



The end of **'health and safety gone mad'**?

SHP

SAFETY & HEALTH
PRACTITIONER

Contents

Introduction	1
What's new in health and safety?	2 - 3
What have key organisations been up to?	4 - 8
RoSPA	A
NEBOSH	B
HSE	C
BOHS	D
Mind	E
British Safety Council	F
SHP	9 - 10
Barbour EHS	11
What's next for health and safety?	12 - 13
Useful resources	13
Meet the network	14 - 15

Introduction

The end of 'health and safety gone mad'?

Health and safety has never been a bigger part of the public consciousness as it is today. COVID-19 has helped people understand the value of PPE, workplace hygiene and health and safety strategy – and the profession has certainly leveraged this public interest into positive headlines.

But there's always more work to be done to improve public perceptions and understanding. The health and safety community needs to be better at shouting about its achievements and explaining what makes its work so important. It is far too essential to allow itself to be defined by negative headlines about "health and safety gone mad".

At its heart, this eBook is all about bringing together the community's most important work and revealing how the events of the last year have caused a sea change in the way health and safety is perceived.

This eBook will examine the vital work of Informa Markets' health and safety brands: news and thought leadership site SHP, online legislation and document library Barbour EHS, and the UK's largest health and safety event Safety & Health Expo.

We'll look at the big projects we've led to help the health and safety profession through the pandemic, whether that's informative hub pages collating all the most important legal information or providing digital platforms for professionals to learn and network.

We'll also hear from some of the major associations that have collaborated with us over the past year. They'll share how they think health and safety has evolved to meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how many are seeing it in a new, more positive light.

What's new in health and safety?



Health and safety responded swiftly to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading the fight to keep frontline workers safe during lockdown and maintain sanitary workplaces as offices have begun to reopen. During all this, the profession has strived to promote wellbeing at work and in the home office.

As the COVID-19 lockdown began, the community kicked into gear finding out what health and safety challenges organisations faced during the pandemic, and what they could do about it. [As SHP reported in June](#), Tribe's Mark Ormerod realised that changing work patterns gave companies more "time to focus on health, safety

and particularly wellbeing, which, of course, is now more important than ever," adding that "leaders have woken up to how important it could be if you get health and safety wrong and are working hard to make sure this doesn't happen."

For that reason, the pandemic has represented an enormous opportunity for organisations to improve their entire health, safety and wellbeing culture. [In an interview with SHP](#), Neil Lennox, Head of Group Safety & Insurance at Sainsbury's suggested "the crisis could pay great dividends for us as a profession" in terms of exposure and influence. In his view, health and safety is being taken more seriously than ever.

That's not a niche view. Health and safety is usually only mentioned in the media when followed by "gone mad", but the pandemic has driven a reassessment.

The Financial Times proudly declared "[We need health and safety at work now more than ever](#)," noting that "COVID-19 has upended our notion of what a dangerous job looks like." It decried the budget cuts to the HSE and local authorities that have prevented effective health and safety regulation during the pandemic and meant that people working on the frontline – particularly in care homes, traditionally considered a "low-risk" environment – are not being protected.

In addition, The Guardian – admittedly not a newspaper traditionally hostile to health and safety – has frequently mentioned the profession in positive terms. Opinion columnist Polly Toynbee [even made space](#) to quote SHP Editor Ian Hart himself, drawing on his reputation for expertise to build a case against the government's test and

trace strategy.

This greater appreciation of health and safety has extended to mental health and wellbeing. Thames Water's Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer, Karl Simons [mentioned in a recent episode of the Safety & Health Podcast](#) that "the health and safety community has woken up to [health] in a very big way", [while Professor Andrew Sharman wrote](#) that health and wellbeing should be at "the centre of our recovery", noting that hectic, "fast-living" has resulted in a pandemic of "ill-being" alongside COVID-19.

What the health and safety profession has witnessed over the last few months is a sea change in public and professional attitudes, as well as a new appreciation from within of its role in wider society. The pandemic has proven the importance of health and safety, and, although sceptics will always remain, there is now a firm platform for it to improve its reputation and enhance its offering.



What has **the profession** been up to?



The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

RoSPA has been working to prevent serious accidental injury across the UK, researching accident prevention, providing training, consultancy, qualifications, events and products for businesses and professionals, and campaigning for better regulation and more awareness. We asked RoSPA for its thoughts on health and safety during the pandemic, and how its work has changed.

“We firmly believe that the health and safety sector will come out the other side of the pandemic stronger than ever before.

“Senior leaders recognise the important role it has in enabling business to trade safely in a world that will have to live with COVID. There’s more understanding of just how vital it is to look after each other, not just while we are at work, but in a whole-life context; we are concerned that the huge increase in time spent by parents and children working from home – in the very place where we have most of our serious accidents – will have led

to an increased amount of harm amongst people of all ages.

“For this reason we continue to ask the health and safety community to promote carry-over messages, to help employees stay safe at home as well as at work, and at the beginning of lockdown we launched our *Accident Free, Avoid A&E* campaign to promote home safety for all.

“Health and safety professionals are the ones who can deploy the right expertise, so now is a golden opportunity to build on our recent experiences and make our organisations and employees, healthier, happier, and more productive.”



www.rospace.com

[Visit the RoSPA hub page on SHP](#)

National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH)

NEBOSH provides health, safety and environmental qualifications to practitioners around the world. It seeks to improve health, safety and wellbeing by promoting training and best practice, offering internationally-recognised qualifications to established leaders and aspiring professionals alike. We asked for NEBOSH's perspective on the contribution of health and safety professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The contribution that health and safety professionals and others trained in the subject have made during the COVID-19 crisis has been immense. We are proud to hear the positive impact so many NEBOSH qualification holders have been having.

"Ian Stacey is a great example. He was appointed Head of Health and Safety by Action for Children in February 2020. Within a month, Ian found himself co-leading the charity's crisis management response, demonstrating the value that comes with health and safety expertise. Ian had to pull together the charity's COVID-19 plan, which considered its 360 properties, 4,000 staff and the vulnerable children and families they support. He split the risk response into "3 Rs": Reduce (e.g. promoting good hygiene), Respond (e.g. setting up a helpdesk to provide staff with advice for practical issues face) and Recovery (measures that will help ensure the charity's future).

"Time and time again we have seen our qualification holders stepping up like this to keep colleagues and customers safe and their businesses operational.

"As our community steps up, so too is NEBOSH. In August we held our first open book examination, the first stage in a significant transformation project to offer remote and online assessments and enable learners to take the examination in a safe location of their choosing. Feedback has already been positive with learners valuing the thought provoking, practical and realistic nature of the assessment.

"While COVID-19 is certainly challenging for individuals and organisations across the world, there is an opportunity for health and safety professionals to demonstrate, to an even wider audience, the incredible value that they bring."



nebosh

www.nebosh.org.uk

[Visit the NEBOSH hub page on SHP](#)

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

As the national regulator for health and safety, the Health and Safety Executive has been at the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom. Its work promoting health and safety compliance and best practice has taken on a new importance over the last year, we asked for the HSE's perspective and advice for maintaining best practice.

"HSE continues to play a critical role in the national response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Our work uses science and evidence to inform our approach to

updating our guidance providing advice that is pragmatic and proportionate in dealing with the risks posed by coronavirus.

"We are sending a clear message about what employers are expected to do to protect their workforce in the current situation. We are working with other regulators and government departments to support employers, agreeing sensible approaches to workplace health and safety which are enabling work and essential services to continue.

“HSE’s Director of Regulation, Philip White, said:

“Our work on COVID-19 has presented HSE with many challenges but with this comes some new opportunities. We have faced a complex and changing operational environment with audience and operational activity having to adapt as our understanding of the risks associated with the virus has evolved. All the work we do is rooted in science, based on expert knowledge and experience built up over the many years we have been dealing with emerging risks.

“Through our spot check and inspection work we are ensuring workplaces are COVID-secure

and adapting to social distancing, new hygiene and cleaning standards which we know are important in reducing the transmission of the virus.

“Through our work we are building confidence in how work can take place safely, keeping businesses open and national services maintained. We are enforcing proportionate compliance and, where appropriate, action to ensure relevant health and safety at work regulations and guidelines for the workplace are being managed and balanced against measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19.”

“It is important for organisations to be COVID-secure, and businesses need to understand the risks posed by the virus in the workplace. HSE is ensuring businesses are kept to date with the latest guidance so they can put measures in place to manage the risk and protect workers. There are simple steps that businesses can take to do that:

- Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment
- Develop increased cleaning, hand washing and hygiene procedures
- Maintain two-metre social distancing where possible
- Where people cannot be two metres apart, manage transmission risk

“Where businesses fail to adequately manage risk and protect workers, HSE will take immediate action. This can range from providing specific advice, issuing enforcement notices, stopping certain work practices until they are made safe and, where businesses fail to comply, this could lead to prosecution.”



www.hse.gov.uk

[Visit the HSE hub page on SHP](#)

British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS)

With so much depending on effective occupational hygiene, BOHS has been playing an essential role during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Offering training, guidance, occupational hygienists and a host of resources, BOHS has added an extensive COVID-19 hub to keep people informed over the course of the pandemic. We asked for BOHS's perspective on the contribution of occupational hygiene professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore the importance of Occupational Hygiene expertise in ensuring a safe and healthy working environment

and protecting workers health.

“The British Occupational Hygiene Society, the UK’s leading body for worker health protection, has been working throughout the pandemic with teams of experts from our membership to address the direct and indirect consequences of COVID-19 and produce a series of guides, matrices, tools, and surveys that aims to educate, advise, and keep workers safe.

“All these publications can be found in BOHS coronavirus hub and include:

- Return to Work Guide: the guidance takes a risk-based approach to preventing disease spread,

but also restarting industrial processes and facilities which may have become hazardous as a result of the unusually long shutdown. It aims to help those with a responsibility for ensuring the immediate and long-term health of staff to prioritise and plan, as well as providing specific guidance on actions and signposting to other resources

- Spotting a Fake Respirator Guide
- BOHS & IOM Guidance on Understanding the Use of Face Coverings, Facemasks, and Respirators

- The most recent addition is the development of the BOHS Risk Matrix, a risk analysis tool to be used by occupational hygienists and other professionals to look at the means that can be used to protect workers from COVID-19”



The Chartered Society for Worker Health Protection

www.bohs.org

Mind

Mental health has taken on a new dimension during the pandemic. People have struggled during lockdown, while the exposure to the virus that many key workers have experience has taken a mental toll. Mind, the UK’s leading mental health charity, spoke to SHP about its work during the pandemic, and how it has responded to a greater demand for help.

“Like all companies and individuals, Mind has had to adaptable and almost turn the way we work upside down. Our local Minds, which usually deliver face-to-face services, have gone digital and are running telephone-based services and we have sent out hundreds of postcards to support those people who may have been without digital access during the pandemic.

“We’ve responded to a huge demand for information about how to cope with your mental health during coronavirus, with well over a million downloads of information from our website.

“It’s been a time of great collaboration and partnership; we’ve been really pleased to see partnerships coming to the fore across the voluntary sector. In a very short period of time we’ve partnered with the Samaritans, the mental

health charity Shout and with Hospice UK to create ‘Our Frontline’, which is an initiative specifically for front line workers, people who work in the NHS and social care or key workers working in supermarkets or on public transport.”

“We know that, whilst coronavirus has had a huge impact on our mental health, that mental health problems were around before coronavirus, they were very much around during coronavirus and, significantly, will be around after the physical impact of coronavirus has started to recede. So, it’s all the more important that we remain a strong and vibrant organisation that is able to respond to people’s needs.”

— Paul Farmer, CEO, Mind



www.mind.org.uk

[Visit the Mind hub page on SHP](#)

British Safety Council

The British Safety Council is dedicated to preventing serious injury and illness in the workplace, offering training and consultancy, and leading campaigns. Its work has taken on a greater importance during COVID-19, both during

lockdown and the return to work. We asked British Safety Council to comment on its vital operations.

“During the current pandemic the British Safety Council has been more committed than ever to

ensuring that no one should be injured or made ill through their work.

“To demonstrate our commitment to health, safety and wellbeing, we have given away nearly 10,000 digital courses on remote working, managing stress and mental health awareness to support the changing work practices during the height of the pandemic.

“The new unique COVID Assurance Assessment Service we developed, helps organisations ensure that they have all the right health, safety and wellbeing measures in place for when their staff return to work. As part of this service, a free detailed return to work guide has been produced to help organisations from all sectors implement the government guidelines around minimising transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace.

“In October, British Safety Council launched Being Well Together, the first truly joined up approach to employee health, safety and wellbeing, delivering holistic, organisation wide

programmes. The new flexible programme is a one-stop-shop for everything organisations need to adopt, develop and implement a successful health, safety and wellbeing plan. It recognises that every organisation is unique, and supports the provision of appropriate, tailored solutions and sign posting to reputable and vetted partners.

“As a charity with over 60 years’ experience leading on workplace health, safety and wellbeing, these unprecedented times have once more allowed us to support employers and employees across the world and start to drive real change.”



www.britsafe.org

[Visit the British Safety Council hub page on SHP](#)



SHP at the forefront of the pandemic



SHP has played an essential role providing clear, authoritative information about health and safety rules, regulations and best practice during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as its usual selection of stories and updates from across the profession that have made it a favourite of health and safety practitioners.

Indeed, with more than 1.7 million annual views from across the globe, SHP has cemented itself as a true health and safety leader – it even has cut-through into the public consciousness, being quoted in The Guardian earlier this year.

What has SHP done during COVID-19?

In seeking to clear up some of the COVID-caused confusion, SHP has produced two extensive

“hub pages” collating all the most important legal information and updates regarding the pandemic. These pages, [Coronavirus Advice for Employers](#) and [A Guide to Home Working](#), have been kept constantly updated in collaboration with the experts at Barbour EHS. They comprise industry expertise, government advice, a selection of downloads, webinars and further reading, and tips and advice for preventing common health problems and meeting new rules and guidelines.

Given the importance of this advice and the convenience of the all-in-one format, these pages have been enormously popular. SHP’s readership has been significantly higher than last year as a result.

This expertise, particularly relating to COVID-19, has extended across the whole site. Stories naturally tend to focus on the pandemic, while other information pages like this one about [face fit testing](#) holds a special significance for the coronavirus. In addition, the [PPE hub page](#) has proved popular with both health and safety professionals and laypersons alike.

However, although COVID-19 has been dominant, other hub pages including those on [hazmat suits](#), [lone working](#) and [mental health in the workplace](#) have also been optimised and updated with the latest legislation and guidance.

The SHP Directory has also been useful for health and safety organisations during the pandemic. It allows companies to list their products and services to potential customers, thereby giving them another avenue for communication with professionals during the days of lockdown.

In addition, SHP has launched the [brand-new Safety & Health Podcast](#). Its most recent episode (at the time of writing), focused on stress and burnout—a critical topic at the best of times, but particularly during the present crisis.

SHP in numbers...

722,110
annual unique
visitors

37,347
annual unique SHP
Directory visitors

39,000+
daily newsletter
subscribers



Ian Hart, Editor, SHP

"The main thing coming out of recent interviews I have done is how health and safety has been at the forefront of the pandemic, and how organisations – and the wider public – now see safety professionals in a different light. It's up to the best safety professionals to grasp this opportunity and use this new-found platform for the good of workplace safety."

Barbour EHS

Cutting through the information overload

Barbour EHS is an essential tool for health and safety practitioners. It is a digital library of health, safety, wellbeing and environmental legislation and documentation, providing an easy, accessible platform for staying up-to-date with rights and responsibilities in the workplace, so organisations can remain compliant and save money.

Barbour hosts documents from a wealth of health and safety publishers, including ACAS, CIBSE, the Department of Communities and Local Government, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, HSE, IOSH and many, many more. This extensive offering is what has made Barbour so essential during the pandemic: its all-in-one platform prevents information overload and gives users the tools to identify and save the documents that matter most to them.

What has Barbour done during COVID-19?

Barbour has introduced and improved a slew of features during the COVID-19 pandemic, all

designed to make life easier for health and safety professionals trying to remain compliant with fast-changing rules and legislation.

It has updated its legal registers service as a result of feedback from customers, making it easier for them to stay compliant during a 45001 audit. It has also improved its library of international quick facts, designed to summarise key legislation across a variety of subjects in a host of international jurisdictions from the United States to China.

Most importantly, Barbour has established a [substantial COVID-19 offering](#), including daily briefings and an expansive section detailing the latest legislation, facts and figures. It has even launched a helpline inviting practitioners to quiz Barbour's staff about health and safety, providing a direct method for clearing some of that complex coronavirus legislative fog. In addition, Barbour has produced a number of documents relevant to employers for navigating the so-called "new normal", including guides to [business continuity](#), [home working](#), [statutory inspections](#), [respiratory protective](#) equipment and much more.

Barbour EHS in numbers...

11,000+
users

100,000+
documents

800+
publishers



Teresa Higgins,
Brand Director, Barbour EHS

"Our editors have been absolutely amazing. They've worked hard to update everything, starting with legal information, then launching a series of webinars to keep people informed. Their work over the last few months has been astonishing."

"We've been helping people at all different levels and in different situations every step of the way."

"We've had 5,000 more visits to the site than this time last year, which is astonishing."

"I feel privileged to be working in the health and safety sector. Its profile has really been raised in the last few months: we are now seen as a blessing, not simply a restraint or a hindrance. It's nice to be the knight in shining armour for a change!"

What's next for health and safety?

Something the health and safety profession has missed over the last year has been live events and face-to-face networking.

Safety & Health Expo is one such event: with 14,000+ visitors, 250+ exhibitors and more than sixty expert-led seminar sessions in 2019, it has established itself as a hugely popular networking venue, educational opportunity and a true mainstay of the health and safety calendar.

Safety & Health Expo 2019 gave visitors the opportunity to see the latest products and technology in the flesh, hear from experts and thought leaders on the most cutting-edge ideas, and even get inspired by some famous speakers from outside the profession sharing their personal experiences of health and safety, including journalist [Steph McGovern](#), Winter Olympian Michael "Eddie the Eagle" Edwards, and rugby star [Jonny Wilkinson](#).

All being well, Safety & Health Expo will return in 2021 with an enhanced offering reflecting the profession's new priorities, and plenty of opportunities to catch-up with old colleagues in a safe, socially distanced way.

An increased focus on workplace wellbeing will be reflected in the events, with the Workplace Wellbeing Show taking place alongside Safety & Health Expo when its doors open. It will provide a focused platform for mental health and wellbeing, giving it the parity of esteem with physical health it has long demanded.

In the meantime, health and safety has had to find ways to adapt to the so-called "new normal" — and with everyone working from their home offices, what better way to keep people informed than a series of digital webinars?

In May this year, Digital Week hosted some of the profession's true leaders, from IOSH president Andrew Sharman to mental health charity Mind's Head of Workplace Wellbeing Programmes Faye McGuinness. This selection of experts engaged with over a thousand viewers, watching from the comfort of their home offices, through key issues



such as sourcing [PPE during COVID-19](#), [the state of the profession](#) and [achieving workplace wellbeing](#) best practice. It was an enjoyable informative experience, though we hope it will soon be complemented by the safe return of live events.

Digital events, online learning and training courses, webinars and podcasts will be the engine room of health and safety learning and development for some time yet. While many of us remain working from home, large gatherings remain prohibited and various regions remain under lockdown, the profession will have to navigate an uneven and fast-changing environment. Consequently, many

of the key health and safety associations continue to offer an array of online services.

Over the next year, the profession will evolve to meet new challenges, to cope with the continued impact of COVID-19 and to find more ways of keeping people informed, educated and connected.



Chris Edwards
Group Director, Informa

“Events this year have proven how vital the work of the health and safety profession is. Although the lockdown has been tough for all of us, it’s been pleasing to see the profession increasingly spoken about in a positive light.

“We’ve been leading the way with digital offerings across our platforms, from hub pages and podcasts on SHP and up-to-the-minute legislation updates and educational webinars on

Barbour, to the game-changing Digital Week that brought live thought leadership to a community working from home.

“Hopefully, the health and safety profession will return to work with a sharper focus than ever before. We hope to continue leading and shaping that conversation in the continued and growing work of SHP and Barbour EHS, and the return of Safety & Health Expo.”



Useful resources

- ▶ [Barbour EHS](#)
- ▶ [British Occupational Hygiene Society \(BOHS\)](#)
- ▶ [British Safety Council](#)
- ▶ [Health & Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#)
- ▶ [Mind](#)
- ▶ [National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health \(NEBOSH\)](#)
- ▶ [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents \(RoSPA\)](#)
- ▶ [Safety & Health Expo](#)
- ▶ [SHP](#)

You can find a full list of additional sources of information for health and safety professionals, compiled by SHP, [here](#).

Meet the **network...**



The Informa Markets safety and health network unites the news, developments and legislation shaping the health and safety profession, with the UK's leading health and safety event. These brands provide individuals and businesses with a holistic view of the entire profession, from the real-world consequences of inadequate health and safety provision, to the solutions and products available to keep people safe.

Barbour Environment, Health and Safety (EHS) is an online library for sourcing information from HSE, British standards and trade associations to help you meet your legislation and compliance requirements, and a catalogue of tools to help you educate and train your workforce.

barbour
safe in our knowledge

[Visit us](#)
[Contact us](#)

Safety & Health Expo is the UK's largest health and safety event, hosting the latest products and services from hundreds of exhibitors and the very latest expertise and thought leadership. It is the number one venue for gaining knowledge, sourcing solutions and making new contacts.

**SAFETY &
HEALTH EXPO**

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SHP is the first for health and safety news in the UK. It meets all the content needs of a health and safety professional, with a daily newsletter and site packed with breaking news, in-depth features, in-court stories, legislation updates, eBooks and webinars.

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[Listen to the podcast](#)

SHP4Jobs is the official jobs site of SHP and Barbour, specialising in matching health and safety practitioners of any level with the top jobs from across the UK and beyond, from consultants to inspectors and engineers.

SHP4JOBS

THE OFFICIAL JOB SITE OF BARBOUR EHS

[Visit us](#)
[Contact us](#)

The SHP Directory is an independent platform for searching for health and safety products, services and suppliers. It allows companies to publish press releases and showcase new solutions to raise brand awareness among thousands of visitors.

SHPDIRECTORY

[Visit us](#)
[Contact us](#)

SHP has teamed up with Taylor & Francis to offer readers an extensive range of published resources to help professionals create a safe and healthy work environment. The books cover good practices and important moral, legal, and financial issues pertaining to a safety manager's job.

SHP

HEALTH & SAFETY BOOKS

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The wider network...

