

## Hazards Safety Reps & Safety Activists Conference 2012

Wow what a conference, so much vital information. This years safety conference was held at Keele University and had the theme of 'Countering the attack on the safe workplace' backed up by the newly released "Stop it your'e killing us" poster, which was the clear message to the coalition throughout the three day conference. Around four hundred safety reps and activists from across the country heard from a variety of speakers.



Speaking in the first evening plenary were Safreen Khan of Children against Dow-Carbide, Louise Taggart of Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) and Ivan Timson a Snr Health & Safety rep from Unite. The speakers reminded the delegates of the cost poor health & safety in other countries, who bears the real burden and how to utilise health & safety material and be a Hazards campaigner. Louise told delegates of the importance of health & safety at work and got a standing ovation she explained how she lost her brother in a workplace incident. (Link to her speech below) Have tissues at the ready.

The busy scheduled carried on, on Saturday morning hearing from of the Alliance for Cancer Prevention, with Helen Lynn giving Simon Pickvance (of Sheffield Occupational Health Advisory Service) speech with additions, as Simon was unwell on workplace cancer, Tony Whitston Chair of Asbestos support group speaking on Asbestos and John McClean Director of Health, Safety & Environment GMB. Nobby Stiles a Unite convener NE 10/348 received the Alan award 2012 from Hazards for his work in health & safety and continued work in setting up events around Workers Memorial Day, he also presented FACK with a cheque for £100 pounds.

The workshop sessions that followed covered a wide range of issues for the delegates and gave people the opportunity to develop their health & safety skills. I helped Hugh Roberston of the TUC to lead a group on "Building the union". The group had some fantastic ideas, and I know we shall be using them to strengthen our own individual unions. Reports from other delegates said they found their workshops very informative and useful.

The workshop sessions were broken by three Keynote meetings which again gave vital information for the delegates.

Finally on Sunday morning there were a number of campaign meetings, where I assisted Hilda Palmer of the Hazard Campaign in one of them on 'Campaigning inside and outside the workplace; and using social media'. We looked at how we can use health & safety to campaign not only to strengthen membership, but how we can campaign outside of work to make people realise that workplace health & safety is no joke, by using meetings, events and social media (within specified boundaries). I spoke on how I have campaigned on health & safety and utilised social media to good effect in correcting 'elf & safety' stories and have written an article on health & safety for the Labour Rose website after tweeting with a Labour councilor. It is not the only tool we should use, but be seen as one of the many, that we can use to promote good health & safety.

Report backs were given in the final plenary from all the mornings meetings and a final statement was agreed and issued. (See page 3&4) Hazards thanked all delegates for attending and wished to thank the National unions, branches, regions and individuals for their donations to the conference without such the conference would be more expensive or not take place.

I wish to thank my Union and region for its continuing support of this conference. I know I have benefitted from the conference as have the other delegates and those that travelled with me.



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It is clear that this coalition care little for the health & safety of the workforce in all that they are doing. From removing proactive inspections in workplaces, to planning to remove more regulations and ACOP's. That is why I am asking that workers Health & Safety is moved up the agenda to the place it deserves. For instance, will health & safety be spoke about today?

I ask that we mount a concerted campaign on health & safety, led by Unite and attack all the coalitions lies & propaganda:

- They say health & safety is a 'burden on business'. It's not, it's a lie! Health & safety is good for business. We have the proof.
- 11,000 HSE inspections removed from so called 'low risk' industry, Printing, Dock workers, Light engineering etc. 65,000 Local Authority Inspections. Yet there is proof that inspections along with enforcement, save lives!
- The HSE say 173 people died in 2011/12, yet the true figure is **1300** people die a year in workplace related incidents. Thousands more suffer due to workplace injuries. We must fight!
- Oppose the cuts to the HSE. If the conservatives get in again it is unlikely to survive.
- There is no health & safety info line line from the HSE anymore. The coalition cut it!!

Safety reps are now at the front line like never before and need the unions continuing support.

We are the biggest union in the UK and should be there at the forefront leading the way, fighting to protect and improve our members health & safety. Failure to do so will push us back to an era similar to the Victorians.

I as you want workplaces to be as safe as they can be for our future generations and I want to be part of the union that fought for our members and all our children's safety at work. As FACK so rightly put it - "We cant bring back the loved ones we have lost, but we can fight to stop other families walking in our shoes", so please let us get organised on this.

**I didn't vote to die at work, did you?**

Ivan Timson  
Snr Unite H&S Rep  
Chesapeake Leicester

Louise Taggart who lost her brother in a workplace incident:

<http://youtu.be/bKT8jMD4490>

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## Hazards 2012 Statement

'We Didn't Vote to Die at Work' so 'Stop it you're Killing us'

'The Hazards Campaign unequivocally condemns this Government's continued attacks on the health, safety and welfare of workers, which is already killing more of us, injuring more of us, and making more of us ill. We demand that all jobs are safe and healthy for all workers in the UK, and across the world and pledge ourselves to step up the 'We didn't vote to die at work' campaign to 'Stop it you're killing us'.

'We utterly reject the Government lies that workers' health and safety is a 'burden on business' as the evidence proves it is really a burden on individual workers, their families, society and the public purse. Employers' health and safety crimes cost society over £40 billion a year, yet the guilty employers pay less than a quarter of that cost.

'We demand an end to both the deregulation of health and safety laws and the slashing of their enforcement; a reinstatement of funding of enforcement by the HSE and local authority inspectors; and a reinstatement of proactive, preventative inspections in all workplaces.

'We demand enforcement of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations to support the life-saving work of safety reps, and harsher penalties on employers who restrict their activities, the right to impose Provisional Improvement Notices (PINs), and the implementation of Directors Duties.

'We demand a worker/Trade Union led enquiry into the HSE occupational cancer strategy and a national cancer strategy which recognises all occupation and environmental risk factors. We demand that all occupational ill-health is put back on the health and safety agenda, and urgent action taken.

We demand safe, healthy jobs and workplaces for all workers all over the world and pledge our international solidarity with workers fighting for better standards in other countries: an injury to one is an injury to all.

We recognise that while all workers are at risk those in temporary, free lance, agency, short term contract and other precarious jobs are at greater risk of work-related injury, ill-health and death and face the worst health and safety conditions and exploitation, generally without the collective support of trade unions. We pledge our solidarity and support, to organise and to campaign for safe healthy jobs for these precarious workers.

## **Hazards Safety Reps & Safety Activists Conference 2012**

We pledge ourselves to put workers' safety and health at the heart of the agenda of the 20th October TUC March for 'A Future that Work 'better by marching as part of our union delegations wearing 'We didn't Vote to die at Work' T-shirts, carrying 'Stop it your Killing us' posters and making our colleagues and the public aware that workers health and safety is no joke, is also public safety, and that every workers' should be able to go to work and come home alive and unharmed after every shift.

We go back to our workplaces to:

'Organise, Educate, Make Work Safe'

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