

BAN SUBSTANCES CAUSING BREAST CANCER

“Prevention of the environmental and occupational exposures that cause cancer must be an integral component of cancer control worldwide.” WHO



GRAPHIC: © EVE BARKER

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AFFILIATE AND HELP KEEP US GOING

We are asking you to affiliate to the London Hazards Centre so that we can continue the work we were set up to do in 1985 – provide advice, information and training to make London a safer place in which to live and work.

Arguably the work of the London Hazards Centre is more important than ever as a result of cuts to the HSE budget and scrapping of key pieces of health and safety legislation.

The London Hazards Centre is also a campaigning organisation that takes a lead on issues like safety reps rights, as well as working closely with trade unions and other organisations, for example, to fight against blacklisting.

We need your support. We are asking individuals, trade union branches and regions, along with community organisations – to affiliate to us. The annual affiliation fees set out below remain the lifeblood of the London Hazards Centre.

Affiliation rates

Community groups, tenants and residents associations	£20
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Trades Councils, law centres and advice/resource centres,	£30
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Tenants federations	
Trade union branches (up to 300 members)	£40

Trade union branches (more than 300 members)	£75
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Regional trade union or voluntary organisations	£120
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National trade union or voluntary organisations	£240
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Subscription rates

Unwaged individuals	£10
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Employed individuals	£20
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Commercial organisations	£300
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Address to affiliate: London Hazards Centre, 225 - 229 Seven Sisters Road, Finsbury Park, London, N4 2DA.

Telephone: 0207 527 5107.

Website: www.lhc.org.uk

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Trust for London

Tackling poverty and inequality

Blacklisting, Bullying and Blowing the Whistle

Conference
16-17 September 2016

This conference, held at the University of Greenwich, was the venue for an uplifting and inspirational gathering of ordinary workers fighting back.

The conference was co-hosted by the University's Work and Employment Research Unit (WERU) and the Blacklist Support Group (BSG). It was intended to be an exposé of the modern workplace where surveillance of workers is common and victimisation of those prepared to stand up for their rights widespread and unreported by mainstream media. The aims of the conference were supported by New Internationalist and Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust

Spearheaded by the success of the Blacklisted Workers Support Group the conference invited activists, lawyers, and academics to come together to share their experiences and to carry the momentum forward in the fight-back against employers' and government austerity measures. Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell also spoke. Successive speakers referred to the current working environment across all sectors which have become one of micro management and bullying. But it was the inclusion of activists

on the panels that gave the conference its unique insight to the realities of the modern workplace. There was general agreement that there should be a public inquiry to expose the scandal of people's lives being ruined for having stood up for workers safety – and that blacklisting be made illegal and those responsible be held accountable.

The BSG quoted John McDonnell who'd said "the biggest difficulty we faced with the blacklisting and the undercover police campaigns, is that people think we live in a liberal democracy and things like that don't happen here". The conference went on to hear speakers recounting personal experiences of victimisation for raising issues of health and safety resulting in sackings and blacklisting. It was obvious that these experiences are not confined to the construction sector. Speakers came from the care sector, NHS, education, the probation service and BME activist groups which highlighted the scale of attacks on workers' rights.

Workshops were held on whistle blowing, bullying, police surveillance and blacklisting. A network is now building of all these groups to fight back and win justice.

On the Friday evening a celebration party was held supporting the blacklisted workers with a Cajun band 'Joli Blon' who were fantastic and people boogied well into the night enjoying their victory! Also on Friday the new 'Blacklisted' documentary by Tom Wood was premiered. The updated version of "Blacklisted", the book by Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain, was also on sale.

It is difficult to express in a few words what an impact this conference had. So many good speakers and specialists in the field of employment research and legislation contributed and supported each other. For more information and support follow the web links below – it really will inspire you.

Peter Farrell and Julia Free

www.hazards.org/blacklistblog
www.newint.org/books

The London Hazards Centre remembers Andy Higgins 04.09.1930 – 17.09.2016

The London Hazards Centre was saddened by the death of Andy Higgins. Andy will be remembered by many for his outstanding contribution as a fighter for social justice. But perhaps more than anything it was Andy's struggle to improve the wages and conditions of building workers that best bears testimony to his life as a campaigner.

Andy moved to Britain from Dublin in 1947 working as a skilled carpenter and joiner, moving around the country from site to site. He struck-up a lifelong friendship with fellow trade union activist Ian McDeson after meeting on a London building site in the early 1960s.

Ian's earliest memories of Andy go back to the origins of the London Joint Sites Committee around 1962 "when they fought successfully against the employers attempt to take tea breaks away". Ian and Andy shared the same politics, both firmly on the left within their union UCATT. Andy went on to join the Communist Party

Throughout his working life Andy was an activist who got involved in all the major struggles to improve conditions for building workers. He was a founder member of the Construction Safety Campaign and its treasure from day one until ill health forced him to give up the role last year. Ian explained that Andy was also a "staunch republican" who fought for the release of the Guilford Four and Birmingham Six.

He "was very meticulous in his work" and took pride in his craftsmanship. Andy was also a great singer and popular for the folk songs he sang in pubs around Camden Town. In later years he sang in the London Irish Pensioners Choir.

Andy outlived his wife and is survived by three children and a grandchild. We send them our deepest sympathies.

The London Hazards Centre remembers Andy Higgins – a great fighter for building workers – a great campaigner for social justice. Ian McDeson was interviewed by Paul Street.

London Asbestos Support and Awareness Group (LASAG)

If you or a family member is suffering with an asbestos related disease you may want help to claim compensation or welfare benefits. LASAG advisers are fully trained former lung cancer nurse specialists who spent their nursing careers working with people suffering from asbestos related diseases and their families.

Asbestos related diseases:

- ◆ Mesothelioma
- ◆ Lung cancer (can be caused by exposure to asbestos)
- ◆ Asbestosis
- ◆ Pleural Thickening
- ◆ Pleural plaques

Contact us today – our services are free

If you need help, advice or more information about what to do following a diagnosis of asbestos related disease, please contact us: Freephone: **0800 278 2515** LASAG operates across London and the south. The group was set up by the London Hazards Centre Trust Limited – a registered charity established in 1984 to campaign for better health & safety.

Let's move from awareness to prevention

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month. It remains the most common cancer and it affects mainly women. The number of women developing the disease is still increasing. Is the Pink Ribbon fund raising campaign enough? What is being done to address the primary prevention of breast cancer?

It's a sad fact that breast cancer incidence has been rising steadily since the 1970s, with a 64% increase. You might be forgiven for thinking this was an acceptable state of affairs as each October millions are raised for breast cancer, yet cases continue to rise. We know and accept that breast cancer is multifactorial – caused by many things – including lack of political will to truly prevent it. But what's harder to accept is the total lack of attention paid by the breast cancer establishment to the environmental and occupational risk factors for breast cancer.

The Health and Safety Executive attributes 4.5% of female breast cancer to occupation (including shift work). Yet this figure barely covers the cases attributed to shift work alone. 46,417 women received a breast cancer diagnosis in 2014. How many were asked about their work histories? Women's occupational cancers are stuck in a vicious circle of being under recognised, and so under reported and so under researched and therefore under acknowledged.

Occupational cancer is not widely accepted by the cancer establishment, which includes the government, the medical establishment, and the cancer charities, all those with the power to produce a more inclusive agenda for breast and other cancers.

This is despite the World Health Organisation acknowl-

edging the environmental and occupational risk factors for breast and other cancers stating that "Prevention of the environmental and occupational exposures that cause cancer must be an integral component of cancer control worldwide."

But don't go looking for action on primary prevention in the English cancer plan because you won't find it. Occupational risk factors are considered only after lifestyle risk factors, like lack of exercise, bad diet and overconsumption of alcohol. But lifestyle risk factors only account for approximately 30% of breast cancer which includes being a carrier of the BRCA gene. This leaves about 70% of breast cancer with no known cause.

The cancer establishment's fall-back position is one of patient blaming and targeting of lifestyle factors over which women are supposed to have control. Little is spent on research on primary prevention. The National Cancer Institute's figures on cancer spending show a 3% spend on overall cancer prevention which has decreased since 2011 despite total cancer funding doubling over that 10 year period.

You could speculate about whether there are vested interests at play here to keep the status quo focused on lifestyle factors and blame the patient interventions, so maybe it's useful to start asking questions about who benefits from not tackling environmental and occupational risk factors for breast cancer? Consecutive governments have failed in the last six years, being a dead loss in terms of prevention; indeed any ground gained in the past appears to be lost.

Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) can be found in a wide range of products and workplaces and have been linked to breast cancer causation. They act like human hormones and can affect the endocrine system, which as the body's messenger system is responsible for every aspect of life. Given that air pollution has also been shown to increase breast cancer risk – where you work, live and

exercise should also be considered a risk factor.

We know that certain occupations carry with them greater risks of breast cancer. Researchers from the University of Stirling OEHSRG group, Dr Jim Brophy and Dr Margaret Keith won an award from the American Public Health Association for their ground breaking research showing significant increases in breast cancer among Canadian women who worked in the automotive plastics, farming, food canning, and metal working. Many of these occupations are linked by the fact they expose women to a cocktail of chemicals including EDCs. The risk for developing breast cancer increased more than 400% and 500% respectively for women working in the automotive plastics and food canning industries.

The APHA passed a resolution on breast cancer and occupation calling on the US. Surgeon General to declare the association between known classes of chemicals including EDCs and breast cancer.

The US Breast Cancer Fund uncovered elevated breast cancer risk for working women in 20 occupations including nursing, teaching, journalism, and those working with chemical solvents. They list workplaces exposures of concern as pesticides, solvents, EDCs, and physical risk factors such as exposure to night shift work and ionising radiation.

Both Danish and Canadian women have been compensated for work-related breast cancer. Danish women had a 40% increase in breast cancer due to their shift work and the Canadian laboratory workers had a rate 8 times higher from working with solvents. The ruling states for the first time that workers made ill by hazardous substances at work don't need to prove their case with scientific certainty in order to collect workers' compensation. There has been no such ruling in the UK; indeed the HSE appears to think women's breasts differ throughout the EU as they insisted on replicating

the Danish research which linked breast cancer to shift work. They found no association.

Future uncertainties about our relations with Europe don't bode well for the protection of human health either at work or in the home. Leaving the EU could see existing legislation aimed at protecting workers health and safety eroded. With far sighted EU chemicals legislation REACH, aimed at protecting human health and the environment, has been abandoned in favour of decreasing 'red tape' and increasing company profits.

So this October let's raise a different kind of awareness – awareness about primary prevention and the much ignored environmental and occupational risk factors for breast cancer. Let's call on the breast cancer establishment to really commit to prevention and stop breast cancer before it starts.

The Alliance for Cancer Prevention is a multi-stakeholder group which includes representatives from NGO's, environmental and occupational health organisations, trade unions, public health advocates and civil society groups, to work together on cancer prevention. We aim to raise awareness about the unacknowledged and often ignored occupational and environmental risk factors for cancer.

Helen Lynn; Co-ordinator of the Alliance for Cancer Prevention.

www.allianceforcancerprevention.org.uk
www.hazards.org
www.cancerhazards.org
www.frompinktoprevention.org

Why not volunteer?

The London Hazards Centre, is looking for volunteers to help run and organise some of our activities. Perhaps you have skills and knowledge that could help organise events, produce promotional material, train others or assist in our campaigning work?

If you are interested in volunteering at the London Hazards Centre why not call 0207 527 5107 or email mail@lhc.org.uk We'd like to hear from you.

SOUTHERN RAIL GUARDS - THIS STRIKE IS ALL ABOUT SAFETY



As London and south east commuters experience months of travel chaos, Go-Ahead, owner of Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) posted profits of nearly £100 million (+27%). But what about passenger safety?

RMT members working as Guards on Southern Rail, now part of the GTR conglomerate of train companies, operating the largest government franchise in Britain, have become involved in a long running industrial dispute with the company. The dispute centres on the safety role of the guard. Southern are attempting to cut costs in the franchise to maximise their profits and the company see the way guards operate as one avenue to securing higher payouts to shareholders. Southern/GTR's plans are that the role of the Guard would be downplayed and, although staff would retain their jobs (with a new focus on revenue), trains could operate without having a second safety critical person on duty.

The public and politicians have to get their heads around railway operational safety and public passenger safety. Whilst the two are entwined, they are vastly

different in skill set and railway understanding. Southern's position is clear; they wish to abandon the safe railway operation role and focus on customers along with the commercial sales of tickets.

Prior to the dispute, Southern/GTR already fleeces its passengers for a fortune in fares for unreliable and overcrowded services and RMT will not allow safety to be the next thing sacrificed in the dash for fatter and fatter profits on this rail franchise. RMT is now looking to build support from across the trade union movement for this important fight which defines the nature of industrial relations in Britain in 2016.

As it stands safety critical guards are able to ensure operational safety, passenger safety and commercial duties for the sale of tickets; it's a 'Green job', highly skilled and requires diligence, understanding and alertness. In an emergency, as we have recently seen with the derailment, they are absolutely invaluable, able to deal with the railway control services at the signal and power supply point; they are able to care for the passengers with assurance and authority and they are able to

evacuate in a safe and controlled manner.

The railway operation role encompasses a myriad of tasks, many of which will be unfamiliar to the public and our passengers: understanding of the Railway Rulebook, electrified lines, train accident(s), train failure, single line working, signalling systems, train despatch, track possessions for essential engineering work, line speed(s) and restrictions, fires, suspect packages, animals on the line & derailments. In total, there are over 35 different areas of operational safety that the guard is required to understand and show an understanding of under assessment.

We know, through all the recorded safety data, that the most dangerous part of a rail journey for a passenger is at the boarding and alighting stage, commonly known as the Platform Train Interface (PTI) – this is the area where we have trips and slips, luggage failures, falls (sometimes onto the track), where clothes get caught in the doors and, as we have seen recently at Hayes & Arlington, where a passenger was swept along the platform, trapped in the doors unable to escape, causing much distress and potential for life threatening injury.

It is at the PTI stage that much of the focus in the dispute has been. RMT believe that Southern are driving through their plan to take away the process and scope of responsibility from the guard and place it with the driver. Under the Southern proposals, the driver will be responsible for ensuring passengers are both on and off the train, that their luggage, pram or wheelchair is clear of the train, that children are on or off, that the elderly are on or off and that the disabled or sick are on or off, that there is no late dash for the train doors and to be absolutely sure that no one, even on the long twisting and curved platforms, is close or touching the train as it starts to depart.

The driver is expected to look at a mirror on the platform and

consult up to 12 monitors, one for each door, each the size of a small match box with a 2.5 second time delay. Southern also plan to introduce much longer 12 carriage trains (this can be a quarter of a mile long) – which will increase the amount of observation drivers would be expected to carry out. RMT believe these proposals are dangerous nonsense based on slashing well paid, union organised jobs in the drive for greed and greater profits by the employer.

The mirrors and monitors should be there to aid and assist Guards, who can focus entirely on passenger safety, working the doors, checking from the platform around the curvatures and structures on a platform. It is this wonderful set of eyes and ears that keep our railway at its most dangerous, safe..

Garry Hassell, RMT.

Footnote

Numerous calls for GTR to be stripped of its Southern franchise were strengthened by a report from the House of Commons Transport Select Committee (13/09/216) which indicated termination was possible on grounds of poor performance. The scathing report listed a wide range of failings including inadequate planning, infrastructure and rolling stock failures, mismanagement and poor industrial relations.

See the report:
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm/cm201617/cmselect/cmtrans/64/6411.htm

HEALTH AND SAFETY THE LONDON HAZARD

Do you want to know your rights when Working in a safe environment is a basic rights and how to enforce them. If you call 527 5107 or email: mail@lhc.org.uk funded to provide health and safety training

You will learn about:

- The main UK health and safety laws
- Who is responsible for health and safety at work
- Who enforces health and safety
- Basic risk assessment
- Sources of information and support



BEING A SAFETY REP

Trade union safety representatives play a crucial role in keeping workplaces safe. They have a legal right to represent workers in discussions with the employer on health, safety and welfare. It's a responsible job that requires thorough training. But what is it like being a safety rep?

What made you become a safety rep?

I used to work in a foundry and I saw so many accidents there. It was horrendous - people's heads catching fire, people standing in hot metal and losing their feet. So I thought it was essential to

have proper health and safety protection for working people, whether you're working in a foundry, office or anywhere else.

And did you get trained-up to do the job?

My first training was in 1977. I was one of the first people to be trained by the TUC as a Safety Rep. We did a ten day, one-day-a-week release and went through the required books - the brown booklets as they were then. I have also done further training with the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) on working with chemicals, as well as the IOSH four-day training on risk assessment. I also did what's known as the 'six-pack' training which includes Personal Protective Equipment, Manual Handling and Workplace Health, Safety & Welfare Regulations.

What hazards do you come across?

The most common hazards right now are temperature and stress in the workplace. We have problems with cement dust in our transport section, which is likely to be the cause of one of our member's asthma becoming more acute. Usually you get a lot of issues around workstations with laptops not having proper risers to prevent neck strain for example. Bullying and stress in the workplace are key issues. Stress is now becoming more and more evident on a daily basis due to government cuts in jobs and services - it has a major impact. People in the council who are working their hearts out to protect the most vulnerable are under the most stress, because there is little scope due to the cuts for improving things for the people they are trying to care for.

Do you feel there are rewards for being a safety rep?

Yes, you see that your work-mates are working in a safe environment; that they

are not going home in a wooden box - because in some jobs that could well be the case - construction for example. Lone working is a serious concern if you don't have the proper risk assessments in place and I have been keen to make sure this is done. One of the best moments was when the council had to admit their failings on health and safety. The HSE had come in and we had shown that the council had serious shortcomings in the way they managed health and safety. I'm also pleased to have chaired the joint management - trade unions health and safety committee on a number of occasions.

Worst moments as a rep?

One of the worst moments was when a young child was killed after a wall collapsed and fell on her. That has to be one of the worst moments, especially because safety reps had been warning the employer over safety issues. An electrician who worked for a private contractor was electrocuted. These are the worst moments. When you see loss of life and you know they will have to explain it to their loved ones.

Important aspects of being a health and safety rep?

Most important is to ensure safety reps receive proper training to equip them with as much information as possible to carry out their duties. We do have a struggle with managers a lot of the time to get training for safety reps, but we keep explaining the brown book to them - tell them to look at it - they will see that safety reps have the right to be trained. (Safety Representatives & Safety Committees Regulations 1977). Making sure you have up to date information is important - knowledge is power. The TUC 'Hazards at Work' is essential for every safety rep, as is the Labour Research Department booklet

on health and safety law.

What else should safety reps be doing?

Get involved with the local Hazards and national Hazards campaigns. Get the 'Hazards' magazine, probably the most essential publication for safety reps. It provides you with up to date information on what's going on, not just in the UK, but around the world. We must show solidarity with workers across the world who are finding health and safety a major problem. For reps living or working in the London area there is the London Hazards Centre - a great source of information that can connect you with a network of activists committed to improving workplace health and safety.

What makes a good health and safety rep?

Firstly is patience. Eagerness is a good thing but in my experience you have to have a certain amount of patience when you're dealing with managers because most managers are not trained in health and safety. You as a safety rep are more skilled and trained than them. Be prepared to make a mistake or two in the beginning, but don't worry about it - it's part of the training. Listen to what people are saying to you particularly other health and safety reps/ officers. Be confident in yourself and brief yourself thoroughly so you can be confident about your arguments. Speak to other people if you are not sure. Research the issue and gather the relevant information. Your confidence will help fellow workers - you are going to be the key person that makes the workplace safer.

Phil Lewis is also vice-chair of Unison's National Safety Committee.

www.tuc.org.uk
www.lrd.org.uk
www.hazards.org
www.lhc.org.uk

Y TRAINING FROM ARDS CENTRE

When it comes to health and safety? Basic human right. Learn about your rights. If you are interested please call 0208 547 5475. The London Hazards Centre is training.

The course is ideal for?

People new to health and safety or those wanting to refresh their knowledge. In particular, migrant workers or recent arrivals in the UK will gain important knowledge about their rights.

Junior Doctors dispute

The junior doctors' contract dispute has been in the public eye for a year now. We have seen the first strike action by doctors in the UK in over 40 years.

Not know to be radicals, what has driven this largely middle class and compliant group of highly motivated and dedicated people to such drastic action? It is a contract that, if accepted, they know will accelerate a brain drain and have serious impact of patient safety and the quality of care.

So why is the government picking a fight with NHS doctors?

The NHS already has a crisis in recruitment and retention of doctors. For the first time places to study medicine were available at clearing. It makes little sense to alienate mobile professionals capable of working anywhere in the world by eroding their morale and cutting pay. Only when you understand the political objective does the penny drop. The NHS has been quietly re-purposed in preparation for transition to an American style private insurance system in which there will be fewer hospitals and fewer doctors needed to staff them. Profit maximisation not provision of care is the driving motivation in this new system. Down-skilling, ie. replacing expensive and highly qualified doctors with less qualified and cheaper staff is also on the agenda. In charge of delivering this new system is Simon Stevens who was appointed CEO of NHS England in 2014 to cross party approval. Stevens has the right background for the job, having spent the last 10 years as Vice President and



PHOTO © GARRY KNIGHT

President of UnitedHealth, one of the biggest American private health insurers. During this time he campaigned against universal health care for Americans.

What are the problems with the contract?

There is no more money to pay for staff for the Jeremy Hunt mantra of a "7 Day NHS". The fake narrative has been crafted to obscure the true objective which is to facilitate more profitable use of staff around the clock performing lucrative planned surgery by private operators. This contract reduces unsocial hours payments in order to facilitate the sweating of the assets whilst impacting most on specialities like intensive care, casualty and paediatrics, which must run 24 hours a day by the very nature of the service. Perversely the sickest patients may find that their particular speciality doctors are most disadvantaged by the contract. In the privatised insurance system these are expensive and unprofitable patients.

The contract is not with the NHS but with "the employer" which could include Virgin, G4S, Serco and many other private providers. The contract effectively prepares doctors for easy transfer to the private sector.

If doctors were overworked by hospital Trusts, they potentially faced large fines which served as a significant deterrent. In the new arrangement a 'Guardian', employed by the Trust and reporting to the Trust Board must be notified and will inform the board. In effect, the protections for doctors have been watered down and the incentive for cash-strapped Trusts will be to overwork Doctors. The contract also absolves the employer of responsibility if tired, overworked doctors make a mistake by harming a patient.

A key patient safety principle should be that whistleblowers are not silenced. Dr Chris Day who lost his career after reporting understaffing has revealed through his court case a fundamental loophole in the law which leaves all 54,000 junior doctors effectively without whistleblowing protection. Health Education England, a body created by the Health and Social care Act 2012, that interviews, appoints, monitors; annually appraises and pays half a doctor's salary was ruled only to have a tangential role in a junior doctors career and parliament had specifically not included them under employment law. The 2012 Act has created a body with the power to terminate doctors' careers.

BMA leadership steps back

Doctors in the NHS face a pay cut and will be spread more thinly over 7 days doing non-urgent work, worsening rota gaps during the week. They effectively have no whistleblowing protection and many are looking to exit the NHS. The impact on the quality of patient care will be serious and damage done as a result hidden from public view with the silencing of whistleblowers. Our NHS is being stolen from under our noses and we will be left with skid row services in fewer overcrowded hospitals delivered by a dumber-down workforce struggling to cope with demand and inadequate resources. It will be an NHS rapidly haemorrhaging staff with more bad headlines softening up the public for top-up private insurance to save the NHS. Last year 98% of junior doctors voted for industrial action and a second ballot on the contract saw 58% reject it. Despite overwhelming public support, the British Medical Association called off planned 5 day strikes. There is a deep sense of betrayal and uncertainty now cast over our essential public servants. Without a rejection of this contract, doctors and patients will pay a heavy price.

Dr Bob Gill, GP Trainer and NHS campaigner, @drbobgill

LONDON'S ILLEGALLY DIRTY AIR

Clean it up - fast!

Pollution is causing the premature death of nearly 10,000 Londoners a year. What can be done?

How bad is London's air pollution really? In short: terrible. London's air is some of the dirtiest in Europe, and in 2015 the Government was ordered by the Supreme Court to come up with a plan to clean up air across the UK in the shortest possible time.

Often you can't see it, or smell it, but air pollution is responsible for nearly 10,000 early deaths in London every year. It has been shown to worsen the effects of asthma, with children and elderly people being hit the hardest. Long term childhood exposure to air pollution can lead to permanent reduced lung function, and dirty air has been shown to affect the development of fetuses as well.

The World Health Organisation has stated that air pollution and diesel exhaust can cause lung cancer, so it's vital that we phase out diesel and clean up our air as quickly as possible.

Road traffic is the biggest problem for dirty air, and diesel vehicles - including dirty diesel buses, diesel cars and big lorries - are the worst of all. But other sources of pollution, from boilers to construction sites, make up some of the problem too.

So, what should be done about it? London Mayor Sadiq Khan's swift action to put forward new measures to tackle air pollution is welcome. But his measures don't go far enough - yet.

We need a diesel scrappage scheme. Recent tests confirm what many suspected after the VW scandal - diesel cars pollute far more in the real world than in

laboratories. Many people bought a diesel because they were told it was better for the environment, and now cannot afford to replace it without help. It's vital that a scrappage scheme encourages people to move to clean vehicles, and offers alternatives to driving.

But the Government shouldn't necessarily be left to foot the bill for a scrappage scheme: companies selling dirty diesel cars must carry at least some of the cost.

The Ultra Low Emissions Zone (ULEZ) is a proposed area in London in which vehicles will have to meet stricter emissions standards to avoid a penalty charge. The ULEZ should be expanded to cover the whole of the capital and be brought in as soon as possible. With people's lives at risk, this has to be a priority.

A carefully-designed ULEZ should cover all types of vehicles, and should be combined with a pay-as-you-go driving scheme which differentiates between cleaner and dirtier vehicles. The Mayor's proposed Emissions Surcharge ('Toxicity charge') to reduce the numbers of older vehicles pumping out filthy fumes is also welcome, but needs some strengthening.

Banishing dirty vehicles from London is vital. But petrol vehicles are polluting too. With a public health crisis as big as this one, we urgently need policies to give people long-term alternatives to driving, such as safe cycling and walking infrastructure, and affordable public transport. We should also be designing communities so that

key services are in easy reach, reducing the need to travel far.

In addition, the Mayor must not add to the existing problem. The proposed new road river crossing in at Silvertown in East London, which the Mayor has just confirmed his support for, would bring new traffic, increase congestion, and worsen air pollution.

Providing information on air pollution levels is also an important way to help people protect their own health, particularly for children, who are the most vulnerable to the impacts of dirty air, and have done nothing to cause the problem. But people should not have to unnecessarily restrict their activity in order to stay healthy. When air pollution is bad, polluting traffic should have emergency restrictions imposed on it to prevent adding to the problem.

There are also things you can do to reduce your own exposure to air pollution. If you travel by car, you're actually subjected to higher fumes than if you walk or cycle, even by busy roads. Leaving the car at home for short journeys will reduce your exposure and stop adding to the dirty air problem too. Sophie Neuburg, Friends of the Earth

To find out more top tips to avoiding air pollution, or to join Friends of the Earth's campaign to tackle dirty air, visit: www.foe.co.uk/go/air

Also, follow these links for more information and to find out what you can do:

www.clientearth.org/
www.healthyaire.org.uk/
www.londonair.org.uk/LondonAir/
www.cleanair.london/

**We all breathe-
1p off
petrol will
increase
pollution!**



**Save our
environment
reduce car use
and don't sell
our trees!**



SQUARE MILE ASBESTOS SCARE

Fears that a major construction project in the City of London may use products imported from China containing asbestos are being investigated.

The alarm was raised by a coalition of groups that includes the Hazards Campaign, the Forum of Asbestos Victims Support Groups UK, trade unions and the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS). As a result, the matter is now being formally investigated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

100 Bishopsgate is a prestige 37 floor 'mixed-use commercial development' under construction almost opposite Liverpool Street Station in the City of London. The station is ranked the third busiest station in the UK with over 75,000 using it each morning rush hour. Australian company Brookfield

Multiplex is carrying out the construction which is due for completion in 2018. Materials to be used in the building are being supplied by Yuanda UK, the British subsidiary of Yuanda China. Over the last few months Yuanda has been at the centre of an asbestos scandal in Australia where it supplied products containing asbestos for use in building a children's hospital in Perth and a skyscraper in Brisbane. Like Britain, asbestos is banned in Australia. The Australian Border Force claims to inspect all high-risk cargo and says it has significantly increased the focus on asbestos.

In Britain controlling the importation of hazardous substances and chemicals of 'high concern' to human health and the environment is carried out by the HSE, the Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) and the Local Government Association (LGA). They do this in close cooperation with the UK Border Agency (UKBA) and HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

We are right to be worried. Each year over 2,500 people in the UK are diagnosed with Mesothelioma - the most serious form of asbestos related cancer - and a similar number die annually from it. Between 1967-2014 54,000 people in the UK died from this terrible disease. Asbestos is still present in many buildings, including schools, hospitals offices and factories.

Yuanda will be supplying prefabricated curtain walling throughout 100 Bishopsgate and other materials used for entrance areas and powered door systems. IBAS contacted Yuanda UK to seek assurances about the materials being supplied for projects in Britain following the scandal in Australia. In a reply dated 1st August 2016 Director Simon Cheesman said: "We have undertaken a comprehensive review of all our materials and products and confirm that none used in the UK and Europe raises any concerns". Let's hope a thorough investigation by the HSE supports what Mr Cheesman says.

The London Hazards Centre (LHC) contacted Brookfield

Multiplex Executive Director Jim Shea to raise concerns over the possibility of asbestos being present in Yuanda products. In an email received on 29 September 2016 he said "Multiplex has been working closely with Yuanda Europe ...to ensure no products containing asbestos are used within UK projects". With regard to the two products found to contain asbestos in Australia he said: "Yuanda have confirmed that neither product is in use on any UK project". Mr Shea also referred to independent testing of random samples taken from Yuanda's Multiplex projects which revealed "no asbestos in any material sampled". Mr Shea went on to explain that "Multiplex are actively engaging with the HSE" as part of the investigation and gave the assurance that "Multiplex take seriously the health and safety of everyone".

The LHC replied to Jim Shea with six additional questions including what levels of random sampling were undertaken, the locations of projects where random sampling took place, and whether Multiplex will be consulting with trade unions on site? Michael Cully, Multiplex Senior Health and Safety Manager replied this time. He said: "As you are aware, the HSE is currently looking into this matter. If you have any queries about their work, I suggest you

address them directly to the HSE". So that seems to have brought the dialogue with Brookfield Multiplex to a close.

Yuanda is a global supplier of curtain walling and facade materials. They have completed a number of major projects across London during the last 10 years including the Brent Civic Centre. In addition to 100 Bishopsgate, Yuanda are supplying materials for major developments underway at 'Harbour Central' on the Isle of Dogs, 'One Blackfriars' close to the south side of Blackfriars Bridge and 'Newington Butts' near the Elephant & Castle South London.

The HSE stated in a letter to the London Hazards Centre that they will inform us of the outcome once the investigation is complete. We will post it on our website as soon as we receive it. This whole episode shows how important it is that health and safety campaigners remain vigilant on such crucial concerns and that we have a properly funded HSE carrying out rigorous enforcement.

Paul Street

Thanks for distribution

The London Hazards Centre thanks the RMT, GMB and London & Eastern Region of Unite for their assistance in circulating the magazine.

Thanks for sponsoring Action Mesothelioma Day in London Friday 1st July 2016

The success of the Mesothelioma Action Day event was due in no small part to the tremendous support of trade union branches and regions. Some of you missed the deadline for getting a mention in the special edition of our magazine published to mark the event. We can now put that right. Thank you for helping us to raise the profile of an entirely preventable disease that kills around 2,500 people a year in the UK.

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