

## Launch of Work-Safety Initiatives - Uniting Activists

### Safety Net Website Launch



On 8th November 2014, the website of West Midlands Hazards Trust will be launched. The project is called "Safety Net" and is funded by Awards for All (Big Lottery Fund). As well as carrying local Hazards news, the website includes basic information on hazards at work, aimed at the most vulnerable in society, including young people.

There will be information on a wide range of hazards, and featuring useful Frequently Asked Questions.

It will also mark the start of the building by the Hazards Trust, of West Midlands' networks, using traditional plus modern communication methods such as social media, of Hazards activists and supporters.

### Setting a Health & Safety Strategy - with Midlands TUC

At the same event, we plan to discuss with representatives of the Regional TUC and local trade union safety reps how to challenge the current cuts to safety inspection, rights and regulations. "Safety Net" is one initiative which will help prevent more deaths and injuries. Others are needed. There are a number of challenges and planned events ahead where relevant issues can be raised, notably:

- the general election in May 2015
- current plans for international treaties which affect work-safety here and abroad
- & on-going issues such as cuts to the HSE.

We know that trade unions are key to safer workplaces, forming the so-called "Union Effect" for which there is plenty of evidence. At a time when there is an ideological attack on the very idea of safety at work, as well as widespread cuts, union safety reps need to be on the offensive to defend what we have. Political parties need to be asked what their plans are on this topic, leading up to the election; and potential MPs need to be made aware of what the work-safety issues really are.



### "Don't Pimp our Watchdog!"

This is the demand, agreed at the last Hazards Campaign Conference, to send to the new executive head of the HSE, Dr Richard Judge, due to start end of November. He was chosen to fit an amended job description to "commercialise" the HSE. As head of the Insolvency Service, and in previous jobs, he has experience of cherry-picking parts of the business to sell off.

**All who want the HSE to continue to focus on the HSE's enforcement role and strengthen it, are asked to send him a letter:**

- emphasising the need for the HSE to protect us further, rather than flog services to stop a funding gap
- and offering help with ideas for improvements to the role

A standard letter to him, as pictured, with details of where to send it, is accessed via this web link: [www.hazards.org/safetypimp](http://www.hazards.org/safetypimp). Please send the letter, and get others to do it too.



## Prison for West Midlands Asbestos Cowboys

Two brothers from Stoke-on-Trent, with little or no building work experience, refurbished a building, carrying out unlicensed asbestos stripping, exposing at least 7 people to high levels of asbestos, including one who was only 17 at the time, and numbers of people who may have been exposed during refurbishment.

They ignored HSE Prohibition and Improvement notices, and carried on breaking several laws and threatening lives in future years. Akram Hussain got 22 weeks and told to pay £43,000; while Inam Hussain got 14 weeks in jail. Contact us if you know of longer jail sentences for lesser crimes.

## Suspended sentence for Cannock scaffolder

Mark Jones was just 27 when his head was fractured by a 4 kg pulley wheel that fell 7 metres. The pulley wheel had not been properly secured to the scaffolding by Christopher Harvey, a scaffolder, who was recently given a 4 month suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay £2,500 plus costs.

Mark eventually made a full recovery but, according to the HSE inspector:"it is nothing more than luck that he was not more seriously injured, or even killed" & "The incident was entirely preventable and could easily have been avoided had Mr Harvey followed the published guidance to attach the wheel securely."

## Dates for your Diary

### Workers' Memorial Day

- is always on **28th April** so put the date in your diary now for 2015.
- Please contact us for more info, or if you would like to join a group who are already planning to make this day have maximum impact for next year and in the future, in Birmingham & Solihull.

### National Stress Network Annual Conference 2014

Saturday November 22nd to  
Sunday 23rd

The Hillscourt Conference Centre,  
Rednal, Nr Birmingham B45 8RS

#### Topic: What next?

**Tackling work-stress in an  
uncertain future**

**- we're dying to ease the burden on  
business!**

- NB: this is with an eye to the lead-up to the general election.

Look on [www.workstress.net](http://www.workstress.net) for more information and a booking form.

### I/we want to support the work of the West Midlands Hazards Trust:

- I would like to join the West Midlands Hazards Trust, please send me a membership form
- I would like more information about the work of the Trust
- I would like to make a donation towards the work of the Trust (Please make cheques payable to the West Midlands Hazards Centre)

- I would like to sign up for the email list and receive regular updates on the work of the Trust

Name: .....

Address: .....

.....

Telephone: .....

Email: .....

I enclose a cheque for £\_\_\_\_\_

### The West Midlands Hazards Trust

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