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Northern Gas Networks Ltd fined after fatal gas explosion

Summary

Northern Gas Networks Ltd have been sentenced for safety breaches after a fire and gas explosion at residential premises resulted in the death of the homeowner.

What happened?

On 11 February 2019, West Yorkshire Fire service were called to a fire and explosion in Mirfield, West Yorks. The occupier was discovered during a search of the property, whilst it was still on fire. She was taken to hospital where she died the following morning.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the source of the gas escape was from a fractured six inch cast iron main running under the carriageway to the front of the property. Their investigation found that the main did not appear on Northern Gas Networks drawings and had therefore not been maintained in accordance with the Pipelines Safety Regulations 1996.

What was the outcome?

Northern Gas Networks Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (1) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. The company was fined £5 million and ordered to pay costs of £91,487.

Anything else?

A HSE representative said: "This incident, that put the lives of the elderly residents of a care home at risk and cost a homeowner her life, has highlighted a failure by Northern Gas Networks Limited to follow their own safety procedures, in this case requiring the prompt and effective investigation and correction of anomalies in their records. Other gas network operators should take the opportunity to learn from this tragic incident."



Worker's finger crushed in machinery

Summary

A company specialising in manufacturing canopies and ventilation ducting has been fined after an employee's hand was drawn into the rotating parts of a machine, resulting in serious injury.

What happened?

On 14 October 2019, an apprentice was instructed by another apprentice and a trainee on how to operate a swaging machine. This consisted of two rotating wheels controlled by a foot pedal, used to put a groove around a ducting tube. After carrying this process out on approximately four pieces of tubing, the apprentice was left to proceed on their own, unsupervised. Whilst continuing the task a fabric safety glove worn by the apprentice caught in the rotating wheels of the machine. On releasing the foot pedal, the wheels took a few seconds to stop, drawing the apprentice's hand between them. The employee suffered from a crushed fingertip and a fracture. As a result of the incident the worker was unable to work for two months.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company had not performed a risk assessment for using the machine or implemented any safe systems of work including recognising that the gloves presented a drawing-in and entanglement hazard on that machine. They did not provide staff with adequate training or assess the additional risks presented by a young, inexperienced person working with machinery and being unaware of existing or potential risks.

What was the outcome?

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £13,000 and ordered to pay costs of £2,682.

Anything else?

A HSE representative said: "This incident could so easily have been avoided. Employers should ensure they carry out an assessment of the risks and put in safe system of works for the operation of all machinery. Companies should be aware of their responsibility to recognise the way in which their employees are working. Employers should also be aware of the use of gloves when operating machinery where there is a risk of entanglement."



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newsletter each month.**

Walker killed by cattle

Summary

A partner in a business has been sentenced for safety breaches after an 83-year-old man was fatally attacked by cattle.

What happened?

On 30 May 2020, a man and his wife were attacked by cattle whilst following a public right of way across a Farm at Chapel-Le-Dale in Carnforth.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the couple were walking on a footpath that passed through the yard at the Farm, following a right of way that runs from the farm down to the road. They were accompanied by two dogs. The couple were attacked by cattle that were grazing in the field with calves at foot. The man was trampled and pronounced dead at the scene and his wife sustained serious injuries.

What was the outcome?

The partner pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3 (2) of the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974. He received a prison sentence of 12 weeks, suspended for 12 months, and was fined a total of £878 and was ordered to pay £7820.30 in costs.

Any thing else?

A HSE spokesperson said: "A number of measures could have been taken to safeguard walkers using the path, while cattle and calves were grazing in that field. "Firstly, not using that field for cattle and calves. Most farmers will have other groups of stock that can graze fields containing rights of way, so can reduce the risk of incidents by putting sheep in them, or they could take fodder crops from them. Cattle with calves can be put in fields without rights of way, away from members of the public, or can be segregated from walkers. Farmers should ensure they take all reasonably practicable precautions to protect walkers on public rights of way, especially when they are grazing cows and calves together, or bulls are present."

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Awareness

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18-year-old employee injured in a fall from height

Summary

A recycling company has been fined after an employee was injured whilst clearing a blockage in a waste metal chute.

What happened?

On the 9 October 2017, an employee of the company was injured when he fell through a chute, approximately 4 metres above a yard, whilst clearing a blockage. Another employee, who was waiting in a telescopic handler to collect the waste metal in the machine bucket, saw him fall and moved the machine to try and catch him. The employee was hit by the bucket and sustained injuries including several broken bones.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that there was no risk assessment or safe system of work in place for clearing blockages. The company had not considered the risk of employees falling through the chute from that height.

What was the outcome?

The company were found guilty of breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at work Act 1974 and were fined £17,500.

Anything else?

A HSE spokesperson said: “This significant injury ... could have been easily prevented. The remedial action taken to prevent future blockages implemented after the incident had no cost implication for the company. Employers should make sure they properly assess and apply effective control measures to minimise risks from clearing blockages.”

Landlord fined for not providing gas safety certificates

Summary

A landlord has been fined for failing to ensure that gas fittings, appliances and associated flues were checked for safety.

What happened?

From late winter 2013 to early spring 2014 the prosecuted man was a landlord for at least 15 flats in an old tenement block. The majority of the flats had gas central heating boilers for heating and hot water. Some of the boilers served more than one flat. Tenants were not provided with Landlord’s Gas Safety Certificates.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigated after receiving a complaint from a tenant. The HSE inspector failed to obtain a response from the landlord and, on being unable to contact the complainant, attended the block of flats with another HSE inspector.

The inspectors gained access to several flats and quickly identified gas safety concerns. They again attempted to make contact with the landlord during this visit but failed. Due to the gas safety concerns the inspectors decided to contact the Gas Safe Register, the official gas safety organisation in Britain, who arranged for Scottish Gas Networks (SGN) to attend the property.

The inspectors later revisited the property with SGN engineers and after gaining access to further flats they identified further gas safety faults. SGN issued ‘immediately dangerous’ safety notices and disconnected the gas supply to several properties.

Despite repeated attempts to contact him, the landlord did not attend the flats to assist with the investigation.

At a later visit SGN notices were again issued to a number of flats. The landlord attended during this visit and HSE Inspectors issued 15 Improvement Notices.

The aim of the notices was to ensure all gas safety issues were identified and rectified by a competent Gas Safe registered engineer which would enable the landlord to provide tenants with a Landlord’s Gas Safety Certificate.

What was the outcome?

The landlord pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 36(3)(b) of the Gas (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and was fined £4,500 and ordered to pay a £175 Victim Surcharge.

Anything else?

A HSE representative said: “It was very fortunate that <the landlord’s> failure to carry out important landlord gas safety checks did not result in a number of deaths in the flats he rented out, where the unsafe gas appliances were leaking poisonous odour free fumes.

“He should have employed a competent Gas Safe Registered engineer to carry out landlord gas safety checks including carrying out the necessary work and obtain a landlord gas safety certificate every 12 months. Landlords may be prosecuted if they do not ensure that this well publicised duty is carried out. Tenants should check that they receive a landlord gas safety certificate on moving into rented property and annually.”

More information about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg285.pdf>

Worker fell from height

Summary

A roofing contractor has been sentenced after an unpaid casual labourer fell through a skylight during the renovation of an old asbestos cement roof.

What happened?

On 23 October 2018, the labourer, who wanted to gain industry experience having never previously worked on roofs, was instructed by <person A> to cut fibreglass for the roof of the building. Once the fibreglass was cut, the labourer went up onto the roof to observe the fitting by <person A> and another colleague. He stepped on a fragile skylight, which gave way causing him to fall five and a half metres to the floor below. He suffered multiple fractures to his hand and wrist, which required surgical wiring to repair, and also fractures to his ribs.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the work had not been properly planned. There was a lack of training or experience in the supervision of others working at height. There were no preventative safety measures in place for the skylights such as netting, crawl boards or safety harnesses in use.

What was the outcome?

<Person A> pleaded guilty to breaching Section 9(2) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. He was given a 12 month community order, which includes 80 hours of unpaid work, and has been ordered to pay costs of £3,000.

Owner of a roofing firm given a suspended sentence for unsafe work at height

Summary

A roofing company owner has been given a suspended sentence after a member of the public reported a concern regarding unsafe work at height.

What happened?

On 5 March 2021, company owner and two workers were replacing roof tiles on a detached dormer bungalow without any scaffolding or edge protection in place to prevent them from falling a distance liable to cause personal injury.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the company owner had failed to take suitable and sufficient measures to ensure that work at height was carried out safely. He had failed to provide sufficient work equipment to prevent a fall or to minimise the distance or consequences of a fall.

The court was also told that this was not the first time that HSE had encountered poor working practices from the company owner. The HSE took previous enforcement action and prosecuted him for a similar offence in 2012.

What was the outcome?

The company owner was found guilty to breaching Regulation 6(3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. He received a thirteen-month suspended prison sentence, 200 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay costs of £1,000.



HSE

Scaffold worker injured

Summary

A scaffolding contractor has been fined after a worker fell from height resulting in serious injuries.

What happened?

On 15 August 2019, the injured man was dismantling temporary over-roof scaffolding when he fell through the scaffolding landing on to the roof of the property below, before rolling down and on to the ground. He fell approximately eight meters in total and sustained two brain haemorrhages, six vertebra fractures, a fractured shoulder blade and multiple rib fractures.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found the company had failed to properly plan the works in respect of giving consideration to how the temporary over roof should be dismantled safely. The injured person was also only provided with a single lanyard harness that was not suitable for such works, rather than a twin lanyard harness.

What was the outcome?

The company pleaded guilty to breaching Regulations 4 (1) (a) and 6 (3) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was also fined £16,667 and ordered to pay costs of £6,767 and a victim surcharge of £170.

Anything else?

A HSE spokesperson said: “The case highlights the importance of following industry guidance in order to design and dismantle scaffolding in a safe manner with the correct equipment made available to those undertaking the work.



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Contractor carried out illegal gas work

Summary

A self-employed contractor has been given a suspended sentence and community service after undertaking gas work on a property whilst not being gas safe registered.

What happened?

On 1 June 2019 a self-employed contractor trading replaced a boiler at a property. Following the installation, a number of problems arose including loss of pressure and water leaks. In August 2019, a Gas Safe Registered engineer attended the property and discovered multiple issues with the installation including an inadequately sized pipe, which they felt posed immediate danger. The case was reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the form of a Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) report.

How did things go wrong?

The HSE found that the contractor had never been Gas Safe Registered. It was also discovered that he had provided himself with a false registration number and had used the registration number of a completely unconnected company. On the inspection of the work carried out by the contractor,

five separate serious defects were found, including an unsealed flue, a pressure relief valve incorrectly located, undersized gas pipework, uncommissioned appliance, and corrosion to the gas pipework. These defects could have led to carbon monoxide leakage, scalding, unsafe combustion, and unburned gas release, which could have proved fatal.

What was the outcome?

The contractor pleaded guilty to two breaches of Regulation 3 (3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and breaches of Regulation 3 (7) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 and Regulation 5 (3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He was given a 40 week suspended sentence, 200 hours community service and ordered to pay costs of £5,263.

Anything else?

A HSE spokesperson said: “This case highlights the dangers of carrying out unregistered gas work. All gas work must be done by registered Gas Safe engineers to ensure the highest standards are met in order to prevent injury and loss of life. Installers will be prosecuted if they carry out gas work without the proper qualifications. Householders should check that anyone they allow to work on the gas supply is gas safe registered.”

Work at height and welfare issues on site

Summary

A plant hire company has been fined for leaving workers at risk of a fall from height and failing to provide welfare facilities.

What happened?

On 17 November 2020 the company was building a new aggregate recycling facility. Part of the work included the provision of cladding to the roof, which was carried out using a cherry picker. However, as some areas of the roof were difficult to reach, employees had to step onto the roof where no edge protection had been provided, putting them at risk of a 30ft fall. In addition, workers had been on site for some considerable time without the minimum required welfare facilities being available.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that workers had been left unsupervised by site management, there had been no method statement to follow when they climbed onto the roof and there were no preventative measures in place to prevent the risk of a fall from height. Workers were also expected to drive to the company's head office along an unadopted road more than five minutes' drive away to use the toilet, despite there being ample room on the site for facilities.

What was the outcome?

The company pleaded guilty to breaches of Regulation 13(4)(c) of the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, and Regulation 4(1) of The Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £66,667 and ordered to pay costs of £1,847.

Safety cases for high-rise buildings: a summary

Summary

The law relating to building safety in England is changing. Proposed reforms currently making their way through parliament will introduce a safety case regime. This will mean new roles and responsibilities for high-rise residential building owners and management, including accountable persons (AP) and building safety managers (BSM).

Building on the safety case principles the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) published last year, they have continued their work with partners in the public and private sector to develop information that they hope will form a toolkit for building owners and managers.

The first part of this toolkit is a short summary of the key things they can do to prepare. It is intended to be a quick read to help people and organisations to understand what they can do.

The HSE has published a document on its website: <https://www.hse.gov.uk/building-safety/how-to-prepare.htm>

In the coming months this will be followed by further information that builds on the safety case principles from last year.

This will include new material that the HSE has introduced following suggestions and comments received from early adopters, private landlords, social housing providers, and other industry consultees.

Unsafe asbestos removal

Summary

An individual has been prosecuted after his employees were exposed to asbestos while refurbishing domestic premises.

What happened?

The man was contracted to carry out a refurbishment for his client. The owner of the property informed him that ceiling boards in the garage contained asbestos. But he then instructed two employees, who had no experience in asbestos removal, to take down the boards with no protective measures in place. Once taken down, the boards were stored inside the house for a further three months until they were moved to the front garden prior to disposal. The boards were subsequently identified as Asbestos Insulating Board – a high risk product which requires an asbestos removal licence to remove.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that he was made aware that asbestos was present in the property, and yet he failed to make adequate enquiries as to where the asbestos was, its type and the condition it was in, prior to carrying out the removal. He also instructed his employees, who lacked the necessary competence, to carry out the removal with no control measures in place.

What was the outcome?

The man pleaded guilty to breaching the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 Regulations 5 (1)(a), 8(1), 11 (1) and received a Community Order for a period of 12 months with a Rehabilitation Requirement of 25 days and Unpaid Work of 100 hours. He was also ordered to pay £5,000 in costs and a £95 victim surcharge.

Fatal fall through fragile asbestos roof

Summary

A company has been sentenced after an employee was fatally injured when he fell six metres through a roof whilst working on a replacement roof project.

What happened?

On 22 May 2017, a roofer was completing snagging work on a replacement roof. He accessed a part of the old roof made of fragile asbestos cement sheets, which gave way. He fell through the sheets to the ground below sustaining fatal injuries.

How did things go wrong?

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the area accessed did not have safety nets fitted and that the employer failed to take reasonably practicable measures to reduce the risk to those working on the roof.

What was the outcome?

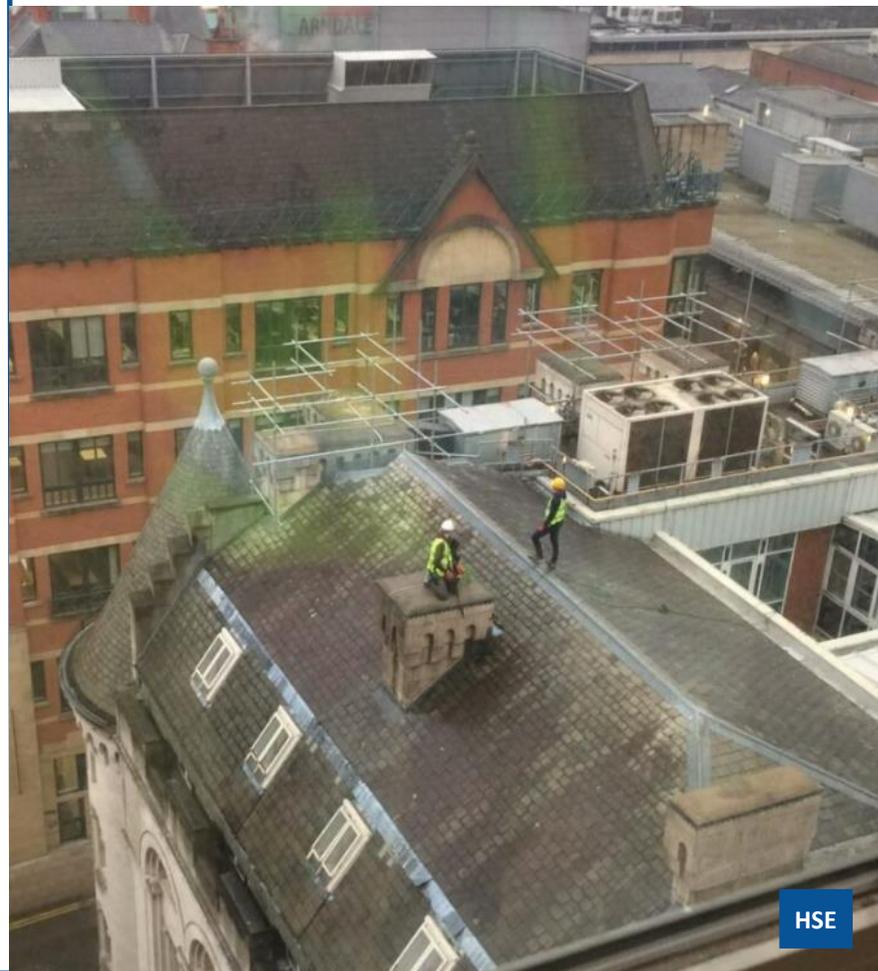
The building contractor pleaded guilty to breaching Regulation 4(1) of the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £51,000 and ordered to pay costs of £5,000.

The owners of the building pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, section 3, at an earlier hearing and were sentenced in February 2021. The company was fined £80,000 and ordered to pay costs of £6,656.

Construction firm fined and director given community order for breaching working at height regulations

Summary

A construction firm and its director have been sentenced after carrying out unsafe work on the roof of a multi-storey building.



What happened?

Concerns were raised with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) after workers were spotted on the roof of the building without safety measures in place to prevent a fall. The HSE carried out two inspections at the site following the reports. On the second site visit employees were found working on the roof with no suitable controls in place to prevent falls. Inspectors stopped the work on site. An investigation by the HSE found that the unsafe work on the roof had taken place from 1 January 2019 to 28 February 2019 with a significant risk of death or serious injury.

What was the outcome?

The company was found guilty of breaching section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It was fined £42,500 and ordered to pay costs of £5,049.73 plus a victim surcharge of £170.

The company director was found guilty of breaching section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, in relation to the company's failing of section 2(1) of the Act. He was given a community order for 270 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay costs of £5,049.73 and a victim surcharge of £85.

Anything else?

A HSE spokesperson said: "Falls from height remain one of the most common causes of work-related fatalities in this country and the risks associated with working at height are well known. HSE will not hesitate to take appropriate enforcement action against companies that fall below the required standards and endanger their employees."



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Australia lists the koala as an endangered species



Getty Images

Australia has listed the koala as an endangered species across most of its east coast. The move follows a dramatic decline in numbers.

It is believed that land clearing, bushfires, drought, disease and other threats have led to the decline.

Koalas were listed as "vulnerable" in Queensland, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) in 2012. Despite the rapid deterioration, governments have been accused of dithering.

Last year, a New South Wales inquiry found koalas would be extinct there by 2050 unless there was urgent action.

It estimated the Black Summer bushfires of 2019-20 had killed 5,000 koalas and affected 24% of habitats in New South Wales alone.

The UK's only two shale gas wells are to be abandoned after the industry regulator ordered them to be sealed

The wells at Preston New Road were the first to frack horizontally onshore in the UK - a process which releases gas from shale rock. But the process has been controversial and test drilling has been hit by many delays and protests.



Getty Images

After an earthquake with a magnitude of 2.9 was recorded near to the site in August 2019, it was concluded by the Oil and Gas Authority (OGA) that it was not possible to predict the size of tremors caused by the practice.

The following November, the government halted fracking and exploration with immediate effect.

The OGA have ordered that the wells now be plugged with concrete.

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This bundle brings together 5 courses of our most popular IATP, CPD and RoSPA courses. Students have 90 days from enrolment to complete their courses and they receive a certificate for each course that they complete.

Our customer support team are available 7 days a week:

- 0900-2130 hrs by email (support@hsqe.co.uk) or
- 0900-1700hrs Mon-Fri by phone (0333 733 1111)

Online safeguarding courses



Autism Awareness

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Child Mental Health Awareness

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Child Online Safety Awareness

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved




Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Designated Safeguarding Lead (Children)

- 🕒 150 mins approx
- 💷 £12.50—£25.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Designated Safeguarding Lead (Vulnerable Adults)

- 🕒 150 mins approx
- 💷 £12.50—£25.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Extremism & Radicalisation Awareness

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved

- All our online safeguarding training courses are CPD certified




Mental Health Awareness

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Mental Health Awareness For Managers

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Safeguarding Children Level 1

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Safeguarding Children (Advanced) Level 2

- 🕒 120 mins approx
- 💷 £7.50—£20.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Level 1

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults (Advanced) Level 2

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £7.50—£20.00 +vat

CPD Approved



Safer Recruitment Awareness

- 🕒 90 mins approx
- 💷 £6.50—£15.00 +vat

CPD Approved

- Immediate start
- Download your CPD certified training certificate as soon as you complete your course online



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