth of workers 'swinging the lead' and that volume, pace, intensity and workload had all increased with employers monitoring everything. He spoke about successful campaigns to challenge these indecent working conditions and the need for unions to develop strategies for all workers with different needs and the need to use the SRSC regs to communicate with homeworkers and also campaign for the right to turn off equipment and ensure that hybrid working might be out of sight but not out of mind.

Meeting 3: Intensification of work and the impact on our mental health, chaired by Tracy Edwards, PCS National Health and Safety Officer.

The first speaker in this meeting was Marie Monaghan UCU North West Regional Officer who spoke about the UCU workload campaign and how they were tackling work related stress. Marie said that UCU were developing workload reps and model policies, using safety reps to ensure inspections could be carried out on workload and work related stress. See resources at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/workloadcampaign>

The second speaker was Sarah Waters from Leeds University who spoke about the research she and Hilda had conducted into work related suicides. She explained the rationale for the research: working age adults have a higher % of suicide and that in the US there had been a 40% increase in working population suicides in the last two decades. She spoke about the Hazards Campaign using Epostcards to get the HSE to investigate all work related suicides,

which are not counted or investigated. See her presentation at

<https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Sarah-Waters-presentation-.pdf>

The final speaker was Paul Holleran GMB NW & I Education and health and safety officer who spoke about the cost of work related stress and the need to address institutional bullying. He explained about work that the NUJ had carried out in Scotland on reporting suicides and guidance that had been developed. See <https://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/nuj-guidelines-for-reporting-mental-health-and-death-by-suicide.html>


The final meetings of the day were fringe meetings – two were in person and one online:

1. **What you should do with Asbestos at Work** which was chaired by Sarah Lyons NEU National Health and Safety Officer with speakers: Michael Phillips NASUWT National Health and Safety, Harminder Bains Partner Leigh Day, Satinder Bains Partner Irwin Mitchell
 - <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Hazards-Conference-2022-What-should-you-do-with-Asbestos-at-Work-30-July-2022-Michael-Phillips-NASUWT.pdf>
 - <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/BBC-and-Cape-Hazards-Presentation.pdf>
 - Sign the petition at <https://asbestosforum.org.uk/cape-case/>
2. **How can we support workers with Long Covid** which was chaired by Wayne Bates NASUWT National Health and Safety office with speakers: Mike Hines Unison Assistant national Health and Safety Officer and Peter Lyons Thompsons Solicitors senior lawyer on covid claims.
 - <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Copy-of-Thompsons-Powerpoint-Peter-Lyons.pdf>
3. **What to do if someone dies at work** chaired by Hilda Palmer, FACK with speakers Keith Cundall partner Fieldfisher and Kath Jenkins Scottish Hazards. Presentations from the speakers can be found at:
 - Introduction on the work of Families Against Corporate Killers, FACK : https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Q7Qy5D_AdL8hTOS27t0lrho4oMI8wKi2/view?usp=sharing
 - Keith Cundall, Partner Field Fisher ‘Inquests: How to be there and be heard’ https://drive.google.com/file/d/1qzvbHHqIDDuB_wJyqkCFIBNMGMRuMAxH/view?usp=sharing
 - Helen Clifford of Clifford Law presentation of cases <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1difq9yZ788qS5eexOJdBUex2VrCgj52u/vi ew?usp=sharing>

Saturday evening was taken up with networking and a 2019 (last time we held an in person hazards conference) quiz, where the prize was Hazards ‘gotta fight for your right to safety’ bags.

Our final plenary on Sunday morning was chaired by Janet Newsham, chair National Hazards Campaign and along with fantastic speakers Prof.Dave Whyte QMUL, Sarah Woolley General Secretary BFAWU and Bryan Simpson UNITE organiser for the hospitality sector provided an insightful and inspiring end to the conference. They spoke about the challenges and victories where safety reps had successfully changed unsafe and unhealthy workplaces and the need to extend their influence into community campaigning (through trades councils) and areas where workers are not in trade unions. All spoke passionately about the role of safety reps and trade unions and the achievements that were possible with new and exciting campaigns. Bryan showed the link to the inspirational and successful 'get me home safely' campaign see <https://www.unitetheunion.org/campaigns/get-me-home-safely-campaign/>

Finally, during the conference awards were made to Phil Lewis Unison member by the construction safety campaign and Hilda Palmer on behalf of the Hazards Campaign and the conference was closed with thanks to all for attending, organising, speaking and participating in the conference, the reading out of the judgement from the Hazards Campaign Workers Court which was held in March 2021



Workers' Court
2021 March 11 UK
Trial by Jury

JUDGMENT

Hazards Campaign v UK Governments
Hazards Campaign v UK HSE
Hazards Campaign v UK Employers

Before
Professor Steve Tombs
Judgment Given On
11 March 2021

The jury has unanimously found the employers, enforcement authorities and the UK Governments, guilty of all the charges laid against them. Their collective criminal negligence will not be forgotten.

You are the living record, yours is one of the many collective records of the lives of over 130,000 people callously ended, needlessly ended, up to this point in the pandemic. Not to mention millions more who have been emotionally, physically, and financially scarred in many cases for the rest of their lives.

As bearers of this record, those for whom you have spoken and about whom you have spoken, we are not going away.

On behalf of the Workers' Court: we demand a public inquiry, we demand legal proceedings for corporate bodies and senior individuals within them; we demand truth, justice, and accountability. We shall remember the dead, but we will also fight for the living.

Ending with the quote *'In our hands is held a power greater than their hoarded gold, greater than the might of armies magnified a thousand fold. We will bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old, for the 'Hazards movement'(union) makes us strong!'*

Workshop presentations/resources:

- Workshop 2 and 14: Mental Health Awareness
 - <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/mental-health-workshop-hazards-2022-nigel-williams.pdf>
- Workshop 3 and 15: Resources and creative action for safety reps
 - <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Workshop-3-and-15-Hazards-Conference-2022-Workshop-Resources-links.docx>
 - <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Workshop-3-and-15-Reps-in-Action-examples.docx>
 - <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Workshop-3-and-15-Plan-a-campaign-activity.pdf>
 - <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Workshop-3-and-15-Resources.docx>
- Workshop 4: Supporting health and Safety reps and building up the organisation <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Hazards-Workshops-4.pdf>
- Workshop 5 and 17: Workplace Inspections <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Workplace-inspections-slides.pdf>
- Workshop 9 and 21: Ventilation and air quality at work https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h3r20G_BTJsqUkg6qOJnzEclOxeQvUmh/view?usp=sharing
- Workshop 11 and 23: Influencing health, safety and fair work through public procurement <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Procurement-Presentation-UK-Hazards-Conference-sunday-workshop.pptx>
- Workshop 16: Supporting health and Safety reps and building up the organisation <https://gmhazards.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/WORKSHOP-NO-16-.pdf>
- Workshop 22: Sex and gender sensitive health and safety workshop - Padlet for workshop resources: <https://padlet.com/Environmenstrual/wjfrou03mbh3p2ds>

Comments received from the evaluation sheets will be analysed in detail to improve future events, but comments include:

- Hybrid conferences and meetings do work. Problems can be addressed and resolved. They're the way forward while we continue to have community infection and in the absence of covid-safe physical spaces and procedures.
- I thought this year's Conference was a great success.
- I enjoyed and learned from all the speakers and came away inspired (and a bit overwhelmed) as always
- A really great first conference - thank you for facilitating
- Thank you for a wonderful conference
- It was a great conference and all the work put in by Janet and her team was much appreciated.
- I want to say thank you for all your hard work in organising the conference it has been a fantastic aid to my cultivating networks outside my own union and industry to get a wider picture of Health and Safety

- I want to say thank you for all your hard work in organising the conference it has been a fantastic aid to my cultivating networks outside my own union and industry to get a wider picture of Health and Safety
- Many thanks for an inspiring weekend
- It is impossible to mention every issue covered over the weekend, but what became clear from the onset, was the passion, commitment, and drive of those attending