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SAFER HIGHWAYS ISSUE 10
QUARTER 1
FEBRUARY 2021

HOW I LEARNED TO SURVIVE DEPRESSION

Alastair Campbell talks about
how manages his mental health.

ALSO IN THIS EDITION...

CRISIS RESILIENCE AND HUMAN CAPITAL

"People are at the core of
every thriving business," -
Kathy Seabrook.

MORE DRUGS THAN DRINK.

Ean Lewin MD of D.tec
International is urging indus-
try to consider if what they
have in place to deter employ-
ees from drug driving.

"IGNORING MY FEELINGS WAS HOW I ENDED UP IN HOSPITAL"

Frankie Bridge, Saturdays
singer and TV personality
opens up.

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FOREWORD

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the latest edition of our magazine, which we publish as we sit in the midst of the latest Covid-19 induced lockdown.

For much of the world 2020 was a year to forget; we spent swathes of it living under restrictions caused by the pandemic. The 5pm Downing Street Briefing became the most watched programme on TV and the phrase unprecedented times slide from tongues across the length and breadth of the nation.

But in amongst all of this there were some bright spots. Across our sector we showed that when instructed that the show must go on, then we will find a way of making that happen. Adjustments to working practices became as commonplace as a mug of tea in the morning. We learned to work from home, the phrase “I will call you back, just on Teams” became an all too familiar response when answering the phone.

But most of all, we, the Highways Sector, delivered. Works were carried out in a safe manner, jobs completed ahead of schedule and thanks to great leadership shown by Highways England people were paid faster than ever. But most of all despite hitting a massive speed bump we innovated and pushed our people to continuously improve.

But of course there have been challenges such as remotely managing our people’s mental health and wellbeing without face to face contact and the increased need for tools such as the One Million Lives check-in tool to help individuals to effectively help themselves.

Now as we look forward to what we hope will be the beginning of the end and the long awaited freedom from the shackles of lockdown I genuinely believe through the ingenuity of our industry we will emerge stronger and better.

As always I can offer a heartfelt thanks to those who have given the time to contribute articles to the publication and I sincerely hope that you, the reader enjoy reading it as much as we enjoy putting it together.

Kindest Regards,

*Kevin Robinson
CEO,
Safer Highways.*

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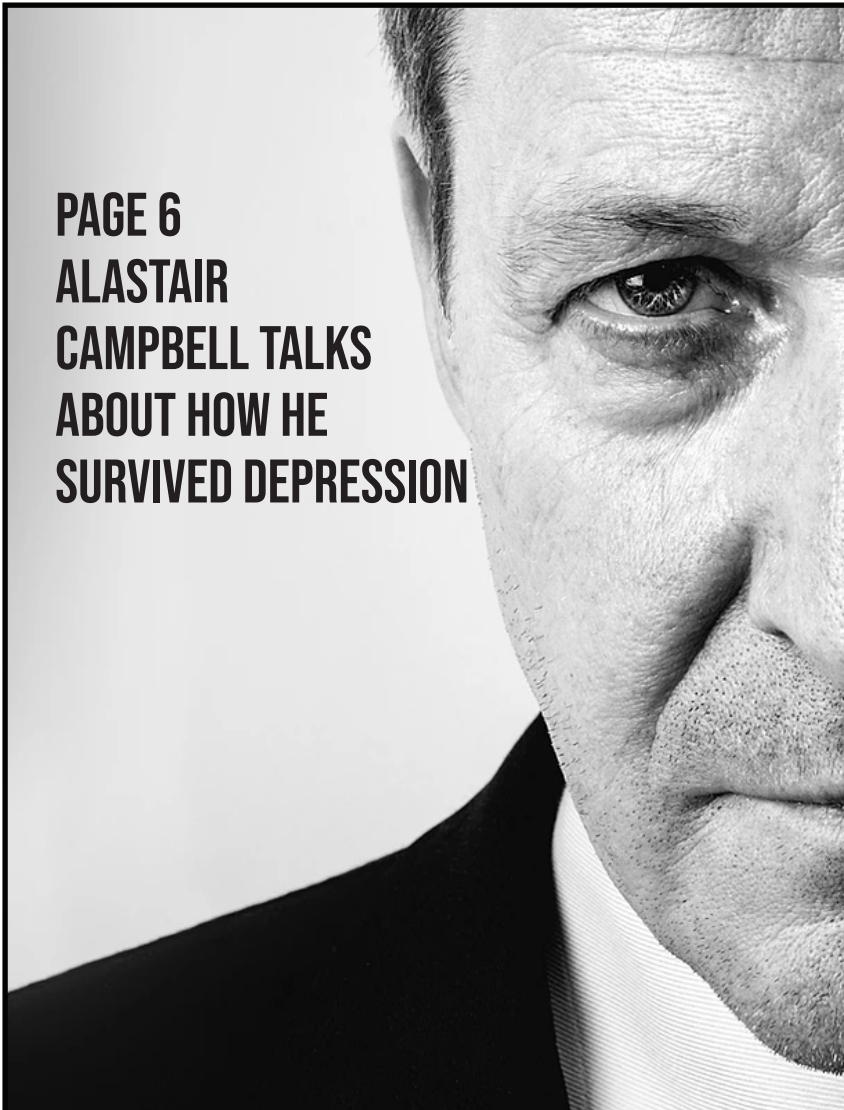
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HOW I LEARNED TO SURVIVE DEPRESSION

A jam jar has been the catalyst in helping Alastair Campbell to manage and cope with his mental health more effectively.

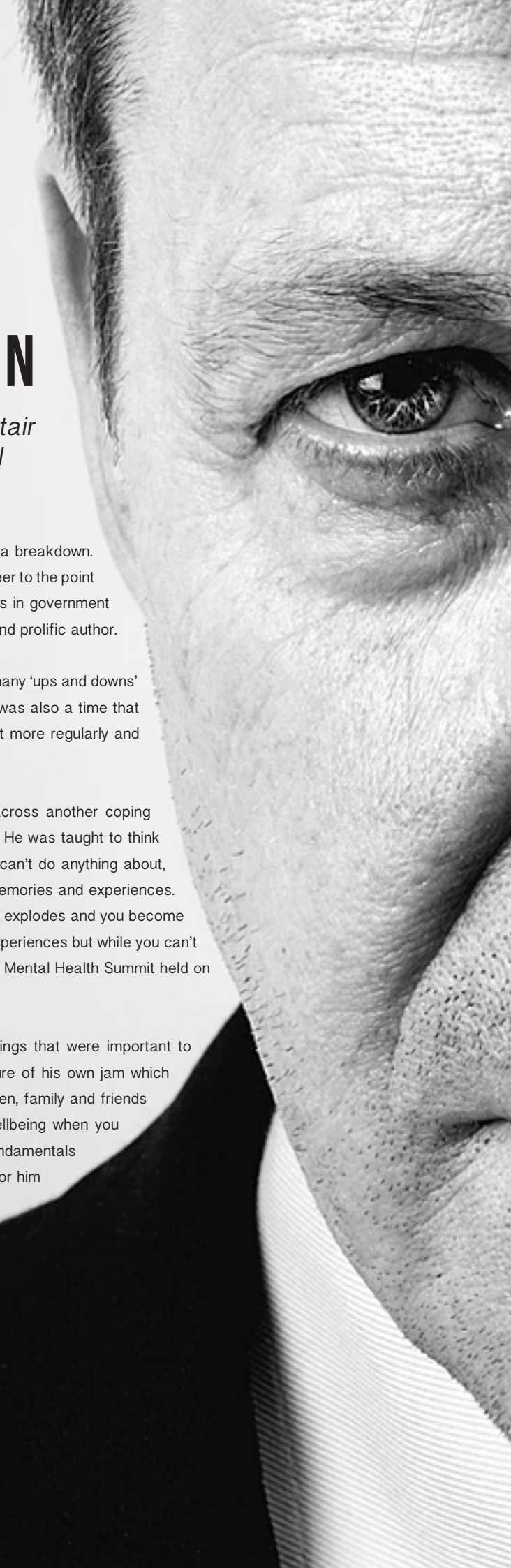
The 1980s were a particularly bad time for him which culminated on a breakdown. What came left was the willingness to stop drinking and rebuild his career to the point where he became one of the most effective and successful advisors in government working for Tony Blair and subsequently a much in demand public speaker and prolific author.

But the depression has never left him. He has often spoke openly about the many 'ups and downs' with his mental health which eventually led to self-harming in 2005. But this was also a time that brought a mini breakthrough for Alistair and he started seeing a psychiatrist more regularly and found the right medication.

Then, some years later, there was another key moment when he came across another coping mechanism which changed his thinking about his own mental health forever. He was taught to think of his life like a jam jar. At the bottom of the jar are your genes-which you can't do anything about, but the rest of the jar is filled up with your life experiences-good and bad memories and experiences. "I was taught that if you're not careful your jam becomes unmanageable and explodes and you become ill. You can't do anything about what has happened, you can reflect on bad experiences but while you can't change them, you can grow your jam jar," he told the recent Safer Highways Mental Health Summit held on the 2nd December 2020..

Growing the jam jar, he was told, would be based around putting in the things that were important to him. So, not being able to sleep one night, Alistair got up and drew a picture of his own jam which includes everything that was important to him such as his partner, his children, family and friends as well as other things that help you stay well or give you a sense of wellbeing when you aren't feeling great. This included meaningful activity such as work, the fundamentals such as sleep, diet and exercise and other things that are important-which for him were Burnley football club, his dog, playing the bagpipes, reading, writing and being creative.

"Before this moment if someone asked me how





I cope with depression I would have said my psychiatrist and taking medication, now its about growing my jam jar and using that as a coping mechanism when I don't feel well. I tick all these things off on a list and it does make me cope much better. Rather than just deal with depression, I have now learnt to survive it and feel that I am a lot more resilient now and look forward to knowing that my bad mental health episodes will end. Before I would think the episodes would never end and that's what drags you down and make you feel what's the point in being here."

Mr Campbell says that although mental health awareness has evolved in the country, more still needs to be done. "I still feel as though we are talking about it as apposed to doing things to get to a place where government, businesses, families, society and individuals are more open about mental health as they are about physical health," he says. Under David Cameron's leadership the government committed to helping people that have psychosis to be seen within two weeks by an expert. This, says Campbell, is nowhere near good enough. "Imagine driving down the road at 100mph on a road without a seat belt on, slamming on the breaks, going through the window and bouncing down the road, calling an ambulance and being told you have to wait two weeks before you can see someone?"

He says some businesses are 'ahead of the government' on mental health. "It makes sense for businesses to have their own mental health and wellbeing programmes because they have a vested interest in getting their staff back to work. We've got to move away from the approach on thinking we are dealing with mental illness and focus on mental health instead. We have to somehow persuade the policy makers and business leaders to focus

on people when they are well and put in place the support needed to make people stay well. We need to create a culture of openness and ask the question that saved my life in three simple words; are you ok?

Mr Campbell's message to business leader is 'take mental health seriously'. "We need to create a culture of openness and awareness so people can talk about how they are without it being held against them in some way. If there is one good thing we can learn from Covid, it is a better understanding mental health and the fact that just like physical health, peoples mental health isn't perfect all the time but by talking about it together we will always get through."

Alistair Campbell's book; Living Better-How I learned to survive depression, is out now.





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“IGNORING MY FEELINGS WAS HOW I ENDED UP IN HOSPITAL”

FRANKIE BRIDGE



Saturdays singer and TV personality Frankie Bridge lives with anxiety and depression – here, she speaks about the advice she has for others struggling, too...

Frankie Bridge is one celebrity who has always been refreshingly honest about her mental health, regularly speaking out about her lifelong battle with anxiety, depression and panic attacks. Now, inspired by her successful Open Mind podcast – in which she interviews guests about their own mental health struggles – she has written, ‘Why Asking For Help Can Save Your Life’, a no-holds-barred account detailing her guilt, self-loathing and eventual hospitalisation in 2012.

The book emphasises the importance of having honest conversations about our mental health, rather than suffering in silence. Seeking professional help in the form of therapy and medication finally got Frankie on the road to recovery and she has learned plenty of coping strategies to help her accept and live with her condition. Here, she shares some of that advice...

‘HOWEVER BAD YOU FEEL, GET UP’

I always make myself get out of bed in the morning. Even if I just make it to school to drop my kids [Parker and Carter, with

husband Wayne Bridge] off and come back to bed, at least I feel like I’ve achieved something. You don’t have to go to the gym – just get out of the house. One of things I find really irritating is when people say, ‘You need to exercise, it’ll make you feel better’. When you are in the deepest, darkest hole, that is the last thing that you can imagine doing.

‘GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK’

People have said to me, ‘What have you got to be unhappy about?’ It’s naive and it’s hurtful. That person may not appear to have anything to be unhappy about, but anxiety and depression are illnesses. I’ve regularly beat myself up because it seems like everyone else can cope better than I can. But I don’t have control over it – that’s just how my brain works. Try to silence the guilt and don’t compare yourself to everyone else. We have to learn to be kinder to ourselves.

‘DO THINGS THAT SCARE YOU’

I’ve found that pushing myself outside of my

comfort zone helps massively. This means that when an anxiety rears its ugly head, I don’t naturally believe the self-doubt my brain feeds me – I question it and think, ‘Maybe my anxiety isn’t right about this’. Last year, I trekked across the Himalayas for breast cancer charity CoppaFeel! and it ticked every one of my anxiety boxes: being with loads of people I didn’t know, being in places that aren’t necessarily that clean like sleeper trains, eating food I wouldn’t normally eat. It was all really nerve-wracking for me. But I loved it.

‘ACCEPT HOW YOU ARE FEELING’

Sometimes, you just have to give in to your low mood instead of trying to ignore it and push it down. I’ll wallow for a day or an afternoon, and then I say, ‘That’s enough’ and I normally feel better for it. We all need to have a cry and I think it allows you to move on a lot quicker. Ignoring my feelings was one of the reasons I became so ill and ended up in hospital.

‘APPRECIATE SMALL MOMENTS OF JOY’

They really lift your mood. For me, it’s seeing my little boys playing together and laughing, especially when

“

That person may not appear to have anything to be unhappy about, but anxiety and depression are illnesses”.

they're doing those proper belly laughs. That is the best thing and makes me so happy.

'LIMIT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA TIME'

I know that Instagram is important for my work, so quitting isn't an option. But I try to control my

usage. We all know people just put the best version of their life on there, but you can't help thinking, 'They are busier than me, skinnier than me, look happier than me and their life looks more together than mine'. Now, Instagram isn't the first thing I look at in the morning and the last thing I look at at night. I don't aimlessly scroll.

'DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOU'

Mindfulness, for example, really doesn't work for me because it gives me too much time to think – and I don't need to be on my own with my mind when it's going into overdrive! I can't turn that off, so I enjoy distraction



rather than trying to be zen.

'TAKE ONE DAY AT A TIME'

For me, that means not planning too far ahead. I don't always know when I am going to have a down day, so to put something in my diary in two weeks' time fills me with anxiety. I end up feeling like I have to be happy and on form that day. I am definitely more of a last-minute person.

'LET PANIC ATTACKS HAPPEN'

When I felt one coming, I used to get scared and try to push it away. But what I've realised is that it's going to come out anyway. It's just going to build and build until it happens. So I think you have to lean into it. When I first had one, I was so fearful that it just escalated. You think, 'I can't breathe, I'm going to die'. But if you cry your eyes out, make whatever noises you want and just let it all out, you'll feel absolutely shattered but generally much better.

'UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE FEELING'

Knowledge about my illness has helped me more than anything, which is why I wanted to write the book. My psychiatrist and psychologist – who both give tips and advice throughout the book – have given me the tools to understand it. That has taken away the fear and the feeling of being weird and crazy, because you accept that it's an illness. I will probably have this for the rest of my life, but I've proven that I can live a life with it and that it's not the end of the world.

OPEN by Frankie Bridge, is published by Cassell (octopusbooks.co.uk). Also available in ebook and Audiobook.

“

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‘I SUFFERED ANXIETY’: MONZO FOUNDER ON THE PRESSURES OF RUNNING A DIGITAL BANK



Tom Blomfield on mental health, the Covid-19 crisis – and the myth of superhero tech bosses Tom Blomfield was not prepared for the stress that the Covid-19 crisis would unleash on the banking sector and his own mental health. The 35-year-old Monzo founder was already struggling to meet the daily demands of running a digital bank that had grown to nearly 5 million customers and had become a success story for Britain’s fintech sector.

Constant worries about wooing investors, generating revenue, and increasingly critical news coverage that the burgeoning bank was attracting, were clearly taking their toll. “I was stressed, definitely. I suffered anxiety that impacted my sleep. Did I border on depression at times? I don’t know,” Blomfield told the Guardian. The banking boss turned to mindfulness apps and tried three different therapists, but nothing changed. “The issue was switching off.”

He said the stereotype of superhuman

Monzo founder Tom Blomfield: ‘The issue was switching off.’

tech bosses could not be further from the truth. “There’s this myth of the superhero founder who sleeps four hours a night and reads 500 books a year and is up hiking before dawn kind of garbage. If it’s true, I’ve never met that person.”

He eventually called it quits: first stepping down as chief executive to take over as a part-time president in May 2020, before leaving his unicorn startup for good last week. “The last couple of years, I didn’t feel like myself. I felt like it was just about keeping Monzo going.” There’s this myth of the superhero founder, who sleeps four hours a night and reads 500 books a year Blomfield joins a growing list of high-profile banking bosses opening up about their mental health, including former Virgin Money boss Jayne-Anne Gadhia who has been candid about postnatal depression and battling suicidal thoughts due to intense work pressure prompted by the company’s 2014 stock market debut.

Worst was the red phone kept in his room at night in case of work emergencies such as major technical outages or the odd financial crisis. “Every couple of months the red phone rings, and you know it’s going to ruin the rest of your week,” he said.

As Monzo grew, its honeymoon period with the press also came to an end. Headlines focused on widening losses – which stood at £114m last year – unexplained decisions to freeze accounts, mis-storing

of customer pins, and U-turns on premium accounts. Every couple of months the red phone rings, and you know it’s going to ruin the rest of your week.

Blomfield also had to deal with his old boss-turned-banking rival Anne Boden documenting unflattering accounts of his time as Starling bank’s chief technology officer in her new book, including embarrassing dinner parties and investor meetings.



mon

He was sent drafts in advance but Blomfield said he did not read them. "A lot of what was written was not true. Honestly, just factually, not true," Blomfield said, adding that retaliating would only fuel further headlines. "There's another side of the story that may get told eventually, but I just don't think it's significant enough to care that much about." Boden declined to comment. The Covid-19 crisis halved Monzo's revenues overnight.

Blomfield's job became more taxing after
t Covid-19

reached the UK, and the financial sector reeled from the impact. At Monzo, revenues halved overnight, and investors pulled funding days before documents were to be signed. "On the Friday that London went into lockdown, three separate funds phoned me up and said: 'Look, this investment's not going ahead.'"

Blomfield was soon working seven days a week, fielding calls from government officials consulting on Covid support
schemes, and UK

regulators trying to determine how much strain UK banks could take. "There were a few weeks at the start of the crisis when genuinely people didn't know if the financial system was going to collapse or not," Blomfield said.

There were a few weeks when people didn't know if the financial system was going to collapse or not

Monzo would later end up cutting 66 jobs, temporary furloughing roughly 175 workers, closing its Las Vegas office and securing top-up funding that cut its £2bn valuation by 40% to £1.2bn.

While the banking sector found its footing the crisis ended up being the push that Blomfield needed to hand control to Monzo's new chief executive, TS Anil. Seeing Monzo recover and surpass pre-coronavirus revenues without his constant guidance this past year, helped Blomfield let go entirely.

"It's definitely the right time for me to move on. And I feel so much lighter now. I'm just enjoying the small things in life," he said. "I feel like myself again."



LOSING MY BROTHER TO SUICIDE



Alice Hendy
Charity Role, Founder &
Director, Ripple Suicide

It is with a heavy heart that I write this post.

I have been frantically reading article upon article relating to suicide ever since the day I lost my brother. Apparently, writing about my experience will help me process my feelings as a grieving sibling, provide me with a channel to focus my grief as well as offering help and comfort to others. I'm not sure that will be the case, but I will give it a go.

I'd like to start by saying that when someone dies by suicide, the aftermath opens up an immediate opportunity to talk about suicide as a public health issue that affects all of us. I feel I have now have a duty to carry out work in suicide prevention and decrease the stigma surrounding the issue by sharing my story with you.

THE DAY MY LIFE CHANGED FOREVER

At 5.59am, on Wednesday 25th November 2020, my life was turned upside down. I had been fast asleep, blissfully unaware of what was about to unfold. My parents opened my bedroom door, turned on my light and sat at the bottom of my bed.

The bedroom light startled me, and I sat up, dazed and confused. "What's happened?" I asked my parents. They both looked at me with a blank expression, pale and bewildered.

"It's Josh", my Father said. "He's killed himself".

I looked at my Father in utter disbelief of what I had just heard. I turned to my Mother, who was staring into space. No tears, no screams. Just an overwhelming numbness consumed my body. I couldn't speak, I couldn't move, I didn't know what to say or do.

At that moment, it felt like time stood still. My Mother, Father and I seemed to be sat there, on my bed, for what felt like an eternity. In the immediate days that followed, we spent most of our time staring blankly at the television in silence.

Our only distraction from this out of body experience we were feeling was a regular knock at the front door with another delivery of sympathy flowers. Our kitchen very quickly became a makeshift florist specialising in lilies. Lilies, a symbol of grief, filled the air with a strong smell which is believed to be the soul of a passed one going away from the body and entering the realm of the immortal.



UTTER DISBELIEF

The feelings that followed the news of my brother taking his own life have consumed me ever since. Each day, my Mother, Father and I experience a different emotion. We seem to take it turns to have 'bad' days, although, each day that passes always seems to be a 'bad' day. If one of us is struggling, the other two rally around to support, and vice versa. In the weeks that followed this devastating news, the same questions whirled around in my head.

- How could he do this to us? (Resentment)
- What if the Police identified the wrong person? (Denial)
- Why didn't he come to us for help? (Confusion)
- What could we have done differently to stop this from happening? (Guilt)
- How could life have got so bad that he thought this was his only option? (Sadness)
- Did he realise how much of a devastating impact this would have on his close-knit family and friends? (Anger)
- How are we ever going to get over this? (Despair)

Grief experienced from someone who has taken their own life really is like no other. Over the last few weeks, many people have said to me 'I can't imagine what you're going through'. And they are right. Unless you have experienced this type of tragedy first hand, you will never understand the pain, sometimes actual physical pain, that lies inside of you day in, day out.



No one understands our pain, because their world didn't stop when ours did".

ISOLATION

Each day I wake up feeling sad that I've

opened my eyes. I dread the fact that I have to get through another long day filled with overwhelming sadness. I am so lucky to have an amazing network of family and friends around me, and I am grateful to have each and every one of them in my life. But, the truth is, I just haven't wanted to talk. I often reject phone calls. Sometimes, I take days to respond. If any of my friends are reading this, please forgive me. I know you care, and I know you're there for me. At the moment, basic life tasks like washing, getting dressed and eating has become a mammoth task for me to do.

SEEK SUPPORT

I've never really been one to talk about my feelings or emotions. Although I can come across quite 'hard' on the exterior, I am actually a very sensitive person. I realised I needed to seek support to deal with the grief and pain I was experiencing pretty early on in my experience, although this was not immediate.

I remember waking up on a Sunday morning and feeling the need to visit the location where my brother chose to end his life. I got up from my bed, picked up my car keys, and drove to the location in my pyjamas and slippers. I parked my car in the middle of a road, left it unlocked with the door open and stumbled towards my destination. I remember walking through a graveyard and a really pretty church which was holding their Sunday service.

I'm not an overly religious person, but I felt an urge to enter the church. I walked in mid-way through the service. The congregation turned their heads and stared at me in disbelief. There I was, in the freezing cold, in my pyjamas and slippers. A kind man got up from his pew to comfort me, clearly acknowledging that I was in a state of distress. He sat me down at the back of the church. I stayed for the duration of the service, listening to the prayers, watching the choir sing hymns and staring intently at the stain glass windows with tears silently streaming down my cheeks. I took comfort from it. After the service, the kind man

asked if I would like to remain behind to speak to the priest. I politely declined and continued to stumble towards the location where my brother took his own life.

Here, I sat on the cold, muddy concrete for about an hour. I sat there, sobbing, desperately trying to put myself into Josh's shoes on that night. Members of the public walked past me like I wasn't even there. Parents guarded their children from me in fear I would do something to put them in danger. I didn't care. I just needed time alone, in that exact spot, to feel my brother's sorrow. I write about this experience now in disbelief. I cannot get over my actions, it's like I was a different person that morning. Perhaps that demonstrates progress in dealing with my grief in comparison to my feelings and behaviour now? I don't know. I'm telling you this part not to gain your sympathy. I want you to know that it took that incident for me to realise I needed additional support. Please, if you are grieving or struggling yourself, seek help immediately. Don't wait it out like I did thinking you can go it alone. I've put some resources I have found personally useful at the bottom of this page - please utilise them, they are of genuine use.

JOSH'S STRUGGLES

There is no doubt that Josh had his struggles. He was diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome from a young age which, although not severe like the examples you watch on the television, was a very difficult condition to deal with. Josh was bullied consistently throughout school. Kids can be very cruel, and cruel they were. He was ridiculed for his condition, and he lacked friendships.

Despite his troubled school experience, Josh obtained a good selection of qualifications from school, left to attend college and secured a respectable job in the community.

As Josh's older sister, I always felt protective of my brother. I tried my best to look after him, wrap him in cotton wool and



stand up to the school bullies on his behalf. I now feel like I've let him down. He didn't come to me for help when he needed it the most.

THE TURNING POINT

I believe it is around the age of 17 that Josh's mental health really began to take a turn. Josh lacked motivation and chose not to put his obvious intelligence to good use, despite being very capable. My parents and I found his attitude incredibly frustrating. How can such a bright boy choose not to put the effort in to maximise his potential? This became a common theme for the remainder of Josh's short life. If there was a short cut, a way to achieve something with minimal work or effort, Josh would go for it. In the years that followed, Josh chanced his arm at cryptocurrency trading as well as setting up numerous business ventures. It has since transpired that Josh had also found himself in financial difficulty, with a large amount of credit and loans in his name, despite having a well-paid job.

NETWORK SUPPORT

As Josh grew from a boy to a man, he became a real character. Everyone who met Josh loved him. He made some wonderful friendships with his work colleagues, friends who would go out of their way to offer him support and guidance. His friends were extremely compassionate

towards Josh, who was very open about his struggles with mental health.

The statistics speak for themselves. There were 5,691 suicides in England and Wales in 2019, that is 321 more compared to the year before. But, it's heartbreaking to look at those statistics. They are not just charts or numbers on a list; each one is a person with a name, a story and a devastated family attached.

Josh was offered support numerous times from Occupational Health assessments, telephone consultations, chats with family and friends, counselling, psychotherapy, you name it. But, he didn't take up these offers. I feel so sad knowing that, despite all of these supportive outlets and everyone around him that loved him more than life itself, he chose to battle alone.

THE AFTERMATH

I guess I should count myself lucky that, at 29 years of age, I have never had the misfortune of managing a loved one's estate and organising a funeral before now.

Over the last 6 weeks, I have dealt with tasks and made decisions I never thought I would have to make. Going through his phone records line by line in the hope of finding answers, choosing which items

of clothes to put my brother in one last time, liaising with the coroner and police surrounding the circumstances of his death, selecting which songs and poems to feature at the funeral, calls to his friends and colleagues, cancelling his bank accounts, cancelling his insurance policies, countless calls to organisations and companies whom Josh had accounts with, each one presenting a new issue.

I felt an immediate sense of responsibility that I needed to step up. I wanted to protect my parents from the horrific reality of the event to the best of my ability. I felt like, and still feel like, my grief is incomparable to my parents. After all, they have lost their only son.

As the only remaining child of my parents, I also feel an overwhelming pressure to provide them with grandchildren. I am their only hope of that life event now happening. Whether or not I do that, I don't know. I am aware both my parents just want me to be happy, I know they would never pressure me to have children. But, it doesn't remove the feeling of expectation and the subsequent guilt I would feel if I did not provide offspring. Again, time will tell.

I can't help feeling that if Josh knew the agonising ordeal my parents and I have gone through in dealing with his decision, he

may well have thought twice. But, I think when you're that mentally unwell, your rationale tends to slip away and the consequences of your actions may well dissolve into the background. Unfortunately, I'll never know what went through his mind that night, and that's the sad and painful reality of suicide.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

There is no denying that the passing of my brother has changed me as a person. I feel like nothing else that happens to me in this world will ever be as bad as what I'm currently going through. I've become distant, quieter, more subdued in nature. I'm not sure if that will remain the case for the short-term or the long-term. I guess we will find out in time. I know many of Josh's family and friends are feeling similar.

I have, however, become fixated and obsessed with ensuring that even one other family does not go through the utter devastation that is the loss of a loved one from suicide. I'm told by my counsellor that this is a common reaction to the death of a loved one; an overwhelming desire to campaign to help others.

When learning of the circumstances surrounding Josh's death, it became apparent that he had been researching methods and techniques to take his own life via online search results. I chose to visit these websites and search results myself in an attempt to enter Josh's headspace. What I discovered shocked me to the core. Harmful online search results add a level of vulnerability to individuals by reinforcing their feelings, legitimising their thoughts and providing users with the ways and means to act on their contemplations. The sheer volume of material available online and the lack of immediate mental health support following an online search of this nature is astounding.



In a population survey of 21 year olds, of the 248 participants who had made attempts on their life, almost three quarters reported harmful internet use.”
- Bristol University, 2016

I know I have to do something to change this and prevent other people from looking at this material online. My profession is in IT, and I've decided to utilise my skillset and connections to create an online monitoring tool to prevent individuals from researching dangerous content. I've called the tool 'Ripple' - it is estimated that for every suicide, more than one in 135 people suffer intense grief; a ripple effect. It is here that I need to make very clear to you that this concept is a non-for profit organisation. I have no interest in making money. I believe my purpose in this life is to now save lives and redirect people suffering with mental health

struggles to the wealth of fantastic charities that can undoubtedly provide them with life-changing support.

Ripple will present a visual page on a user's device the second they are flagged as searching for a harmful keyword or phrase relating to self-harm or suicide. The Ripple page is presented before harmful online search results are displayed, and act as an interception to encourage users to visit a mental health support page from charity partners as an alternative to viewing harmful online results.



There are 1.2 million internet searches for ways to take your own life every month” - Suicide Forum, 2018

I have spent the last few weeks perfecting my proposal and pitching my idea to businesses and charities specialising in mental health. Lots of people have said “well done” or “I can't believe you have done this so soon after”. All I want now is the opportunity to be heard, to display a redirection to people like you who may be struggling and to encourage you to seek help. The day I can say the Ripple tool saved a life from suicide is the day I am more accepting of hearing “well done”.

Joshy - if you are watching me write this, please know that I love you with all my heart and I pray you are finally at peace. I promise I will look after Mum and Dad for you. Love you always.

I guess now, I am attempting to grow from my struggles and use my lessons from my experience to reduce the stigma surrounding suicide.

If you have read through my story and would like to support me with Ripple, help me deal with my grief, back me on my journey, or just would like to talk, please do make contact with me.

Please look out for each other. Make the time to check in with those around you.

Love to you all, Alice

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

SoBS (Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide): 0300 111 5065

Samaritans: Phone: 116 123. Email: jo@samaritans.org

PAPYRUS: Phone: 0800 068 4141. Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Mind: Phone: 0300 123 3393 . Email: info@mind.org.uk

CALM: Phone: 0800 58 58 58. Webchat available

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GEMMA OATEN SHARES SHOCKING PHOTO TAKEN AT THE HEIGHT OF HER ANOREXIA BATTLE AGED 19



Gemma Oaten has shared a shocking photo taken at the height of her anorexia battle aged 19.



EATING DISORDER SUPPORT SERVICE



The actress, 36, posted the snap, which shows her looking dangerously thin while clad in pyjamas and revealed it was taken just before she suffered a heart attack.

Gemma shared the harrowing photo alongside a snap of her looking healthy and happy in the present day to celebrate how far she had come in her battle - and mark her new role as acting manager at charity SEED Eating Disorders Support Services.

She captioned the snap: 'Today I am very proud to announce that I am taking on the role of Acting Manager of my family's charity SEED Eating Disorders Support Services @seeduk_ed.

'This is a full circle for moment for me & I wanted to share a little about my journey:

'The picture on the left was a photo I found recently taken when I was suffering from anorexia & it broke my heart to look at it. You can see the impact this devastating mental health illness had on my family & I. 'I also am aware that this image may be difficult to look at for many of you.

'The image on the top right was taken just before my heart attack when I was just 19 years old. The picture on the right is me 3 days ago. Recovery is possible & there is hope.

'Thank you @nickyjohnston and @jenhawkins_hmua for capturing the woman I am today as I take on the role of charity manager in order to support SEED's growth, deliver our goals & build awareness of the charity & eating disorders.

'The charity was founded by my mother @margoaten MBE & father Dennis Oaten because they nearly lost me to this vicious disease.

'My parents have worked tirelessly over the last 20+ years to help & support 1000's of those affected by eating disorders, but now - sadly - they must step down from the day to day running due to ill health.

'As with many charities, COVID-19 has hit us hard financially, so I have decided to step into this role & continue the hard work that my parents have put into this wonderful, life changing & life saving organisation.

'It's been an emotional & overwhelming time. I am determined & ready to fight to save our charity & change the way eating disorders are viewed, to get SEED the support it deserves & in turn allow #SEED to help the 1.6 million people in the UK alone who are affected by an eating disorder.

'A mental health illness that has the highest mortality rate of any other.

'If you are reading this & an eating disorder has touched your life or the life of those close to you, please do reach out to SEED for support.

'Never give up. We're not giving up on you. Have faith & always hope.'

The former Emmerdale star first formed a complicated relationship with food at the age of ten before being diagnosed with an eating disorder just two years later.

Speaking to The Sun in June she said: 'I just restricted my eating completely. I constantly felt fat. It was just a spiral. I became a prisoner of my own mind...

'I would be pumped with calories, drugs

and potassium and shipped back out. There was no funding to put me anywhere that was specialised.'

Gemma said that she was warned by doctors that if she didn't eat or drink anything within 24 hours she would be dead.

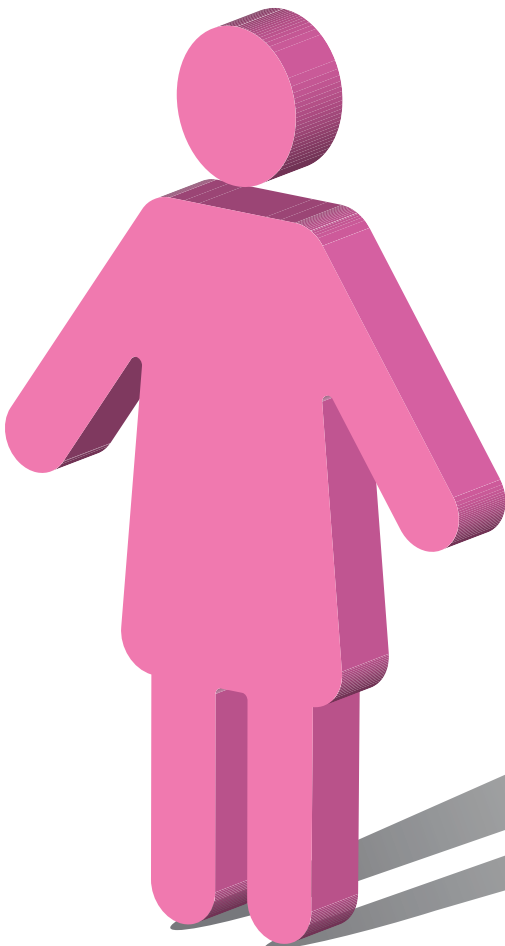
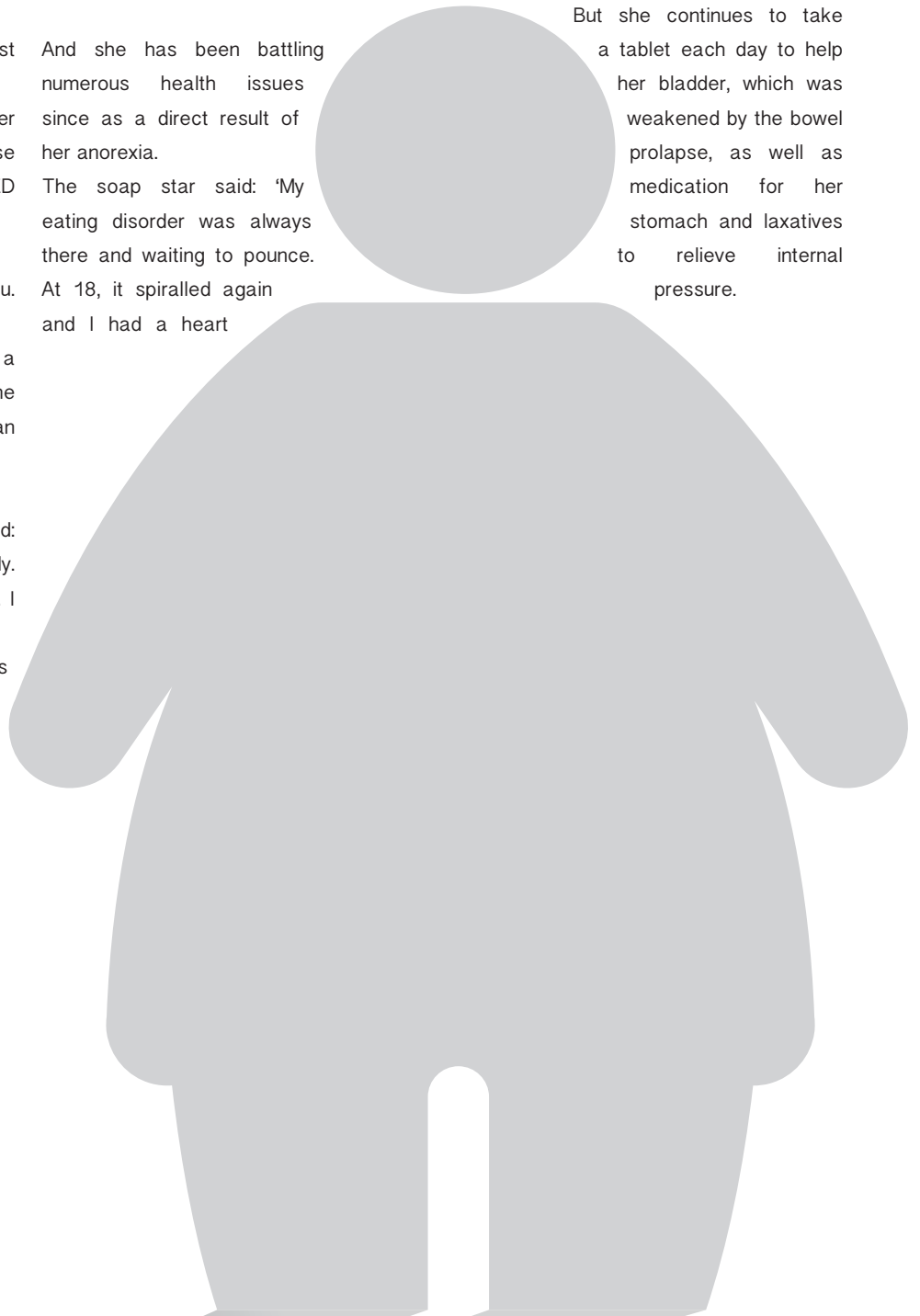
And she has been battling numerous health issues since as a direct result of her anorexia.

The soap star said: 'My eating disorder was always there and waiting to pounce.

At 18, it spiralled again and I had a heart

attack. A year later at 19, I had a bowel prolapse [when the rectal wall slides out]. The health scares served as a wake up call for Gemma who said she decided to start seeing a therapist and has now been in recovery for 13 years.

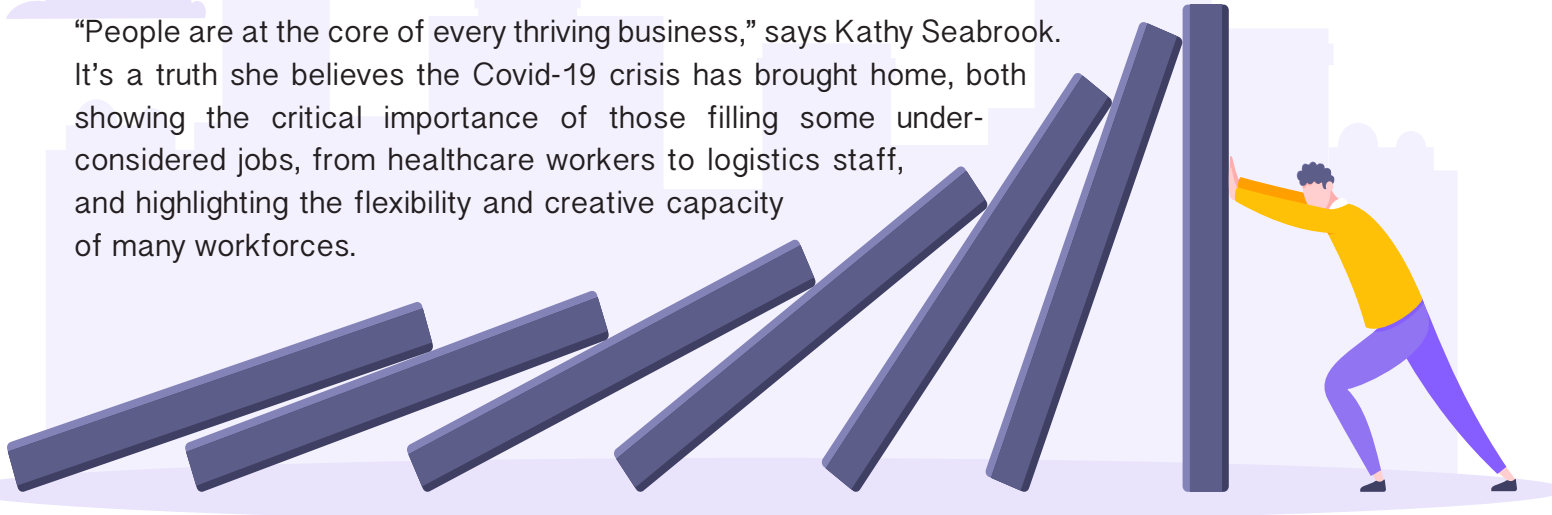
But she continues to take a tablet each day to help her bladder, which was weakened by the bowel prolapse, as well as medication for her stomach and laxatives to relieve internal pressure.



For help and support with eating disorders contact SEED on (01482) 718130 or visit www.seedeatingdisorders.org.uk

CRISIS RESILIENCE AND HUMAN CAPITAL

“People are at the core of every thriving business,” says Kathy Seabrook. It’s a truth she believes the Covid-19 crisis has brought home, both showing the critical importance of those filling some under-considered jobs, from healthcare workers to logistics staff, and highlighting the flexibility and creative capacity of many workforces.



She points to the example of the Ford Motor Company’s US operations where production lines were adapted from producing cars to making hospital respirators in the first wave of the Covid pandemic. “It took very smart people to switch those lines in such a short time.” I asked Kathy, who is former president of the American Society of Safety Professionals to expand a little on her chapter in the One Percent Safer book, because it combines two topical issues: the Covid pandemic and the growing interest in human capital management.

Human capital, of which sound safety and health management is an integral part, has been driven up the agenda by the interest of institutional investors, who are naturally keen to put their money where it will grow. Many of them see businesses who do not look after their workforces as threatening that growth as taking unnecessary risks which could come back to bite them in a gradual drain of talent, if not in regulatory sanctions for poor safety standards.

Major employers are aware of this investor interest and are changing the information they share on their performance. Kathy points to a report in August 2020 by

US finance data company MSCI, which showed that the proportion of companies publicly disclosing their safety and health audit measures jumped from 59% in 2015 to 89% in 2019.

“That was encouraging because health and safety has not been to the fore,” she says.

Increasingly, says Kathy, “Investors are asking ‘Where are your risks? What are your opportunities?’” And in a knowledge- and services-driven economy, employees and how they are nurtured and cared for represent the greatest opportunities and the biggest risks to sustained profitability.

“We need to change the math for companies, from people equals cost, to people equals value,” says Kathy, who is an ambassador for the Capitals Coalition, which promotes the benefits of putting human and environmental issues at the centre of business.

Safety and health professionals have an important role in helping organisations show their human capital bona fides but don’t always realise the external pressure is growing.

“It’s about our profession understanding the business environment we operate in,”

Kathy told me. “If we put our heads and hands around this, it is our future. It will create value for us too.”

In her original contribution to the book, Kathy challenged OSH leaders to ask the important questions: “Does your company know its potential high-consequence risks? Would your company be resilient in the event of a low-probability, high-consequence incident such as Covid-19?”

Her questions chime with Siemens global safety head Ralf Franke’s point in his contribution to One Percent Safer, that organisations need to work fast to codify the information in their organisations about what they did well and badly in responding to the pandemic, to help ensure they are resilient when the next low-probability shock comes. And a lot of that resilience, as Kathy emphasises, will depend on how they value and manage their human capital.

Kathy’s contribution is just one of 137 thought-provoking chapters in the One Percent Safer book.

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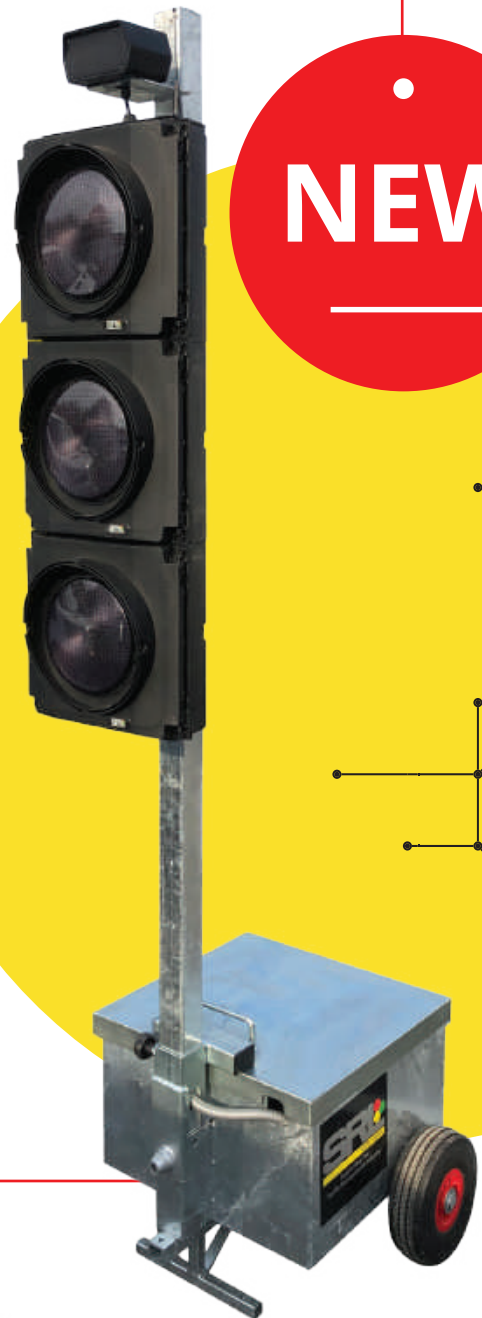
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CARING FOR TEMPORARY WORKERS IN A PANDEMIC

Last year had started on such a high for Evolve Resourcing Solutions. But it was short lived. By the end of March, the country was in lockdown and in unprecedented times as Covid 19 took a grip.

With so much uncertainty around what it was it was dealing with, Government closed most construction sites down and apart from a small amount of essential workers, the temporary recruitment company didn't place an operative on any site anywhere for over six weeks.

"Times were tough but for me the health, safety and wellbeing of our workers was our main focus," says Sarah Hardy, Director of Evolve Resourcing Solutions.

"We decided to use the lockdown time wisely to how we were going to develop the business and more importantly how we were going to support them when they were able to come back to work."

As early summer hit and covid rates fell,

restrictions were lifted and work started to return. "By this time, we had put a programme in place to ensure that all our operatives would be going back to sites with all the levels of compliance they needed generally as well as showing they understood and would adhere to covid restrictions etc. Even without covid, we had robust plans in place to ensure all of our operatives are fit for the roles they have signed up for and we put rigorous checks in place to ensure that happens on a regular basis with everyone we have on our books. The consequences of getting compliance wrong could be detrimental if we don't have the right systems and processes in place." Along side this and informing all operatives of the latest covid guidance so they are up-to-date, they all had to sign covid declaration forms before starting a new

job to Evolve's clients the assurance of minimising the spread of the virus on sites. Also, as a result of covid, the company tried to source as many workers as possible that were local to the jobs-meaning they could walk or cycle to work and avoid public transport. After that, regular weekly covid tests were put in place to back this up and to safeguard workers and their co-workers on site. "The fact that our clients were investing in regular testing meant that we could also maintain a higher turnover of staff with the confidence that these operatives had all tested negative and could move freely between jobs before their next test," she adds.

But Ms Hardy's other concern was the operatives themselves. She realised early on that this unprecedented pandemic would



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have an effect on their mental health and wellbeing, especially when jobs were put on hold or cancelled as happened on several occasions last year. "Being familiar with mental health issues myself, it was obvious early on to me that we had to go further to ensure our operatives were being looked after. I knew the pandemic itself and the consequences of it would have an effect on the workers, especially those that may have been without work for longer periods of time. It was clear to me that this would affect people in different ways and we had to take that on-board.

"It is a fact that most of our operatives are men and we all know men don't talk as much as women about these issues. It was important to me personally that we found different ways to make sure they were ok and to get them thinking about these issues. So, we used the excellent resources that Safer Highways provide and gave them access to these. Also, I was regularly contacting all of them to see whether there were any employment concerns they wanted to talk about. It was personal for me because we are always like to have a strong workforce and to look after their health and wellbeing first and foremost."

As a result, Evolve regularly provided each operative with a weekly mailer, providing them with all the updated government guidance along with the other resources based around health and wellbeing.

Also, the regular phone calls did uncover the fact that some workers that were suffering as a result of what happened last year across the country. "There was one example where an operative asked me for an advance in his wage because he couldn't afford his car insurance and if he couldn't insure his car, he couldn't work. That was something we were happy to do in this case for obvious reasons but also because of the bigger picture. It meant he didn't have to worry any longer and would be happier at work knowing it had been sorted. It is this sort of approach that I want to continue and hope that it is playing a small part in making a difference to the way our operatives are living and working."

“

Being familiar with mental health issues myself, it was obvious early on to me that we had to go further to ensure our operatives were being looked after”.

“

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At Amey we want our employees to know that it's ok not to be ok and to trust that we will fully support them with any wellbeing challenges they may face.

Let's be safe, happy and healthy, together.



Mates in Mind

Our recent partnership with Mates in Mind is an extension of our commitment to mental health and wellbeing.

Through this partnership we're implementing our bespoke mental health and wellbeing program including all employee mental health awareness training and bespoke manager training, to provide our people with vital guidance, and support when it comes to managing mental health within the workplace.

We recognise that taking this proactive step to address mental health in the workplace has never been more important as we continue to adapt to the challenges of the pandemic and take steps towards building a thriving workplace and a positive mental health culture that supports all employee's mental wellbeing.

Empowering our people

At Amey we offer a range of wellbeing support for our people. We've introduced Wellbeing Wednesdays, focusing on a different wellbeing topic each month, sharing content and resources to help raise awareness and to normalise the conversation around the wellbeing.

We've launched our Wellbeing Podcast series, featuring a variety of inspirational guests, including both expert speakers and Amey employees who share their personal experiences and discuss the wellbeing subjects that are important to us all.

Our people also have access to a Wellbeing Hub that's a one stop shop for wellbeing and mental health resources that they can visit to access the resources that are right for them at a time when they need them. Materials offer support on financial, physical, social and workplace wellbeing.

We also provide our employees with access to a wide range of resources through our wellbeing partners including sessions such as Mindful Mondays, Time for Me drop ins and HIIT workouts, as well as information and resources around financial wellbeing and nutrition.

All of this is supported by our large network of Wellbeing Ambassadors and Mental Health First Aiders across the business that receive ongoing training, development and support to enable them to have the confidence and skills to deal effectively with whatever situations they are faced with.

MORE DRUGS THAN DRINK.

Current guidance on drug driving is either unavailable or outdated says Ean Lewin MD of D.tec International. Ean is now urging industry to consider if what they have in place is enough to deter employees from drug driving to ultimately reduce fatalities on our roads?

There are more drugs on our roads than drink” says Ean Lewin MD of D.tec International. “Since the introduction of Section 5a of The Road Traffic Act back in March 2015 I have watched as annual drug drive arrest figures have surged. Each year I am left shocked as the statistics ramp up, with most recent figures calculated to be 40 to 50 times more than pre s5a.”



Ean Lewin
Managing Director
D.tec International

As supplier to all 44 police forces throughout England, Scotland, and Wales, Ean appreciates he is in a unique position as he notes “he is all too aware of the scale of our countries problem with Drug driving.”

“You might think things would have slowed this year given the fact we are in the middle of a third national lockdown” He says. “Sadly, this is not the case, as it appears those choosing to drive are taking more risks than ever.” Essex Police saw 2 ½ to 3 times more drug arrests than drink offences during the first lockdown.





Ean runs through the stats collated in early 2020 noting that “Merseyside police arrested over 2000 drivers on drug driving offences, which is significant. Terrifyingly, over 50% of those arrested were at work, driving, or drove for work in some way.”

The defacto body for reference across Europe, the ECMDDA reports that the UK is the highest consumer of illegal drugs in Europe. One in Eight employees under the age of 35 have admitted to smoking cannabis whilst one in fourteen of all employees have too.

All employees in employment

	Last year (intermittent user)	Last month (regular user)
Cannabis	1 in 14	1 in 25
Cocaine	1 in 33	1 in 100

Employees under 35

	Last year (intermittent user)	Last month (regular user)
Cannabis	1 in 8	1 in 14
Cocaine	1 in 20	1 in 50

“If society is struggling to get this problem under control, then it stands to reason that businesses will be affected through no fault of their own, we are not immune to the problem.”

“So what can industry do to make our roads safer?” asks Ean.

The vast majority of businesses responsibly prioritise employee safety above all else despite outdated guidance.

“We work with many fleet operators who are spending hundreds, or thousands of pounds installing telematics that improve fuel efficiency, monitor vehicle performance and track driver behaviours.”

But is that truly adequate to ensure the person behind the wheel of your asset is fit to do their job safely? “A risk assessment or fit to drive self-declaration is not nearly enough, who is going to admit to being unfit to drive when their livelihood depends on it?” Most importantly often times drug users do not understand the lasting impact that the cannabis they had the night before is having on their reaction times for up to a week later, or the fact the cocaine they took on Saturday is causing them to drive more erratically come Monday morning.

“With this in mind I ask that industry does better, for their businesses, their employees and the wider public. Whether Corporate Social Responsibility, or employee welfare, or to prevent directors and managers being prosecuted under Corporate Manslaughter etc. Act with personal fines and potential prison sentences.

Be clear of one thing, a plead to the judge of ‘naivety due to lack of experience’ is not an excuse to turn a blind eye and will not help you personally when at trial some 2 or 3 years post the incident.”

Ean added “After 25 years of helping Police forces and businesses tackle this issue and whilst lobbying other professional bodies like CILT, RHA... CLOC’s and FORS and Ministers, MP’s, DfT and their transport safety advisory body PACTS for new legislation, I hope industry can work together to set a gold standard that deters drug using risk takers from failing to properly carry out their duties and putting you and others in harm’s way. It is all about saving lives and reducing serious injury.



The vast majority of businesses responsibly prioritise employee safety above all else despite outdated guidance”.



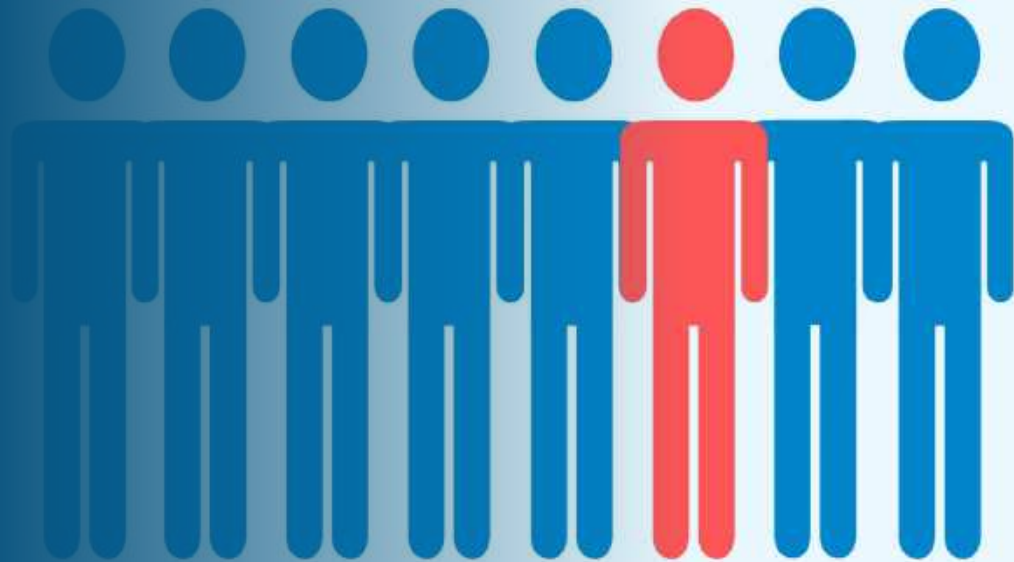
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Risk assessment or fit to drive self-declaration is not nearly enough, who is going to admit to being unfit to drive when their livelihood depends on it?”



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The statistics show that last year

ONE IN EIGHT

under 35s were using cannabis and
one in fourteen of all employees were too.

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“WHY INDUSTRY NEEDS TO CHANGE IN ITS APPROACH TO HEALTH AND SAFETY”

IS YOUR BUSINESS STAYING THE SAME WHILE THE WORLD RAPIDLY CHANGES AROUND YOU?

WHERE DOES IT SIT IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR WHOLE INDUSTRY SECTOR?

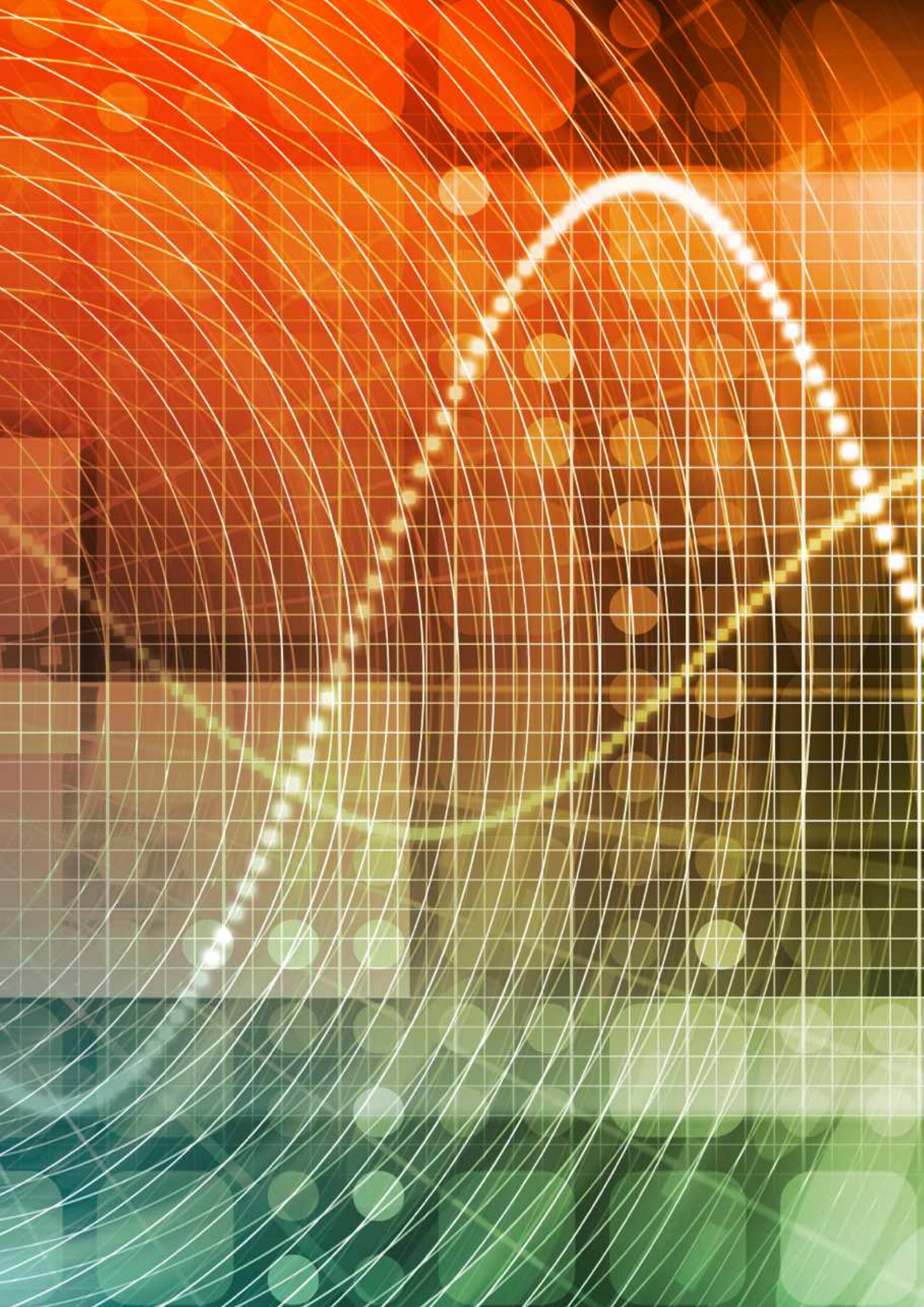
It's a cliché that 'change is a constant' and we've moved through many technological changes over the past couple of centuries. More recently, the pace of change has been quickening. In only a couple of decades, we moved from floppy discs, to USB keys to cloud computing and from a landline telephone to carrying everything we 'need' in a mobile phone that lives by our side. From records to cassettes and CDs of our favourite artists, now, a suite of digital options.

However, the global pandemic has simultaneously accelerated existing trends and created seismic shifts across the economy. The demise of our UK High Streets and flagship retailers was already underway, driven by exponential growth of E-commerce. Cinemas were suffering from bigger budget online streaming productions.

With so much turbulence, the natural tendency can be a reactive 'fight or flight.' Unsurprisingly, the first lockdown caught business leaders off guard. Those with more established risk, crisis management and business continuity portfolios may have been better prepared. Though, notwithstanding the scale of the challenges, how many businesses actually managed risk registers which reflected their 'live' operations? Or, business continuity plans which were frequently tested through scenario planning, to learn and adapt?

One year on, in the third UK lockdown, terms such as 'PPE,' 'stay safe,' 'save lives,' and 'risk' have entered the lexicon of the population outside of professional roles, thanks to the widespread media coverage. But, what has actually changed internally? Have written Health and Safety Policies been reviewed to drive changes in organisational structure, revised roles and responsibilities and new arrangements? How has your Board developed measures of operational safety and environmental risk which reflect the current direction of the business?

At the most fundamental level, how much organisational drift has taken place? Innovation, seizing new opportunities, pivoting into new markets or even 'remaining the same' may have left businesses out of step with strategic goals. Management systems and bureaucratic processes may now add more cost than value where they were a 'bolt on'



instead of being integral to driving the business.

Whole industrial sectors were built on foundations of custom and practice, best available knowledge, technology, expertise and reliance on relative status quo. Innovation was oft perceived as the luxury of entrepreneurs, or R&D functions where research and design could unlock competitive edge. But, globally, we now question our most common assumptions. Do we need to rent office premium space? Are we prepared to commute for hours? Is it ethical to internationally to attend a conference? Do we all need to be together in one room to interview candidates? Can we work from anywhere?

Not only has digitisation of the economy been rapid, it's forced itself upon all demographics, irrespective of technophobia. "I don't really bother with social media" doesn't excuse you from having to attend meetings on Zoom, MicroSoft Teams, Google Hangout etc. All age groups are expected to interact with apps to monitor transmission of the Covid19 virus and arrange vaccinations.

It's opened up the debate about disparity of wealth, with children from poorer families understood to be falling further behind more affluent peers due to lack of technology within the household.

Mental health awareness had already become prominent across the media. Appointment of Mental Health First Aiders were increasing amongst employers. But, how are HR functions and others ensuring that these roles are supported to meet high demand from dispersed employees? Where does an employer's role start and end for mental health where whole departments are now home-based? How much responsibility is being taken around ergonomics where display screen equipment is being used from an armchair due to lack of home office space?

Whereas 'risk' and 'health and safety' have often been viewed as hygiene factors, a cost to be avoided, a problem to be managed, industry needs to change at all levels. Fears around 'compliance' or 'getting it wrong' will limit strategic capability. The law is slow to change and to act. Declining resources for regulators to advise and enforce means the objective measures of compliance may be more difficult to define.

Industry, supported by Government departments and professional bodies need to focus on strategic goals which enhance brand and reputation, underpinned by agility, adaptability and resilience. Being creative, curious and caring about people and the environment will develop more responsive approaches, at pace. Red Laces consultancy unravels the mystery around risk and sustainability for business leaders and has developed an innovative and free,

digital diagnostic tool. It takes less than 2 minutes to answer 20 questions and the outcome is a personalised score from which to baseline. It is available at www.redlaces.co.uk.scoreapp.com

GenZ are now entering the economy (born 1996-2010). School leavers and graduates are particularly vulnerable as they search for their first roles during this economic turmoil. However, they have only known a world with smartphones and social media. In a digital world, they are hyper-connected. Many have side hustles where they sell clothes, make-up, jewellery and more on Instagram. An employer recruiting a Marketing Director with 10 years of experience could attract someone in their mid-20s.

GenZ value mental health highly, have a strong sense of community and sustainability is very important to them. As Government-funded furlough schemes end, unemployment levels are likely to increase. The gig economy associated with E-commerce, food deliveries and more is also likely to increase further. So, how can employers think differently about solutions to increase diversity, inclusion and equity and harness the best talent?

There has been an increase in professional bodies introducing mentoring schemes and promoting their 'future leaders.' What other models could be used to disrupt thinking across industry to be a driving force for making the world a better place whilst delivering commercial success?

There is no more status quo. If your business is staying the same while the world rapidly changes around you...?



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Jonathan Dempsey
Red Laces

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James Bird
Human and Organisational Factors Program Lead
Kier Highways

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BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH TO SAFETY

Amey's award winning safety behavioural toolkit – ThinkSafe, has been used to develop a new survey to consider the wellbeing and mental health impacts of the pandemic in AmeyConsulting on its workforce.

ameyconsulting



ThinkSafe is a series of toolkits which provide high quality data, beyond traditional safety metrics and examine the psychological and human factor variables associated with safety; such as workload, job pressure and safety climate. The toolkits were developed following a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) with Leeds Beckett University's 'Psychology Applied to Safety & Health' research team.

It was developed by AmeyConsulting and Rail to focus on psychological and human factor conditions that may contribute to accidents or incidents, utilising a 'bottom-up' approach to understand the risk of everyday activities.

The project came out of a need to address the pitfalls of using root cause analysis, audits and accident data to understand risk and

reduce accidents. Although useful, these approaches are considered somewhat reactive, therefore potentially posing a safety risk.

The ThinkSafe toolkits have continually helped to provide insight into other contributory factors of safety. COVID-19 has presented a number of wellbeing challenges including the effects of long-term teleworking and in 2020 the ThinkSafe framework was used to create a bespoke survey (called Future Office) completed by over 1,500 employees in AmeyConsulting. The results gathered through this survey have helped to inform a range of follow up initiatives such as an AmeyConsulting virtual wellbeing event.

Speaking about the ThinkSafe initiative Robert Doyle, HSEQ Director, Consulting, Amey said: "ThinkSafe provides an innovative approach to support our ongoing zero harm philosophy - by focusing on human and psychological factors which can positively or negatively impact on the safety and wellbeing of our workforce. At Amey we are committed to pushing the boundaries and ongoing improvement against our health, safety and wellbeing agenda which is ever more prevalent during a pandemic."

ThinkSafe has been
r o l l e d

out to over 5,000 employees across the business since it first launched in AmeyConsulting and Rail and has been shortlisted for the Ferrovial Zuritanken internal awards. It was awarded the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Initiative of the Year Award in 2020. The coveted prize benchmarked 'fascinating, industry leading, innovative solutions to health and safety management.'

The effectiveness of the toolkit will be shared with other industries at this year's RSSB Human Factors Conference.



DRIVING SAFETY TO ANOTHER LEVEL



John Talbot
Chairman
Highway Care



When it comes to business, John Talbot, Chairman of Highway Care is a man driven by two things. The first is a desire to invent and engineer things to provide solutions to everyday challenges and the second is to save lives on the road network. The two of those things provide a powerful combination, something that has been the catalyst for Highway Care's success in the highways sector to enable it to remain at the forefront of the development of safety solutions for the industry for over 40 years.

That passion and drive to make a difference doesn't come naturally to everyone but it certainly does to John and that flows through the whole Highway Care business today. Even though he is no longer a part of the businesses' day-to-day activities, he has built a team around him that share the same philosophy, same ethos and more importantly, the same passion.

But to understand how Highway Care went from conception to success and why the desire to contribute to saving lives means

so much to John you have to go back to the beginning of his career-something that is both remarkable and insightful.

After graduating at Cambridge University in 1964 he soon took up a scholarship in the West Indies to complete a diploma in Tropical Agriculture. Part of this obligation was to serve in the developing world as part of Britain's contribution to developing agriculture across the globe. As a result John spent what he describes as a 'rewarding' time in Trinidad and Jamaica, but he was keen to get back to the Caribbean and accepted a job at Tate and Lyle where he was put in charge of research and development in a large sugar plantation in Jamaica, giving him 'a lot of responsibility' at an incredibly young age. "This taught me a lot about life and work at the same time and the knowledge of how different cultures work in business," he says. From there, he was headhunted by Novartis as its technical development manager, where he was put in charge of the entire Caribbean and part of South America with a view to developing its sugar, banana and pineapple crop portfolio. "It was an incredible experience-seven years' worth of travelling across 20 countries living and working simultaneously and again it taught me a lot about business at the same time," adds John.

What came next was the precursor to what was meant to be his destiny-running his own business. He continued to travel for work, this time to South America and places like Venezuela where he worked on finding the most suitable herbicides to help manage unwanted vegetation that presented a fire risk around important industrial facilities

such as oil refineries.

"While this was once again vital and interesting work that I would draw on in the future I felt like a rolling stone bouncing around from country to country and desperately needed some routes of my own, so I decided to come back to the UK with a desire to finally start my own business. I felt I had learnt a lot and had strong ideas of my own, which I contribute towards solving problems."

So, John carried on in the same line of work building a successful business using herbicides to good effect taming vegetation in places like timber yards, paper mills and once again oil refineries. The company got approached to deal with things like trip hazards where vegetation was blocking holes, barriers and fences as well as railway equipment, buildings and also to help improve the condition of public places.

Then in 1978, interest in the service started to grow from local authorities who wanted to suppress vegetation alongside and in the centre of roads and the company Selectokil was born. From treating small stretches for Kent County Council on the A2 as well as on the M1 in Derbyshire, the demand and need for the service grew very rapidly. The feedback was impressive, and the service was working offering local authority



operatives
the chance to
control weeds and vegetation
so they could do things like inspect
safety barriers properly with a good line
of sight. Before long, Selectokil had a
fleet of trucks, especially redesigned
and converted, covering the UK at a rate
of about 100 miles in one night. "All of a
sudden it seemed so far removed from
when I started off with one Land Rover and
a small knapsack sprayer" he said. It was
also John's first introduction at working
next to live traffic and that got him thinking.

But still the business grew, and the
company became a popular name among
all the road operators (mainly County
Councils) including the Highways Agency,
who it worked closely with and ended
up being instrumental in the start of the
TD29/87 regulations for road operators
which later became known as Chapter
8. By this time, Selectokil also diversified
into the military sector, helping develop
a product that could be applied to the
surface of all military runways in the UK
to make them look like ploughed fields from
above, negating any potential air strikes.

It was perhaps the next chapter of his career
that became the most relevant to where he
is today. All those years working next to
live traffic and in other dangerous areas

made
him
realise that there
was a need to protect the back of
vehicles working on the live network,
around the same time of the early
development of the mobile lane closure.
"I realised there was a need to protect
the trucks and their drivers, the workers
and indeed the travelling public but there
weren't any solutions apart from one
company Triplex-selling lorry-mounted
crash cushions." So, in search of a solution
he headed west to the US and travelled
6,000 miles for solutions that might help
him. He came back with something that
eventually Highway Care has become best
known for- a quickly deployable temporary
safety barrier. From there he realised the
huge need and potential to develop safety
solutions to help with challenges on the
road network and a Highway Care division
of Selectokil was formed.

The ideas and the products kept on coming
and the company diversified again to solve
a problem with French drains developing
a machine to clean the drains but not
damage the delicate surface at the same
time-putting back the clean and dry stone

in one continuous
movement of recycling. It
was a machine and system later taken
on by another of the industry's well-
known companies with a focus on safety
- Carnell. The energy absorption products
and quick-change barrier continued to
grow in popularity, and as a result, spurred
on by some healthy competition in the
market Highway Care, under the watchful
eye of John , developed another temporary
barrier that was made out of continuously
smooth steel, was quickly deployable
and provided a low deflection vehicle
restraint system which could protect all
vehicles, including motorcyclists-who were
particularly vulnerable to hitting posts-
often with fatal consequences. This was
the first version of what is now known
as the BG800 temporary steel barrier -
still a vital safety product today and one
that was the first temporary steel barrier
introduced overseas. Accepted for use on
Highways England's roads, BG800 offers
an energy absorbing feature, which when
hit, results in minimal damage to both
errant vehicles and the barrier itself due
to its distinguished stepped profile design.

"Until then the system that was used in temporary situations, such as the use of cones, was appalling and very dangerous," he says.

Much development work followed, and in the meantime Highway Care became successful across the globe. Products came fast-including the first 60mph lorry-mounted crash cushion, the first automatic braking system on lorry mounted crash cushions as well as roadside crash cushions, mobile light arrows and end terminals and a quick-changeable moveable concrete barrier as well as several products to keep motorcyclists safe such as the popular Bikeguard.

*It was that early experience working myself and having workers next to live traffic that I was responsible for that has kept me constantly driving to develop solutions to that take safety on the network to another level and I am extremely proud for Highway Care to have played a part in that. Now we have a team in place that is arguably better than ever which is vital for any successful business. We will continue to keep that development going and some of our current and future developments such as the automated cone laying machine are going to be important for keeping road workers safe and removing more of them from live traffic," says Mr Talbot. "That's the reason why we keep going," he adds.

He says the automated cone lane machine, Falcon, is only one part of his vision to eventually help automate the lane closure process where a combination of automated trucks will do the job that roadworkers currently risk their lives every day for. "I have a vision that one day this will be possible. Automation, if used appropriately, can and will play a huge part in our industry and save more lives in the future," he adds.

But what is really needed to conceptualise safety products in today's fast moving highways sector? "I think its important to have a real understanding of what the challenge is you want to overcome. There are still too many people, including roadworkers, killed and seriously injured on our road network so you either remove them from harm or protect them in the most effective way possible. Sadly, there isn't a silver bullet to solve everything in one go, its about building a body of work that keeps on improving things," says Mr Talbot.

Being a self-confessed 'motorcycle fruitcake', there will no doubt be more products that protect motorcyclists as well. "Some fantastic work has been done on progressing clothing for motorcyclists, but I believe air bag protection will be the big thing in the future." But is he tempted to diversify again? "Well actually I have a few products that are at concept stage including a covid related protection product but you know," however "the rule for better business is to stick to what you know well," he adds.



INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS
FOR A SAFER FUTURE



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THE 6 SKILLS NEEDED TO TRANSFORM OUR SECTOR



Lizi Stewart
Managing
Director of
Transportation
Atkins



The digital transformation of our highways will require our industry to grow and embrace a whole new skill set. From data science to blockchain to artificial intelligence and beyond; these skills are rare, hard to recruit and even harder to retain in an industry that prides itself on tradition. These new skills are disruptive of themselves, but we see double disruption when these new skills are held by the next generation, with a whole new set of expectations and set of beliefs about the world.

Atkins has worked with CIHT to better understand the views and aspirations of Generation Z through a 'Voice of the future' survey. In the Voice of the future survey, the majority of respondents (63%) chose learning and development as their highest priority when selecting a potential employer. If we want to attract the best talent, we must invest in helping the next generation build a suite of skills that will help us to meet the future needs of our clients and disrupt our industry.

In my view, there are six essential skills – outside the obvious technology and

engineering ones – that we need from the next generation to help us transform our industry.

A GROWTH MINDSET.

Because technology will move on. The challenges around climate change will move on. We need to constantly be looking to learn, continuously improve and grow. Understanding and influencing behaviours.

You can design infrastructure. You can look at smart use of technology. But one of the most important skills we can have is understanding behaviours, how people react and how they respond, and how we in turn influence and shape and create the conditions for people to make great

choices.

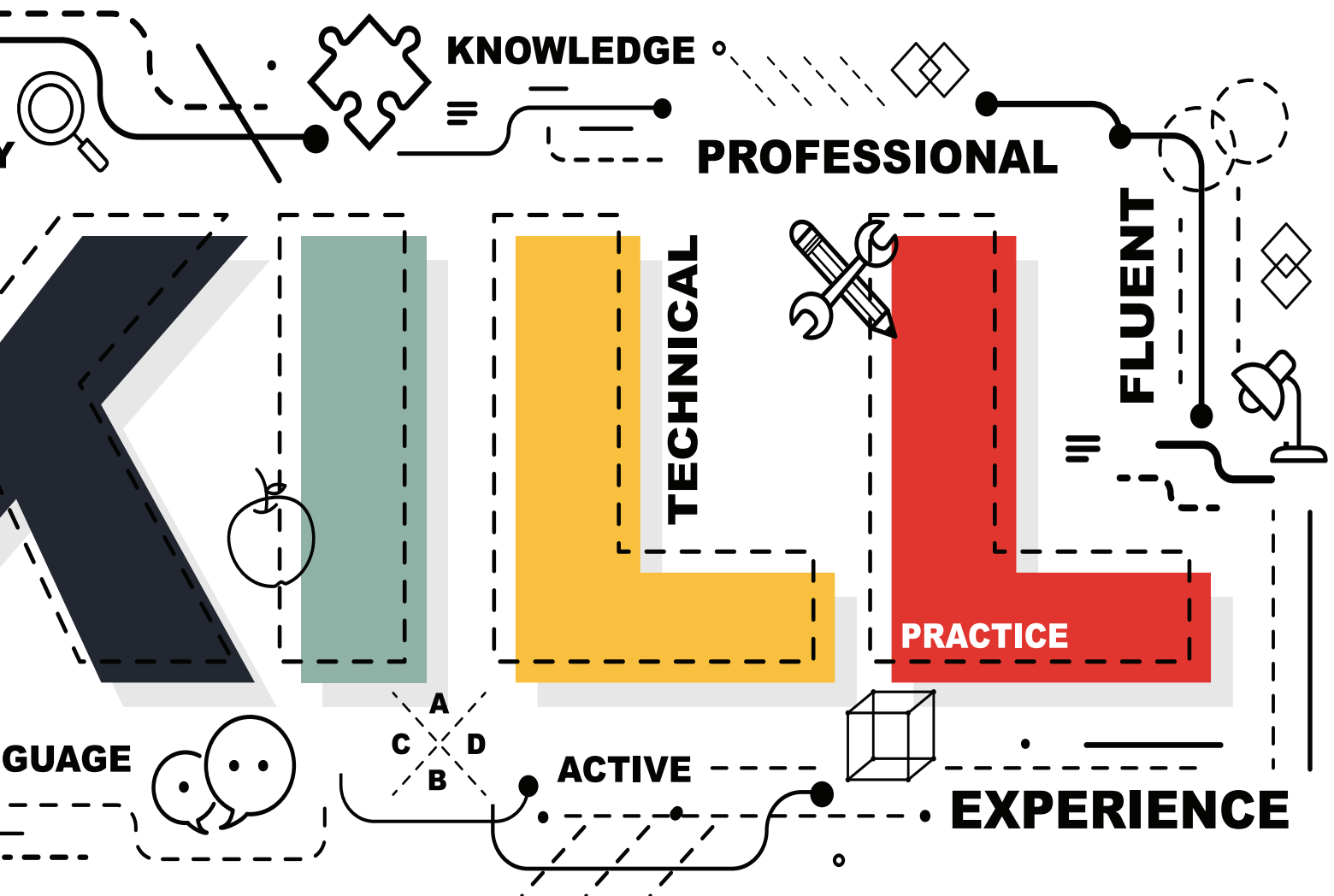
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.

You're always going to be working in teams, with other stakeholders, with clients, with the public. So, growing skills around relationship building is absolutely critical.

COMMERCIAL SKILLS.

One of the truisms of our sector is that our projects do sometimes overrun. As engineers, as planners, we need to get passionate about commercial skills and understanding the financial impact and implications of what it is that we're recommending. We need to understand what data and information is missing that





can cause our designs or plans to go wrong, and we need to be really proactive, so that stakeholders and decision makers have transparency.

ABILITY TO APPLY KNOWLEDGE.

What other industries have done, how they learn, what they did, and didn't, do well – all of this has applications to what we're doing in highways. We need people who avoid the temptation to re-invent the wheel or to think we know all the answers. Core to this is being evidence and research led.

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION.

This is fundamental to our future. And if we're really serious about creativity and

innovation, we need to get really serious about diversity and inclusion because it's been proven diverse teams are more creative and innovative, deliver better financial outcomes and can better manage risk.

56% of the Voices of the future respondents also believed that today's infrastructure doesn't meet the needs of young people. So, we need to accelerate the development of the young professionals in our industry, so that they can disrupt what we do and help shape the infrastructure they need.

“
You're always going to be working in teams, with other stakeholders, with clients, with the public. So, growing skills around relationship building is absolutely critical”.

CHLOE'S BLOG: THE YEAR AND LIFE OF A GRADUATE ENGINEER AT SIEMENS



Chloe is an Engineer, who completed the Graduate Scheme with Siemens in October 2020.



Ever wondered what the 1st year graduates get up to at Siemens? Well, I am not sure about everybody else, but what I can do is talk about my experience.

When I started here at Siemens, I wondered "How the hell did I do that?, How did I, get onto the Siemens Graduate scheme?" They must see something in me that I have yet to see in myself. Either way I'm sure I am not the only one who may have thought this. Even so, I am extremely happy and grateful to be starting my engineering career with such an amazing company.

When I started the scheme I only had an overview of what my year might entail and chatting to seasoned graduates I still wasn't overly sure. If that's the case, was there any other new graduates in the same boat? Has anyone documented and spoken about their year on the programme before for all to see? With these questions brewing in my mind I tried to answer some of them but I had no luck. That being the case, I decided to share what I have learned about the Siemens scheme along with some of my experiences from this year.

So, here it goes.

The Scheme

Siemens offered me a 2-year Graduate Development Programme (GDP) with a total of 4 different rotations. Each rotation is about 5 to 6 months and is there to give me an overall view and understanding of how that part of the business works and operates.

The Training and development

Siemens certainly doesn't hold back on training. On top of the rotations, the GDP also offers a solid programme of modules which are designed to enhance my core and soft skills.

In this first year I have completed courses such as:

- Project Management Fundamentals which is an accredited course with the APM.
- Team Building, where we learned to solve problems with one another before and after getting our results from the prism test and understanding how each of us work.
- Business Influencing, which I think is one of the most useful courses I have taken thus far. You can use it everywhere!
- Virtual Mentee, basically tells you how to be the ideal mentee to your mentor.
- Customer Communication, shows



- you how to deal with conflict and understand how to defuse a situation for different personality types.
- Career Planning, helped me identify my strengths and how I can sell myself.

In addition to these, I have also completed other courses which are tailored towards the division I am working in, in my case Smart Infrastructure. For instance, I have completed:

- BCM01 Fundamentals of HVAC & Building Technology
- Safe Isolation
- BS5839, Part 1 2017 (which is the British Standard for fire detection and fire alarm systems for buildings)
- Agile Ways of Working
- CDM (Construction Design Management)
- Social Selling and Blogging
- etc...

And the list of courses keeps growing!

At the Beginning

When I started I found out that I was the only graduate in Smart Infrastructure. I must admit it felt slightly lonely in the beginning. Yes everyone was really nice, helpful and welcoming but sometimes all you want is someone to talk to who is going through the same situation as yourself. This



is where I feel Siemens knows what they are doing. Because in the first couple of weeks of starting, Siemens threw an “Aspire” event where all the new graduates across all the divisions and disciplines could come together and meet. It was through this event that I didn’t feel so alone and that I met some other amazing people. One of which I meet fairly regularly to discuss what we are doing in our rotations and if there is any cross collaborations we help one another. Plus

it’s a good chance to catch-up and have a good chit chat.

My 1st Rotation: BPS (Building Performance & Sustainability)

During this Rotation I was an honorary Superhero, saving the world one building at a time!

Here I was given the opportunity to work with an amazing team and shadow the Energy Solutions Engineers through different project stages.

The very first project that I was involved with was at Siemens Congleton Manufacturing site where they mainly build drivers. There, we proposed our Total Energy Management solution of “Reduce, Produce & Procure” along with implementing the Navigator solution with circa 100 meters that allow future interface with MindSphere.

One of the best parts about this project was seeing first hand the cross collaboration BPS has with our colleagues in the DES (Distributed Energy Systems) and P&G (Power & Gas) divisions to implement the most energy efficient gas engine on this site so that Congleton could be mostly self-sufficient. Making it the first manufacturing building in the UK to be completely carbon neutral.

My 2nd Rotation: Sales

The sales team got me involved in customer meetings which was a great way to learn how best to interact with different sets of people, this also involved a fair amount of travel to which I was grateful as I go to get out and away from the desk. I was also involved with a bid process for a significant account and man is that stressful and complicated! Thank god for the marketing team though. They are the ones who get everything in order for the bid and do all the significant research.

This was a fascinating rotation which gave me a new appreciation of the sales team and what they go through. For something

so sporadic there is certainly a significant amount of structure and paperwork associated to it.

One key thing they taught me is that in sales they don’t just sell a product they sell a solution. This resonates with what I was initially taught in BPS. (It’s good to see the thought is spreading!) Basically this means that instead of selling something to that customer because that’s what they think they need. We help and guide them to understand the true meaning of the issues they wish to overcome; be it energy efficiency, fire safety, security, etc□ And create their ideal solution. Even if that means less money for us!

However, watching the team conduct their daily business I have noticed that to be a sales person you need to have a certain set of qualities, such as:

- Being competitive.
- Having the drive to succeed.
- Having a back bone.
- But most importantly being a people person because its all about the relationships that you make with your customers.

I unfortunately do not have them all.

Volunteering events

On top of my day to day work I have to allocate a minimum of a week towards volunteering activities. So, I chose some of the best ones!

The Big Bang Fair At this event I got to inspire the next generation towards STEM activities but most importantly I got to talk to them and show them how awesome engineering can be. It was also a great way to meet and chat with other colleagues in Siemens but also other engineers from different companies.

The Next Big Thing Challenge For 3 months I had the privilege to mentor a group of year 8’s who were given the challenge design and program a piece of technology (a Raspberry Pi with a Sense HAT), be it

wearable or not, to help people live independently. Having never used a Raspberry Pi or coded using Python before, my task was to understand the basics. So that I could help teach the kids what they needed to know to create what they had in their imagination. I'm really proud of them and what they achieved as they came 3rd with their innovative idea.

Goodwood Festival of Speed This year I got to support the event by manning the hydrogen fuel cell exhibit as well as the '79 VW BullE Camper to promote Siemens' energy capabilities. I was also asked to be a "Rove Reporter" to go around the festival and document on social media all that was fun, inspiring and relevant to Siemens.

Representing Siemens

Unlike most I jump at every opportunity that comes my way, especially if it helps promote female engineers. Because the more we speak up, the more it will become normality!

I started off short and sweet with a small quote that was shared on social media.

And have now been upgraded to the new graduate brochure which is not yet out, but watch this space because who knows where else I might tip up.

What I've learned:

Every day, every rotation is different and all you can do is go with the flow. Be flexible and intuitive. Don't be afraid to ask the stupid questions! I did all the time because it helped me understand better what it was I needed to do.

Always ask what the acronyms mean because they just keep on coming! I think I am up to 400 now, and have had to create an excel spreadsheet to keep on top of them.

Have fun! Get involved with what interests you.

This first year has made me think a lot about my future and what I would like to do with it. It's a big decision deciding what I want to be when I grow

up. But, I am 100% certain that I want to be an Energy Engineer because it is something that I am truly passionate about. Plus, who wouldn't want to be a superhero in training!

What did I do about it?

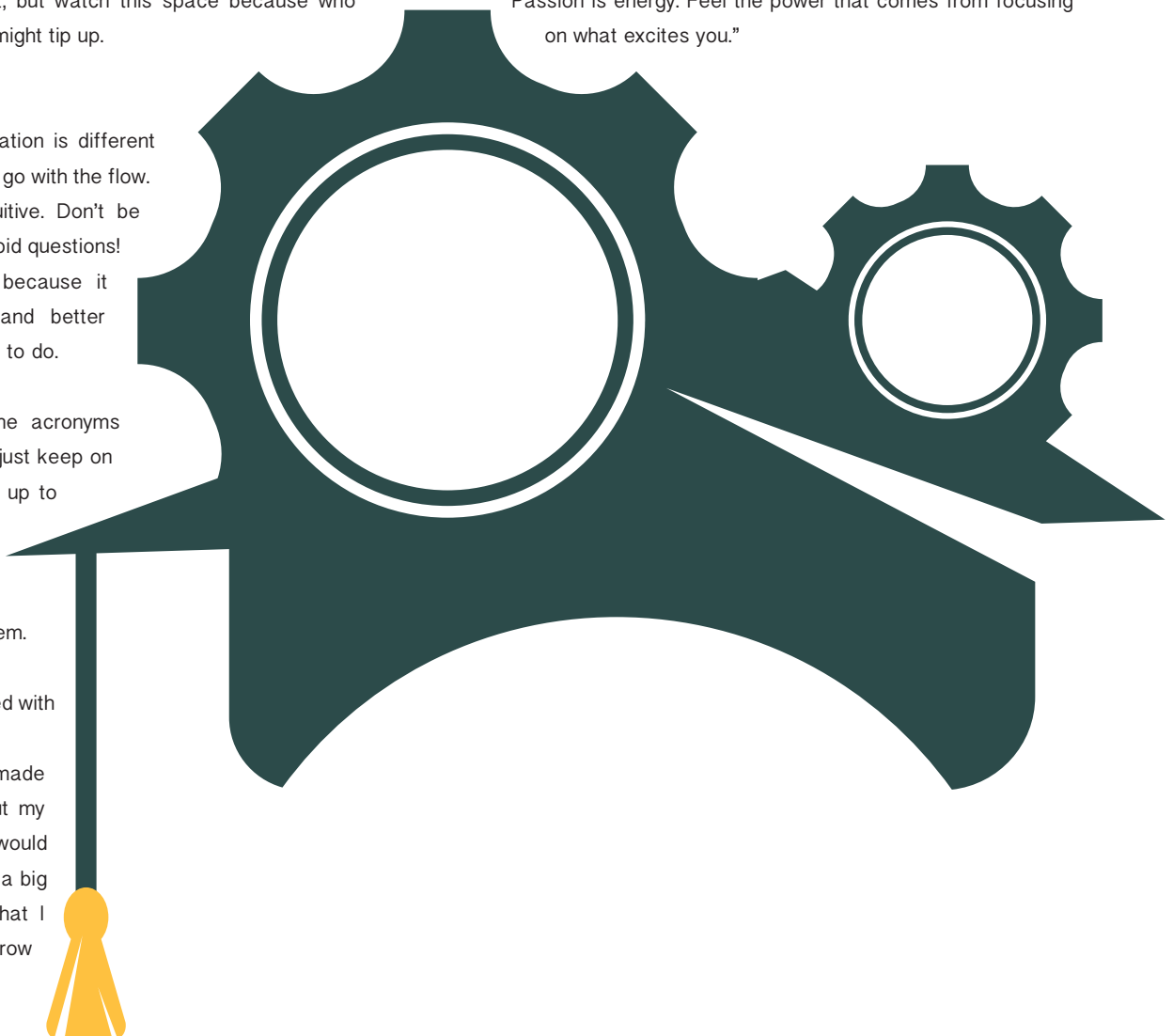
Well, I have 1 year left of my Graduate Development Programme and with a clear view of what I would like to do, I went to the Head of BPS and asked if I could join their team once I have finished the scheme. He took me a side, looked my straight in the eye and asked if this was what I truly wanted, trying to measure my commitment and sureness I suppose. Either way my answer was ever only going to be "yes". With that he was delighted and thrilled and offered me a position which is not yet defined.

With this news, I told my line manager (who is in charge of my scheme) that this is where I want to go once my scheme is up and that the Head of BPS was onboard. That being said, he has now tailored the rest of my graduate scheme towards it.

What's next!

With this new direction, my next rotation will be in Project Management working on projects associated with BPS. Ending with my final rotation being my future role as an Energy Engineer and I can't wait.

Passion is energy. Feel the power that comes from focusing on what excites you."



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INSPIRING OUR FUTURE ENGINEERS



It's well documented that the transport sector has a shortage in skills and diversity when it comes to attracting new talent to the industry. In the grasps of a global pandemic that is raising youth unemployment, many young people are looking again at their options and towards businesses that can offer a safe pair of hands to nurture their career choices – a key opportunity for our sector to invest and attract new talent through its doors.

At Amey we're committed to inspiring and engaging early on through building a series of young person programmes and developing routes into employment that are easily and widely accessible. We want to give everyone the opportunity to perform, whatever their background or experience, providing leading employment opportunities in local communities, with an emphasis on supporting young people into employment - whether that's as a graduate, an apprentice or on a placement.

In Amey Consulting & Rail and in partnership with several universities, this year we launched four fully funded degree apprenticeship programmes to help bring new talent into the industry across Civil Engineering, Data Science and Environmental & Sustainability. These programmes will sit alongside Amey Consulting's award-winning Rail degree apprentice programme which has launched again for its second successive year.

The programmes, that start in May and September are aimed at school and college leavers, to gain a bespoke degree in their chosen field and provide the opportunity to work on major highway and railway infrastructure schemes, giving them vital first-hand skills and mentoring whilst learning 'on the job'.

Partnerships have been formed with Coventry University to deliver both the Civil Engineering and Environmental & Sustainability programmes, York St John (London Campus) for the Data Science programme and we will continue working closely with Sheffield Hallam University to deliver our Rail degree apprentice programme.

“

The launch of our four-degree apprenticeship programmes provides an alternative route into the industry and supports our commitment to equal opportunities; resulting in a more diverse and sustainable business for the future,” said, Alex Gilbert Managing Director of Amey Consulting.

Kirstie Jones
Head of HR for Transport
Infrastructure
Amey



“Given the nature and size of business, it’s critical to invest in early careers to create a stream of highly qualified engineering talent.”

Apprentices, upon completion of the Degree Apprenticeship Programme, will not only have obtained a Bachelor’s degree, but also practical, business focussed vocational skills obtained through real world experience, gained in our design offices and on site, helping Amey Consulting and Rail cement its reputation as one of the UK’s leading providers of professional engineering services.

Through our commitment to professional excellence, all apprentices will have the opportunity to become Chartered, ensuring a continuation of their learning and development.

This degree scheme is an integral part of our commitment to drive innovation in employment practices, striving for greater inclusion within the workplace and our commitment to the 5 per cent club pledge of hiring more apprentices.

DIGITAL INSPIRATION DURING LOCKDOWN

It’s not only through degrees and apprenticeships that Amey looks to inspire its future engineers.

Research undertaken by Engineering UK found that when young people were asked whether they would be likely to consider engineering as a career, 44 per cent of boys/young men answered yes as opposed to just 24 per cent of girls/young women and that gap is even wider when it comes to technology with 65 per cent of boys/young men vs 37 per cent of girls/young women saying they would be likely to consider a career in the sector.

This research indicates that whilst young people are interested in STEM subjects in primary school, that interest often wanes with age, particularly amongst girls and is a significant problem post 16. At the same time rising demand for researchers and technicians in the workforce, enhanced by the development of new technologies, and government’s fear that without a plentiful supply of STEM qualified

workers at a number of levels in the economy, there may be a decline in innovation and, consequently, economic competitiveness, we are already seeing early signs of a skills shortage in the transport sector.

Our desire to reach more diverse groups has seen our team help create an array of material and learning platforms to encourage women in engineering. Claire, a HRBP from Amey Rail worked with Girlguiding to develop a Girlguiding badge based on STEM skills to encourage more girls to take up STEM skill subjects. This badge has been a huge success and seen over 130,000 girls take part. “I’m happy that I may have helped girls gain confidence and discover a love of engineering. I hope it’ll encourage lots of them to become engineers. Of all the things I’ve done, it’s been the most personally satisfying. I’ve even become a Girl Guide leader myself,” said Claire.

With the onslaught of COVID-19 and the need for home schooling, at Amey we’ve created the Education Hub page that looks to inspire young children into STEM and a career in transport. The site has free access to a range of inclusive activities and resources that bring some fun in to the home as well as educate, engage and inspire our young people, from designing a railway route and building structures to learning more about the environment. We’ve also recently launched our Chat and Learn programmes that are providing schools and young people with the chance to request a one-to-one or class career talk, with the hope of engaging young people, through a variety of interactive initiatives.

Our sector has a wealth of knowledge that we need to mobilise to inspire our young people. For our sector to survive and thrive we need to look to engage young people in engineering careers, creating a fun, inclusive and relatable experience that will ignite a passion that will develop our engineers for the tomorrow.

To find out more information about starting your career at Amey follow the link here:

<https://www.amey.co.uk/your-career/early-careers/>

FROM WESTMINSTER PPE FRUSTRATION TO ROYAL APPROVAL FOR TIMELY EXPANSION, ARCO MD OPENS UP ON 2020



2020 was always going to see a marker set in the history of the huge Hull family firm as it opened its £30 million National Distribution Centre and saw a new city centre headquarters start to emerge.

But those at the helm of the 134-year-old firm found themselves thrust into a frustrating and frenetic pandemic situation when they were in the box seat to deliver.

Overlooked by government despite being the UK market leader - and more than good enough for the Scottish NHS with whom it secured a huge contract - Arco, like many, also had to close one third of the business down - then restart it - while taking the extraordinary step of chartering 10 planes to bring vital items of personal protective equipment in from trusted suppliers.

While Mr Evison desperately hopes lessons will be learned in Westminster from the handling of the PPE scandal, the unprecedented events of the past year have underlined the family firm's strength. It was also a stroke of good fortune that the huge state-of-the-art shed - vital capacity as the UK needed a master distributor - completed at the right time, even if Arco, and clearly the Department for Health and Social Care, didn't realise just how quickly it would be put through its paces. "Our existing customers were front-of-mind in all the decisions we have taken,"

Mr Evison said. "A lot of companies sold their souls to get good contracts, we shut the business down with the intention to make sure we got supplies for existing customers.

"We have been around for 134 years, and what was really important was we could keep clients supplied when supplies were pretty short.

Our focus was to make sure we could get the supply. Food production, industrial production, are strong sectors for us, and we are the warehouse for those companies, relied upon, so it was critical to do that. Any excess was here for front line workers, yet out of it all, we were 0.07 per cent of supply. It was a whole area of frustration."

Arco's credentials were clear - not just from the stated position, released last month - subsequently picked up in a parliamentary analysis of the hard-hitting National Audit Office review - but similar scenarios that should have acted as a playbook.

"We are able to guarantee strong supply because we own the supply chain that starts in China. We don't just source a manufacturer, we have a team there and we make sure we understand products are ethically sourced, the workforce is treated



properly and more importantly, that goods are compliant,” Mr Evison said, of the 10-strong Arco workforce in the Far East.

Laboratory services are embedded within the operation. It has published technical papers on the right equipment for the right environment, while working with the likes of London Eye, the BBC and Ericsson on service contracts.

“We don’t just buy and sell it, we use it, train it, work with it,” he said. “That’s why we can talk about safety.”

And this is where the issue with government procurement - raised in a positioning statement released by chairman Thomas Martin and then in Westminster debate by constituency MP Emma Hardy - has been tough to take.

“My biggest issue after this pandemic is that we worry the government - if it is issuing contracts with unknown entities - is not prioritising compliance and safety. Everyone asks if I’m disappointed we didn’t get the contracts, but my biggest issue for me is the health and safety of the market

“

Strategic partnerships are really important for us to hold stock for some of the NHS trusts, we can cycle stock through so it doesn’t go out of date.”



place being diminished by decisions made.

"It is like an MoT on a car, you rely on it to know the brakes are good. If you put a mask on you need to rely on it, the workforce needs to rely on it.

"It is critical to me that health and safety compliance and enforcement is maintained.

"We offered our resource. We wrote to the government offices, involved direct contacts with procurement teams, offered what products we had, offered our expertise and offered our supply chain - we never got a response.

"We did participate in three contracts, we've provided respirators for ICU and that was a really thorough process.

"We helped through Ebola, we helped through foot-and-mouth, and we helped through swine flu - it is not as if we weren't known. We have been very public and helped support government response, yet for whatever reason they took a very different approach.

"At the time it was difficult, we had just come out of Chinese New Year, getting to speak to anyone was tough.

"We chartered 10 planes - we had a 747 with 20 million masks on board - not something in February I thought I'd be doing in May."

The fact stock sat idle as wards relied on the likes of pivoting 3D printers irks. But the bond with customers has strengthened and the role deepened as it continually met demand.

And with such cargoes touching down at Stansted, the need for the National Distribution Centre couldn't have been clearer than the blue light it was bathed in for recognition of the key workers it served - or wanted to.

"We assumed it was to be a five to 10 year

period before it was full," Mr Evison said of the expansion alongside the A63 entrance to Hull. "It went very quickly from taking a walk around in February wondering how we would fill the place.

"What this has done in the short term has filled it, and in the long term we will end up holding a bit more stock. Strategic partnerships are really important for us to hold stock for some of the NHS trusts, we can cycle stock through so it doesn't go out of date.

"The benefit of a family-owned business is we can take a longer term view and prioritise long term growth and we have a history of doing that. Four years ago we doubled the packing tables, which doubled the amount we could handle - so that really helped as well."

While coronavirus has dominated the year, what 2020 had set out to be has also happened too, with Princess Anne doing the honours on the big build in September, as she had the original expansion.

"We've opened a distribution centre, we're in the final stages of re-writing a website and there's the new head office too - we're looking at a £70 million investment," Mr Evison said.

"There are not many people investing in offices, or retail footprint, but that will set us up for a long term position. We've invested in over-the-counter, we've moved the one in Hull and have a further five stores now operating - taking us to 46. They offer a range of products but also showcase our expertise.

"The HQ will be a great statement for the business, we want to attract the best talent, we want to develop people in the Hull area."

And it is the people who have seen it through, of which Mr Evison is in no doubt.

"Experience came to the fore as locations



One of the "best meetings of the year" has been the community panel, where Arco gives back - regularly one per cent of profits. Through Covid, 44 causes close to the heart of employees that suffered were awarded £1,000".



We've had an acknowledgement from the DHSC, confirming they believe they have done the right thing and traded with the right people," Mr Evison said. "We are trying to help and support the debate. We all have a responsibility to protect the population."

were made safe, and processes were put in place, while every employee received a pack of 100 face masks and sanitiser for themselves and their families. Staff who couldn't work had salaries topped up.

"The biggest thing was making sure we had done the right thing for our colleagues, and we have had a lot of supportive feedback," he said, with half of the 1,650 employees in Hull and East Yorkshire.

Paying tribute to the "absolutely brilliant" team, he said: "We had to shut the retail business, safety services and training, and our embroidery business. We had to manage and support one third of our people out onto furlough, then had to bring them back into work safely after the first lockdown - making sure people really understood what we were doing, fetching them in safely."

It worked, and the distribution element was also named Safety Team of the Year by Safety and Health Practitioner, while Arco has also won several awards from customers for service in unprecedented times.

"We could have profiteered from what went on, but we battened down and focused on supply," Mr Evison said. "It has been a real rollercoaster year. We relied heavily on colleagues to do the right thing, which they have done, while falling back on experience."

Turning to performance, with end of year results from June not public yet, he said: "It isn't a record year - possibly an average of the last five years. The first three or four months will reflect the closing of businesses, and as we came out [of lockdown] lots of businesses have been procuring safety equipment, and we're showing good sales growth at the moment.

"It has got to be balanced by economic uncertainty - many areas like oil and gas have struggled, which we're strong in - and Brexit, which is a worry. We have a business in Ireland, so we're watching what happens there."

Last year it turned over £282 million, the year before £295 million - with the EU exit uncertainty blamed for the tough market and trading conditions it entered the current period in.

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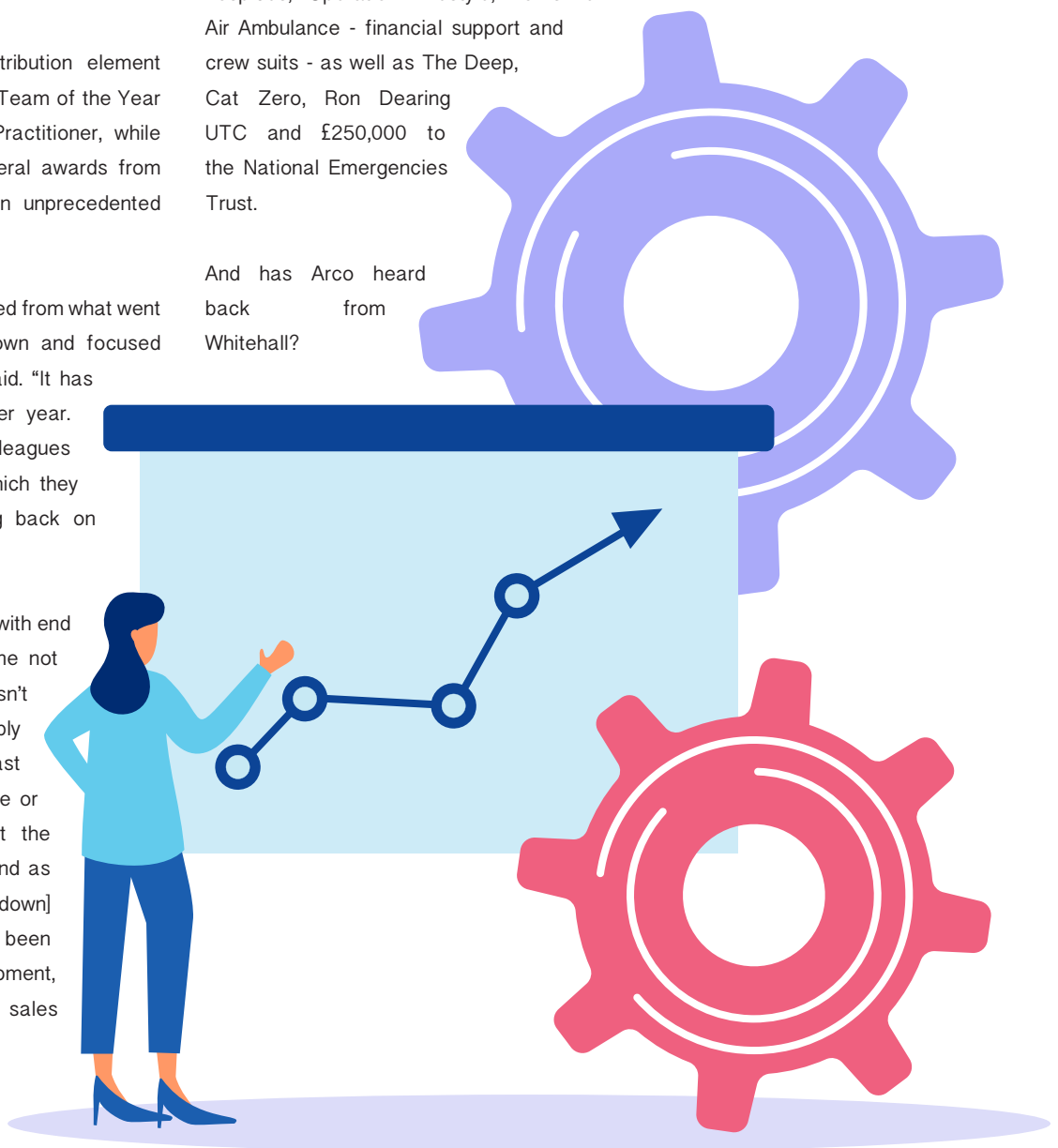
It has come alongside other donations to hospices, Operation Lifestyle, Yorkshire Air Ambulance - financial support and crew suits - as well as The Deep, Cat Zero, Ron Dearing UTC and £250,000 to the National Emergencies Trust.

And has Arco heard back from Whitehall?

"We've had an acknowledgement from the DHSC, confirming they believe they have done the right thing and traded with the right people," Mr Evison said. "We are trying to help and support the debate. We all have a responsibility to protect the population."

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And warning shortages are still evident in some categories, notably certain masks and gloves, Mr Evison warned: "The pandemic remains dangerous, we are not through it in any way, shape or form."



WE'RE BUILDING NEW FUTURES



Kari Sprostranova
Group Sustainability Director
Balfour Beatty

The construction and infrastructure industry has long been recognised as one which has a significant impact on the world; whether we're building critical national infrastructure such as roads and railways or schools and hospitals at the heart of local communities.

We know that ours is an industry which can truly move the dial on the social and environmental agenda, globally. As we enter each community, we can shape far more than what is constructed within the walls of our hoardings and so we have a responsibility to act as a truly responsible and considerate neighbour by leaving a lasting positive legacy.

But to truly make a change, it requires the right strategy.

We've made great strides since 2009, guided by our Sustainability Blueprint, but we know we can do more. We can make our operations more sustainable, we can go beyond net zero carbon, we can generate zero waste, and we can create better communities for people to live in. That's why we've launched our refreshed Sustainability Strategy aptly named "Building New Futures"

The 2040 Ambitions in our Sustainability Strategy focus on the areas we can make the biggest difference: the Environment, Materials and Communities, and are set for 2040 so that we have time to really embrace and integrate the right practices – recognising that a lot can change over this period of time. We also have 2030 targets to pave the way to the delivery of these ambitions.

We recognise the natural alignment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals which are a blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all; including Goal 8: Sustainable Cities and Communities, Goal 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Goal 11: Decent Work and Economic Growth, Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production and Goal 13: Climate Actions.

Our global strategy will address sustainability across our operations in the UK, the US and Hong Kong. We know that to deliver the strategy successfully we must take in to account local factors. That is why we are empowering our geographies with the flexibility to develop their own Sustainability Action Plan to achieve our Group Sustainability Ambitions. There

are specific regional requirements within our businesses in the UK, US and Hong Kong and these plans will adhere to and recognise those nuances.

You can hear more about our ambitions and targets from my colleagues Bekir, Emma and Hansas they explore our focus in greater detail and the initiatives that we are already implementing to help us reach our 2040 ambitions.

With 26,000 employees, thousands more supply chain partners and countless more people we impact indirectly, we believe we can make a real change on a local and global scale.

This is a journey that is at the very heart of Balfour Beatty and, through the positive impact we can have, we hope to inspire current and future generations. We must keep pushing ourselves, our customers and all those who work with and for us to embrace the changes that will result in a more sustainable future – because everyone has a part to play.

Becoming a truly sustainable business is absolutely one of our top priorities and I'm confident we'll leave a lasting positive legacy.

Balfour Beatty is a leading international infrastructure group

Balfour Beatty is committed to health and safety in every aspect of our work. Nothing is more important to us than ensuring everyone returns home safely every day.

We strive to protect our workforce and anyone affected by our works at all times and we will never stray from our ultimate target of Zero Harm.



BY ROYAL APPOINTMENT

Karl Simons speaks about the thrill of receiving an OBE.



Karl Simons
Chief Health, Safety
& Wellbeing Officer,
Thames Water

KARL YOU'VE JUST RECEIVED AN OBE TELL ME HOW YOU'VE FOUND OUT?

I actually received an email on my iPad from an address I'd not seen before and it had the word honours in it and when I opened it I saw the words Prime Minister and Queen and OBE, so had a rush of emotion combined with a feeling of complete disbelief. It then didn't take long for doubt to creep in and I questioned whether it was a joke email as I thought surely they would send a letter. So I called the cabinet office number they gave and was congratulated. I did actually call back several times after that to double and triple check!

IN TERMS OF THE STRIDES MADE IN THE WORK OF MENTAL HEALTH, DO YOU SEE THIS AWARD AS A POSITIVE STEP?

I absolutely believe that business has come a long way over recent years regarding the increase in visibility and profile of mental health management. There are so many great leaders I have had the pleasure of learning from that are taking strides to introduce initiatives that are making a

profound impact for their employees. But I do believe there is still some way to go and I will continue to be very vocal about what can be done and how changes for the better can benefit everyone at work.

HOW DID YOUR FAMILY REACT WHEN YOU TOLD THEM?

It's been wonderful, they were all very shocked and very proud, there were tears and cheers all round. My wonderful children are extremely excited about it and even my local pub landlord has posted some lovely words on Facebook which all my friends in our community are commenting on. However above it all is my beautiful wife that's been alongside me all over the world for the past 23 years, as without her playing a major part in supporting me to have the time to undertake all the additional external work I do to help people, outside of my day job, for which I have been recognised, I wouldn't be writing this.

WHEN DO YOU FINALLY GET TO RECEIVE YOUR OBE? OR HAVE YOU ALREADY RECEIVED IT BY RECORDED DELIVERY IN THE POST?

The Cabinet Office honours team have informed me they are still planning the investitures this year once we have hopefully come out of the Covid Pandemic and I really hope they continue as I know I'm allowed to take my wife and two children to the palace to see HM the Queen and she

addresses all the families present on the day, which will be a wonderful experience for everyone involved.

WHAT NEXT? NOT FOR KARL SIMONS BUT FOR RAISING AWARENESS AROUND MENTAL HEALTH?

I've always said the one thing about campaigning for a worthy cause is you have to be relentless over many consecutive years and this award doesn't change a thing in regards to how I will continue to try and make a difference in protecting people. More than ever this year we have seen the UK struggle with levels of stress and anxiety increasing and those with a diagnosed mental illness suffer as a result of isolation and fear. But amongst the darkness there are some rays of light and thus hope as we see more people reaching out with care and acts of kindness and goodwill to support those in need. In my own organisation this is no different and I am bombarded every week with stories of kindness and goodwill where those working for and on behalf of Thames Water are looking after their colleagues.

AND MAYBE EVEN A KNIGHTHOOD FOR KARL SIMONS?

Ha very funny, we live in uncertain times and my only concluding words are that I sincerely do wish everyone the safety, health and happiness they deserve at this challenging time in all our lives x



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Safety is a fundamental right and a WJ core value.

It's an imperative we achieve through our behaviours, working practices and equipment, whilst understanding our interdependence and responsibility to keep ourselves and others safe.

Through this thinking, WJ have developed a safety culture that encourages everyone to "think exceptional" about safety and collaborate to design out risk from our operations.





BEHAVIOURAL APPROACH TO RISK

James Bird talks about how human factors can mitigate risk.

Understanding the risk associated with highway sites is an essential part of improving the welfare of roadworkers. Using a combination of human and behavioural interventions, the toolbox will help the industry improve the safety of road and street works. Increasing communication with the public about the importance of roadwork safety will provide a necessary platform to raise the profile of highway workers and help eradicate roadworker abuse.

These were the thoughts of James Bird, Senior SHE Manager – HOF and BCC at Kier who presented as part of the Safer Highways organised Why Stamp It Out Now webinar.

The aim of the webinar was to give the broader industry, clients and local and national government an insight into the scale of the problem and the course of action the public highways sector has to take to eliminate risk.

Mr Bird's thoughts are based around a method of working-the swiss cheese model- that considers using combination of organisational and human conditions with other pre-conditions to allow preventative and mitigative measures in place to reduce the chance of a hazard turning into an incident. Applying this method, would help road operators understand risk and therefore understand in greater detail what control measure could be put in place. This, said Mr Bird, could be applied to create a assessment for operators to understand better what measures could be put in place on a site to help significantly reduce or eradicate road worker abuse happening. The next stage, he said, would be to use this to make sites safer, protecting workers from physical and verbal abuse and supporting them when it does happen.

Stamp It Out has recently joined forces with Transport Scotland to work on campaigns that reflect the need to drive change across the whole of the UK. Speaking as part of the panel on the webinar,

Jonny Moran, Operating Company Manager at Transport Scotland said that since November 2019, statistics from the trunk road network showed that 70% of workers experience people driving dangerously at them, meaning there were 5,500 instances of vehicle incursions into roadwork sites and 52% near misses from vehicle incursions. Stocking statistics to back that up found that 31% of workers had missiles thrown at them, 65% were verbally abused and 14% suffered physical abuse.

Mr Moran said he recognised that because some workers felt they could not report abuse for a variety of reasons, the statistics recorded were only part of the story. "We quickly realised that the reality of abuse was a lot greater than the figures we had and that needed to be urgently addressed," he said. Transport Scotland will now put in place a series of objectives and measures to help eradicate abuse. This will include taking a zero-tolerance approach, supporting staff and encouraging a culture of reporting incidents as well as co-ordinating a public facing campaign and to publicise more prosecutions of people that are convicted of road worker abuse. "If we want to promote this industry as a good one to be working in, developing people and fostering a safe working environment then supporting our teams when they suffer these incidents is vital," said Mr Moran.

Road worker abuse is a growing concern on both the local and strategic road networks in the UK as well as the wider highways and transport sectors, affecting the physical and mental health and wellbeing of workers on an alarmingly regular basis. Past incidents have been so severe, they have involved knives, shotguns and crossbows being pulled on workers as they go about their daily tasks.

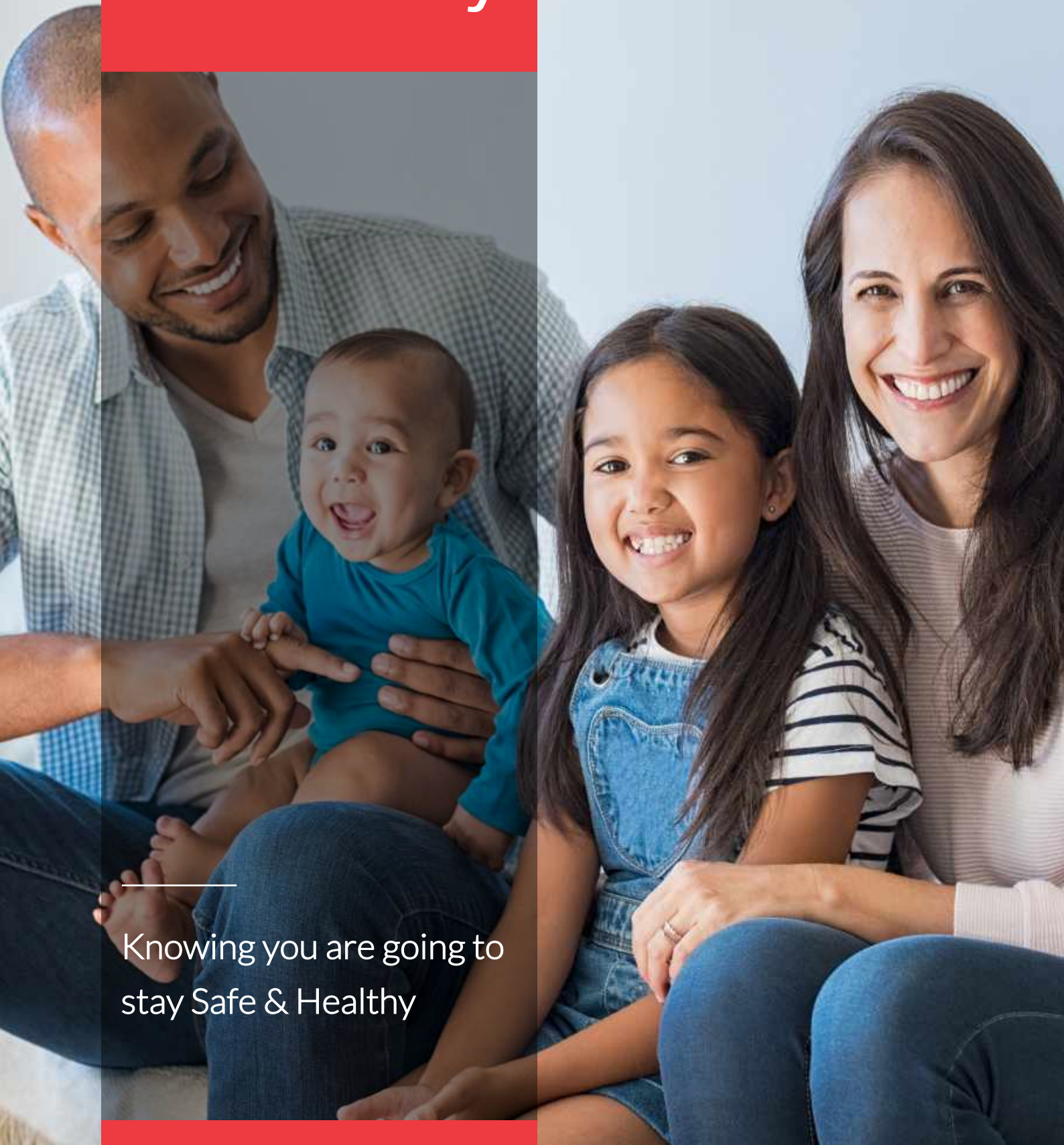
The industry led Stamp It Out campaign also places the development of a new, open API app and conflict resolution training as central parts of the campaign, development of which was reported on at

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