

LCA News Bulletin

News from the Legionella Control Association

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Hospice Fined After Patient Died and an Employee Left with Life Changing Health Issues

A London hospice has been sentenced after a patient died of legionnaires' disease and a worker suffered life changing effects as a result of contracting legionnaires' disease.

Southwark Crown Court heard how a man was admitted to St Christopher's Hospice on the 9th of July 2012. He was taken to a nearby Hospital on the 12th of August 2012 where he died five days later. He was later found to have died of Legionnaires' disease which he contracted during his time at the Hospice.

In December 2012, an orderly worker contracted Legionnaires' disease while carrying out her duties at the Hospice and spent 18 days in a coma before making a recovery.

Failure to Appoint a Competent Person (known as the Responsible Person)

St Christopher's Hospice, of Lawrie Park Road, Sydenham, London, pleaded guilty to breaching Sections 3(1) and 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and was sentenced to a two year conditional discharge, and ordered to pay costs of £25,000.

After the hearing HSE inspector Matt Raine said:

"The risks of legionella are well known in the healthcare industry. St Christopher's Hospice had implemented some measures in an attempt to control legionella. However they failed to appoint a competent person to manage the risk of legionella in the Hospice's hot and cold water system.

The failures in the management of legionella led to conditions in hot and cold water system that favoured the proliferation of legionellae. It was entirely foreseeable that there would be risk of contracting legionnaires' disease for patients and employees working at this hospice."

Advice and Guidance

Competency, training and the role of the responsible person are core themes at this year's LCA open day on the 18th of October 2016. There is little that is new in legionella control but outbreaks still happen because the advice and guidance that exists is neglected.

The LCA is committed to setting and raising industry standards to support our members in preventing legionnaires' disease.