

fack families against corporate killers

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FACK Statement International Workers' Memorial Day 28 April 2023

We FACK families are eternally grateful to each and every person who has come together today to mark International Workers' Memorial Day. A day when we remember all of those bereaved by work. And renew our commitment to fighting like hell for the living.

Because, just what is it to be bereaved by work...?

It's to start a day like any other. And end it like no other. To not have known that was your last goodbye. To be left to rue the denial of so many tomorrows and still feel the ripple effects decades on.

It's to be let down, time and again. By the employer who had a moral duty and a legal responsibility to look after our family member, and failed in both respects in the worst possible way. By those politicians who erroneously believe health and safety protections to be burdens on business, and seek to slash and burn where they should be seeking to safeguard and bolster. By the enforcement authorities who seem so often incapable of effecting proactive preventative inspections. And by our prosecution bodies, who take far too long to bring negligent employers to, what passes for, justice.

Because, to be bereaved by work is to be a victim of crime. But to be made to feel like a lesser class of victim. One where you're not placed at the heart of the justice process, but left to feel you exist somewhere on the periphery. To have to garner the strength time and again to face another battle against a justice system, which is meant to be on our side, but which all too often serves to further deepen our trauma.

It's to question whether you yourself have done enough. Whether you could have done more to get answers sooner. To get action quicker. To ensure changes are implemented to prevent the heartbreak of other families like your own. But having to come to terms with the fact this is never within our own power, but reliant on others. Others who have let us down.

The loss of our loved one's life set off a chain reaction of change, where the lives we thought we were going to lead are no longer possible. The wedding day that didn't happen. The child who didn't survive their apprenticeship. The future mapped out with your partner of 28 years now a solo challenge, rather than a team adventure. The sibling you can no longer call for advice, or look to for support.

It's also about facing poverty through the loss of a breadwinner's income or losing your own job, house, livelihood, as you grieve for your loved one and are unable to work to sustain yourself and your family. Compensation is often not made at all, or is too little, and the benefits system is very harsh and support very scarce. The effects of a work death can resonate painfully through generations.

It's to feel a devastation you never thought possible. And other times to feel numb, a nothing-ness, a lack of hope. When you see another news report of a death due to a so-called "accident" at work, it's to not just understand what that *actually* means, but to *feel* it.

What else is it to be bereaved by work....?

It's to find lifelong friends you will cherish, all the while wishing you had met in altogether different circumstances.

It's to find the voice you never knew you had. The one which, though it may occasionally tremble, steadies itself to assertively speak truth to power. To find that strength you never ever expected to need.

And though you are let down at too many turns, you are lifted by the fortitude and support of others. Like those who work and volunteer in the Hazards movement, Hazards Centres, and charity Scottish Hazards. Like the trade unionists who help ensure their workplaces are safer and healthier. And like those individual politicians, enforcers, prosecutors and others who do *get it*, who do understand what we are going through, and who want desperately to bring about the changes we need to see.

We need the employers who do care to guide, educate and cajole those who need woken up to their responsibilities. Laws to be protected. An end to the odious practice of blacklisting. We need enforcement before the fact. Lessons to be learned, communicated and actioned before loss of life occurs. Penalties that fit the crime. Those bereaved by work to be placed at the heart of the justice system. And for no other family to have to walk in our families' shoes.

So, we will continue to tell our loved ones' stories. We will continue to lay bare our reality.

All in the desperate hope and eternal expectation that we'll be able to prevent others going through the turmoil of those of us left behind. Our loved one went to work to make a better life. Instead, there was loss of life and lives forever altered.

We FACKers pledge to you is to continue to live the International Workers' Memorial Day mantra each and every day, as we forever remember our dead, and do our damndest to fight like hell for the living.

FACK was established in July 2006, by and for families of people killed by the gross negligence of business employers, to sit with families in the darkest hour and help them speak truth to power, see www.fack.org.uk
<https://gmhazards.org.uk/index.php/fack/> Facebook: Families Against Corporate Killers

Founder Members of FACK:

Dawn and Paul Adams – son Samuel Adams aged 6 killed at Trafford Centre, 10th October 1998

Linzi Herbertson – husband Andrew Herbertson 29, killed at work on 30th January 1998

Mike and Lynne Hutin – son Andrew Hutin 20, killed at work on 8th Nov 2001

Mick & Bet Murphy – son Lewis Murphy 18, killed at work on 21st February 2004

Louise Adamson – brother Michael Adamson 26, killed at work on 4th August 2005

Linda Whelan – son Craig Whelan 23, (and **Paul Wakefield**) killed at work on 23rd May 2004

Dorothy & Douglas Wright – son Mark Wright 37, killed at work on 13th April 2005

For more information and to support FACK, contact Hilda Palmer, Facilitator for FACK: Tel 0161 792 1044