



## HS Broadcast – Safe Staff Treats and Trampolining

I am often asked to comment on some, often weird and wacky, activities that employers want to undertake as a treat to their staff. From a health & safety perspective these types of activities do make me a little nervous – in particular, one activity that seemed popular last year was trampolining, so I thought I would explore this in a little more detail.

Flip Out UK, which operates 20 trampolining centres in the UK and promotes itself for both personal and corporate events, has made the decision to remove an attraction called the tower jump. The tower jump comprises of a four-metre jump into a foam pit. 18-year-old Lucy Jones (L) thought this challenge would boost her confidence, but instead she landed in agony and unable to feel her left leg.

L alleges that when she screamed out and said that she could not move, staff told her that the injury was “just bruising” and that she must get out of the foam pit. She also claims that when she was unable to do so, two staff dragged her out without warning. It later transpired that she had fractured a vertebra which required surgery to fit steel rods.

L was put at significant risk by the inadequate first aid response. First aid training is an immediate area to look at.

L is now suing Flip Out (F) and her lawyer reports that he has uncovered a number of serious accidents indicating a flaw in the design of landing areas at F’s centres. Most shockingly, it is reported that there were three

cases of fractured vertebrae in a single day, 1 February 2017, at F in Chester. This was just a few weeks after L’s accident at the same venue. The local authority has also confirmed it is investigating whether F has committed health and safety offences.

F has said that safety is its number-one priority and that as a result of the concerns it has replaced the tower jump with an alternative activity.

All types of physically challenging event carry some element of risk. In part it is the risk-taking which gives the feeling of excitement. However can you safely attend a trampolining centre for a corporate event or are they a major hazard?

Data gathered by iNews, via a freedom of information request, showed that ambulances were called out 760 times to 68 UK trampoline parks in 2016. This was an approximate 50% increase compared with the year before.

The International Association of Trampoline Parks (IATP) says that this is due to a rapid rise in the number of parks opening rather than an increase in risk. The numbers should also be seen in the context of millions of safe visits every year.

It is hoped that the number of accidents will decrease following the introduction of a voluntary safety code in March 2017.



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The British Standard describes minimum standards for the design of trampoline parks and operating procedures. It also introduces an inspection regime.

1. If you do go ahead with this activity, check that the trampolining centre is an IATP member.
2. Ensure that you are provided with a safety briefing beforehand.
3. A combination of alcohol and trampolining is definitely out of the question.