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INTERFACE

haeeha ON HIRE

WANT TO GET YOUR BRAND IN FRONT OF THE HIRE INDUSTRY'S MEMBERSHIP?

Discuss promotional opportunities with Theresa Geeson
advertising@hae.org.uk

Bi-monthly updates in digital and printed format to keep all those in the industry abreast of the latest news, business developments, legislation changes, products and advice.

GOT SOME NEWS OR INSIGHTS TO SHARE?

Contact Editor Stephanie Cornwall
editorial@hae.org.uk

We value the support of those companies who advertise in the magazine, without whom its publication would not be possible. We would urge all of our members and suppliers to spread the word about its promotional opportunities so that we can offer an even greater gallery of products and services, and help to keep this fabulous magazine in circulation.

INTRODUCTION BY HAE EHA CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER PAUL GAZE



A view from on high

A KEY feature of Hire Association Europe (HAE) and Event Hire Association (EHA) membership is the work of our groups and committees. They come together to share best practice, develop innovative safety guidance, help raise standards, and demonstrate the professional nature of the hire sector.

One of these, the Technical Health and Safety Committee facilitated by Carl Bartlett and led by Andy Johnson, recently came together at Snorkel EMEA in Washington, Tyne & Wear, where Andrew Fishburn and Richard Roof updated the committee on latest safety developments and innovations in aerial work platforms and they heard from Kevin Howell and Stuart Miller of Howell Technology Group (HTG) about how cyber and physical security work together to reduce cyber security breaches. They also received an update from Billy Naphine and Anthony Naphine from CargoStop International on the work of the Load Safety Forum and the new suite of training programmes developed to support the industry.

Committee members have said they were particularly moved by a presentation by Load Safety Ambassador, Maria Dennis, on raising awareness of the impact of unsafe loads. Maria tragically lost her son as a result of an unsafe load incident. Her story shines a real light on the risks insecure loads present, and why, in the hire sector, we must give the subject proper attention. Our new partnership with Mentor, full details of which can be found in the February edition of 'Interface', means we can provide you with specialised training

on load security and I can't emphasise enough the value this can bring.

The latest HAE EHA member podcast was also recorded at Snorkel. This podcast aims to provide an insight into Snorkel and how it achieved Hire Industry Trusted Supply (HITS) certification, which incorporates SSIP Approval. Andrew Fishburn specifically discusses his familiarity with SSIP and why he feels it's important to incorporate it into the HITS audit process. If you've not yet listened to the podcast, I'd urge you to do so – <https://www.hae.org.uk/podcast/>.

If you read our earlier 'Interface' review of the last Amazon UK member event, held in Bolton, you'll be aware of the opportunities this provided to network, dive into industry issues, and enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of the impressive distribution facility. We're now offering members an opportunity to join us at a similar event – this time at Amazon's new EMA4 Minworth facility in Sutton Coldfield on Thursday, May 14th. I'd encourage members to register now to secure a place at this very worthwhile event – <https://bit.ly/4aPd6cT>

It was great to see BBC Morning Live's feature on HAE EHA member SelectaDNA with Nick Knowles, highlighting the ongoing challenge of tool theft for tradespeople across the UK. Thanks to new forensic marking technology and excellent work by the Metropolitan Police, stolen equipment is being identified and returned to its rightful owners, which we see as a real advancement – although of course there's no room for complacency. The footage shows Sergeant Dave Catlow from the Metropolitan Police handing

back recovered stolen equipment to Jeff Taylor, National Security Manager at Openreach, following the UK's largest-ever haul of stolen tools during Operation Larkwood.

Safety should always be a priority for your hire business and this year is no exception. The industry's best, independently-audited standard is open to all HAE EHA members, so whether you're a national hire organisation or an independent hire company, SafeHire is proportionate to the nature and scale of your business, giving you the best opportunity to prove your organisation's commitment to safety. If you're interested in learning more about the SafeHire journey, now is a good time to give our team a call on 0121 380 4602

Finally, I was deeply saddened by the recent news that Douglas Anderson has passed. Douglas was a true changemaker in the hire sector and led the way in how our sector innovates and transforms. Not only did he contribute much to our sector, but he was also an advocate for family-owned businesses, construction and Scotland.

Keeping up with the fast-paced hire sector is all about staying informed. For HAE EHA members, the articles featured in 'Interface On Hire' are more than just news updates, they provide vital market intelligence and trend reports. By sharing these stories, we help our wider industry stay connected, showcasing the innovation and essential support hire businesses provide to global infrastructure, so if you have an update about a project, product or service, be sure to get in touch with Stephanie and Theresa. <<

INTERFACE ON HIRE

Head Office

2450 Regents Court, The Crescent,
Birmingham Business Park,
Solihull B37 7YE



CEO

Paul Gaze
paul.gaze@hae.org.uk
0121 380 4609



Director Certification Services

Carl Bartlett
carl.bartlett@hae.org.uk
0121 380 4604



Commercial Director

Neil Bravery
neil.bravery@hae.org.uk
0121 380 4605



Director of Public Affairs

Mark Bradshaw
mark.bradshaw@hae.org.uk
0121 380 4621



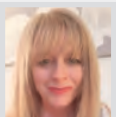
Learning & Development Officer

Nikki Wyllie
nikki.wyllie@hae.org.uk
0121 380 4617



Marketing Officer

Stuart Tyrrell
stuart.tyrrell@hae.org.uk
0121 380 4608



Editor

Stephanie Cornwall
editorial@hae.org.uk

Advertising

Theresa Geeson
advertising@hae.org.uk

Design

Dean Cole
deanc@warnersgroup.co.uk

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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR ...

WAR is a concern for all industries and the hire sector is no exception. All over the UK and Europe, US/Israel air attacks, and Iran's response, are impacting on energy costs, supply chain costs and fuel-dependent rental machinery/transport.

There is nothing like an international conflict to bring industry together and encourage working towards common causes. HAE EHA's Director of Public Affairs, Mark Bradshaw, is staying in close contact with UK Government central agencies, and other trade association partners and his latest article summarises the current points of focus. Whatever concerns may arise as a result of the conflict, HAE EHA will be doing what it always does – representing the needs of its members, doing everything it can to keep them informed and looking at how situations can be eased or improved. Don't be afraid to get in touch with the association to discuss any specific concerns.

Cyber-attacks are also something that are becoming more and more commonplace and with that in mind, the next two issues of Interface On Hire will be focusing on the statistics and effects, while highlighting what can be done to help avoid and avert. Be sure to check out information from the Technical Health and Safety Committee and the HAE EHA Insurance Services team on page 30.

In the latest 'Lunch with the CEO' feature, HAE EHA CEO Paul Gaze sits down to have coffee and a one-to-one with Steve Hitchen, CEO of One Stop Hire, and in our New To The Crew section, we welcome six new members who have joined HAE EHA in recent weeks from a range of different sectors and geographical areas.

Two new training opportunities are coming up which we'd urge member businesses to take advantage of: A ServiceTech training programme and hire desk controller new entrant training programme. Both offer NVQ Level 2 certificates and a comprehensive content and support package. You can find out all about these in the training section at the end of the magazine.

Too often attachments are considered 'add-ons' and decisions about them are made late in a process, but, as Alexandra Trunley, Head of Attachments at Sunbelt Rentals UK & Ireland, reveals in this issue's focus feature, attachment specification is becoming a critical control point in plant hire performance and consequences will surface quickly if these are overlooked.

Our risk services section looks at supporting neurodivergent employees in the workplace and how to get the best performance from them while our finance section seeks to clarify the current interest rate environment and how to set realistic targets.

Before I sign off, I'd like to say how much I'm looking forward to the next Hire Awards of Excellence event in a few days' time. I hope to see many of you there!

Stephanie Cornwall

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Innovation to transform equipment scheduling

THE newly-launched Allocation Chart in MCS RM Web aims to give equipment rental businesses more control and clarity over their rental operations.

MCS says the latest enhancement is designed to give users complete visibility and flexibility across their fleet, and will support faster decision-making and smoother scheduling whatever the location.

The new Allocation Chart brings a fresh, modern interface tailored for rental teams that need instant insight into equipment status and availability. With fully-interactive features and powerful functionality, the chart enables users to manage complex rental schedules and move quotations or bookings from a requested product type to the exact item being delivered.

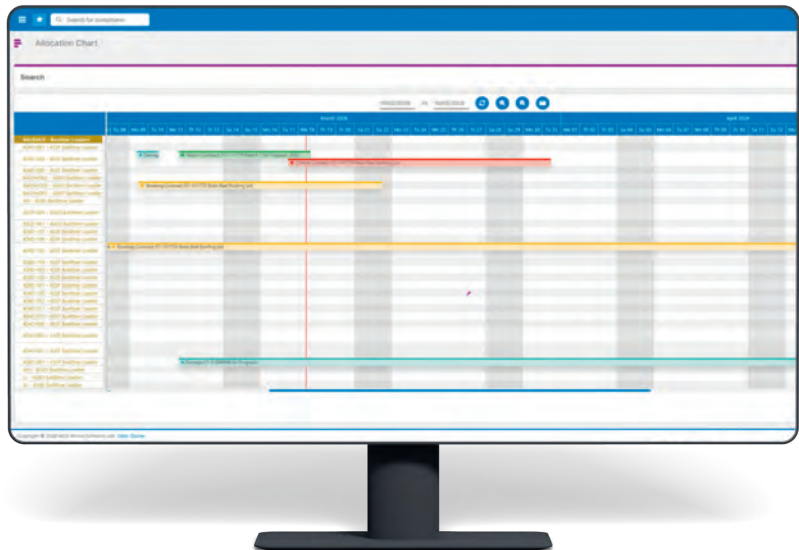
It is also possible to adjust allocations on the fly with drag-and-drop functionality, making it easier to respond to last-minute changes

in demand, while a full picture of equipment assignments, availability, and future bookings can be viewed through a browser-based interface.

Dispatchers, hire coordinators, and managers can all optimise their

workforce and assets in one central platform, MCS's Chief Technology Officer Chris Clarke said.

"It allows them to plan more efficiently, adapt quickly to changing schedules, and make better decisions in real time."



Amazon UK to host second members' day

HAE EHA members are being invited to attend a members' day on May 14th, which will incorporate a tour of an Amazon distribution hub, alongside presentations on many current issues affecting those in the hire sector.

It's the second time HAE EHA has joined forces with Amazon UK to hold such an event. Last year, a similar event was held in Bolton, and the May event will take place at its recently-opened distribution facility in Sutton Coldfield, EMA4 Minworth.

The event starts at 10am on Thursday, May 14th. Specialist presentations will take place and there will be a discussion on current issues in plant, tool, and equipment hire. This will be followed by an extensive tour of the ultra-modern Amazon facility.

Attendees will have the opportunity to network, and speak to the HAE EHA team about the different services and help available to those in the hire sector. Breakfast and drinks will be included, along with lunch before the tour, and an Amazon Goodie Bag.

Anyone interested in attending should contact the HAE EHA marketing department at marketing@hae.org.uk.

Ready to welcome you at awards night

THE compere for this year's Hire Awards of Excellence has now been announced.

Comedian and veteran after-dinner speaker Adger Brown will take to the stage to welcome all those gathered at the event on April 18th, at Grosvenor House, London, and announce this year's award winners.

A popular comedian and charity auctioneer, Adger has more than 40 years' experience entertaining audiences across the country, including hosting events in the hire sector. He is a member of the Grand Order of Water Rats and a Barker with The Variety Club of Great Britain.



Teams roll up their sleeves to help communities

TEAMS of staff from Sunbelt Rentals UK & Ireland supported the Great British Spring Clean 2026 recently, collecting litter and supporting their local communities.

The Great British Spring Clean, organised by environmental charity

Keep Britain Tidy, is the UK's largest mass-action environmental campaign, bringing together individuals, communities and organisations to improve local environments.

As part of the campaign, Sunbelt Rentals teams pledged to collect 100

bags of litter, working in partnership with local community organisations and alongside external volunteers. Activities took place across multiple locations from Warrington to Dundee, including local community spaces, green areas and locations surrounding their depots.

In total, 79 teammates participated, collecting 256 bags of litter, exceeding its original pledge.

The company's Social Sustainability Manager Lisa Kennedy said: "We set ourselves an ambitious target of collecting 100 bags of litter, and while I wasn't certain we'd reach it, the team has absolutely surpassed expectations. The enthusiasm and commitment shown has been fantastic, and I'm excited to see how this initiative can grow even further next year."

One of the initiatives took place in Dundee, where Sunbelt Rentals supported a litter pick with St Fergus Primary School and donated 16 litter pickers, 24 pairs of gloves, 8 litter hoops and 25 high-visibility vests to help pupils continue caring for their local environment.



Further site lighting sets added to help reduce carbon emissions

FAMILY-owned hire company GAP Hire Solutions, has purchased more than 300 Trime site lighting sets in its ongoing drive to help clients reduce their carbon emissions.

GAP currently has more than 2,000 Trime lighting sets available to hire for a variety of applications throughout the UK, including large tier 1 contractors, HS2, and Sizewell, etc.

Each year, GAP reviews and benchmarks its tower light requirements, and has selected Trime as its principal supplier of lighting towers. GAP's Head of Asset Management and Supply Chain, David Munro, said the Trime X-ECO HYBRID and the X-ECO LED lighting sets are particularly popular with clients.

The X-ECO HYBRID is an LED lighting tower that is powered by a combination of a lithium battery and a small, fuel-efficient diesel engine and can be fully recharged in less than 3.5 hours while the X-ECO LED features

six 160W, 48V multi-directionally adjustable LED lights floodlights, with 48V power between the generator and the lights.

Established in 1969 by Gordon Anderson, GAP Hire Solutions is the

UK's largest independent hire company with specialist divisions and almost 200 locations across the country, supplying a wide range of equipment from diggers and dumpers to portable toilets and tankers.



Power generators range for welfare cabins

POWER products designed for welfare cabins are a strong focus for power generation supplier and manufacturer Trime currently.

The company is seeking to broaden its range of power products for temporary accommodation facilities and welfare units, having created a line of bespoke sets to provide them with sustainable, clean electricity.

The MGTP 6000 SLA, 6kVA generator features a Kohler electric start diesel engine accredited to Stage 5 regulations, enabled to run from sustainable HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) fuel. Other features include: Engine protection shutdown system, an emergency stop button, and a useful large opening side door for easy and quick servicing. The complete set measures: Length: 869 mm, width:

550 mm, and a height of 725 mm, with a low-dry weight of just 178 kg.

Trime's MG 10000 CUBE delivers 9.8kVA of clean power from its water-cooled, silent Kubota diesel engine certified to Stage 5. This unit has similar features to the 6kVA product with slightly larger dimensions: Length 1100 mm, width 790mm, height 1000 mm and a dry weight of 425 kg.

If extended running is a prerequisite, Trime's MGMK 10000-300 is fitted with an extra-large 300 litre base fuel tank that will produce continuous 9.8kVA of power for up to 157 hours at 75% load. Because of the MGMK 10000-300 large fuel tank, its dimensions are slightly larger than those of its MG 10000 CUBE cousin: Length 1115 mm, width 800mm, height 1560 mm and a dry weight of 465 kg.



The MG 9000 and the MG 12000 compact are designed for applications where space is at a premium. The MG 9000 (9kVA/7.2kW) measures: Length: 960 mm, Width: 680 mm, Height: 1785 mm, alongside a dry weight of 478 kg. The larger MG 12000 (12kVA/9.6Kw) measures: Length: 960 mm, Width: 680 mm, Height: 1785 mm and a dry weight of 518kg.

Accelerating rail sector decarbonisation

Vp Brandon Hire Station has confirmed a significant investment in Instagrid GO RAIL units for its national hire fleet.

Engineered specifically for the rail environment, Instagrid GO RAIL is a rail-approved adaptation of the award-winning Instagrid GO portable power unit. GO RAIL has successfully passed Network Rail's rigorous product approval process, validating its safety, performance and compliance with the sector's stringent operational standards.

Key modifications to the standard GO unit include a high visibility rail-compliant colour and a two-handle carry system, enabling safe, easy two-person lifting along track and into remote locations where reliable, off grid power is essential.

By integrating GO RAIL into its fleet, Brandon says it is enabling contractors to work more effectively during overnight possessions, within noise-sensitive areas, and in enclosed or emission-restricted environments where traditional generators are unsuitable.

With more than 30,000 miles of track and 20,000-plus structures requiring ongoing maintenance, the UK rail network depends on reliable power access in locations away from a fixed grid supply.

GO RAIL provides a clean, silent and high-performance alternative to small fuel generators and removes the need for spill kits and fire prevention equipment, making it ideal for tunnel

works and confined spaces where safety restrictions traditionally limit generator use.

Vp Brandon Hire Station's investment will make the technology readily accessible to rail contractors nationwide.

Vp Brandon Hire Station's Support Services Director, Andrew Reed, said: "Our investment in Instagrid GO RAIL reflects Brandon Hire Station's ongoing commitment to bringing innovative, rail-approved equipment to market. We continuously seek technologies that help our customers work more efficiently, safely and sustainably and GO RAIL is a strong example of a product engineered for the real demands of the rail environment."

Instagrid's UK Sales Director Matt O'Hara added: "GO RAIL was developed specifically to meet the stringent requirements of the UK rail sector. Brandon Hire Station's investment ensures contractors nationwide can now access high performance portable power that cuts noise, emissions and operational risk. Together, we're supporting the industry's transition away from outdated generator technology while improving productivity on site."



Digital Product Passports for plant and tool hire sector

RICONNECT INC is providing Digital Product Passports (DPPs) as part of its cloud-based software as a service offering to the plant, tool and equipment hire sector.

RiConnect is dedicated to simplifying and digitalising the processes around compliance and traceability for equipment management. Having pioneered the utilisation of radio frequency identification (RFID) chips, RiConnect enables end users of lifting and other equipment to maintain pre-use checks and unique equipment identification. In addition to RFID technology, the platform also supports barcode and QR code identification, providing flexible options for asset traceability across different operational environments.

Digital chips and identification technologies within the RiConnect ecosystem support multiple identification methods, including RFID, QR codes, and barcodes. These technologies enable physical assets to be uniquely identified and connected to digital records managed through the RiConnect DPP platform, ensuring traceability, compliance visibility, and lifecycle documentation.

The complete supply chain, from equipment manufacturers, distributors, hire firms and trade bodies, through to the end user and end of life operations can be supported by the service offering.

Sales Manager Rob Whitehurst-Maiden said: "The central benefit of a tool being equipped with a DPP is that it means product information, inspection reports, and usage history can be tracked, making maintenance and examination easier. Beyond the regulatory framework, which is required



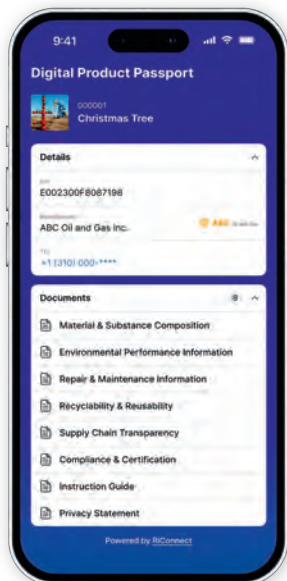
when selling equipment into the EU, the RiConnect DPP and associated module can help manufacturers and hire companies provide digital documentation and equipment identification to their customers."

The rental business is a core market for the RiConnect portfolio, especially DPPs, Rob said.

"Despite its scale, much of the sector still relies on a combination of legacy systems, spreadsheets, and manual processes to manage asset compliance. As fleets grow larger, this creates inefficiencies and limits visibility across operations. As a result, there is increasing interest in digital solutions that can provide better oversight of equipment usage, improve asset utilisation and streamline day-to-day management."

While DPPs are driving interest in RiConnect, its wider 2026 catalogue underpins a broader commitment to plant compliance and traceability. Standards are becoming more complex, making paper-based systems unsustainable. Regulatory pressure, audit challenges, poor traceability, and scattered documents are just some of the pain points that RiConnect addresses – both in its new 12-page marketing document and at industry's coalface.

Rob added: "HAE has been an invaluable partner, not only in establishing contacts within the industry, but also sharing information during technical committee meetings and adding value to the sector."



Multiphase generator gains interest

PREPTEC, which specialises in the sale, hire, repair, and servicing of industrial floor preparation equipment in the UK, has been seeing increased interest from the rental industry in its GEN24000 multiphase generator over the past five years.

Launched in 2020, the compact unit is fitted with a 35hp petrol engine and designed for professional use in the construction, flooring and refurbishment industry. Typical applications include powering floor grinders, shot blasters, dust control vacuums, screed mixers, floor saws, breakers, heaters, temporary lifts and other site equipment.

Three-phase and single-phase equipment can be run simultaneously, making it ideal for use with floor preparation equipment and an attached dust control vacuum. The unit weighs 197kg therefore is portable and easy to transport in a van to site. It has a large 20ltr fuel tank.

A 110v transformer can be connected to the 230v socket to power 110v tools and equipment.

Lincoln-based Preptec has been operating in the surface preparation industry more than 20 years.

Solution to help hire companies speed up payments

KLIPBOARD, a provider of sector-specific business software and HAE EHA supplier member, has launched Klipboard Money, a payments solution designed to help hire and rental businesses get paid faster, reduce operational friction, and save time.

Formerly known as Kerridge Commercial Systems Ltd, Klipboard Money assists with payments and cash flow challenges for large and small companies including distributors, equipment rental companies, automotive and parts businesses who are saving time and getting cash quicker as a result.

While standalone payment providers focus solely on taking payments, Klipboard Money integrates into Klipboard's business management platforms to simplify payments and account reconciliation.

Vice-President of Payments Lochan Sim said: "For too long, payments have been treated as a separate function, something businesses have had to bolt on and work around. That approach

has quietly eroded margins, created costly workarounds, and slowed growth. Klipboard Money changes that. By embedding payments into the heart of business operations, we turn payments from a source of friction into a genuine growth engine, helping customers get paid faster, operate more efficiently, and scale without added complexity."

As well as embedding into Klipboard's business software, including OnRent Go and OnRent Events, Klipboard Money also integrates into accounting packages such as Xero, Quickbooks and Sage, reducing admin time, invoice chasing and payment reconciliation.

Customers can pay using their preferred payment method including Apple Pay, Google Pay or open banking – whether that is online, by invoice, or by link - accelerating

payment, improving cashflow and reducing the risk of errors and fraud.

Every payment is connected into a single, rental business workflow.

Payment links can be sent to customers, so they can pay instantly without phone calls or delays, reducing fraud risks associated with taking card details over the phone and ensuring PCI compliance.

Deposits and prepayments can be taken to secure work, rentals or orders, and reduce no-shows.



Take a seat on unique 'listening bench'

JCB APPRENTICES have created a unique 80th anniversary project where members of the public are invited to tune into the manufacturer's past, present, and future.

The team of 15 young engineering, manufacturing and business apprentices designed the 'listening bench' for the grounds of the company's Rocester factory.

The bench, designed in the style of Joseph Cyril Bamford's first ever product - a tipping trailer made out of wartime scrap - has built-in speakers which play recordings at the push of a button, capturing the company's story over the past eight decades.

JCB Chairman Anthony Bamford officially unveiled the listening bench and pressed the button to introduce a

recording of his father speaking 30 years ago on the company's 50th anniversary.

Over ten weeks, a team of engineering, manufacturing, craft, commercial, finance and marketing apprentices were challenged to design and build the bench with a focus on sustainability, using surplus materials from production lines to keep the project as close to carbon neutral as possible.

Project leader and Business Administration apprentice Lana Hockaday, 21, said: "This project has really helped us develop a wide range of skills - from communication and teamwork to organisation and problem-solving. For many of us, it was our first time taking on something of this scale, so it was a great opportunity to build confidence and experience working across different departments and sites. Seeing it all come together and hearing the finished audio playing from the first bench was an amazing moment."



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60 new apprentice roles on offer

SUNBELT Rentals is inviting applications for its next cohort of apprentices, with 60 new apprenticeship roles now available.

The company's apprenticeship programme offers opportunities ranging from early careers to continuous professional development.

The programme currently supports 80 early career apprentices across 19 different apprenticeship courses, spanning technical and engineering specialisms to professional and business-focused skills.

More than 225 internal colleagues are currently undertaking apprenticeships, utilising more than 20 different pathways to gain additional qualifications and

skills and its partnership network continues to expand, with more than 30 currently in place.

Apprentices are mentored by experienced colleagues and supported at every stage by the company's Early Careers Team.

Early Careers & Social Impact Academy Manager at Sunbelt Rentals, Julie Harpley, said: "Our programmes span numerous frameworks across our business, ensuring that whether applicants are aspiring to become an engineer, learn a skilled trade, or join our professional services teams, they'll gain hands-on experience and make an impact from day one. We are now actively seeking our next intake of

apprentices. This represents an excellent opportunity to join Sunbelt Rentals and build a rewarding career with us."

In 2025, Sunbelt Rentals achieved Gold Membership of the 5% Club, a significant recognition of its commitment to developing talent through earn-and-learn schemes.

Max Doddy, who joined Sunbelt Rentals in October 2023 and is progressing through his Level 3 Mechatronics qualification, shared his experience: "What particularly appealed to me was the opportunity to gain qualifications whilst gaining hands-on experience working alongside engineers with years of industry knowledge.

"This combination of practical and theoretical learning was a significant draw for me, especially having previously studied electrical engineering at college and knowing I wanted to pursue a career in this field. The aspect I appreciate most is the variety. No two days are the same. You're constantly learning, whether it's working on different equipment or visiting various sites."

Sunbelt Rentals offers a range of apprenticeships from levels 2 to 6, based at locations across the UK. Vacancies are now open, with roles commencing in September 2026. For more information, visit <https://bit.ly/3PudBSE>



New one-man access tower integral to anniversary celebrations

SUPPLIER member POP UP Products celebrates its 20th anniversary this year and is marking the milestone with a number of events and offers for customers.

Starting life as part of NSG in 1973, the company became an independent business in 2006, delivering low-level access products to companies and individuals across the UK.

Throughout 2026, the company will be holding events, collaborations, and memorable throwback moments.

Earlier this year, the company introduced the MI Tower, a one-man rolling access tower which can be assembled in less than 10 minutes. The base of the MI Tower ingeniously doubles as its storage and transport trolley, allowing all components to be kept together, preventing lost parts and

simplifying transportation. It's compact enough to fit through standard doorways and into small vans or cars, making it incredibly versatile for various job sites.

The company believes it is the world's first one-person, quick assembly access tower and will be a game-changer for solo professionals. A competition for all those ordering an MI Tower is one of the events marking its 20th anniversary.

The Find the Golden Deck competition is open to all those who order one of the

towers before November. They are in with a chance of receiving the limited-edition MI Tower version with golden decks, as well as an opportunity to win a £500 Christmas gift.



Conflict, crime and collaboration



HAE EHA Director of Public Affairs, Mark Bradshaw looks at some of the public affairs issues impacting on hire, and how we are monitoring these.

THE Middle East conflict is having serious implications for the economy and for the hire sector.

HAE EHA has supplied information to both the government and CBI about the increased costs and operational concerns of our members. The longer the instability continues, the deeper the impact on the hire sector. Members with particular concerns are invited to contact HAE EHA.

The Chancellor gave her Spring Statement at the beginning of March but this was almost immediately superseded by the economic turbulence caused by the military actions on the Gulf. We expect further updates on the implications for the public finances, inflationary pressures and supply chains over the coming weeks.

Policing support

The hire sector continues to provide support to the national policing team at NCATT and we are working with other funders on a new package of support for three years from 2027/28. Currently, we are working on options for enhancing the invaluable work done by NCATT.

Fraud targeting

Members are reminded to sign up to the HAE EHA Crime Portal in order to share and review information about thefts, fraudulent hires and attempted crime. HAE EHA recently published targeted fraud prevention and awareness checklists for use by hire desk and delivery teams. I'd strongly urge members to make full use of this resource to help prevent their business becoming a victim.

FYA resource

It is now several months since the First Year 40% capital Allowance came into effect. HAE EHA will be putting together a resource pack and organising a webinar for members. We ask members to consider how the FYA might benefit their business as we need to demonstrate to the Treasury and HMRC that the measure has had a positive impact on the hire sector. As with all financial decisions, members will need to take professional advice beforehand.

External collaborations

HAE EHA is collaborating with several external partners to improve the level of information about the hire sector.

This would strengthen our campaigning activities and provide a resource to support recruitment and retention. We plan to share more details with members in the coming months.

Carbon reporting

The association is working with the European Rental Association on a more accessible resource on carbon reporting in the hire and rental sector. Providing detailed and validated information on carbon impact is usually required as part of pre-tendering qualification and other processes. We want the ERA material and calculator to be usable by all UK hire businesses. <<



↙ HAE EHA Director of Public Affairs Mark Bradshaw is responsible for relations with the UK Government, other central agencies, as well as external and trade association partners. If you would like further information on any of the above, or other related topics, call 0121 380 4621 or email mark.bradshaw@hae.org.uk

Lunch with the CEO

16 Years of growth and community impact



HAE EHA CEO Paul Gaze sits down to have coffee and a one-to-one with Steve Hitchen, CEO of One Stop Hire.



I ask: So Steve, so here we are in 2026, 16 years after you established One Stop Hire. How do you feel 16 years on?

Stephen says: I think the word is blessed, really - incredibly blessed. We never expected to become a national business. We're not quite there yet, but we're getting very close. We started as a northwest regional business and, by building and developing an incredible team of people, great customers, and a strong supply chain, we put the building blocks and platform in place to drive the business into new regions. As my father-in-law always said, people are everything - that's your customers, your suppliers, and your employees. If you look after them, they'll look after you.

I ask: Under your leadership, you and the team have focused on putting the customer first. How have you been able to drive this forward?

Stephen says: We promote strongly that "the answer is always yes". It used to be "the answer's yes - now what's the question?" but we've shortened that. We're a service business, we're problem solvers, and we provide solutions. One of our departments is called Total Solutions, and that's exactly what people want. A key area of delivering this pledge is to have the support systems, processes and people in place to enable the depot network and our National Hire Centre to have total confidence that 'yes means yes' and we are able to do what we say. Over the years, the background

departments involved in procurement, logistics and repairs have constantly evolved and improved and they are unsung heroes to be honest.

I ask: So you've created the culture and the environment for your staff to succeed and deliver for your customers?

Stephen says: Absolutely. They all know a depot manager might take an order for a 10 kVA generator and not have one in the depot, but they still say yes because they know they can go on the system and find one, or call our fulfilment centre and someone will say "We'll get you one". Whether we move it from another region, repair one, rehire or buy one, we'll make it happen. It takes time for people to build the confidence to say yes when they know it could be a challenge, but that's what sits behind it.

"Once we opened in London and the Southwest, we sat down to look at the next few years' strategy and it was abundantly clear that we had to steer a path towards having a full nationwide coverage."

We are all one team and all the kit, vehicles and people are focused not just on their depot but on the company has been key. The bi-annual bonus is based predominantly on the whole group profit NOT the individual depot and this promotes more teamwork and sharing of resources.

I ask: Has your strategy changed from when you first established One Stop Hire 16 years ago?

Stephen says: Yes. Really, it's just been customer-driven. My ambition at the start was to become a strong market leader in the Northwest. I'd been at Ainscough Crane Hire for 17 years, working nationally from Land's End to John O'Groats, and I thought I wanted a good business based in the northwest, never more than an hour from home. Danni and I had started a family and I wanted to be around to support Danni and see the kids development as they grow up so quickly. Once the family was settled, it coincided with us getting opportunities to work in Yorkshire and the Midlands and that's when we ventured out of our home region. Once we opened in London and the Southwest, we sat down to look at the next few years' strategy and it was abundantly clear that we had to steer a

“We try to create a benefits and staff support package that is relevant to today's life challenges, and an environment that feels like a family or a community.”

path towards having a full nationwide coverage as we started to deal with, and get engagement with, national contractors of many types. Customer demand and economic growth areas have always been our driver.

I ask: Steve, I know that family's really important to you in the journey that you're on. How has this approach helped you drive the business forward?

Stephen says: I worked for 17 years in a very large family business, Ainscough Crane Hire. My father-in-law Martin and his two brothers were the driving force, and their kids, siblings, and cousins were all involved. It was a great model. They cared about their employees and took time to look after them, giving them opportunities to grow and develop, supporting them through tough times in their personal and workplace lives. Ainscough had

generations of families working in the business and it truly was a “dads and lads, Mums and daughters, uncles, aunties, cousins and best mates” mix! That family culture and mentality had some drawbacks but overall it was a massive positive and the mega success of that business, right up to when the family sold it in 2007, proves it. That DNA is in me and it is in One Stop Hire and I refer to it as the recipe for success. We try to create a benefits and staff support package that is relevant to today's life challenges, and an environment that feels like a family or a community — whether that's a depot or a region. We work very hard to maintain those family, community-based standards. I've got my son working in the business, and many team members have family and friends involved too, very much like the old Ainscough model.



“We need, as a country, to find innovative ways of making good work rewarding and easy to access for our future generations.”

I ask: You mentioned some of the different locations and areas where you developed the business and the strategy over the last few years. Have business acquisitions and depot locations been an important part of the growth of One Stop Hire?

Stephen says: Yes, One Stop Hire is a 50/50 mixture of greenfield setups & acquisitions. There are pros and cons, with both models but for me an acquisition is always exciting as you look to integrate a business into your systems and culture whilst acquiring new knowledge in the process. Certain areas we moved into had no acquisition opportunities available so it was a case of set up from scratch and find the people.

I ask: I know you're heavily involved in supporting your local community. Can you tell me about a few of the areas that you're really proud of?

Stephen says: When I left Ainscough Crane Hire, my father-in-law and some other business people had invested heavily in a charity called OnSide, which creates what they call 21st-century youth zones. These are big complexes with fitness and wellbeing, business, cooking, arts and crafts and music and dance studios. All are state-of-the-art buildings with state-of-the-art facilities. The mission is to create a place safe for kids from six to 16 to go and get involved in activities, and keep them from harm on the streets. All are staffed with mentors and social workers who can provide counselling and help on all the challenging issues that young people face today. I originally helped out in the Wigan Youth Zone and then swapped over my help and patronage to the one that was built in my home town of Chorley six years ago. In the last few years, as we've grown nationally, we've focused a lot of resource on supporting our employees' communities. Many of our staff are involved in sports and other activities outside work, so every

year we invite bids for sponsorship to support them. We currently support five or six rugby and football teams across the North East, North West, and Midlands. We're sponsoring a gymnastics team that's heading to Florida for the World Championships and one of our hire controllers in Sunderland races 600cc bikes just below Superbike level, so his motorcycle now has One Stop Hire branding, and we've been watching him at Donington Park and Oulton Park. In East London, we also have a semi-professional ice hockey player, so we now sponsor an ice hockey team called Medway Madness. It's very rewarding getting the news feeds out, updating the staff on their progress.

I ask: Having the right products in your fleet is an essential part of the business equation. However, it is also about having committed, competent staff who buy into your vision, which is crucial. Can you tell me about how you've invested in learning and development for Team One Stop Hire?

Stephen says: Obviously, finding people to run, test, and repair equipment is a challenge, and bringing people into our sector can be difficult. In 2023, we opened our first internal academy where we take on seven young people each year and put them through a two-year foundation course in plant and tool repairs. Our first group has completed it. Some are now working in depots, others are moving on to the next level. We offer a third, fourth, and fifth year so they can build skills in areas like LOLER and PUWER for lifting equipment, and qualifications such as CAP for powered access. By the time they're 25, they can work on petrol, diesel, electrics, and hydraulics, with additional certifications in lifting and powered access. There aren't many people with that level of skill. It's a huge CV. Our aim is to create these highly-capable young engineers and spread them across our network.

I ask: I believe you've talked about the potential for other areas?

Stephen says: Eventually, I'd love academies in Bristol, London, and the North East as well. That's the goal, though there are many challenges to making it happen. Over the years, we have given business apprenticeships to graduates and school leavers and when you give them the right mentoring and a pathway across the whole business so they understand exactly how we operate, who we serve and why the hire industry exists you end up with amazingly knowledgeable young people who can then spread their talents into the areas they excel in and enjoy the most. I was very lucky when I joined the plant division of Fairclough Construction at 17 years of age to be helped and mentored by a great guy. He taught me about the products, the people, the culture, customer service and attention to detail. He also helped me learn to drive a car! It left an indelible mark on me and today I love seeing young people growing in our business of which we have many. We've got lots of young people like that coming through, teamed up with experienced staff so knowledge gets passed on. You forget how quickly young people learn & also the new skills & ideas they have, particularly in Tech, that they bring to the party.

I ask: I believe that you invited the Right Honourable Darren Jones MP to visit the One Stop Hire Depot in Bristol. How did that go?

Stephen says: Surprisingly well. I was incredibly impressed with him. Politics isn't really my thing, and I can be cynical about politicians, just like a lot of people, but he was excellent. He was genuinely interested in what we do around the circular economy, HVO fuel, carbon reduction, employment progression, and the challenges our sector faces. With support from HAE's Director of Public Affairs, Mark Bradshaw, we explained how we contribute to the economy and how our work supports the Government's agenda. It was a very good visit and, with the recent help given in the budget for hire companies claiming capital allowances, let's hope the start of the hire sector being recognised in government as a key sector is

taking shape. He acknowledged the challenges and said he'd connect us with local organisations for work experience and recruitment opportunities. He was honest about the difficulties young people face. I'm very passionate about that. Public transport isn't always great, and if young people can't drive, getting to work is hard. When they can drive, they might buy a cheap car but then face huge insurance costs, so we need, as a country, to find innovative ways of making good work rewarding and easy to access for our future generations. I heard an idea on a podcast that young people shouldn't pay tax until they've earned their first £100,000. I thought that was interesting. It would give young people a chance to save for a house, buy a car, and get started in life with less or no debt burden. I shared all of that with him on the day.

I ask: How has being part of HAE and undertaking SafeHire made a difference for One Stop Hire?

Stephen says: SafeHire is great. It's an independent outside audit that checks our internal systems and quality. Providing safe, reliable, well maintained and compliant equipment is the fundamental thing we must do to succeed. I really value SafeHire and it adds another level of quality to our portfolio of ISO and other accreditations.

I ask: And finally, Steve, where do you see the industry going in the short to medium term?

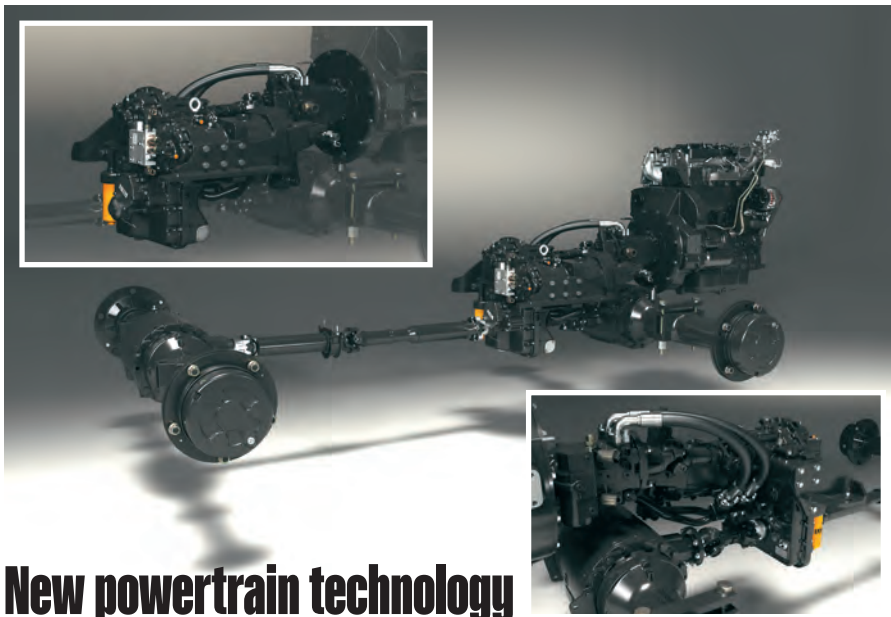
Stephen says: I don't think the hire sector is anywhere near reaching its full potential, even though the UK rental market is very big compared to European countries. There's still much more to come. Hire is the circular economy defined in a nutshell, and we as an industry need to drive that message. Contractors and government both need to



understand the benefits and engage in helping us to develop the carbon reducing products and processes the world of today demands. I showed Darren Jones MP a piece of kit that was 15 years old and had been hired

hundreds of times. Because it was well maintained and of a professional quality, it could last many more years again. It's something that people might otherwise buy cheaply off Amazon or a cheap DIY outlet, use once, and throw away or leave in a garage. He was astonished. With innovation in solar, battery technology, hydrogen and countless other developments, hire has a great future. Some of the things we're doing now, especially through the Hire Association and the committees I've sat on, are really positive and exciting. <<

“Hire is the circular economy defined in a nutshell, and we as an industry need to drive that message.”



New powertrain technology

THE wraps were removed on the new JCB DualTech VT transmission and SS670 package at a recent show in Las Vegas.

JCB DualTech was first unveiled in 2016. The new design and package was tailored initially for the recently-launched JCB TM280 loading shovel model but its compact design means it can also be integrated into a number of Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) applications.

The new JCB DualTech VT is an innovative two-speed transmission that combines the benefits of hydrostatic and powershift technologies in the same unit. Based on JCB's market-leading DualTech Variable Transmission used in heavy-duty agricultural telescopic handlers, this version has been reengineered into a more traditional inline layout, making it ideally suited to wheeled machines with conventional drivetrain architecture.

DualTech VT provides hydrostatic drive up to 25kph. Above 25kph it

transitions to direct mechanical drive, providing travel up to 40kph.

The new SS670 synchro shuttle transmission, the latest generation of its Synchro-Shuttle technology which has evolved significantly in the 48 years that JCB Transmissions has been manufacturing axles and transmissions at its factories in Wrexham, North Wales, UK.

Developed initially for JCB site dumpers, backhoe loaders and rough-terrain forklifts, the SS670 package provides is suitable for a wide range of off-highway applications.

Replacing the established SS600, SS700 and SS750, the new SS670 Synchro-Shuttle transmission delivers significant performance improvements via the established W300 torque converter and latest synchroniser technology, offering an improvement in shift quality. The design is also optimised to minimise churning losses and enhance efficiency.



Gloucester hirer expands fleet

GLOUCESTER plant and tool hire company Rocket Rentals has made a major expansion to its fleet.

The Gloucesterbased hirer said it is investing in compact, manoeuvrable kit to keep pace with booming demand across construction, civils and infrastructure. It has just purchased 55 new JCB machines - including a 35strong fleet of zerotailswing excavators. The investment includes 145XR, 90Z2, 50Z2 and 25Z1 excavators, alongside JCB Loadall telehandlers, X Series tracked excavators, and the brandnew JCB CT430140 tandem roller.

Managing Director Simon Tomblin said: "Running zerotailswing wherever possible is now a must for our customers, and with this order we can offer zeroswing options from one tonne right up to the new 15-tonne models. JCB's new CT430140 roller is also a superb addition, giving excellent compaction results on both asphalt and aggregates."

Founded in 2003, Rocket Rentals has grown into one of the region's leading plant and tool hire specialists. Its expanding fleet covers everything from one to 25 tonne excavators to dumpers, rollers, telehandlers, bowsers, generators and skid steers, supporting projects across construction, industrial and civil engineering sectors.

Model material at station

A FULL-SIZED JCB digger dressed up like a collector's scale model stopped Londoners in their tracks outside London King's Cross railway station recently, before going on to make an appearance at Cheltenham Festival.

The 'JCB Backhoe in a Box' was presented as though it were a scale model. It had been carefully dismantled at the manufacturer's Staffordshire headquarters, where it was first

unveiled, then reassembled and unveiled outside the London railway station.

Standing nearly 15 feet high and more than 20 feet across in its special packaging, the installation was displayed for a week. the life size display is impossible to miss.

Its appearance in London marked the start of a UK-wide. The next stop



was Cheltenham Festival, where the manufacturer was title sponsor of the opening race on the final day of the Festival.

A perfect 10

WHC Hire Services has added to its fleet of excavators with the addition of 10 new JCB 140X tracked machines.

The Gloucestershire-based hirer has operated the X-Series since its launch in 2019, with the model becoming a core part of its hire fleet across utilities, civils, groundwork and land management projects.

Supplied by Watling JCB, its fleet includes JCB excavators, Loadall telescopic handlers, forklifts and electric scissor lifts.

Managing Director James Clutterbuck said: "WHC Hire Services has a long-standing relationship with JCB and the X Series range is a firm favourite in the hire fleet for its power, performance, comfort and reliability. We have been running the 140X since its launch in 2019, and it has proven to be a genuine game changer for our customers. Operators have consistently highlighted the power, comfort, and fuel efficiency of the 140X Series, which helps contribute to more profitable projects."

Established in 1997, WHC Hire Services now operates from three depots across three counties, delivering a multi award-winning plant hire service with national coverage.

First backhoe loader put straight to work

COUNTY-Down-based P. Smyth Digger Hire has bought one of the first JCB 3CX PRO DualDrive backhoe loaders in Northern Ireland.

The new JCB 3CX PRO has been put straight to work pole planting for electricity cables on behalf of Northern Ireland Electricity Networks (NIE Networks) outside the village of Moira.

Supplied by dealer Dennison JCB, the new 3CX PRO model features DualDrive, JCB's latest backhoe innovation which allows the operator to drive and reposition the machine while facing the excavator. It is proving highly beneficial for pole planting operations as well as highways work where the backhoe is now able to operate even more efficiently within a single lane.

P. Smyth Digger Hire Owner Operator, Ricky Smyth, said: "We do a lot of work with NIE Networks and the JCB DualDrive feature is perfect for our work. We are able

to move forwards and backwards from pole to pole without having to twist and turn. This means we're not wasting time and we're not blocking the roads as just the single lane closure is required, which minimises disruption to the public.

"We're very impressed with it. It's fast on the road which is fantastic too. We do lots of miles – some days nearly a 100-mile round trip – so it makes a huge difference. In this line of work we can't afford downtime so the service and support we get from our dealer Dennison JCB is excellent."

The new 3CX PRO model boasts a number of further developments, including a single loader lever to reduce operator effort, revised direction control for quicker and easier use, a return-to-grade function for improved performance, upgraded quickhitch with wider fork carriage and de-bog feature offering simultaneous control of excavator and loader controls.

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Getting attached

Alexandra Trunley, Head of Attachments at Sunbelt Rentals UK & Ireland, discusses why attachment specification is becoming a critical control point in plant hire performance

In plant hire, the early stages of a conversation often shape the outcome of an entire job. Yet attachment decisions are still frequently made late in the process, or in response to the brand of carrier that is already on site.

Attachments are not simply add-ons. They define how the task is carried out, the loads involved and the demands placed on the carrier. In many cases, those requirements determine the machine specification, not the other way around. Where this is overlooked, the consequences tend to surface quickly in the form of delays, incompatibility issues and reduced productivity.

Across hire operations, the same challenges appear repeatedly. Attachments arrive without the right hydraulic flow compatibility. Ground conditions or material types do not match the original assumption. Equipment capable of handling multiple tasks is overlooked, leading to additional deliveries and unnecessary machine movements. These issues are

rarely the result of poor intent, more often, they stem from decisions being made too quickly, without full visibility of the task requirements.

The safety case

Compatibility between attachment and carrier is one of the most critical considerations. Hydraulic flow, pressure requirements and mounting configurations must align. When they do not, the immediate impact is downtime and rework. The wider implications include wasted transport movements, additional fuel consumption and lost working time. In some cases, attachments that could have completed multiple tasks are replaced by separate units simply because those compatibility checks were not completed early enough.

There is also a safety dimension to this interface. The attachment-machine pairing influences operating pressures and site procedures. In higher-risk environments, including rail and infrastructure projects, attachments



must be operated in line with strict guidance and exclusion controls. Misunderstanding how equipment will be used on site can introduce avoidable risk, particularly where vegetation management, cutting or demolition activities are involved. These risks are rarely visible at the point of hire, which is why early questioning and clear communication are essential.

Carbon and efficiency impact

The environmental impact of attachment decisions is also often underestimated. Poor specification can lead to multiple deliveries, additional plant movements and unnecessary idling on site. Conversely, selecting attachments with broader functionality can reduce the volume of equipment

required. In practical terms, that might mean using one attachment capable of performing multiple tasks rather than sending several single-purpose units. Over the course of a project, the effect is cumulative resulting in fewer transport journeys, reduced fuel use and less congestion on site.

Operationally, this also supports better utilisation of carriers. Rather than bringing multiple machines to site to run different attachments simultaneously, a compatible machine can often be used across several tasks with planned changeovers. This approach requires greater coordination and confidence from site teams, but it can significantly reduce both cost and environmental impact when applied consistently.

From transactional to advisory

For hire businesses, this is driving a gradual shift in how frontline teams operate. The hire desk is no longer simply a transactional function. Increasingly, it is becoming a technical checkpoint where early decisions influence safety outcomes and equipment efficiency. That requires

a different skill set. Teams need to be comfortable asking about ground conditions, material type, pressures, space constraints and the end goal of the project.

This advisory role also involves challenging assumptions. Customers often work under significant time pressure, and the instinct is to proceed with what is familiar or readily available. However, when hire providers take time to understand the full scope of a project, there is greater opportunity to suggest alternative approaches, identify compatibility issues early and reduce the likelihood of rework later.

Information sharing plays a central role here. The earlier hire providers understand a project's objectives, constraints and sequencing, the better they can plan equipment availability and specification. Even where programmes change, that initial dialogue creates a clearer baseline and reduces the risk of reactive decisions that introduce inefficiency.

The next five years

Attachment hire is set to play a more strategic role in project planning,

with earlier engagement and stronger input into specification becoming the norm. As safety standards continue to rise and programme pressures increase, the tolerance for mismatched equipment and avoidable downtime will continue to narrow.

Sustainability will also shape decision-making more directly. Smarter attachment selection can reduce transport movements, minimise idle equipment and limit the need for additional machines on site. While each improvement may seem incremental, the combined impact across large projects is significant.

As a result, attachment hire will be judged on the operational value it brings. This includes supporting safer working practices, improving utilisation and helping projects maintain momentum without unnecessary disruption.

For an industry that has traditionally focused on machines first, this signals a broader shift in thinking. Understanding the task in detail, then aligning attachment and carrier accordingly, will become a defining factor in how effectively sites operate. <<

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Cyber defence and supply chain risk

Significant increases in cyber-attacks over the past year pose risks to supply chain functionality. The Technical Health and Safety Committee are keeping a sharp eye on the situation and the impact of the government’s action plan.

MANY owners and employers operating in the hire sector, along with their suppliers, will rightfully be concerned about the potential for a large-scale cyber-attack to put their business at risk, following a rise in incidents over the past year, including high profile cases such as those affecting Marks & Spencer, Jaguar Land Rover and the Co-Op Group.

In the past 12 months, significant UK cyber-attacks rose by 129%, with the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) now managing around four major incidents each week.

More than 444,000 cases of fraud and cyber-related risk were recorded by the National Fraud Database (NFD) in the UK during 2025. This figure highlights a record high for fraud cases, driven by increased cybercriminal activity, with a 6% rise in reported fraud risk cases over 2024, according to UK fraud prevention service Cifas.

As it stands, cyber risk affects every level of society, from governments



Carl Bartlett

protecting essential services, to businesses navigating fluctuating markets and supply chain delays, through to organisations fighting to keep their operations running. These high stakes are evident in recent large-scale cyberattacks.

Real-world impact

Following the 2025 M&S cyber-attack, the retailer’s market capitalisation fell by around £1 billion, and customer data was allegedly stolen. This has resulted



Kevin Howell

in collective legal action as people look for compensation for their lost data.

Last year, Jaguar Land Rover also reported a £485 million pre-tax loss for the quarter versus a £398 million profit a year earlier, after being forced to shut down networks and halt highly automated- production lines for weeks. This event has been widely described as the costliest cyberattack in UK history, with an estimated £1.9 billion economic impact and considerable supply chain disruption.

The Cyber Security Longitudinal Survey also recently highlighted that 82% of medium-sized and larger businesses have suffered a cyber incident in the past year.

What's being done about cybercrime?

As the frequency and severity of cyberattacks rise, so does the government's determination to tackle them. It recently announced new measures to 'make public services more secure and resilient' with a dedicated Cyber Action Plan, allowing people to use these services safely and securely.

In its new Cyber Action Plan, the UK government has committed £210 million to strengthen public services against cyber threats. At its core, this will consist of a new Government Cyber Unit, setting mandatory cybersecurity standards, coordinating incident response, and providing expert support across departments, local authorities, and health services.

The plan also introduces measures to secure supply chains and improve detection and recovery capabilities, ensuring essential services remain safe and reliable.

Its Cyber Essentials scheme sets out clear and practical steps businesses can take to protect themselves from the most common cyber-attacks. Such steps include keeping software up-to-date and controlling who has access to accounts and data in order to immediately boost cyber resilience. Many cyber incidents exploit these basic weaknesses and Cyber Essentials is designed to safeguard against them.

The plan is being progressed in three phases from now until 2029. In phase one, by March 2027, it will focus on governance and minimum standards. Phase two will see implementation scale up with enhanced tools, threat monitoring, and workforce development. From 2029 onward, phase three will drive continuous improvement, aiming to build stronger supplier resilience and embedding cyber skills across the public sector.

Security Matters, an independent news platform for security and risk professionals, recently reported that last year, 92% fewer insurance claims were made by those organisations with Cyber Essentials in place.

Ultimately, this plan sets a new overall standard for security and accountability, raising expectations for every organisation connected to government services.

Cyber Insurance solutions can usually provide threat alerts and proactive insight, access to cyber security tools and advice along with cover for legal defence, PR costs, loss or damage, and business interruption.

The topic was recently a focus for the Technical Health and Safety Committee.

Kevin Howell, Founder of Howell Technology Group (HTG), a technology and cyber security services

business which now employs more than 20 staff and serves customers nationwide, highlighted the growing number of cases and the need for businesses to protect themselves when he gave a recent presentation to HAE EHA's Technical Health and Safety (THS) Committee, which is made up of HSEQ experts from member organisations, representatives from the Health & Safety Executive and the Hire Certification Services audit team.

Kevin said cyber security threats are forcing organisations to rethink how they operate.

"Today's business landscape is full of constantly evolving cyber risks, leaving many business owners feeling vulnerable and uncertain," he said. "With rising costs and tightening budgets, organisations are under real pressure to protect revenue and maintain growth, and increasing cyber threats put both directly at risk. Cyber security is no longer just an IT issue, it's fundamental to business resilience and revenue protection."

HAE EHA's Carl Bartlett, a fellow Technical Health and Safety Committee member, added: "Your cyber security posture is now a key part of your value proposition to larger clients and directly impacts contractual and reputational risks." <<

"Times are tough for many businesses, with rising costs and tightening budgets, so increasing cyber risks are the last things anyone needs to deal with."

Kevin Howell, HTG





Gauging your interest

If you are reviewing finance options, understanding the current rate environment helps set realistic expectations before you apply. The HAE EHA finance team helps to clarify.

AS of February 2026, the Bank of England base rate stood at 3.75%, although it was envisaged as likely to fall to 2% within the first quarter of the year.

That figure underpins the wider lending market. While businesses do not borrow directly at the base rate, it influences how lenders price funding, assess risk and structure new facilities. When the rate changes, borrowing costs across the UK tends to adjust accordingly, although not always immediately or by the same margin.

Why interest rates matter to businesses

Interest rates in business influence borrowing costs, cash flow and investment decisions. When rates rise, the cost of servicing loans, overdrafts and other finance can increase, which

may affect hiring plans, expansion or day-to-day liquidity. Lenders may also take a more cautious approach to affordability during periods of economic pressure.

When rates fall, borrowing can become more manageable and refinancing opportunities may open up. For SMEs considering funding, understanding how interest rates impact on business helps you assess timing, affordability and how much you can realistically borrow.

Current business loan rates in the UK

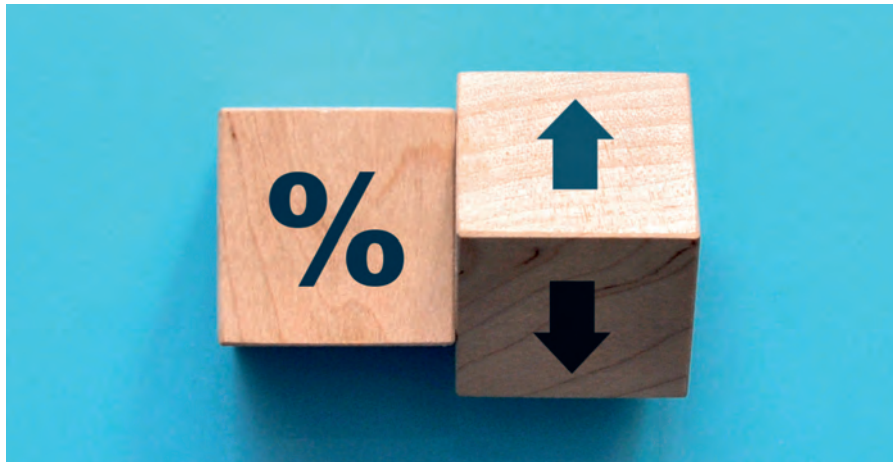
There is no single standard rate for a business loan. Business loan interest rates in the UK vary depending on the type of facility, the lender's risk appetite and the financial strength of the applicant.

Unsecured business loan interest rates are typically higher than secured borrowing because there is no asset reducing the lender's exposure. Well-established businesses with strong credit and consistent turnover may access more competitive pricing, while newer or higher-risk businesses may see higher rates to reflect that risk.

Advertised rates tend to show the lender's most competitive example. The rate offered to your business will be based on its accounts, cash flow, existing commitments and credit profile. The headline percentage is important, but so are fees, repayment terms and whether the rate is fixed or variable.

Why interest rates change

When lenders assess interest rates for a business loan, they focus on risk and affordability.



Credit history plays a major role, both for the company and often for its directors. Trading history is equally important. Consistent revenue and stable profitability provide reassurance that repayments are sustainable. The size and term of the loan also matter, as does whether any security is available.

Industry conditions and wider economic uncertainty can influence pricing too. Business loans interest rates UK lenders provide are tailored to each application rather than applied as a flat figure.

What the base rate means for business finance

The Bank of England sets the base rate as part of its monetary policy framework. That rate affects how much it costs banks to access funds, which then influences the pricing of commercial lending.

When inflation rises, base rate increases often follow, which can raise borrowing costs. When inflation falls, rate reductions may ease pressure on repayments. Lenders, however, also consider their own funding structures

and market competition, so movements are not always perfectly aligned.

For business owners, the base rate provides context. Your final offer will still depend on your individual financial position.

For SME business owners considering growth, refinancing or working capital support, understanding how the base rate feeds into lender pricing can make timing decisions easier.

How interest rates impact business decisions

Interest rates impact on business planning in practical ways. They influence expansion decisions, equipment purchases, recruitment plans and refinancing strategies.

When borrowing costs are lower, investment may feel more achievable. When rates are higher, cash flow management becomes more critical. Monitoring both the wider economic environment and your own financial resilience helps you make informed decisions rather than reactive ones. <<

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Health and safety breaches

In this regular feature, we detail the latest court cases and sentences resulting from HSE investigations, highlighting the significant outcomes that result from lack of compliance and adequate care while carrying out work on construction sites, within factory or workplace environments, using plant machinery, working at height and other areas commonly associated with hire services.

Plant hire company fined after employee struck by falling JCB bucket

A PLANT hire company has been fined after a mechanic suffered life-changing injuries when a JCB bucket fell on him while he was helping to repair a tipper truck.

In October 2023, the employee of Salford Grab Hire Limited was assisting a colleague in repairing a broken lifting mechanism on a tipper truck body. A JCB was being used to prop up the tipper body in the raised position when the one-tonne bucket became dislodged and fell.

The worker suffered multiple fractures to his hand, shoulder blade, ribs, shin and thigh, as well as a crushed ankle and foot. He also developed a blood clot in his lungs as a result of the incident.

An investigation by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that Salford Grab Hire Limited had not used appropriate equipment to support the tipper body during repairs. The bucket being used to prop up the body did not have a quick hitch or retaining pin, causing it to become dislodged and fall.

Salford Grab Hire Limited of Fairacre Astley Moss, Tyldesley, Manchester pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £10,000 and ordered to pay costs of £3,475.90.



Two firms fined after racking collapse kills workers

TWO companies have been fined following an incident which resulted in the deaths of two workers in West Yorkshire.

Lee Horton, 58, and Daron Pickstock, 43, were killed when an industrial racking system collapsed as it was being tested at Castfields Industrial Estate in Bingley in October 2020.

The racking was being tested at a site belonging to Space Productiv Ltd, of which Mr Horton, from Ilkley, was the managing director. Mr Pickstock, who was from Chorley, was self-employed and working for a company called Collins Site Services.

The racking system was being loaded with test weights, some of which weighed up to two tonnes, when the structure began to collapse. The two men had been working from a mobile elevating work platform (MEWP) next to the racking structure as it was being loaded.

However, as the structure collapsed, it struck the MEWP, causing it to overturn while both men were inside. Mr Horton and Mr Pickstock sustained fatal injuries and died shortly afterwards.

An HSE investigation found that both companies failed to adequately assess the risks arising from the work being undertaken and failed to put in place a safe system of work to ensure the health and safety of those involved.

HSE found that the planned and implemented systems of work were unsafe. Workers were positioned within the collapse zone of the racking during testing, placing them at serious risk should the structure fail.

Space Productiv Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £97,500 and ordered to pay £17,377 in costs.

Collins Site Services Ltd also admitted breaching the act and was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £10,292 in costs.

Father electrocuted after cherry picker powerline collision

TWO companies have been fined after an employee was killed and a colleague left with life-altering injuries when a cherry picker collided with an overhead powerline.

Willand O&M Ltd and New Wave Marine Ltd have been sentenced following an incident in June 2020 at the Willand Biogas site, Hide Market Road, Cullompton, in Devon, in which Carl Parsons died and colleague Luke Madavan was left with life-changing injuries.

The court heard that New Wave Marine had been contracted by Willand O&M to lift the lid of a biodigester and stir a crust blockage that had accumulated inside the tank. During this work, a cherry picker operated by New Wave Marine struck an overhead powerline. The electrical current passed through the metal basket, fatally electrocuting Carl Parsons and causing a serious electric shock to Luke Madavan.

An HSE investigation found that Willand O&M had been advised by its principal contractor and Western Power Distribution to relocate the overhead powerline. Doing so would have eliminated the risk of contact during both the

build and foreseeable future maintenance. Willand O&M failed to act on this advice and put no adequate control measures in place, such as height restrictors on cherry pickers or restricted work areas. Supervision, monitoring and site induction were also found to be poor.

New Wave Marine's risk assessment was found to be neither suitable nor sufficient. The company also lacked formal training provision and adequate supervision for the work being carried out.

Willand O&M Ltd of Cleave Farm, Station Road, Willand, Cullompton, Devon, pleaded guilty to an offence under the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, having failed to ensure that persons carrying out work at the site were not working on or near a live conductor without reasonable and suitable precautions in place to prevent injury. The company was fined £51,000 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £28,467.

New Wave Marine Ltd pleaded guilty to offences under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and the Work at Height Regulations 2005. The company was fined £30,000 with prosecution costs of £8,000.

Waste company sentenced after telehandler incident

A WASTE and recycling company has been fined after an employee suffered life-changing injuries after being crushed by a reversing telehandler at a site in Lancashire.

Jordan Campion, from Burnley, was working for Sheridan Skips Burnley Limited at its site in Smiths Yard, Clifton Street when the incident occurred in March 2024.

Mr Campion, now 21, and three other employees were sorting and separating waste material by hand in the same yard as a colleague who was operating a telehandler. Mr Campion was standing against a brick wall at the side of the yard when the telehandler reversed into him, crushing him against the wall.

As a result, Mr Campion suffered multiple fractures, nerve damage to his right arm and internal organ injuries. He also lost partial hearing in his right ear and developed a blood clot which caused optical damage to his right eye, resulting in permanent sight loss in that eye.

An HSE investigation found that Mr Campion and other employees frequently worked in the yard while vehicles operated alongside them. Sheridan Skips Burnley Limited had not undertaken a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks and failed to provide adequate measures for the safe segregation of vehicles and pedestrians. There was no physical protection from vehicle movement, which regularly put employees in considerable danger.

The investigation also found that the telehandler operator could not see clearly while reversing, as the machine was missing mirrors to aid reversing – a deficiency the company had failed to address.

Sheridan Skips Burnley Limited, of Cathedral Gates, Manchester, pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £24,000 and ordered to pay £4,777.

Grounds maintenance company fined after employee killed

A WORKER was killed when the ride-on mower he was operating ended up in a village pond.

Kamil Grygieniec, 23, from Northallerton, was cutting grass around the pond in North Stainley in October 2021 when the ride-on mower he was operating descended a steep incline and ended up in it.

The mower was being used without a safety-critical roll-over protection system (ROPS) fitted.

An HSE investigation found that MHS Countryside Management Limited had failed to carry out a suitable and sufficient site-specific risk assessment for the work being undertaken.

The investigation also established that the mower's roll-over protection system (ROPS) had been removed at some point prior to the work taking place. ROPS are designed to protect operators in the event of a machine overturning and are a critical safety feature when working on uneven or sloping ground. MHS Countryside Management Limited, of Bishop Auckland, pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £27,000 and ordered to pay £11,166 in costs.





Two companies and site manager prosecuted following large-scale asbestos disturbance

TWO Midlands companies and a site manager have been sentenced after a largescale asbestos disturbance and illegal clearance operation was carried out at a Cannock demolition site, putting workers and members of the public at risk of exposure to the deadly carcinogen.

Following concerns about unsafe demolition work, an HSE inspector visited a site at Greenheath Road, Cannock in September 2023. The inspector found that demolition had been halted after asbestos was discovered on site. A subsequent refurbishment and demolition asbestos survey identified 218m² of asbestos-containing materials and debris.

The investigation established that Sohan Group Limited, the client for the project, had commissioned an asbestos management survey before work began, which identified some asbestos-containing materials within the building. This survey was shared with the demolition contractor, Maize Metals Limited, who nonetheless proceeded with the demolition work despite being aware of the asbestos present.

Sohan Group Limited had not appointed a principal contractor to manage the construction project, as required under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015. Following the refurbishment and demolition survey, the company obtained a quote for removal by a licensed asbestos removal contractor but

instead appointed Disa Properties Limited, represented by Ali Raza Baig, to carry out the asbestos clear-up. Neither the company nor Mr Baig held the necessary licence or competence to work with asbestos. Mr Baig failed to engage a licensed contractor and failed to ensure appropriate measures were in place to prevent exposure to, and spread of, harmful asbestos fibres.

Wolverhampton -based Sohan Group Limited pleaded guilty to breaching the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and was fined £74,900 and ordered to pay costs of £3,658.14 and a statutory surcharge of £2,000.

Maize Metals Limited, of West Bromwich, pleaded guilty to breaching the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 and was fined £13,400 and ordered to pay costs of £1,359.51 and a statutory surcharge of £2,000.

Ali Raza Baig, of Amington, Staffordshire, pleaded guilty to breaching the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 Act 1974. He was sentenced to 26 weeks' imprisonment, suspended for two years, and made subject to an electronically-monitored curfew between 7pm and 7am for three months. A director disqualification order was made under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 for five years. He was ordered to pay costs of £5,899 and a statutory surcharge of £154.

Company fined after fall from height

A GREEN waste recycling company based in West Sussex has been fined after an employee broke his leg when he fell from a compost screening machine.

Simon Pateman was working for Woodhorn Group Limited at its green waste recycling site in Tangmere, Chichester, in February 2024 when he climbed onto a Komtech compost screening machine to clear a blockage from the fan housing.

The machine was suspended at height within a large barn and lacked sufficient measures to prevent falls. As Mr Pateman climbed onto the machine he slipped, trapping his left leg between the machine and its frame.

The momentum and lack of guardrails around the fan housing caused Mr Pateman to fall backwards onto the gantry, striking his head on a handrail while his leg remained trapped. He sustained a broken leg which required surgery to insert a metal plate and screws.

An HSE investigation found that Woodhorn Group Limited had failed to assess the risks associated with cleaning the machine, including the risk of falls from height from the unguarded edges around the fan housing.



The company's standard operating procedure also failed to provide employees with instructions on how to safely clean and unblock the fan housing. The investigation further found the company had failed to prevent access to dangerous parts of the machine, with the interlocked gate not preventing access to employees during the cleaning process for the 'stars' – rotating discs used to break down larger clumps of compost.

HSE guidance on working at height states that employers should carry out as much work as possible from the ground and ensure workers can safely access and leave areas where work at height is required. Equipment used for working at height must be suitable,

stable and strong enough for the task and properly maintained.

Employers and those in control of work at height must ensure activities are properly planned, supervised and carried out by competent people, including the use of appropriate equipment.

Woodhorn Group Limited, of Oving, Chichester, pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £14,000 and ordered to pay £6,500 in costs.

Police force fined after traffic management collision

A POLICE force has been fined after one of its officers was hit by a passing car while responding to a traffic collision on Christmas Eve.

The 22-year-old was a student officer working for West Mercia Police when the incident happened in 2023. The officer had been responding to the traffic collision in Bridgnorth, Shropshire. That collision occurred on a single carriageway road that had no street lighting and where the national speed limit for the road was 60 mph.

The officer had been stood on a bend, managing traffic at the scene when he was hit by a passing car. He sustained life-threatening and life-changing injuries.

An HSE investigation found that West Mercia Police failed to do all that was reasonably practicable to manage the risks arising from or in connection with traffic collisions.

The force's risk assessments were not suitable and sufficient and it failed to provide adequate equipment for safely responding to traffic collisions.

There was also a lack of suitable information, instruction and training for its officers. As a result, employees and members of the public were exposed to unnecessary risks.

In June 2021, the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) sent all police forces across the UK a series of recommendation reports which provided relevant advice explaining how to implement road safety recommendations following an officer and staff safety review report.

The Office of Chief Constable West Mercia Police, Headquarters, Hindlip Hall, Hindlip, Worcester, pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The force was fined £85,800 and ordered to pay £9,402 in costs at Birmingham Magistrates Court.

Multiple employees exposed to vibration risks

A METAL fabrication company based at Immingham Docks in North East Lincolnshire has been sentenced after pleading guilty to exposing multiple employees to vibration risks at work.

HSE became aware in June 2024 of three reports of vibration-related illness among employees of Drury Engineering Services Ltd. An investigation was opened and an Improvement Notice served on the company to control the ongoing risk.

The notice was served because the company had failed to reduce employees' vibration exposure to as low a level as reasonably practicable through organisational and technical measures.

During the investigation, inspectors identified a further three employees who met the threshold for reporting to HSE owing to vibration-related illness. A seventh report was made by the company later that year.

Employees told inspectors the illness was affecting their daily lives. Some experienced finger blanching during simple household tasks such as mowing the lawn. Others were kept awake at night by numbness in their hands, while some described being unable to grip and suffering nerve damage.

Drury Engineering Services Ltd has been operating at Immingham Docks since 2000. A new health and safety manager was appointed in June 2022 and began work to address issues with the company's vibration management system, but by this point employees had already been significantly exposed to vibration risks.

Drury Engineering Services Ltd pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £44,000 and ordered to pay £8,061.70 in costs.

Construction company fined after worker falls from height

A CONSTRUCTION company has been fined after a worker sustained serious injuries when he fell from a ladder during renovation works in London.

In August 2021, the worker was engaged on a refurbishment project in Islington for Bow Tie Construction Limited. The project involved converting an existing domestic property and a former handbag factory into a single dwelling.

As part of the works, a new concrete staircase was to be installed between the ground and first floors. Temporary timber formwork was required to construct the staircase.

The worker, along with two others, had been instructed by company director and acting site manager Rafael Delimata to build the formwork. While standing on the top of a stepladder and using a gas-powered nail gun, the worker fell approximately 1.65 metres to the floor below.

He sustained multiple serious injuries, including crush injuries to both elbows requiring several surgeries, a fractured forearm, dislocated wrists, and injuries to his right leg and left knee.

An HSE investigation found that Bow Tie Construction Limited had failed to implement a safe system of work for working at height during the construction of the staircase.

The investigation also identified wider failings in the management of work at height on site, including inadequate edge protection, incorrectly-assembled tower scaffolds, staircases without edge protection, and uncontrolled use of ladders. These failings continued despite a previous HSE visit, during which a Prohibition Notice had been served for unsafe work at height.

High Wycombe-based Bow Tie Construction Limited, pleaded guilty to breaching the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The company was fined £24,000 and ordered to pay £4,101 in costs.



Supporting neurodivergent employees in the workplace

The HAE EHA Risk Services team looks at how hire sector employers can meet their obligations, while getting the best from all their staff.

CREATING a workplace where everyone feels valued and supported is an important part of building a strong, inclusive organisation. Supporting neurodivergent employees is a key part of this.

Neurodiversity includes a range of conditions such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism, OCD, dyscalculia and dyspraxia. Each individual experiences these conditions differently, which means the support they need in the workplace may also vary.

Senior HR Advisor at Stallard Kane, Claudia Miller, said The Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on employers to protect neurodiverse employees from disadvantage and discrimination in the workplace.

"Many individuals with neurodiverse conditions experience challenges on a daily basis and, in some cases, may

be classified as disabled," she said, adding that all employers can meet their obligations by ensuring the correct support mechanisms and reasonable adjustments are in place to remove any barriers which prevent the individual from carrying out their duties.

Understanding these needs and responding in a thoughtful way can help employers create a workplace where people feel supported and able to perform at their best.

Head of Risk Solutions at Stallard Kane, Faye Bevington, who is neurodiverse herself, said even small changes can make all the difference.

"As a neurodiverse individual and a senior manager, I still face challenges. I recently struggled with an external training module written in green text over images, which I couldn't read," she said. "These small adjustments can make a significant difference."

Faye said training and awareness-raising are key things for employers to focus on.

"Awareness of neurodiversity in the workplace is essential, and robust business training is the first step towards greater understanding," she said.

Ways to support neurodivergent employees

1. Introduce universal adjustments

Not all employees will disclose their neurodiversity, and some may not have a formal diagnosis. Many individuals also mask their neurodivergent traits in order to fit in, which can be mentally exhausting. Introducing universal adjustments can help ensure everyone feels supported. This might include flexible working hours, quiet workspaces or allowing the use of noise-cancelling headphones, regardless of whether someone has disclosed a specific condition.

2. Ask employees what support works

Every neurodivergent individual will manage their condition differently. What works well for one person may not work for another. Having open conversations with employees about their needs can make a significant difference. For example, some people may find certain fonts or colours difficult to read, while others may benefit from using headphones to help with concentration.

3. Provide awareness training

Training helps build understanding and awareness across the organisation. Training should cover common conditions such as dyslexia, ADHD, autism, OCD, dyscalculia and dyspraxia. When teams understand these differences, it helps create a more supportive and inclusive environment.

4. Adapt communication

Communication preferences can vary greatly between individuals. Some employees may find long documents overwhelming or struggle to identify key information within large amounts of text. Simple adjustments such as highlighting important information, breaking content into shorter sections or providing visual summaries can help make communication clearer and more accessible.

5. Recognise strengths

Neurodivergent individuals often bring unique strengths to the workplace. For example, people with dyslexia may excel in creative thinking and visual problem solving, individuals with autism may have a strong ability to focus on detail for extended periods, and those with ADHD may channel their energy and focus into driving new projects forward. Recognising and encouraging these strengths can unlock innovation and productivity across the business.

6. Use assistive technology

Assistive technology can make everyday tasks more manageable and improve productivity. Examples include mind-mapping software, speech-to-text tools and dual screens or screen-reading technology. Employers should also be aware of support such as the UK government's Access to Work programme, which may provide funding for employees with disabilities or health conditions.

7. Adapt the physical work environment

The physical environment can have a significant impact on neurodivergent employees. For some people, open-plan offices can be overwhelming owing to noise or lack of personal space. Employers may want to consider adjustments such as: Creating quieter working areas; using partitions to define workspaces; providing adjustable lighting; offering dedicated quiet zones. These changes can help reduce distractions and improve concentration.

8. Encourage sympathy and understanding

Creating a supportive workplace culture is essential. Many neurodivergent individuals spend a lot of energy masking their behaviours to appear more neurotypical. For example, someone may suppress their natural tendency to stim (self-stimulatory behaviour) in a workplace setting, which can lead to stress or fatigue. Encouraging empathy and understanding helps create a workplace where people feel comfortable being themselves.

9. Hold regular one-to-one meetings

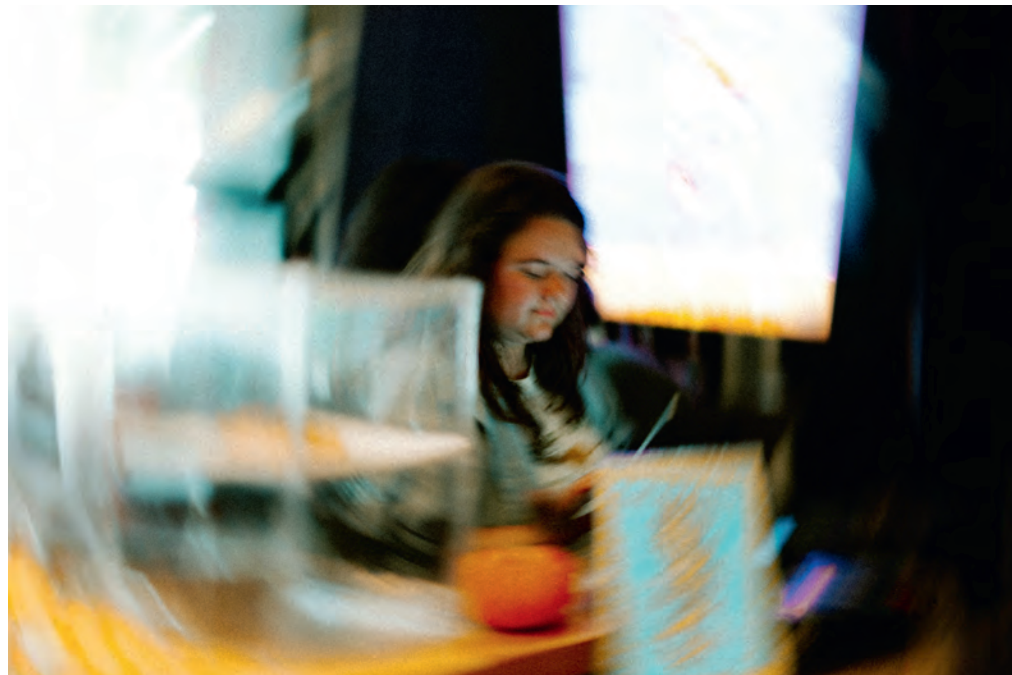
Regular check-ins provide valuable opportunities for employees to discuss challenges and request additional

support. These conversations allow managers to understand how employees are feeling and identify any adjustments that may help them work more effectively. Addressing concerns early can prevent small issues from becoming larger problems.

10. Signpost to additional support

In some cases, employees may need support beyond what the workplace can provide. Managers and HR teams should be aware of external resources and services that may help neurodivergent individuals, such as mental health support, specialist training or professional coaching. Being able to guide employees towards the right support demonstrates a genuine commitment to their wellbeing.

Supporting neurodivergent employees requires thoughtful consideration, empathy and a proactive approach. By implementing these strategies, employers can create an inclusive workplace that not only supports neurodivergent individuals but also benefits the entire organisation. When people feel understood and supported, they are more likely to thrive, contribute ideas and help drive innovation. <<



Risk Services is the HAE EHA helpline for enquiries relating to workplace legislation or health and safety policies. The service is provided for HAE EHA members in collaboration with Stallard Kane. For more information, email risk-services@hae.org.uk or call **0121 380 4612**.

NEW TO THE CREW ...

We introduce the latest recruits to HAE EHA membership and invite you to join us in giving them a warm welcome.

SIX new members have joined HAE EHA in recent weeks from a range of different sectors and geographical areas, expanding its growing membership.

- **FINNING POWER RENTAL LTD**, part of the Finning group and an authorised Caterpillar distributor, provides temporary and emergency power solutions across the UK and Ireland. The company acts as a specialist partner to the hire sector by supplying, installing, and maintaining a range of Cat® power equipment for planned projects, shutdowns, and unplanned outages.

- **SMARTEQUIP** is a cloud-based technology platform designed specifically to support the hire and rental sector by optimising the equipment lifecycle, streamlining parts procurement, and increasing technician efficiency. It serves as a digital bridge between equipment owners (rental companies) and manufacturers/suppliers, allowing for real-time, serial-number-specific parts support and service management.

- **INJIN-CORPE** is an engineering and technology company which develops and supplies electric machinery to reduce carbon emissions. Key activities INJIN-Corpe provides to the hire sector include: Producing electric construction and mining equipment, including India's first 1.2-ton mini electric excavator (MEX 1.0); enabling hire companies to transition to green energy by providing equipment that eliminates diesel emissions and reduces noise; collaborating with rental firms to introduce 24-ton battery-electric excavators into UK infrastructure projects. The company's products are designed to reduce maintenance downtime and operating costs.

- **GREENPORT RENTALS LIMITED**, trading as GoHire, operates as a plant, tool, and equipment hire company servicing the Hull and Grimsby areas. Based in Hull, it provides machinery for construction and landscaping, such as mini diggers, designed for projects requiring efficient, and versatile equipment in tight spaces.

- **COLLIER HIRE T/AS COLLIER & CATCHPOLE LIMITED** offers a variety of professional-grade tools and essential equipment for site work, material handling, and power applications. The company acts as a key partner for companies in the hire sector by ensuring reliable, on-time, and high-quality material supply and tool availability, operating throughout East Anglia (Colchester, Ipswich, Lawford).

- **MAURER PERFORMANCE HIRE T/A MPH** is a provider of audio equipment for hire industries. It offers an array of in-ear monitoring equipment for hire. The company is based in Sheffield and its monitor engineers are proficient in all digital consoles (Yamaha, Midas, DiGiCo, Allen and Heath).

Prioritising prevention: The roadmap to keeping Britain working

Carl Bartlett reports on a recent House of Commons policy workshop.

RECENTLY represented Hire Association Europe (HAE) at the Terrace Pavilion, House of Commons, for a high-profile IOSH workshop: “How Can a Prevention-First and Person-Centred Approach Keep Britain Working?”

Hosted by Lee Barron MP, the event addressed a staggering national crisis: More than 2.8 million working-age people are currently out of the workforce as a result of ill health, costing the UK economy an estimated £212 billion annually.

For the hire and rental sector—where physical demands and operational pace are high—the move toward a “prevention-first” culture isn’t just a policy shift. It is a business necessity to protect our most valuable asset: Our people.

The regulator’s perspective: Health is “unfinished business”

John Rowe, representing the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), delivered a powerful reminder that while the UK has made monumental strides in physical safety since 1974, work-related ill health remains “the unfinished business” of the regulator.

Rowe emphasised that mental health and musculoskeletal (MSK) issues now account for the vast majority of lost working days. His challenge to industry leaders was clear: “Are you treating work-related ill health as seriously as safety?”

For our members, this means moving beyond reactive “sticking plasters” and embedding health into the very design of work, ensuring that the hire yard is as mentally supportive as it is physically safe.

Government commitment: Support for the frontline

Dame Diana Johnson MP, Minister for Employment, reinforced that keeping people in work is a top government



Carl Bartlett



Dame Diana Johnson MP

priority. She highlighted that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is actively investing in the capability of those who matter most: Line managers.

A key announcement for our SME-heavy sector was the rollout of free occupational health training for 5,000 line managers, led by IOSH. The Minister noted that while only 20% of SMEs currently provide such training, 79% of those who do, find it highly effective in preventing long-term absence. This is a vital opportunity for HAE members to upskill their teams at no cost, fostering the “simple, honest conversations” that keep issues from escalating.

The Mayfield Review: A three-year strategy for stability

Sir Charlie Mayfield, Chair of the Government’s Keep Britain Working Review, outlined the roadmap for 2026–2028. He described a “vanguard phase” aimed at re-humanising the workplace and reducing the reliance on the “problematic” fit note system.

His strategy for the next two years focuses on three pillars:

A healthy working life cycle: A practical framework to help employers support workers from recruitment to retirement.

Workplace health provision: Accessible, non-clinical support specifically designed for SMEs that lack large HR departments.



Workplace health intelligence unit: A data-driven initiative to finally prove the return on investment (ROI) for preventative health programmes.

People-first approach

Perhaps most relevant to our sector was Sir Charlie’s “Hannah and Tom test”. He reminded the room that any new policy must work for the small business owner - the person running a local hire firm or a chain of regional depots. If a health strategy isn’t simple, practical, and accessible for these employers, it won’t work for Britain.

The workshop made it clear that “good work” is the best form of prevention. By embracing a person-centred approach, prioritising early intervention and flexible adjustments, we can relieve pressure on the NHS while building more resilient, productive businesses.

As we move toward the 2027 “Vanguard” phase, HAE members are encouraged to lead the way by treating health with the same rigorous standard we apply to our equipment safety. <<



ServiceTech and Hire desk excellence

Our HAE EHA Training team provides full details of two forthcoming training programmes which could help HAE EHA businesses build essential, accredited skills amongst their workforce.

TWO training programmes that can help build essential skills and understanding are being brought to the attention of HAE EHA members, who can enrol staff for the office and work-based modules and help them achieve NVQ certification.

The first is a ServiceTech training programme, incorporating training and NVQ accreditation, will be held in three instalments between May and September. This programme is for up to 10 learners in one cohort and HAE EHA will arrange accommodation. Pricing will include meals and subsistence costs.

The first programme sessions will take place from Wednesday, May 20th to Friday, May 22nd, and will cover theory and practical content. The first module kicks off at 12.30pm on the first day and will continue until 12.30pm on the second day, covering basic electrics. The second module in this instalment will cover basic engines and will take place directly after the first module, finishing at 12.30pm on the Friday.

The second instalment will cover modules 6 and 4, again incorporating

theory and practical content. Module 6 covers workshop health and safety, including IOSH Working Safely. This runs from 12.30pm on Monday, July 6th to just after lunch the following day, and will be followed by module 4 on small plant, including basic hydraulics, which will finish at 12.30pm on Wednesday, July 8th.

The third instalment runs from September 9th to 11th, covering modules 5, 3 and 7. Module 5 will feature practical content and theory on powered access, including hydraulic and systems, running from 12.30pm on the Wednesday until 12.30pm on the Thursday. Module 3 and 7, covering non-mechanical and materials hoists. The theory and practical content will incorporate steps, towers, the Genie SLA (a manually-operated material lift designed for heavy-duty lifting) and the Sumner 2000 Series (material lifts built and designed to help move heavy loads safely and easily).

All training will include a certificate per module, the above plan would benefit from 3 CAP points as its 6 days training plus points for their NVQ achievement, 2 points for Level 2 Plant Maintenance and 4 points for Level 3.

HAE EHA will arrange accommodation for those taking part, which will include additional time in evenings if required to make progress on each learner's NVQ.

Each learner will have an NVQ assessor allocated and they will be inducted and assessed in their own depot with the aim of being near completion by the September block where possible.

The programme costs £1,200 for NVQ Level 2 or 3 Plant Maintenance or Level 3 Thorough Examination with a grant of £600 on completion of the NVQ.

Training costs £340 per week or £1,020 for the complete course. Full board accommodation costs £120 per night, or £720 for the entire course.

The total programme cost of £2,940 can be invoiced monthly at £490 per month over six months by Hire Association Europe. Businesses who are putting forward multiple learners will be eligible for discounts.

New entrant training for hire desks

The forthcoming Hire Desk Controller New Entrant Training Programme gives HAE EHA members an opportunity to qualify their recent new recruits or develop staff to the role of Hire Desk Controller.

The programme lasts for 18 months and is aimed at new or recent recruits to the Hire Desk Controller role or for development of internal staff. It consists of 26 days off-the-job training delivered in seven blocks spread across 18 months. Delegates will build a portfolio of evidence throughout their programme with the aim being to have achieved the qualification by the end of the 18-month programme.

Each of the training modules will take place at either the HAE EHA Offices in Birmingham or the Training Centre in Oswestry. These are made up as follows:

- Module 1, Soft Skills - HAE EHA Offices
- Introduction to hire and rental operations, the qualification and ERR
- Health and safety in equipment hire
- Hand arm vibration (HAVS) workshop
- Manual handling and hire of abrasive wheels
- Gas safety awareness (half-day) and first week wrap up
- Module 2 block 1 practical training - Training Centre, Oswestry
- Hammers, breakers and drills
- Angle grinders and chop saws
- Core cutters and gas nailers
- Saws, planers, sanders, cutters, trimmers, mowers and washers
- Module 2, Block 2 Practical Training - Training Centre
- Hammers, breakers and drills
- Angle grinders and chop saws
- Core cutters and gas nailers

- Saws, planers, sanders, cutters, trimmers, mowers and washers
- Module 3, Block 1 Practical Training – Training Centre
- MEWP and mobile tower awareness
- Electrical testing of plant and machinery for the hire sector
- Module 4, Block 1 & 2 Practical Training - Training Centre
- Prime movers and concrete equipment
- Hire of small plant, generators and lighting towers
- Cleaning and decorating
- Hire of ladders and low level staging
- Module 3 Block 2 Soft Skills - Training Centre
- Preparing for your customers
- Giving a great first impression
- Hire procedures and practical applications
- Know your customer, show your customer
- Module 5 Soft Skills - HAE EHA Offices
- Logistics

- Extra mile
- Environmental issues
- Emergency first aid
- Review and conclusions

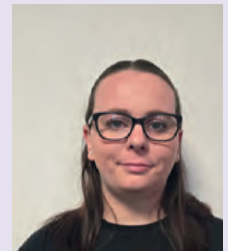
A full training plan with dates can be provided upon request.

The outcome will be a Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Hire and Rental Operations. The cost (for CITB-registered employers) will be £1,800 plus VAT. HAE EHA will invoice in two instalments: £950 in advance of the programme, £850 in advance of programme assessment (month 13). The month 13 invoice covers assessment and not completion. If the learner receives a visit from their assessor then this invoice must be paid to cover those costs.

The NVQ certificate, along with information on how CITB in-scope, levy-registered businesses can claim the achievement grant, will be sent as soon as the learner has achieved. <<



Nikki Wyllie is responsible for learning and development within the association, supporting members to identify training needs and plan any development required for employees. Nikki also coordinates the association's NVQ Assessment Centre and CITB Approved Training Organisation.
nikki.wyllie@hae.org.uk



Unite 1k Launch: Fair Chance Week

Your invitation

Join us in mobilising 1,000 employers to offer fair chances, through the adoption of the Fair Chance Charter.

When businesses create Fair Chances, they strengthen their own organisations, their communities and the economy.

Tuesday 28th April 2026
9:30am - 11.00am
Breakfast & Networking included

Hosted at
Virgin Group
Whitfield Studios
50a Charlotte Street
London
W1T 2NS



PRINT ON DEMAND



So how can this work?

You can easily obtain our whole range of fully-licensed, up-to-date HAE EHA safety guidance leaflets for your business without the hassle of keeping stock.

You can optionally co-brand the leaflets with your own company logo. Leaflets are downloaded as PDF files so you can either print them on demand or email to your customer.

To give your customers peace of mind that they are getting the very latest safety advice, each leaflet clearly states its expiry date, together with a unique QR code which guarantees that you are giving them our latest advice.



Give it a try!

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