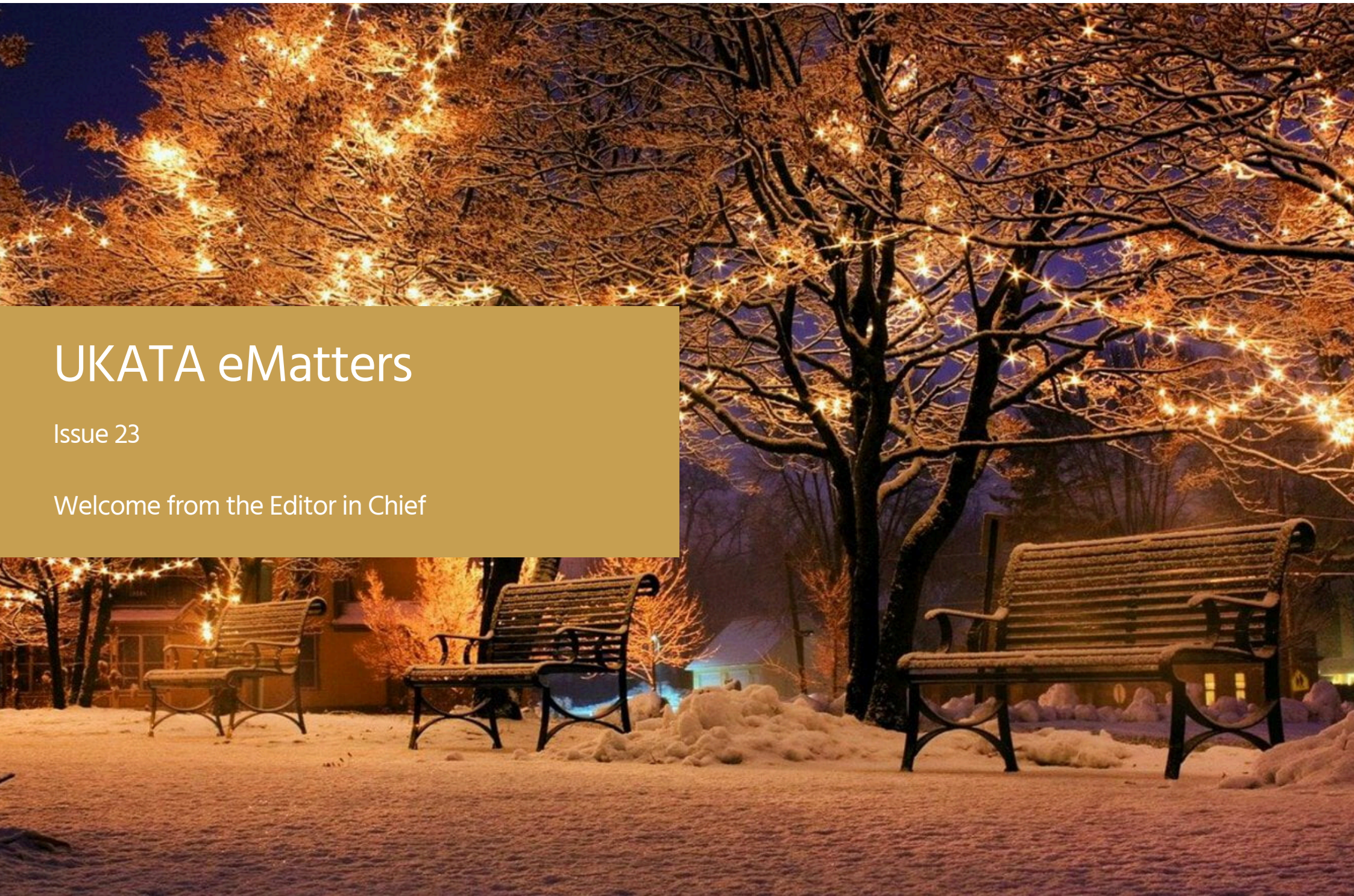


# UKATA eMatters

Issue 23

Welcome from the Editor in Chief





# Welcome to what is our last eMatters of the year

As I sat down to write this I stared at the blank screen and thought what can I say? In fact, what can anyone say about 2020, a year like no other for us all. A rollercoaster ride without any of the fun of the fairground. I truly hope that you, our members and our wider readership have managed to make it through the year without the extreme pain and hardship we have all seen going on in the country and around the globe.

Much had been planned on behalf of our members this year, which will have to wait until restrictions are finally lifted. Much has also been achieved in the background ready to support and promote UKATA membership and continue to maintain our profile within the Industry.

Prudent management from our brilliant Chief Operating Officer, Craig Evans supported by his excellent team and the Board of Directors sees our Association in a strong and resilient position for 2021. My personal thanks must also go to the whole team at Head Office who have risen to the challenges they faced and stepped up to these with professionalism and dedication despite the uncertainties ahead.

New delivery methods and relaxed rules for this difficult and challenging period have indeed contributed to ensuring that the VITAL training our clients and delegates need has still been delivered during this strange time. However, it is hoped that next year we can all get back to our usual ways of conducting business, including a face to face AGM!

I have always thought of Christmas as a time to reflect and rejoice on what we have, what we have achieved and our hopes and dreams for the coming year, both personally and professionally. This year, more than ever it is a time to be grateful for what we do have and not what we might want. Family, friends and loved ones and indeed business colleagues may not all have the chance to be together this year, but I truly hope that everyone can enjoy the festive break in a safe way and I hope and pray for a better 2021 for us all. Happy Christmas from me to you.



Jacqui Royall, Editor in Chief

---



Welcome from  
the Chief  
Operating Officer

# Review and closing remarks of 2020 – an extraordinary year!

For the final time this year, I just wanted to thank all of our members, associates and partners for your incredible support this year. It has been a strange year, met with many challenges and new ways of working.

A positive to take from these unprecedented times is that of the strength of collaborative working.

I have been very humbled reading news stories of members and associates helping their local communities; residents, businesses, key workers, as well as those offering valuable services to our front-line workers in the NHS and care sectors. Your humility, kindness, and support is greatly appreciated by all.

In late March, we endeavoured to move swiftly to support our members and introduced financial support and the facility of video conference into

the training delivery mechanisms portfolio to enable training to continue. This has been agreed to be continued until 31st March 2021 pending a full review by the board of directors at an extraordinary meeting in January 2021.

As a reminder to members, the current UKATA policy on maximum delegate numbers for training courses delivered by video conference are:

- Asbestos Awareness: 10 delegates maximum
- Non-Licensable: 8 delegates maximum
- Licensable: 6 delegates maximum
- All other courses permitted to be delivered by video conference training: 8 delegates maximum

These are the maximum delegate numbers and under no circumstances should these be exceeded.



Craig Evans, Chief Operating Officer



Another first was the AGM held digitally for the first time in the association's history. Not the ideal platform to present the event, but as you are aware – the AGM is an annual legal requirement. I hope you will join me with a warm welcome to our new directors; Steven Bossley, Specialist Assessment and Training Centre Ltd, Dean Platt, Asbestos Training Solutions Ltd, Mick Bennett, Mitie Ltd and Adam Harding, ADM Training Ltd who were formally elected at this event and I look forward to working with them more closely next year.

I am also very pleased to announce that our charity partnership for 2020/2021 is the Mavis Nye Foundation. Mavis is an avid supporter of UKATA and we look forward to working with her foundation closely over the next year. More information on the partnership can be found on page 6.

In summer, we joined forces by way of a corporate partnership with SMAS Worksafe, a leading registered member of Safety Schemes in Procurement (SSIP) and health and safety assessment company who take great pride in

working with some of the biggest names in construction and provide a second to none service to their members, clients, and consultants alike. To promote this partnership and to gain exposure for both organisations, a series of joint webinars were conducted covering UKATA, types of training, duty to manage and asbestos in soils.

Another partnership formed in late October was that with Specialist Risk Group (SRG) who is committed to arranging market-leading insurance solutions for all UKATA members at a competitive price. SRG (owners of Miles Smith, The Underwriting Exchange, Specialist Risk Insurance Solutions and AUA Insolvency Risk Services) is an integrated group of insurance intermediaries arranging specialist insurance for corporates operating in the UK and internationally. The group serves over 18,000 end policyholders and has specialist expertise across multiple lines of business.

### **RECOGNITION - 10 YEARS OF SERVICE**

On behalf of the board of directors and all staff, I would like to say a huge congratulations and

thank you to Jackie Peat for her 10 years of service. In her position as Brand Development Officer, Jackie oversees all brand protection issues, our industry associates and third party agents. To celebrate, the team got together on Microsoft Teams to present Jackie with her trophy, flowers and a special video to commemorate her incredible time at UKATA. Jackie is a true asset to the team bringing a wealth of experience and it has been a pleasure to work with her over the last decade.



Jackie Peat, Brand Development Officer

Finally, a last big thank you to all our members for their continuous support over what has been a difficult time for many. If there is any way that we can further support you, please get in touch with your dedicated file-handler.

As a new year approaches, we look forward to receiving new supporters in our joint efforts to increase awareness of asbestos and continue to deliver the highest standard of asbestos training throughout the industry.



**I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family Season's Greetings and very best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.**





# New Certificate Generator Launch

Set for deployment on 28th  
December

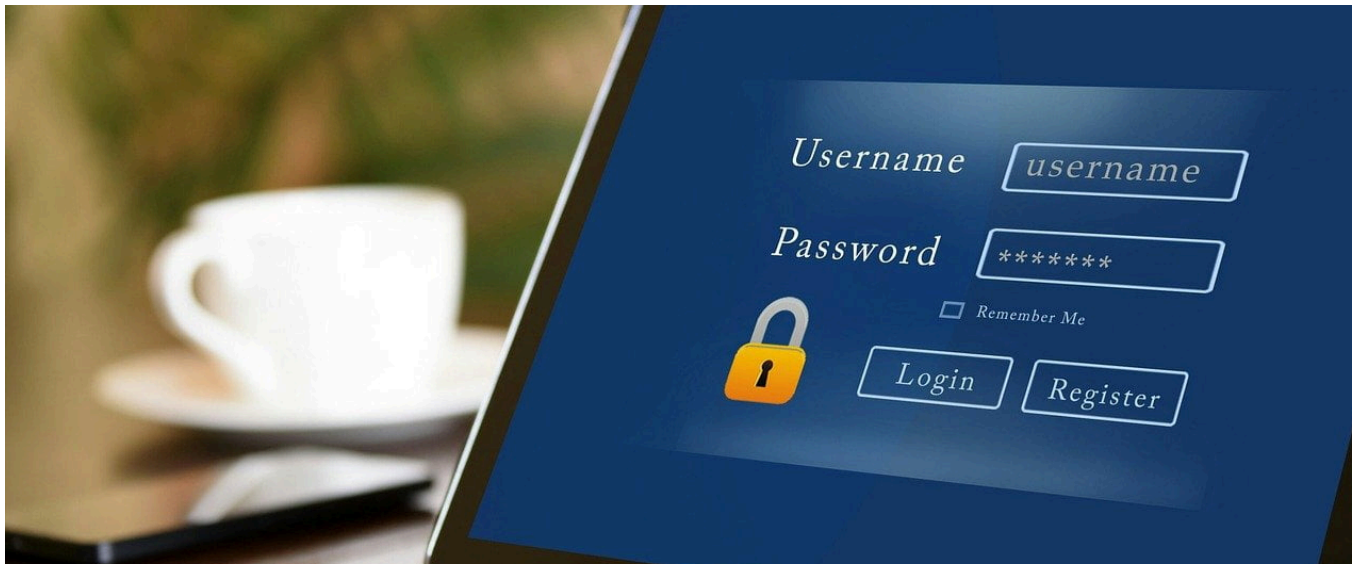


# Launch: New Certificate Generator

UKATA members will be aware that it has been a long-term objective to develop a new Certificate Generator and integrate this with the long-established Tutor Registration system.

The new online system will be deployed on **Monday 28th December 2020**.

Following the deployment of the new Certificate Generator, new features will be rolled out in the new year, to include; a new design of certificate, improved security by QR code on the certificate and online purchase of credits.



## New Certificate Generator Features:

- One platform/one login for members to manage certificate production and tutors.
- Auto top-up feature when running low on certificate credits.
- New reports to show certificate production, filtered by; course date, course title, tutor etc.
- Option to include the delegates' company name and DOB within the data input to improve later searching of delegates (optional – GDPR consent required).
- Partnership database for ease of adding partners on certificates.
- Ability to bulk upload (by .csv) delegates information to produce certificates.
- Option to email the certificate direct to the delegate.
- Optional reminder emails to delegates for refresher training.





# Standardising Course Titles

New course titles for 2021

Over the last few years, UKATA has developed a number of new syllabi, addendums and additional courses for the benefit of members. However, this has led to some disparity with course titles. With the launch of the new Certificate Generator on the 28th December, now is a good time to standardise the course titles.

Updating the course titles requires a significant amount of work, as every syllabus and guidance document will require updating, along with updates to the website and search facilities. We envisage this work to be completed in early January, but members will be kept up to date as this develops.

<b>Current Title</b>	<b>New Title</b>	<b>Course Code</b>
<b>Awareness</b>		
Asbestos Awareness Course	Asbestos Awareness	AA
Asbestos Awareness Refresher Course	Asbestos Awareness Refresher	AA-R
Asbestos Awareness for Managers	Asbestos Awareness For Managers	AAM
Asbestos Awareness for Managers Refresher	Asbestos Awareness For Managers Refresher	AAM-R
Asbestos Awareness for Groundworkers	Asbestos Awareness For Groundworkers	AAG
Asbestos Awareness for Groundworkers Refresher	Asbestos Awareness For Groundworkers Refresher	AAG-R
Asbestos Awareness for Waste Management and Civic Amenity Site Operatives and Managers	Asbestos Awareness For Waste and Civic Site Personnel	AAWCA
<b>Non-Licensable</b>		
Non-Licensable Work With Asbestos Including NNLW	Asbestos Non-Licensed Operative	NLW
Non-Licensable Work With Asbestos Including NNLW Refresher	Asbestos Non-Licensed Operative Refresher	NLW-R
Non-Licensable Work With Asbestos Including NNLW for Groundworkers	Asbestos Non-Licensed Groundworker	NLWG
Non-Licensable Work With Asbestos Including NNLW for Groundworkers Refresher	Asbestos Non-Licensed Groundworker Refresher	NLWG-R
Non-Licensable Work With Asbestos Including NNLW for Waste Management and Civic Amenity Site Operatives and Managers	Asbestos Non-Licensed Waste and Civic Amenity Site Personnel	NLWWCA
<p><b>Open full table in browser:</b>  <a href="https://ukata.turtl.co/story/ukata-ematters-issue-23/page/4/1">https://ukata.turtl.co/story/ukata-ematters-issue-23/page/4/1</a></p>		
<b>Licensable</b>		





## UKATA AGM Roundup

# The 12th UKATA Annual General Meeting goes digital!

For the first time in the association's history, the UKATA AGM was held virtually. In an unprecedented move, UKATA Chairman, Graham O'Mahony, and Chief Operating Officer, Craig Evans presented the formal business, accounts, director election results and achievements in a pre-recorded digit format, including an electronic voting system. The conference element of the event was unfortunately cancelled until further notice.

A drastic change to the successful full-day event in 2019 where a record number of members attended Jurys Inn, East Midlands.

Graham kickstarted the AGM proceedings by presenting the accounts of the association for 2019/2020 and was happy to report that all was showing healthy, despite substantial investment throughout the year including attendance at numerous trade exhibitions.

Graham then moved on to the election of directors. The four vacancies (one licensable, one non-licensable and two awareness) had been filled from exactly four nominations and therefore, no election was required.

Subsequently, the four new directors are:

- Steven Bossley – Specialist Assessment and Training Centre Ltd – Licensable
- Dean Platt – Asbestos Training Solutions Ltd – Non-Licensable
- Mick Bennett – Mitie Ltd – Awareness
- Adam Harding – ADM Training Ltd – Awareness

The Chief Operating Officer, Craig Evans, delivered the second part of the AGM and ran through the achievements and the work that has

been done over the past year. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing pandemic, a lot of plans that had been set out at the last AGM had been forced to be put on the backburner.

However, Craig Evans proudly stated that to support members throughout these difficult times, more than £25,000 of financial support has been delivered.

Additionally, video conference training had been introduced at the beginning of April 2020, including the development of a new online platform to enable the end of courses assessments to be conducted remotely – in excess of 1,600 exams had taken place using the platform.

Another exciting project that had been worked on during the last 12 months included international levels of membership. Working with the Department for International Trade, enquiries have been made to companies in Southern Ireland to gauge interest. This has been placed on temporary hold but will be picked back up again at the beginning of 2021.



Regional meetings had been organised for March 2020 with speakers from the HSE and Wefit RPE set to attend. As members will be aware, these meetings were postponed due to the pandemic, but they will be resurrected when possible.

Craig also reported on new sector engagements and the recent partnership with SMAS Worksafe and how these relationships would put UKATA at the forefront of asbestos training.

In his closing remarks, Craig Evans announced deservingly, that our charity partner for this year would be the Mavis Nye Foundation. Mavis has always been a loyal supporter of UKATA and this partnership will help raise monies to fund their dedicated mesothelioma nurse.

Graham then closed the AGM 2020 by thanking all members for their continued support, and the Board of Directors and UKATA staff for all their hard work.



Graham O'Mahony, Chairman, Virtual UKATA AGM

# Meet the newly elected Directors

As announced in the 2020 UKATA AGM, Steven Bossley, Dean Platt, Mick Bennett and Adam Harding have now joined the Board of Directors to help continue to grow and develop the association.

A brief synopsis of the new directors is provided:



Steven Bossley, Specialist Assessment and Training Centre Ltd

---

## **Steven Bossley – Licensable**

Steven has previously been a UKATA director and feels he still had more to offer the association, with working as a consultant in the asbestos, demolition & construction sectors. Steven also holds an SMSTS Asbestos Manager qualification and is currently working towards his NEBOSH construction.

With years of experience gained by working closely with demolition, construction and asbestos industries, his background, knowledge, and experience will be a useful asset to the board and ultimately help benefit members.

## **Dean Platt – Non-Licensable**

Since becoming a member in 2011, Dean had been reflecting on his role during the lockdown and decided to become more involved with UKATA.

Dean has been in the asbestos industry since 2006 in a supervisory role regarding licensed asbestos removal and was employed in 2008 as the asbestos manager for Kier Building Maintenance, which has then led to a national role. Following on from this, in 2011 he parted ways with Kier to set up Asbestos Training Solutions Ltd.



Dean Platt, Asbestos Training Solutions Ltd

---



### **Mick Bennett – Awareness**

Mick has been working within the asbestos industry for the last ten years as an asbestos awareness trainer. Since becoming QHSE/ Compliance Manager for Mitie and taking on the roles as the technical lead for asbestos, he has

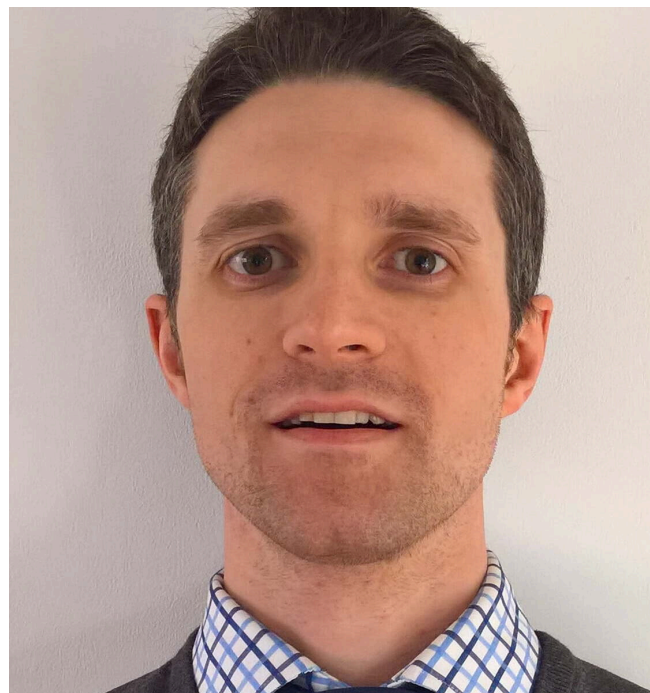
worked with a wide range of clients advising all aspects of asbestos ranging from writing their management plans to training.

Mick has also completed the BOHS P401, P403, P407, W504, and is passionate about asbestos and the industry.



Mick Bennett, Mitie Ltd

---



Adam Harding, ADM Training Ltd

---

### **Adam Harding – Awareness**

Adam became a member since the association's inception and now feels it is time to give something back. He entered the industry as a science graduate and furthered his education with NEBOSH and BOHS training qualifications.

Adam's early career was spent in surveying and project management roles, gaining valuable field experience. He then went on to hold senior roles within a leading Asbestos Consultancy prior to establishing ADM Training.

By being part of the board, Adam would like to further the continuous improvement and evolution that the asbestos training industry has seen over the past few years supporting UKATA and its members.



# Corporate Associate: New Member Benefit

CAR



# Corporate Associate: UKATA announce a new joint partnership with Specialist Risk Group (SRG)

**SRG is committed to arranging market-leading insurance solutions for UKATA members on the most competitive terms.**

SRG (owners of Miles Smith, The Underwriting Exchange, Specialist Risk Insurance Solutions and AUA Insolvency Risk Services) is an integrated group of insurance intermediaries arranging specialist insurance for corporates operating in the UK and internationally. The group serves over 18,000 end policyholders and has specialist expertise across multiple lines of business.

SRG specialise in creating solutions to challenging risk transfer questions. Since its formation, the fast growth group, which provides solutions for hard-to-place specialist UK and international insurance risks, has amassed more than

£350m in gross written premium and currently trades with around 800 UK brokers and over 250 Irish and international brokers with whom SRG has long-standing relationships, providing significant distribution capability.

The service and product offering is tailored to the unique requirements of each UKATA member and will provide exclusive access to in-house schemes through its UK specialty broking division, Miles Smith. These schemes offer outstanding policy coverage and comply with HSE regulations.

**SR** SPECIALIST  
RISK GROUP





We are delighted to welcome SRG as our corporate partner. SRG have been working with trade associations providing market leading insurance products and advice for over 30 years, and so it made perfect sense to form this relationship. With their wealth of experience in the asbestos industry providing insurance solutions, proposals will be focused on the specific objectives of UKATA to ensure that the insurance offering adds value to being a UKATA member.

Craig Evans, UKATA Chief Operating Officer



We are delighted to be working with UKATA to provide specialist insurance solutions and expert risk management advice to its members. Our team have over 30 years of experience in working with businesses in the asbestos industry so I feel that we will bring real value to UKATA members through our expert knowledge and advice, tailored service and competitive premiums.

Annie Wakeman, Group Head of Marketing at SRG



For more information visit [www.specialistrisk.com](http://www.specialistrisk.com)





# News

Member News



# Franks Portlock Awarded Sellafield Contract

**Environmental management consultancy and decommissioning specialist, Franks Portlock has been awarded a three-year contract to provide asbestos services to Sellafield Limited.**

The comprehensive scope of the contract includes the provision of asbestos surveys and re-inspections, sample collection and analysis, analytical monitoring services, site management of abatement works, asbestos technical specification and project management.

The new three-year contract, which has an additional one-year option, will see Franks Portlock continue its role as a Tier 2 supplier to Sellafield Ltd, a status it has held since it commenced



Phil Franks, Stephen Portlock

work with Sellafield Ltd in 2014 at which time it was awarded a contract to provide asbestos analytical services worth £2 million.

Founded in 2006, by Phil Franks and Stephen Portlock, Franks Portlock is a leading environmental consultancy which offers a range of asbestos and



water hygiene management and consultancy services. The company, which operates nationally, has offices in Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, Rosyth, Fife and Sellafield, Cumbria.

James New, Sellafield site contract manager and North West regional manager at Franks Portlock, commented: "We are delighted to be awarded this three-year (plus 1) contract with Sellafield Ltd and to announce our continued support to both Sellafield Ltd and the wider



nuclear industry. In addition, the expansion into full asbestos service provision means we can look forward to developing and growing our relationships and support within the nuclear supply chain, as well as within the local West Cumbria community.

“The success of our contract award is due significantly to the disciplined, safe working and professional standards attained by our Sellafield site team over the last six years and is a testament to the pride they take in their roles as nuclear professionals.

“We are looking forward to supporting Sellafield Ltd in a collaborative approach to the

framework, utilising our knowledge and expertise to provide Sellafield with a strong and dynamic model for asbestos management.”

Franks Portlock specialises in helping organisations manage workplace and environmental risk in order to comply with UK safety regulations. The company works with organisations across a range of sectors, from the marine and nuclear industries to healthcare, residential and retail, both on a regional and national level.

For more information please visit [www.franksportlock.co.uk](http://www.franksportlock.co.uk).

## SOCOTEC Going the Distance: Asbestos Management and Consultancy for UK Highways

Over the course of several years, SOCOTEC has provided a full range of asbestos services on major highways projects in the UK, including the A14, M5 Overbury Viaduct and M20. From asbestos surveys and air monitoring to abatement work, auditing and contaminated land investigation, the organisation has made use of a wide

range of consultancy and management services to support specialist projects, many of which had stringent requirements.



### **Emily Hill A14 – Cambridge to Huntingdon**

Since 2016, SOCOTEC has carried out a range of consultancy services to help enable one of the country's largest road upgrades, the Cambridge to Huntingdon A14 road improvement scheme. The services provided by SOCOTEC have included asbestos demolition surveys, air monitoring, asbestos removals project management and emergency attendance for bulk sampling. In addition to asbestos-specific works, the Asbestos team has worked in close collaboration with SOCOTEC's Ground Investigation and Contaminated Land Consultancy teams on project-specific works, reviewing potential contaminants and hazardous materials within soils and the ground.

Asbestos surveys were completed across a range of structures and buildings, including culverts, bridges,

environmental barriers, pubs, service stations, head walls, river reliefs and stretches of the highway itself. Through working collaboratively with other parts of the business, SOCOTEC's asbestos surveys often included coring of structures to enable core sampling and analysis.

As part of the ongoing works, SOCOTEC provided a reactive service throughout in order to prevent programme delays and maintain a high level of efficiency. A project-specific email address was created to ensure communications were handled effectively and efficiently by the right people. All vehicles used on site were fully compliant with Chapter 8 guidelines in terms of their livery, while all surveyors were in possession of Safety Critical Medicals and CSCS cards as proof of qualification and safety to work on the site. Each worker was also subject to a project-specific

induction to equip them with a bespoke understanding of health and safety, risk/hazards and legal compliance while working on the project.

### **M5 – Oldbury Viaduct**

The M5's Oldbury viaduct is 1.8 miles long and was constructed in the late 1960s. It is part of what was originally known as the Midland Links Motorway and its usage has grown to 60,000 vehicles per day in each direction. The viaduct is split into 165 separate sections, each of which is linked by joints fitted in the gaps between. A waterproofing layer protects a deck from the motorway's run-off water, but this layer has perished over time. This resulted in damage to the concrete and some corrosion of its steel reinforcement, which required repairs.

SOCOTEC worked in close collaboration with the client,



providing a range of services that included materials testing, workplace exposure monitoring, pencil coring, effluent monitoring and asbestos consultancy. Having worked on the project from its inception, SOCOTEC was ideally placed to offer specialist services based on a complete and core understanding of not only the project, but also the client and their stringent delivery expectations and requirements.

The pre-existing relationship between SOCOTEC and the client



ensured that the team were fully aware of the project and its specific requirements (including safety critical medicals, Chapter 8 vehicles and area-specific inductions) prior to securing the work. This prior knowledge enabled efficiency in mobilisation, delivery of value based on a full, unambiguous understanding of expectations and overall consistent and clear communication.

The asbestos consultancy works undertaken included a review of project documentation for compliance against UK and EU standards, the development and ratification of audit processes for third party contractors, air monitoring and asbestos sampling.

### **M20 – Smart Motorways**

The M20 provides critical access to Dover, the Channel Tunnel, Heathrow, Gatwick and the wider south east,

south west and the Midlands via the M26 and M25, and its use has expanded rapidly over its lifetime. SOCOTEC's Asbestos team worked on the highway to assist with the upgrading of Junctions 3-5 to smart motorways, which included converting the hard shoulder to create a permanent fourth lane, installing new gantries, building new emergency areas and a new footbridge and improving drainage.

SOCOTEC was able to support the project by completing asbestos surveys to varying highway elements, alongside offering project management services for the removal of asbestos-containing drainage systems. The consultancy team developed a core understanding of the requirements on site and were able to offer a very reactive service that allowed the project team to hit tight deadlines and stick to the overall programme.



Upon SOCOTEC's involvement in the project, value was added almost immediately. During attendance on site, the team were advised that the client was about to place an order for the remediation of a large stockpile of soils based on an asbestos-containing drainage pipe being placed on top of the stockpile. It had been previously advised that the entirety of the stockpile had to be removed due to visible fragments of asbestos being identified on top of the stockpile that had broken away from the pipe.

The soil around the site was tested prior to the commencement of the works, with no asbestos content identified. As the pipe was the only element of the site that was added, SOCOTEC carried out an investigation to determine whether the surface level contamination had actually impacted the stockpile as a whole. Soil sampling was completed and the pipework and any other visible fragments removed from the surface, before the soil was re-used on-site under the appropriate code of practice. This was an eco-friendly and cost-effective alternative to the soil being discarded as contaminated waste and sent to landfill.

# Olive Media offer two months free access to their virtual LMS training platform

To combat the decrease in classroom-based training, UKATA member Olive Media is offering all UKATA members two months free access to their Virtual LMS Training Platform, MyKademy Pro.

Since its establishment in 2011, Olive Group has trained more than two million people across the world and created digital learning content in 27 languages. The company operates in a variety of sectors including education, recruitment, healthcare, nursing, pharma, retail, construction, hospitality, and manufacturing. Olive Group's education clients include awarding bodies, independent training providers and colleges.

**OLIVE**  
LEARNING

MyKademy Pro offers a vast range of features that members can make use of such as virtual classroom sessions, document manager, custom reporting, a learning management system and a timetable and attendee management system.

You can find out more about MyKademy by watching this short video.

To receive your free two months access to MyKademy, please contact Managing Director Kevin Doyle by emailing [hello@olivegroup.io](mailto:hello@olivegroup.io) or calling 003531 4111 011.







Update from the Mavis Nye Foundation

# Mavis Nye Foundation announced as UKATA's charity partner for 2020/2021

As announced at the virtual AGM, UKATA is pleased to announce that the Mavis Nye Foundation has been selected as the association's charity partner for 2020/2021.

Mavis has kindly provided UKATA members with a brief update on her Foundation and her current personal treatment. I know members will join in wishing Mavis all the best.

"For the Mavis Nye Foundation, we have achieved a £10k Research Grant to Simon Bolton in Leeds but COVID 19 has held them up. We have also achieved a Mesothelioma UK nurse so we have to keep raising donations every year to run this. Finally, with help from Royds Withy King, we managed to donate office chairs to East Kents CNS's.

I'm very excited to be in partnership with UKATA as they have been involved since my illness started in 2009 and I became so involved with asbestos safety and training. It is so important to keep people that work with asbestos safe and I keep saying our lungs are so important. You must keep them healthy and safe as you need them all your life.

We have joined UKATA for several years at the Contamination Expo in London and Birmingham and Ray and I have given presentations in the theatre there. We have also spoken at the great AGM and the gala nights which was great fun.

Craig and his team have always been there giving me so much support when I have needed it, even made my banner for the Foundation. I really admire Roger Willey and his expertise in asbestos.

We are putting plans together for next year to supply the machine for the new trial in Basingstoke hospital. This year has been so difficult to have events and we have had to cancel our summer ball and our Christmas Ball and hope we can have the summer ball 2021 but even that sounds impossible at the time of writing this. So we have been raising money from donations.

UKATA is hoping to hold their AGM next year and we have two of Ray's paintings to auction off. It's in my diary and I hope it can stay there.

In the meantime, we appeal that you donate to the charity in any way you can even if it's only running around the block or cycling somewhere. I call on all UKATA members to get involved and support any way they can.





# Asbestos Victims' Support in these Challenging Times

By Joanne Gordon, Chair, Asbestos Victims Support Group Forum



## COVID-19 has presented huge challenges for organisations and for the Asbestos Victims Support Groups it has been no exception.

However, with a combination of groups working together, supporting each other, embracing technology and finding new ways to support and reach out to asbestos-related disease victims, the Forum members have risen to this challenge.

### The Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum

The Asbestos Victims Support Groups' Forum UK was established in 2005, it is open to groups who provide independent and free advice to victims of asbestos-related disease. We meet throughout the year to share best practice and to act as one voice for asbestos related-disease victims as well as fighting for justice.

### We believe

- **We need properly funded mesothelioma research**
- **Asbestos Victims need fairer compensation and welfare benefits**
- **A World-wide ban on asbestos**

### The Current Crisis - Mesothelioma and Lung Cancer Cases

The victims who the Forum members help, and support are amongst the most vulnerable, with victims of mesothelioma and lung cancer being advised to shield. As a result, groups were not be able to continue home visits; instead we needed to undertake benefit claims by telephone and post. However, this posed a problem. If people are shielding and not getting to the post office or seeing family, how were we to efficiently process claims for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit as we would have to rely on victims returning the paperwork to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

The Forum began discussions with the DWP, who agreed an 'easement' on forms being signed. Forms can be completed without a signature and the DWP will make a follow-up call to confirm identification. Claims for Mesothelioma and Lung Cancer are being dealt with quickly.

**AVSGF • UK**  
**ASBESTOS VICTIMS SUPPORT GROUP FORUM**



## Benign Cases – Campaigning

We appreciate that the Government suspended face-to-face claims for 3 months due to the crisis to protect staff and claimants. The Government more recently agreed to review this decision.

However, the Forum have concerns because many victims of Asbestosis and Pleural Thickening are ill and elderly, as well as having comorbid problems. Some claimants have been waiting since January 2020 because a medical had not been arranged before lockdown.

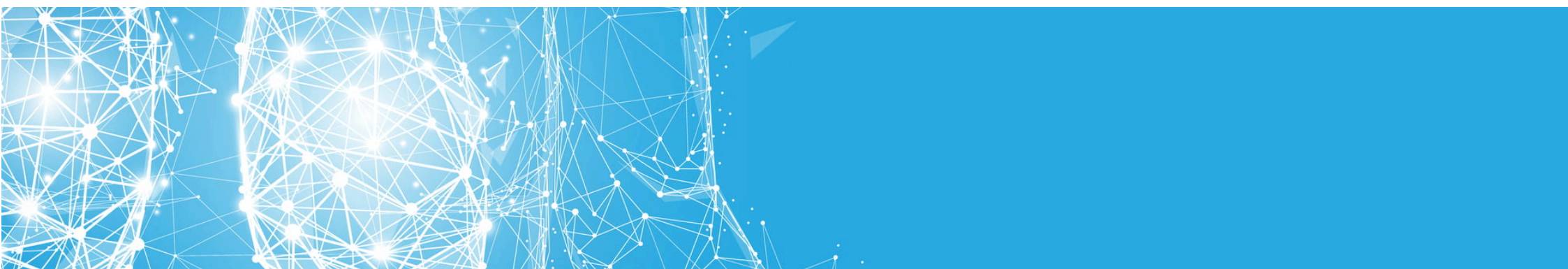
Forum members are now writing, with the permission of claimants, to their local MPs to urge them to ask the Government to find new ways to process claims.

This could include obtaining medical records including lung function tests, which they would complete anyway as part of the assessment process, after which claimants could be contacted for information as to how the disease is affecting them instead of the face-to-face medical.

## Delays

Delays in processing these benefits could mean victims are missing out on hundreds of pounds of compensation. Although Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit claims will be backdated, payment under the Workers' Compensation Scheme (Government lump sum scheme) is dependent upon the age of the person at the time they were assessed for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit. As delays continue, more claimants will have had a birthday, which means they may miss out on money. Someone in their 70s awarded 10% would lose, on average, £150 to £200 but this will increase with higher awards.

**Anyone who would like to support this campaign can contact DAST on 01246 380415 for further information and advice for writing to their own MP.**



## Holistic Service

Forum members offer a holistic service supporting members' wellbeing and mental health needs as well as offering financial support through benefits advice. Through COVID19, Forum groups have been reaching out to victims by taking their meetings online as well as producing newsletters. Although many members would have liked to have held physical events for Action Mesothelioma Day, online meetings, videos and events were well received. Despite the difficulties of the pandemic some groups also managed to raise thousands of pounds for research. We are already planning Action Mesothelioma Day 2021 as the Forum have been asked to link with medical and research charities to plan a major event. So, watch this space. During this challenging time we have also managed to develop a new website – so please take a look - <https://asbestosforum.org.uk>.

## In Conclusion

We are proud of what the Forum members have achieved in this very challenging time and we are continuing to fight for justice and equality for victims of asbestos related diseases and their families.

To contact the Forum please contact Joanne Gordon, Chair 01246 380415 or email [info@asbestosforum.org.uk](mailto:info@asbestosforum.org.uk).





Thank you for reading

# UKATA eMatters - Issue 23

