

## Kill joys or killers...

Society has been taking Dr Jykle for many years and accusing him of being Mr Hyde. Is it time, YES, that we actually stopped thrashing Dr Jykle and started to support the significant work that is being done to make life safer, healthier and increasing our work wellbeing.

We will always have the overzealous individuals and organisations who from political avarice want to have their 15 minutes of fame. So they will interpret the current legislation in a manner that is seriously scary to those who sit and think a while. There will also be those driven by the best intentions who have personally suffered from a particular incident who feel that no one must ever suffer as they do and zero tolerance must be followed.

So the local authority empty paddling pools of the 50mm of water in case a child may drown. The gravestones are levelled or toppled to ensure that the trip hazard is minimised. Does this actually reduce the safety risk by a worthwhile amount or is it actually to reduce the anxiety of those who may be sued by the litigious society that we are becoming?

Risk aversion is a costly exercise, both financially and emotionally, leading in the long run to an environment that is actually no safer. Risk management and assessment when carried out in a balance proportionate manner will pay long term dividends. Why do so few actually take the few minutes to stop and look at their work environment and actually ask the question is this a safe place to work? So often I and many others of my like, yes a Health & Safety man (woman), visit an organisation and am amazed to find the broken gas flue, the frayed electrical cable, etc. These are not specialist hazards that take years to understand and manage.

Are we afraid of what we may find? Do we already know what the answer is and have no desire to sort it out or have we become so blinkered and or mothered that we require permission to act. Risk Assessment has become a term steeped in mystery, a black art.

We seem to have missed the point; we do not need any more legislation. We need to motivate people to actually 'stop and look'. Look at the accident statistics and the vast majority of the accidents could easily be predicted. Remove the cable from across the floor, the pile of paper on the floor, the stacked pallets ready to fall, the racking overloaded and buckling.

So let's have a go, go on, 'STOP' and 'LOOK'. What can you see that could cause an accident? Now do something about it.

