



Risks Newsletter



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SPECIAL FEATURE: ASBESTOS

Government stands up for asbestos victims

The TUC has welcomed the government's announcement that it is to amend the Compensation Bill to reverse last month's House of Lords ruling that slashed the compensation payments made to mesothelioma sufferers and their families. Last month the House of Lords ruled in the "Barker" judgement that the compensation paid to two widows should be substantially reduced because some of the employers their husbands had worked for had since gone out of business and the firms sued could not be held totally liable ([Risks 255](#)). Secretary of state for constitutional affairs, Lord Falconer, said: "I intend to bring forward an amendment to the Compensation Bill to provide that in these cases negligent employers should be jointly and severally liable, so that the claimant can recover full compensation from any relevant employer. It would then be open to that employer to seek a contribution to the damages awarded from other negligent employers." TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "The government is to be congratulated for acting to change the law so speedily in the wake of the Barker judgement. Had this decision been allowed to stand, the victims of this terrible disease and their families would have had to wait an intolerable amount of time for compensation, and would have only been eligible for a fraction of the compensation they should have received." He added: "Now the way stands open for employees who have become terminally ill and for the families whose loved ones have had their lives cut short because of exposure to asbestos to get the full compensation to which they are rightly entitled. We look forward to seeing the detail of the proposed amendment, and we will be pushing ministers to make the changes retrospective so that neither the people involved in the Barker case, Sylvia Barker and Mary Murray, nor any of the other families adversely affected in the interim, lose out." The news was welcomed by unions, asbestos groups and personal injury solicitors, but received a cool response from insurers.

- [TUC news release](#). [DCA news release](#). [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#). [Irwin Mitchell Solicitors news release](#). [John Pickering and Partners news release](#). [ABI news release](#).
- [The Times](#). [Daily Mirror](#). [Daily Record](#). [Western Mail](#). [Belfast Telegraph](#). [Evening News](#).
- [Hazards asbestos news and resources](#).

Global: ILO to promote global asbestos ban

The International Labour Office (ILO) is to pursue a global ban on asbestos, the world's biggest ever industrial killer. The landmark decision came with the adoption of a resolution on 14 June at the ILO conference in Geneva and followed a high level union campaign. Anita Normark, general secretary of the Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) – the global union federation at the forefront of the campaign – had earlier challenged employers' organisations not to block the asbestos ban resolution and to end their "courtship with a known killer". Normark said: "This momentous decision should hasten the demise of a dying industry." She added: "ILO should now push for a swift and absolute stop to asbestos trade, to ensure we bring an early end to this industrial genocide, responsible for at least 100,000 deaths every year – one death every five minutes." Under the terms of the resolution, ILO is now required "to promote the elimination of future use of all forms of asbestos and asbestos-containing materials." Jukka Takala, director of ILO's SafeWork programme, said: "ILO will have to make its own plans for setting up both global and national campaigns, identify responsible units and persons for such campaigns, prepare an implementation programme, implement the plan, and to follow up and continuously adjust and improve such implementation plans." He told Hazards magazine the tools at ILO's disposal include standards and their national compliance, advocacy and awareness measures, knowledge management and information exchange, technical collaboration and

international collaboration.

- [BWI news release](#). [ILO news release](#). [IMF news release](#). Global Unions news release [[pdf](#)].
- [ILO to promote global asbestos ban](#), *Hazards* interview with ILO SafeWork director Jukka Takala, 20 June 2006.
- Hazards [asbestos webpages](#). Hazards [cancer webpages](#). [International Ban Asbestos Secretariat](#)

The human tragedy behind the campaign

The government's move to ensure asbestos cancer victims receive compensation and ILO's push for a global ban come as deaths from Britain's worst occupational killer continue to grow. Mesothelioma deaths alone account for 1,900 deaths a year; asbestos-related lung and other cancers account for even more. Every week comes new reports of lives ended painfully and prematurely by asbestos. Joiner Edwin Whiteley, from Westhoughton, died aged 59 on 5 January 2006, after months of suffering with an asbestos cancer. At a June inquest, Coroner Alan Walsh concluded that Mr Whiteley died from an industrial disease. Former Gloucester Wagon Works employee Terence Lamb, from Cheltenham, died on 19 January this year from the asbestos cancer mesothelioma. Coroner Alan Crickmore, who recorded a verdict of death due to industrial disease at an inquest last week, said it was one of a number of cases that have been linked to the former works in recent years. Widow Linda Carter, whose husband David died last year from mesothelioma, is trying to trace former co-workers. David - also known by friends as Andy Carter - was only 59 when he died in April 2005 as a result of exposure to asbestos at W L Miller & Sons Limited in Poole. While the UK epidemic has yet to peak, aggressive marketing of asbestos in developing nations has already ensured further generations worldwide will die as a result of asbestos exposure.

- [Bolton Evening News](#). [Gloucestershire Citizen](#). [Leicester Mercury](#). [Thompsons Solicitors news release](#).
- If you worked at Millers in Poole during the 60s, 70s, 80s or 90s, or if you have family or friends who did, please contact [Thompsons](#) on 0800 783 0266.
- [Asbestos forum – listing of asbestos groups in the UK](#).

Italy/Belgium: Asbestos bosses get suspended jail terms

Former bosses of the Italian subsidiary of an asbestos multinational have received suspended prison terms for workplace safety crimes. Karel Vinck, a top Belgian manager who used to be at the head of the Italian subsidiary of the asbestos cement giant Eternit in the 1970s, was given a suspended three-year prison sentence by a Sicilian Court last month, together with seven other former managers. "The Eternit managers have, to a large extent, put at risk and neglected the workers' health by handling asbestos," said a representative of the Public Prosecutor's office in a statement to the Belgian press. Mr Vinck is well-known in Belgium as the former chief of the Belgian railway NMBS-SNCB and the Flemish employers' organisation. He has said he intends to appeal against the sentence and is now threatening legal action against Belgian magazine Knack over what he claims is "unfair and scandalous" reporting of the case. Knack wrote that Vinck was received the suspended jail term for failing to inform workers about the dangers of asbestos. But Vinck said the dangers of asbestos were not known in the 1970s when he was the boss of Eternit. Infact the cancer and respiratory disease link was established decades before. An International Labour Office (ILO) report in 1938, for example, warned of a possible lung cancer risk from asbestos exposure.

- [ETUI-REHS news report](#). [Expatica](#).

BECTU launches asbestos register

Theatre and TV technicians' union BECTU says it has seen an upturn in the number of members seeking advice on asbestos and has set up an asbestos register to ensure exposures are recorded. The union and its law firm Thompsons have created the register for members as “an invaluable database of information that can help to speed up the process of compensation claims for members who become ill due to asbestos exposure. It records the names of members, employers, the workplaces where they came into contact with asbestos and the relevant dates involved.” The union says while the entertainment industry is not typically linked to asbestos, the material was commonly used around and in film and television sets and many BECTU members may have come into contact with it. It was also commonly used to lag pipes and BECTU members may have been exposed if dust from those pipes was present while they worked. The union adds that lighting equipment could have contained asbestos and says asbestos sheets were used to construct temporary rooms and to make buildings fireproof for stunts involving fire. Even protective equipment such as fireproof suits and gloves, commonly worn by stunt workers and to protect against dry ice, were made from asbestos. “It’s important that BECTU has as many names as possible on the register to help those that are already ill or become ill in the future and need to make a claim,” BECTU says.

- [BECTU news release](#).

UNION NEWS

HSE agrees to retain offences records

A Health and Safety Executive policy which required the removal of “naming-and-shaming” records from its prosecutions and notices database has been reversed after concerns were

raised by unions and safety campaigners. TUC-backed health and safety journal Hazards first called for the end of the deletion of records more than five years old in January this year. It argued a complete database was necessary to identify serial long-term safety offenders, to track trends in offences and to monitor the effectiveness of HSE enforcement. The issue was then taken up with HSE top brass by TUC, safety advice group the London Hazards Centre (LHC) and journalists' union NUJ. Delegates at NUJ's annual delegate meeting called for the records to be reinstated, leading to letters of complaint to HSE from NUJ safety officer Don Macglew and general secretary Jeremy Dear. The decision to reverse the policy and reinstate deleted records came in a 19 June letter from HSE chief executive Geoffrey Podger to LHC worker and NUJ rep Mick Holder, who had coordinated the protests. The HSE letter said after obtaining legal advice “we will reinstate onto our website records of Health and Safety at Work Act offences which have been committed by companies at a distance in time of more than five years.” The records will be retained in a “special archive”, he said. Hugh Robertson, head of health and safety at the TUC, welcomed the decision. He said: “This shows that the HSE is listening to its constituents and making sure that it providing people with the information they need.” NUJ general secretary Jeremy Dear said: “When NUJ members heard that some of the worst corporate offenders were going to have their slates wiped clean in this way they were outraged and immediately started a campaign to reverse this misguided decision by the HSE. Now, only three months later, after constant lobbying and powerful persuasion, NUJ members have won through - the HSE has changed its mind and we will still be able to find out who the culprits are and keep a watchful eye on them.” The NUJ leader added: “This is a great result and I would like to congratulate all those who worked so hard to win such an important victory. It demonstrates that with determination we can make real changes that will help us protect our safety at work.”

- [NUJ news release](#). [Amicus news release](#). HSE [prosecutions](#) and [notices](#) database.

- [Total suck up](#), Hazards magazine, No.93, Jan-March 2006 [full report](#). HSE wipe out history, The Daily Hazard, No.88, April 2006 [\[pdf\]](#).

CWU calls for higher deaths penalties

The government must introduce corporate manslaughter laws and stringent directors' safety duties if it is to make dangerous employers think twice before putting their staff in danger, communications union CWU has said. The union call came after Royal Mail and its facilities management spin-off Romec Ltd were fined a total of £250,000 and ordered to pay costs totalling £47,000 after Romec engineer and CWU member Ian Dicker, 47, fell to his death through a fragile skylight at the West London Mail Centre in July 2003. Both companies pleaded guilty to safety offences. Sentencing the firms at Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court on 15 June, His Honour Simon Smith described the roof where the men were working as "very dangerous". Royal Mail was fined £150,000 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £25,000. Romec was fined £100,000 with costs of £22,000. CWU national safety officer Dave Joyce welcomed the heavy fines for "very serious failures" but added "this fine is less than a ½ per cent of Royal Mail's £355m operating profit on a turnover of £9bn. In fact chief executive Adam Crozier could have paid the fines out of his £3 million pounds bonus and still had plenty of change in his pocket!" He said: "This case clearly illustrates why we need a new corporate manslaughter offence on the statute books and reinforces the case for more stringent health and safety duties on directors with penalties for those who neglect safety standards to such an extent that they lead to deaths like this."

- [CWU news release](#).

TUC in renewed work cancer call

The UK must revise its massive official underestimate of the work cancer toll, the TUC has said. The call comes after research this month confirmed TUC's charge that the UK's occupational cancer estimate is outdated and inadequate, missing most workplace cancers ([Risks 261](#)). The new Australian study echoed the findings of a November 2005 report in the TUC-backed journal Hazards that said Britain is facing an occupational cancer epidemic that could be responsible for as many as 24,000 deaths a year, four times the figure suggested by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) ([Risks 234](#)). TUC general secretary Brendan Barber said: "This latest piece of research shows that the UK must upwardly revise its estimates of the number of work-related cancer deaths. Until it does so, the UK will continue to severely underestimate the number of workers at risk, and workers will go on being exposed needlessly to life-threatening chemicals. We need far more to be done to prevent exposure." TUC is calling on the government to fund a major national occupational cancer prevention and awareness-raising campaign, revise upwards the out-of-date occupational cancer estimates used by the HSE, phase out the most dangerous, cancer-causing chemicals and introduce a national system of occupational health records which could move with an individual throughout their working life. It also says HSE must reverse the dramatic fall in HSE inspections.

- [TUC news release. Hazards work and cancer news pages](#) and full [cancer report](#).
- Lin Fritschi and Tim Driscoll. Cancer due to occupation in Australia, [Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health](#), volume 30, number 3, pages 213-219, June 2006.

CSP calls for better risk assessment

Workers are being injured because of corner-cutting by employers and inadequate risk assessment, physios' union CSP has warned. A new CSP analysis of Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures has ranked injury risks by region.

It found more people are injured as a consequence of work-related activity in North Warwickshire than in any other region of Great Britain. For every 10,000 people in employment in North Warwickshire, 174.6 people were injured as a consequence of work in 2004/05. CPS said this is three times higher than the average number of people injured across GB as a whole, which is 57.8 people per 10,000 in employment. City of London has the best record, with 10.3 people injured per 10,000 in employment. CSP chair of Council, Sarah Bazin, said: “Despite the obligation on employers to conduct full risk assessments, there is still a daily toll of people injured, maimed or even killed as a result of work activity.” She added: “Our study suggests that corners are being cut and that risk assessments are not always up to scratch. There is clearly massive room for improvement when it comes to creating safer work environments.” Ms Bazin concluded: “Physiotherapists see the devastating consequences of work-related accidents on a daily basis and are urging all employers to ensure they protect workers and the public by eliminating hazardous work environments.”

- [CSP news release.](#)

Docklands railway safety strike looms

SERCO should get back to the talks table if it wants to avoid industrial action over its plans to slash safety critical platform staff on the Docklands Light Railway (DLR), rail union RMT has warned. Last week RMT's 250 Serco/DLR members voted for strike action and for action short of strike against plans that include cutting safety critical platform staff, cutting station assistants' pay by up to £5,000 and doing away with more than half of station supervisors. “We told the company that its plans were unacceptable, and now our members have delivered a decisive mandate for industrial action to defend these safety critical jobs,” RMT general secretary Bob Crow said after last week's vote. “However it is dressed up, this re-organisation means a cut in safety critical staff

and fewer people on duty on a railway where most stations are already unstaffed, and it means the downgrading of the skills of those station staff that remain.” Urging the company to renew talks, he said: “RMT members across the company have rallied to defend their colleagues' jobs and to prevent watering down of safety standards, and they are to be congratulated for their stand.”

- [RMT news release.](#)

Ryanair staff raise safety concerns

Check-in and ground staff employed by budget airline Ryanair are under dangerous pressures at work, their union GMB has said. Delegates to the union's congress this month called on authorities to step up safety checks at Britain's airports following reports from GMB members of increasing incidences of verbal and physical attacks on airport check-in staff and a growing number of industrial accidents resulting from insufficient 'turnaround time' for groundstaff to prepare a plane for take-off ([Risks 238](#)). GMB says Ryanair's policy of a reducing turnaround times for 737 series aircraft at Stansted from 30 to 25 minutes means that baggage handlers and crews have to cut corners to meet the reduced time available to them to unload, reload plans and prepare plans for departure. The union adds that increasing passenger numbers are leading to frayed tempers at check-in, and wants safety screens installed between staff and passengers. Gary Pearce, GMB organiser at Stansted, City and Heathrow airports said: “GMB will not tolerate our members being abused at work whether by the passengers or by their employers. The installation of safety screens between check-in staff and passengers will all but solve the problem of growing assaults on staff. The authorities must take action on the 'turnaround' times. To add insult to injury, ground crew who fail to meet the reduced times run the risk of disciplinary action.”

- [GMB news release.](#) [ITF Ryan-be-fair](#)

[campaign.](#)

OTHER NEWS

Company fined after fatigue crash death

A potato firm has been fined £30,000 after one of its workers crashed and died while driving home after a third consecutive shift of nearly 20 hours ([Risks 252](#)). The Produce Connection, of Chittering, Cambridgeshire, admitted failing to ensure the health of workers and the public. Mark Fiebig, 21, of Soham, died when his van drifted into the path of a lorry on the A10 near Ely in 2002. Judge Gareth Hawksworth at Cambridge Crown Court said the firm had failed to monitor the hours employees worked. The court heard that Mr Fiebig was thought to be suffering from "chronic fatigue" and had fallen asleep at the wheel. The company was also ordered to pay £24,000 costs after admitting two breaches of health and safety law. The case is thought to be the first of its kind in the UK because The Produce Connection admitted breaching health and safety legislation even though Mr Fiebig died outside working hours. Prosecutor Pascal Bates said Mr Fiebig had worked 11 days without a day off prior to his fatal crash. During that time he had worked on average 17 hours a day and was getting three to four hours' sleep a night. Mr Bates said other staff were working similarly long hours. He added: "Workers were paid by the hour. For payroll purposes a daily note was kept of each worker's working hour." He said the farm manager "had to be aware, and so did other management."

- [East Anglian Daily Times](#). [BBC News Online](#).

Suicide note blamed work pressure

An engineer who killed himself wrote in a suicide note saying "the pressure of work has turned my

mind into a ticking time bomb," an inquest has heard. Cardiff Coroner's Court heard how 28-year-old Wayne Williams hanged himself after a party to mark the end of a year-long contract in Singapore. Coroner Mary Hassell recorded a verdict of suicide on the death of Mr Williams from Llantwit Major in south Wales. The court heard that two notes were found. One note, addressed to his work colleagues, read: "Unfortunately the game has got the better of me - give my apologies to all the lads." The other to his parents read: "I have been depressed for a while now - the pressure of work has turned my mind into a ticking time bomb." The coroner said "it is hard to understand why someone described as happy-go-lucky should choose to end their own life over pressure in work." This death is the latest in a sequence of work-related suicides ([Risks 244](#)). In March, the Court of Appeal ruled that Luton IBC was responsible for death of Thomas Corr, who killed himself as a result of depression resulting from a workplace injury ([Risks 251](#)). Hazards magazine reported in 2003 that the work-related suicide toll in the UK was likely to exceed 100 deaths per year, caused by factors including overwork, stress and harassment. None of these deaths will be included in workplace death figures ([Risks 118](#)). Occupational suicide is an official work disease in Japan ([Risks 175](#)).

- [BBC News Online](#).
- Hazards [worked to death](#) and [suicide](#) webpages.

Heart attacks linked to job loss

Losing your job late in your career doubles the chance of suffering a heart attack or stroke, a study says. Yale University researchers studied 4,301 people aged 51 to 61 who were working in 1992, the report in the Occupational and Environmental Medicine journal said. Over 10 years, there were 23 heart attacks and 13 strokes among the group of 582 who were forced out of a job. The team said stress was to blame for the findings. Lead researcher Dr William Gallo said:

“For many individuals, late career job loss is an exceptionally stressful experience, with the potential for provoking numerous undesirable outcomes. Based on our results, the true costs of unemployment exceed the obvious economic costs and include substantial health consequences as well.” In total, 202 had heart attacks and 140 had strokes from all the groups studied, which included those who had lost their jobs involuntarily, retired, taken a temporary break from work or were still employed. Once risk factors such as diabetes, smoking, obesity and high blood pressure were taken into account, the risk of the involuntary job loss group having a heart attack after losing their job was 2.5 per cent and a stroke 2.4 per cent. TUC head of safety Hugh Robertson said it was unsurprising that losing a job late in life had such an effect. He said: “I don't think it is necessarily because of the age, but rather related to the problems people over 50 have finding jobs of equivalent standard because of the ageism in the workplace.” He added: “There is also the risk to their pensions as they are not always transferable. These are the sort of issues that need to be addressed if the impact to health is to be minimised.” Precarious work has been linked to host of workplace injury and ill-health risks ([Risks 260](#)), with studies showing the health of insecure workers is between that of the secure – healthiest - workers and the unemployed.

- [BBC News Online](#). [Reuters](#).
- [Worked to death - Heart disease and stroke risk](#). [Hazards get-a-life news and resources](#).

Study looks at pesticide link with Parkinson's

Scientists have begun a three-year study aimed at establishing whether pesticides can cause Parkinson's disease. The project, funded by the environment department Defra comes as a US study of men exposed to pesticides published online last week found they are more than twice as likely to develop Parkinson's disease as are men who have managed to avoid contact with the toxic chemicals. The new £906,000 Defra

project, with partners in Britain, the rest of Europe and the United States, will follow up earlier research at Rutgers University in the US, and attempt to mimic more closely the levels and forms of exposure that people are likely to experience, such as inhalation of droplets, chemicals on the skin or swallowing of residues on food. Elizabeth Sigmund, of the Organophosphates Information Network, said: “This is a very, very important piece of research,” adding the research signalled a change of attitude in Defra. Barbara Dinham, director of Pesticides Action Network, said “a huge amount of money” was being spent on the study but questioned whether it was being set up to undermine work already done at Rutgers. The results could benefit the agrochemical industry, she warned. Jim Maraganore, a senior investigator on the Mayo Clinic study published online last week, said it “confirms what has been found in previous studies: that occupational or other exposure to herbicides, insecticides and other pesticides increases risk for Parkinson's.” The risk for Parkinson's from pesticide exposure was equally high among farmers and non-farmers, the Mayo Clinic researchers found.

- [The Guardian](#). [Medical Research News](#). [EurekAlert](#). [Medpage Today](#).
- Roberta Frigerio and others. Chemical exposures and Parkinson's disease: A population-based case-control study, *Movement Disorders*, published online 13 June 2006. DOI: 10.1002/mds.21009

Fumes exposure killed contract worker

A contract worker was killed by a lung infection brought on by inhaling toxic gases at work, an inquest has heard. Robert Bartell, from Lakenheath, was “suffocated” by bacterial pneumonia following exposure to gases from his welding torch on a ship in Holland, where he had been working. The inquest at Shire Hall in Cambridge heard that the 55-year-old had blamed poor ventilation on the Dutch ship for his declining health after a four week stretch of

work on the continent. The inquest heard the Dutch firm, Intec Marine and Offshore, which was employing Mr Bartell through a Glasgow-based agency, had not received any reports from workers on the ship about poor ventilation. But the coroner's court heard Mr Bartell had told doctors treating him his concerns were so great he was considering not returning to work on the ship after the Christmas break. Dr Meryl Griffiths, consultant pathologist at Addenbrooke's, who carried out a post mortem on Mr Bartell's body, told the hearing the bacterial pneumonia he had contracted would not have been fatal if his lungs had not been fatally weakened by exposure to the fumes. Cambridgeshire coroner David Morris recorded a verdict of accidental death on Mr Bartell. The death, like others that occur as a result of workplace exposures abroad, will not appear in UK work fatality figures ([Risks 208](#)).

- [East Anglian Daily Times](#). [Cambridge Evening News](#).

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Europe: Workplace health to be top priority

Workplace health will be a top priority for the Finnish government's presidency of the European Union, to run for six months from 1 July. In an online interview Professor Pekka Puska, director general of the Finnish National Public Health Institute, said: "All over Europe, the share of working age population is shrinking and at the same time, there is a lot of disability and absenteeism. So, the health of workers and of the workforce is crucial for socio-economic development. It is linked both to mental and physical health." He said there will be a ministerial conference on the health of the working population in Finland in July.

- [ETUI-REHS news report](#). [EurActiv.com](#).
- [Hazards work and health webpages](#).

USA: Boss guilty for double homicide

A US company boss has been found guilty of double homicide after the deaths of two employees. Brent Weidman, the former president of Far West Water and Sewer Company, was found guilty by a jury of two counts of negligent homicide and two counts of endangerment in the deaths in 2001 of 26-year-old James Gamble and 62-year-old Gary Lanser. A sentencing hearing is expected to take place next week. The two men were killed in a confined space incident while working on an underground sewage tank. Gamble entered the tank to remove a plug that was blocking a line into the tank. He was overcome by hydrogen sulphide fumes when a pump that ran raw sewage into the tank from a different line was turned on. Lanser died trying to save Gamble. The air in the tank had not been tested on the day of the incident, the workers had not been properly trained and the required safety and rescue procedures were not followed. Last year, Arizona prosecutors Christina Fitzpatrick and Mark Horlings convinced a jury to find Far West guilty on five of the six felony charges filed against it. In January, a Yuma judge imposed \$1.77 million (£960,000) in criminal fines against the company.

- [Confined Space](#). [Yuma Sun](#).
- [Hazards deadly business webpages](#).

ACTION

Mind's survey on the office environment

The mental health charity Mind is undertaking a survey of the office environment in England and Wales and its impact on mental health. Mind says "we want to hear about the experience of anyone who works in an office, how it affects them and what they would like to see in their workplace." It adds: "In conjunction with the

Trade Union Congress (TUC), we are asking people to complete a short survey to give us information about what is happening around England and Wales.”

- [Mind's survey on the office environment.](#)

EVENTS AND COURSES

European safety week, 23-27 October 2006

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has said it will be working in partnership with TUC and other organisations throughout Euroweek this year. The European Week for Health and Safety at Work will run from 23 to 27 October and has a “Safe start” young workers theme. Jason Batt, project manager for the UK campaign, commented: “Young people are the future of business, society and the economy, they should be provided with information on sensible health and safety.” The event hopes to raise awareness of health and safety matters in the workplace and generate understanding amongst children and young people that risks should be managed rather than eliminated. HSE says for this campaign, it is working in partnership with TUC, the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the manufacturers’ organisation EEF.

- [HSE Euroweek webpage.](#) [European Agency Euroweek 2006 webpage.](#)
- Action packs for European Week contain materials for young people, employers, supervisors and parents on young people at work. They are available from [HSE Books](#).

National stress conference, Birmingham, 18 November 2006

The UK National Work Stress Network’s annual conference will be held in Birmingham on 18

November. The theme is “managing sickness absence with care”, which the organisers say will include an “examination of employers’ practices and procedures for managing sickness absence and providing phased supported therapeutic return to work programmes.” There will be HSE, union, disability and campaign speakers. Workshops cover: Workplace sickness absence procedures; managing returns to work; disability issues and sickness absence; and management standards and absence.

- [UK National Work Stress Network.](#) National stress conference, 10.00am to 4.00pm, Saturday 18 November 2006, Hillscourt Conference Centre, Rednal, Birmingham. £50.00 (£16 unwaged). Booking form and conference flyer [[pdf](#)].

TUC courses for safety reps

COURSES FOR APRIL TO JULY 2006

- [North West](#), [South East](#), [Yorkshire and the Humber](#), [South West](#), [Midlands](#), [Scotland](#)

USEFUL LINKS

- **Visit** the TUC http://www.tuc.org.uk/h_and_s/ website pages on health and safety. See what’s on offer from [TUC Publications](#) and [What’s On in health and safety](#).
- **Subscribe** to [Hazards](#) magazine, supported by the TUC as a key source of information for union safety reps.
- **What’s new** in the [HSC/E](#) and the [European Agency](#).
- [HSE Books](#), PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 2WA. Tel: 01787 881165; fax: 01787 313995