**THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024**

**Charity calls for urgent reform and launches ‘Safer Lives, Stronger Nation’, as new report warns preventable accidents in the UK are rising and accidental deaths reach an all-time high**

* Accidental death rates up by 42% over the last decade and accidents are the second biggest killer of under 40s
* Accidents cost £6 billion in NHS medical care and £5.9 billion in lost working days
* The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) calls on the Government to implement a **National Accident Prevention Strategy** to save lives, boost the economy and free up capacity in the NHS

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has today launched a new campaign, [‘Safer Lives, Stronger Nation’](https://www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/report), to lobby the Government to implement the UK’s first ever National Accident Prevention Strategy to save lives, boost the economy and free up capacity in the NHS.

Action is needed now, as RoSPA’s new report\* reveals that accidental deaths in the UK have reached an all-time high – with rates increasing by 42% over the last decade, accidents are now the second biggest killer of people under 40. In England alone, accident-related hospital admissions for serious injuries have risen by 48% in the twenty years, hospitalising over 700,000 people annually. As well as the tragic human loss and suffering, preventable accidents cost the UK a massive £12 billion every year due to lost working days and NHS medical care.

RoSPA, along with over 370 supporters, are calling for the Government to seize the initiative and create a National Accident Prevention Strategy – a first for the UK. And, because it’s impossible to arrest a crisis like this without a plan, RoSPA propose that the National Accident Prevention Strategy is the specific responsibility of an individual minister without a portfolio. This would enable the minister to treat accident prevention holistically, with the authority to attend the Cabinet and the ability to convene cross-departmental committees.

The National Accident Prevention Strategy must:

* Take a joined-up approach which cuts across departments and provides strategic leadership to guide policy making at national level
* Empower individual departments or agencies to craft and implement more detailed policies
* Propose ambitious but realistic and evidence-led policy interventions to reduce accident rates
* Cover the core sectors directly affecting the UK economy: home, work, product, leisure and transport
* Be forward-facing to address emerging challenges, like the climate crisis, the rise of AI and the UK’s ageing population
* Address inequalities like deprivation, age, ethnicity and region
* Take a four-nations approach to data sharing and collaboration
* Strengthen Government’s data collection and publishing processes relating to accidents

The ‘Safer Lives, Stronger Nation’ campaign launched at an event hosted by Lord Jordan in the House of Commons, and already has widespread support from over 315 businesses, universities, consumer groups and not-for-profit organisations, including Speedy Hire, the RNLI, Mitie, Berkeley Group, Go Ape, Jaguar Building Services, Nebosh, IOSH, Palletforce and Northumbria University. **Read the full report and sign up to support the campaign at** [**www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy**](https://www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy)

**Steve Cole, Director of Policy, Campaigns and Public Affairs at RoSPA, said:** “The UK is facing an accident crisis, and the Government must take action now. Our report revealing the growing numbers and types of fatal and life-changing accidents across the UK unveils a new public health scandal.

“This situation has gone unchecked and unnoticed for too long. Accidents can be prevented so we are lobbying Government to create a National Accident Prevention Strategy to sit across departments so problems can be tackled at their core. Join our campaign to stop rising accident rates, save lives, prevent injuries and reduce costs across the economy.”

**Accidents cost the UK almost £12 billion annually in medical care and cost to businesses**

Accident-related injuries are a drain on the economy and prevent people from working. The combined cost to UK businesses is £5.9 billion, due to lost output and indirect management costs.

In England alone last year, over 4.4 million bed days were used up to treat patients with accident-related injuries, costing the NHS an estimated £4.6 billion. Across the UK accidents led to around 5.2 million bed days, costing the NHS an estimated £5.4 billion last year. In addition, accidents resulted in around 7 million Accident & Emergency (A&E) visits across the UK last year, costing a further £613 million, bringing the total cost of accidents to the NHS to at least £6 billion annually.

**Ten times more working days lost due to accidents than strikes**

Across the UK in 2022/23, 7.7 million working days were lost by those who were unable to work after an accident as they’d been admitted to hospital, or by their carers who took time off work to be with them. A further 21 million working days were lost by those who had to attend A&E after an accident.

In total in 2022/23 accidents led to almost 29 million lost working days across the UK – 10 times more than were lost due to strikes (2.7 million lost working days) in the same year.

**Dr. James Broun, Research Manager at RoSPA and author of ‘Safer Lives, Stronger Nation’, said:** “Our major review of all accident data uncovers the full scale and true cost of accidents for the very first time. This data is unique; it looks at all types of accidents across the UK, as well as individually across all four nations.

“Accidents aren’t currently monitored or recorded to the same extent as other health issues, but the findings are alarming. Accident rates across the UK, as well as within England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – are rising steeply. We’ve brought together this data to reveal the reality of this crisis and to impress upon the Government that action must be taken to reverse rising accident figures.”

**Dan Evans, Chief Executive at Speedy Hire, said:** “We take health and safety extremely seriously, and it is a source of immense pride that we have been recognised for our excellence in keeping colleagues and customers safe. For us, colleague safety doesn’t begin and end at the workplace door, which is why at Speedy Hire we take a ‘whole person, whole life’ approach. This has never been more important to do so, as RoSPA’s report reveals people are far more likely to suffer a serious accident at home than they are at work. Both the cost of accidents to peoples’ personal lives and to businesses is far too high, so we must act now to keep people safe and support economic growth.”

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**Notes to Editor(s)**

\*The full report, entitled: ‘Safer Lives, Stronger Nation: Our Call for a National Accident Prevention Strategy’ is available here: [www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/report](https://www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/report)

* A range of case studies and accompanying photographs are available by request
* Please contact the press team to arrange interviews with spokespeople
* Media pack can be found here: <https://www.rospa.com/campaigns-and-fundraising/current-campaigns/national-accident-prevention-strategy/media-pack>
* [RoSPA](http://www.rospa.com/) is a leading voice in health and safety that campaigns to reduce avoidable accidents. Our vision is to create a life free from accidental injury, and with the support of our members, this is at the core of everything we do. We lobby Government on issues that matter, pioneer the world’s largest health and safety awards and provide a suite of RoSPA qualifications that help learners and employers keep their colleagues safe from accidents and ill-health.