HSENI REPORTS DROP IN WORKPLACE FATALITIES

The 21st Annual Report of the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) has revealed a significant decrease in fatalities and major injuries in the workplace from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

For further information visit www.hseni.gov.uk

Derek Martin, Chairperson of the HSENI, said he was very encouraged by the reduction in the number of deaths and serious injury during the reporting year.

"The HSENI team and our partners have worked with dedication and determination to make the workplace safer," he noted.

Across all sectors there were 11 deaths, compared with 13 the previous year, which recorded a further death from an incident in 2018-19.

The number of major injuries, which are often life-changing, fell to 290, representing a reduction of 11%, while the number of reportable injuries saw a decrease of 5% to 1,811.

"Our shared resolve remains firm to see further reductions. Working together with our partners and industry bodies we can help everyone to stay safe at work. We will continue to raise awareness of issues in the workplace which are associated with chronic ill-health."

Martin noted that as the 2019-20 financial year drew to a close, the development of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the organisation and its activities became apparent.

"The versatility and expertise of HSENI's staff was evident as the nature of the organisation's inspectorate and advisory work is now focused primarily on COVID-related incidents and queries."

Derek Martin, HSENI Chairperson.

INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIP

During 2019-2020, HSENI carried out 5,399 inspections which resulted in 247 enforcement notices being issued. The Major Investigations Team led 14 successful prosecutions which resulted in fines totaling £602,500.

HSENI's Chief Executive Robert Kidd said: "HSENI remains focused on keeping everyone safe in the workplace by stopping unsafe working practices. Despite a demanding year that saw the additional challenges of COVID-19, excellent progress has been made.

"An unprecedented number of complaints in relation to COVID-19 concerns were received during the final weeks of 2019-2020. HSENI played an important role in supporting co-regulators and assisting industry to implement public health guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

"Our work with partners in the agricultural sector has seen fatalities reduce to one compared to seven in the previous year. Sadly, the number of fatalities in the construction sector increased from three in 2018-19 to four during this reporting period."

Kidd noted that the HSENI's work to reduce occupational ill-health has developed as a result of working with a number of external organisations.

"We have continued to develop our educational programme by delivering over 100 promotional events, seminars, lectures and workshops.

"We dealt with over 6,550 direct calls to our helpline, while almost 100,000 visitors used our website to download publications. HSENI is grateful to those who share our ambition to make Northern Ireland's workplaces as safe and healthy as possible, and who have contributed to the achievement of the outcomes set out in our annual report."

Robert Kidd, HSENI Chief Executive.