

**NATIONAL  
FORKLIFT  
SAFETY DAY**



# National Forklift Safety Day White Paper

# Introduction

As part of National Forklift Safety Day, the UK Material Handling Association (UKMHA) hosted a Research Roundtable to explore key safety challenges in the warehouse sector. The roundtable brought together industry experts to discuss strategies for enhancing safety culture, improving training, and addressing emerging risks. The Research Roundtable, conducted in a semi-structured format and moderated by an experienced facilitator, delved into several critical topics surrounding warehouse safety:

- **THE SCALE AND IMPACT OF SAFETY CHALLENGES**
- **ADDRESSING CULTURAL AND BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES WITHIN SAFETY PRACTICES**
- **THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN IMPROVING SAFETY**
- **PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE**
- **COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS FOR INDUSTRY-WIDE SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS**

This research paper will look to highlight key findings from each section of the Research Roundtable.

## Research Roundtable Guests



**Darren Leigh**  
National SHEQ Manager, Best Food Logistics



**David Garton**  
Health & Safety Accident Impact Speaker



**Elaine Greaves**  
QHS Manager, Toyota Material Handling



**Gemma Wilkins**  
Head of HSE, Keyline, CCF, BSS & TF Solutions, Travis Perkins



**Kirsty Adams**  
Director, Logistics Content



**Lisa Ramos**  
Accident Survivor and Health & Safety Accident Impact Speaker



**Lee Brookes**  
Key Account Manager, FTC Safety Solutions



**Ray Barnett**  
Sales Director, A-Safe



**Rob Fisher**  
Chief Executive, UKMHA



**Scott McGready**  
Group Head of SHEQ, Briggs Equipment



**Stuart Taylor**  
Managing Director, Mentor



**Tony Fitton**  
Director of Operations, Iron Mountain

# National Forklift Safety Day 2025

As we mark another year of National Forklift Safety Day (NFSD), 10 June 2025, we reflect on the ongoing challenges and strides made toward fostering a safer material handling industry.

This year's campaign, *A Painted Line Isn't Enough*, urges employers to look beyond surface-level precautions and consider the long-term impact of workplace accidents. While statistics may measure incidents, they can never capture the full human cost – the families affected, the careers disrupted, and the lives changed.

Throughout this report, industry experts examine how safety standards can be improved, sharing insights from real-world experiences and best practices. A major focus of this year's NFSD campaign has been the emotional consequences of accidents, and we revisit the powerful story of Lisa Ramos. Her accident serves as a reminder that workplace safety is not just about compliance – it is about people.

Alongside this report, the UK Material Handling Association (UKMHA) is launching a new safety initiative designed to uncover the root causes of incidents and drive tangible change across the sector. This initiative, coupled with continued awareness efforts, reinforces our collective responsibility to ensure the highest safety standards.

It was clear from the discussions at our Research Roundtable that there is no room for complacency when it comes to safely operating or working in close proximity to workplace vehicles. The statistics remain stubbornly high, which is why the UKMHA is so deeply invested in National Forklift Safety Day. This year's campaign also includes downloadable digital assets, and we'll be sharing an emotive video featuring Dave Garton, partner of Lisa Ramos.

Remember: A painted line isn't enough. Workplace safety is far more complex than simply adding painted walkways. It requires commitment, vigilance, leadership buy-in, and a truly holistic approach. PPE that's sitting in the locker, isn't enough either, and nor is an unused seatbelt. Safety equipment must be actively used, not just available.

We urge employers and workers alike to embrace the findings in this report, implement change, and take meaningful steps toward accident prevention. Safety is not optional – it is essential.

Finally I would like to thank all the experts who attended the Research Roundtable and contributed to the National Forklift Safety Day White Paper.”



Rob Fisher **Chief Executive, UKMHA**



**Downloadable  
NFSD Poster**



**Accidents have a tendency to become mere statistics, but for those involved, the consequences can last a lifetime. By highlighting the human cost of such accidents – not just on the victims but also on equipment operators, co-workers, family and friends, we aim to highlight the human story that is the reality behind every statistic.**

David Goss  
**Technical Director,  
UKMHA**

## About the UKMHA

The UK Material Handling Association (UKMHA) represents all forklift truck original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), suppliers, forklift dealers and end users in the UK's material handling industry. Its aim is to help its members operate safely and efficiently by advising on best practices and providing essential services to support their activities. It's also committed to attracting the best talent and upholding standards of excellence across the sector.



**Lisa's partner David talks about the effect the accident had on him personally as well as the family as a whole.**



# 01 Understanding the scale of safety challenges



The research round table began with a stark reminder of the human cost of forklift-related incidents, highlighting the frequency and severity of injuries that continue to occur and be reported across workplaces each week.

Participants discussed that around 25% of accidents in the transport storage sector are a result of people being hit or impacted in some way by a forklift truck. Some participants noted that, on the surface, this trend appears to be worsening, and that many workers now expect accidents as part of the job – with 1 in 5 people expecting to be involved in an incident at work.

However, this interpretation was later challenged during discussions on reporting culture. Some operators suggested that an apparent rise in incidents may, in part, reflect improved reporting rather than declining safety. For example, one guest pointed out that stronger near-miss reporting is a sign of a more alert and engaged workforce.

It was clear amongst participants that there was a real appreciation for both the human cost and the financial cost of a poor safety culture. One participant who had suffered a workplace accident stated “It wasn’t just about the accident it – was the aftermath... My last operation was three years ago. The incident happened 19 years ago”. Furthermore, the participant highlighted how accidents in the workplace do not just impact the person involved, but also those around the person, such as family and friends, as well as others that witnessed the accident.

Outside of the human cost, participants also highlighted the financial cost of accidents – one guest estimated that for every £1 worth of damage on a forklift truck, it can be between £5-30 of damage elsewhere in the business. This does not account for the potential legal and financial repercussions such as fines and prosecutions, which participants noted are poorly understood by many small businesses.



Participants agreed that current approaches towards safety culture therefore often fall short. Many safety initiatives are reactive rather than proactive. Several participants observed that meaningful improvements often follow serious accidents, rather than emerging from a proactive environment. In smaller organisations especially, safety can sometimes be seen as a compliance exercise rather than an integral part of a business strategy. One participant noted that “there is a whole world out there of smaller businesses that have little understanding of the risk because they haven’t had an accident. They don’t train, they don’t have control measures nor do they have assessments in place.” Acknowledging the paradox – that change is often driven by crisis – another participant reflected that “businesses that take safety more seriously usually have a history of serious accidents”.



## “THE REALITY IS, WHO CARES ABOUT THE STOCK WHEN SOMEONE’S INJURED?”

### • KEY FINDING

*An increase in reported incidents may actually result in fewer serious accidents.*



### Save the date: IMHX, 9-11 September 2025

Visitor registration is now open for the International Materials Handling Exhibition (IMHX) 2025. After a three-year hiatus, the exhibition returns to the NEC Birmingham from 9-11 September 2025.

IMHX 2025 is expected to welcome approximately 10,000 attendees and over 300 exhibitors showcasing the latest innovations in warehouse technology, automation, robotics and supply chain solutions. Industry leaders including UKMHA members Crown Lift Trucks, CombiLift, Toyota Material Handling, B&B Attachments, Intelligent Energy and Compact Manufacturing are among the major names already confirmed as exhibitors.

On the morning of Wednesday, 10 September, the UKMHA will take centre stage to deliver key updates, including an industry forecast from Oxford Economics, a safety briefing, and a gripping mock trial illustrating the business risks of a warehouse accident. See the conference agenda for more details.

**To register for IMHX visit [imhx.net](https://imhx.net)**



# Forklift Safety

## The *REALITY* check

**500k**

**1**

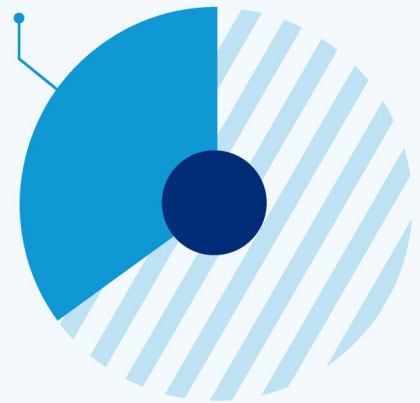
Over 500,000 forklifts (including Powered Pallet Trucks) are estimated to be in operation across the UK.



**2**

Between 40% - 60% of forklift accidents involve impacts with people.

**40%**



**60%**

**1.2k**

**3**

It is thought that forklift accidents may lead to more than 1,200 serious injuries annually.



**5**

In 2024, 25% of all sector accidents involved a forklift truck.

**4**

5 People are hospitalised with life changing injuries every working day.

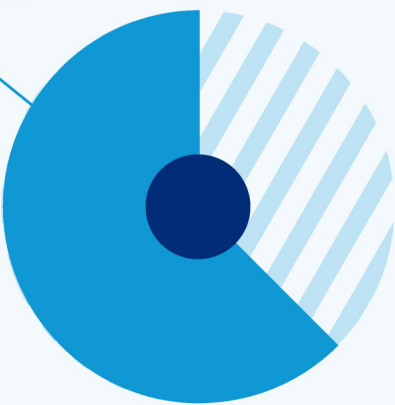




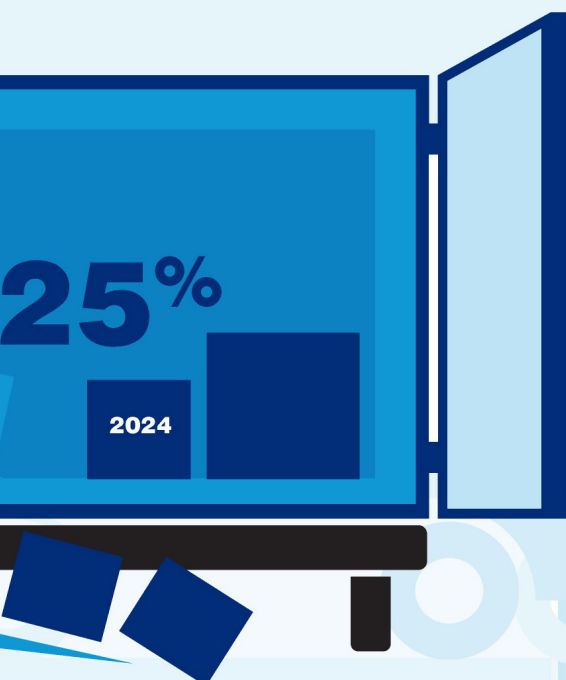
# Safety in the UK:

forklift incidents in recent years  
persons on foot at the time.

0%



% of transport and storage  
idents involved an impact with  
ck.



## The **COST** of negligence

**500k**

£500,000!

Manufacturing company fined half-a-million pounds after forklift truck death. Jamie Anderson was killed on 4 June 2019, when the forklift truck he was operating overturned at a depot in Newark.

**1.28M**

£1.28 million!

British food manufacturer fined £1.28 million by the Health and Safety Executive following a fatal incident involving a lorry reversing into a loading bay, causing the death of an employee.

**30k**

£30,000!

Logistics operator fined for failing to ensure safety and welfare of its employees. District Judge imposed a fine of £30,000 and ordered the company to pay full prosecution costs of £7,297 to Bucks Council.

\*Source:

Statistics are taken from the Health & Safety Executive and Mentor Training. Fines as reported by the HSE or local authority.

# 02 Improving safety culture



With a clear understanding of the scale of the issue and the limitations of existing approaches, the conversation shifted to what meaningful change might look like. Participants explored questions of responsibility, reporting, and the practical steps organisations can take to prevent harm.

It was agreed that workplaces must create a culture where employees feel that they can speak out against unsafe procedures and without fear of repercussions for themselves or colleagues. Near-miss and hazard reporting emerged as a critical – and often overlooked – tool in creating this culture. While some participants noted that encouraging the reporting of near-miss incidents could potentially create the perception that workplaces are becoming more unsafe, there was consensus that an increase in reporting incidents and near-misses is, in fact, a positive step toward improving overall safety.

One participant noted that “overall, our near-miss reporting culture is strong, but I’d like to see more reports involving forklifts. Increasing that is a target for us, because good reporting comes from staying alert, not being complacent.” Another guest stated that they offered awards to the site that reported the most accidents or near-misses.

Participants also acknowledged that a complicated reporting process can discourage workers from reporting hazards, accidents and near-misses. One participant pointed out that employees often lack the time to complete lengthy forms for near-miss incidents. To address this, some participants shared examples of simplifying the process, such as using apps and QR codes placed around the workplace to streamline reporting.

However, it was also emphasised that the responsibility for ensuring reporting is upheld falls across all levels of the organisation, with feedback and action expected in response. As noted by one participant, “if someone reports something and you don’t follow up, they won’t report it again.”

**“IF SOMEONE HAS REPORTED A HAZARD OR NEAR-MISS, AND YOU DON’T GIVE THEM FEEDBACK, THEN THAT PERSON IS NOW LESS LIKELY TO REPORT ANYTHING”**



Finally, participants agreed that the language used around reporting needs to change to ensure employees feel comfortable raising issues. Participants highlighted that often businesses use language that comes from an aggressive, challenging place when it comes to safety reporting, which encourages employees to see the reporting process as a finger-pointing exercise.

The group agreed that softening language and using terms like "good catch" or "safety gain" helps create a habit of reporting and makes employees feel more comfortable sharing potential safety issues. One guest noted that they had rebranded their hazard reporting as 'Safety Gain' to "make it feel positive and encouraging, rather than critical."

Ultimately, the discussion highlighted that lasting improvements in workplace safety depend on changing behaviours as much as systems. Encouraging open, blame-free reporting – especially of near-misses – was seen as key to building a more proactive mindset. Simplifying systems, providing feedback, and using positive language were all highlighted as ways to make safe behaviour a shared habit across all levels of the organisation.

- **KEY FINDING**

*The group agreed that using more positive language – such as 'good catch' or 'safety gain' – encourages a reporting culture and helps employees feel more at ease when raising potential safety concerns.*





# 03 Safety and Technology

The way that technology can assist in ensuring safe work culture was discussed at length by research roundtable guests. Several different types of technology were referenced, such as AI camera systems with real-time pedestrian detection: “When a person is detected, the system slows the truck automatically. It’s now one of the most popular safety products in the sector.”

Other technologies included holographic safe zones projected from forklifts, as well as smart racking systems that detect repeated impacts. Automation was noted as a growing priority for some teams, with many believing it could enhance safety by removing human error from critical tasks. However, others pointed out that while automation has been around in warehouses for some time, it’s far from widespread. There are significant barriers to mass adoption, and it’s too early to fully assess its impact on safety.

At the same time, new technologies continue to emerge; one example shared was a Real-Time Location System that integrates multiple safety features – monitoring vehicle speed, collision risk, and pedestrian presence – while also creating a digital twin of the warehouse. Accurate to within 2 centimetres, the system helps define restricted areas and provides a comprehensive, data-driven overview of on-site movement and risk.

The importance of data-collection was also highlighted by several participants. However, participants also emphasised that collecting data alone isn’t enough – it’s how the data is interpreted, shared, and actioned that truly impacts safety outcomes.

One area of interest raised during the discussion was the potential gamification of data to encourage safer behaviours amongst forklift drivers. If enough telematics data is collected, organisations are able to develop league-tables, run skills based assessments, and implement reward systems that recognise safe and responsible behaviours.





Whilst the speaker noted that their organisation was still in the early stages of exploring this approach, the concept of gamification itself underscores the importance of the human element in safety culture, which was widely agreed on by the group. Ultimately, guests argued that whilst technology is assisting in improving safety, it is not a silver bullet. According to one guest, “you can have all the technology, [but] when it comes to an accident, it’s always going to be down to a human being.”

Furthermore, one participant highlighted that a lot of the current technology available helps mostly when investigating an incident rather than preventing it, by providing time stamps as well as CCTV footage, possibly from the trucks themselves.

Participants noted that data is often used reactively to investigate accidents after they happen, rather than proactively to prevent incidents. Gamification has the potential to provide a solution to this. By making data review more engaging and “fun”, gamification could encourage people to look at data on an ongoing basis, rather than treating it as an onerous task.

Alongside the discussion of technological capabilities, several participants shared their experiences and thoughts regarding how monitoring systems such as CCTV are perceived by employees. Overall, participants agreed that cameras are an effective deterrent for dangerous behaviour in the warehouse - one guest shared an example of how the installation of a racking monitoring system led to a noticeable shift in behaviour. Another guest highlighted how ultimately if there is an accident, cameras are an employee’s friend.

# “YOU NEED TO HAVE A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING TO HAVE A WELL-ROUNDED SAFETY APPROACH”

Finally, the conversation shifted towards the difficulty in encouraging smaller businesses to adopt technology. Participants agreed that it is mostly an issue of messaging, and a need to demonstrate to smaller businesses the actual cost of potential accidents versus technology investment. Guests argued that smaller businesses should be aware that safety features can be retrofitted to existing equipment, and are more accessible than these businesses may believe. One guest noted that “irrelevant to how old your truck is, you can still have these [safety features] added to it.”

Overall, while technology continues to evolve and offer increasingly sophisticated solutions for improving workplace safety, its true impact depends on how it’s applied, understood and supported by the people using it.

## CASE STUDY:

### Travis Perkins: Sound alerts

Travis Perkins partnered with the University of Salford to explore ways to improve safety when using electric forklift trucks, which operate more quietly than traditional diesel models. The reduced noise levels, while beneficial for environmental and workplace sound levels, can present risks in busy yard and warehouse environments where sound plays a key role in hazard awareness.

To address this, the University of Salford’s acoustics team developed and tested a range of sound alerts through virtual reality simulations and user feedback. The aim was to find an alert that was both noticeable and acceptable to operators. The resulting solution, the Sound-Informed Vehicle Alert System, was selected following trials involving realistic scenarios.

As of mid-2024, Travis Perkins had installed the SIVAS alert on around half of its 1,200 electric forklifts. The move supports both safety and the company’s wider decarbonisation efforts, with electric vehicles contributing to a potential annual reduction of 6,600 tonnes in scope 1 carbon emissions.

Visit [HERE](#) for further information on this project.

#### • KEY FINDING

*Gathering data is only the first step – its real value lies in how it’s analysed, communicated and used to drive meaningful safety improvements.*

# 04 Pedestrian Responsibility



A core challenge when considering safety in the warehouse is the overlooked role of the pedestrian, and a misunderstanding in regards to who is the pedestrian in the workplace. One guest argued that there is a “real disconnect” when it comes to understanding who a pedestrian is, with many often assuming it is the customer. However, participants agreed that a pedestrian is anyone with boots on the ground, including operators every time they step out of the vehicle. It was also agreed that it can be a challenge to segregate the operators, as they do not often associate themselves as pedestrians.

Several guests also pointed out how pedestrian behaviour often contradicts how people would act in comparison to real-world scenarios. As one participant remarked, “if those vehicles were on the road, people would take a lot more care”.

Guests agreed that “we’re all responsible for our own safety”, but training for pedestrians is often lacking and not widespread, with one guest noting that “there is no training for pedestrians”. Another participant highlighted their organisation’s efforts to raise awareness around individual responsibility, though it was also noted the difficulty of changing attitudes when unsafe behaviour becomes normalised. One participant described reviewing a minor incident on CCTV, which showed several workers crowding a vehicle: “that behaviour just becomes normal”. One guest shared that they had witnessed issues amongst Very Narrow Aisle (VNA) drivers. They recounted how stock teams and customer service members always use walkways, but VNA drivers when on-foot will often stray from walkways.

Lack of pedestrian training and a culture of complacency was therefore raised by participants numerous times. Whilst operators typically undergo more structured instructions, pedestrians (who are often in much more danger) are left to navigate high-risk spaces. Participants emphasised that safety awareness must include a cultural shift, and there is a need to ensure pedestrians are aware that they are working in a high-risk environment. Ultimately, if “you’re not on a truck, you’re a pedestrian”.

Participants also emphasised that without adequate training, people aren’t equipped to assess hazards and noted that training is crucial for understanding workplace safety risks that aren’t immediately obvious.

Conversation then turned to how to raise awareness of pedestrian safety and responsibility. Participants agreed that there can be structural challenges to improving safety, particularly in older warehouses. Although 100% segregation is the ideal, guests agreed this was difficult to



## CASE STUDY:

### Best Food Logistics reports reduction in workplace incidents

In 2024–2025, Best Food Logistics reported significant reductions in workplace incidents, including a 29.2% decrease in total accidents, a 35.5% reduction in RIDDOR-reportable incidents, and a 422-day reduction in lost time. These figures build on progress made in 2023–2024, when the company saw a 19% reduction in accidents and an 18.4% drop in RIDDOR cases.

These improvements were achieved through a broad safety initiative aimed at strengthening workplace culture, with support from senior leadership and an engaged SHEQ (Safety, Health, Environment and Quality) team.

Key focus areas included:

- Strengthening safety culture through visible leadership and communication.
- Regular health and safety meetings with management, unions, and colleague representatives at both site and national levels.
- Enhanced accident reporting and investigation, including training workshops and sign-off procedures for site management.
- Daily collaborative walk-rounds to monitor and reinforce safe behaviours.
- Recognition and reward schemes to highlight positive contributions to safety.
- Clear safety targets and KPIs embedded throughout the business.
- Close collaboration with the wider Booker Group to align standards and share learning.

**“SAFETY ISN’T  
ACTUALLY  
THAT  
DIFFICULT. IF IT  
LOOKS WRONG,  
IT’S PROBABLY  
WRONG”**



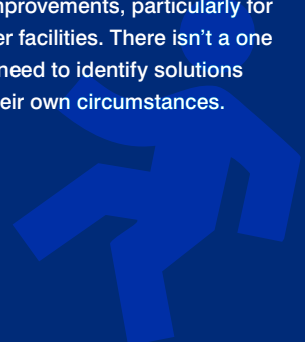
## CASE STUDY:

### Lockout Procedure for Safe Loading

At one facility discussed during the roundtable, a highly effective lockout procedure has been implemented to protect pedestrians and operators during truck loading. The system uses a shutter door that automatically closes and locks the loading bay, completely isolating the area from any unauthorised entry.

Even if a driver attempts to open the door during the loading process, the mechanism ensures the space remains secure – creating a fully segregated, safe working zone for employees.

While this approach was praised for its effectiveness, it was also acknowledged that such systems can come with significant costs. As one participant noted, “Stuff like that can cost money” – highlighting the challenge of balancing investment with safety improvements, particularly for smaller sites or older facilities. There isn’t a one size fits all, sites need to identify solutions appropriate to their own circumstances.





- **KEY FINDING**

***Participants noted a “real disconnect” in understanding who qualifies as a pedestrian, with many assuming it refers only to customers, when in fact it includes anyone on foot – vehicle operators included.***

achieve in practice. There was therefore a strong focus amongst participants on the need for cultural change and increased awareness. One guest argued that there needs to be a change in language to reinforce the perception that anybody not on a vehicle is a pedestrian. Another guest highlighted the need for firmer consequences for pedestrians that don't adhere to safety protocols, whilst another reported that they had been trying to encourage non-operators to challenge unsafe behaviours and instilling in workers that “safety isn't that difficult, if it looks wrong it probably is wrong”.

One guest noted that there are effective resources that outline best practice, referencing the *British Standard Institute's (BSI) PAS 13 Code of Practice*. The guest highlighted that there are several effective resources that employers can utilise that don't require big investment, something that is increasingly important for smaller businesses that may not have the capital to invest in safety infrastructure.

One example of low-cost investment is 'Lines of desire' which refer to the informal routes pedestrians naturally take – often the most direct paths, which can differ from designated walkways. PAS 13 highlights the importance of recognising these patterns when designing workplace layouts to help improve safety by aligning design with real human behaviour.

Finally, a key theme that emerged throughout the discussion was the importance of industry collaboration, with participants stressing the need for a sector-wide approach. One guest noted that despite commercial competition, safety should be treated as a shared, non-competitive goal.

The UKMHA was identified as a key player in this collective effort. The organisation has been instrumental in creating opportunities for stakeholders to come together and shape the future of safety and industry standardisation.

Ultimately, participants agreed that progress with forklift and material handling equipment requires a multi-layered approach, from better training and cultural change at site level, to clearer industry standards and stronger collaboration between businesses and regulatory bodies. As one guest noted, “safety is a continuous journey”.

# 05 A Message for SMEs

The roundtable discussions highlighted that safety related to materials handling equipment continues to present significant challenges.

Key themes included the importance of proactive reporting, clear communication, and building a culture where safety is integrated into everyday operations. Technology is playing an increasing role, but participants agreed that its impact depends on how it is implemented and supported by the workforce.

While many participants at the roundtable represented larger organisations with dedicated safety teams, there was a shared recognition that the greatest gains, and the most urgent need, lies with smaller businesses. Several participants stressed that some SMEs operate without formal training, risk assessments, or clear safety protocols, due to limited resources and competing demands. Yet the group was clear in that safety improvements don't always require large scale investments.

Participants understood, however, that the challenges faced by smaller businesses can be greater, as they often lack access to dedicated resources.

Simple, low-cost actions, such as encouraging open reporting, using QR codes to simplify processes, or reframing safety conversations in more approachable language, can make a significant difference. Free and accessible resources, such as the BSI's PAS 13 Code of Practice or support from the UKMHA, were highlighted as valuable entry points for smaller operators looking to improve.

Participants also called for greater awareness across the industry that many safety technologies can be retrofitted to existing equipment, and that cultural changes, such as making safety everyone's responsibility, are just as impactful as expensive infrastructure.

Finally, the value of industry collaboration came through strongly. Organisations like the UKMHA play a vital role in enabling shared learning, fostering cross-sector dialogue, and developing guidance that is not only rigorous but also usable. Ongoing cooperation, clearer standards, and sustained cultural focus were seen as essential to long-term progress.

The discussion reinforced that above all else, safety is fundamentally about changing behaviours and culture. Embedding safety as a shared responsibility is key in creating environments where harm is actively prevented rather than reactively managed. By applying some of the practical insights shared during the roundtable, SMEs can begin to foster safer environments, without waiting for a serious accident to force change.

## • KEY FINDING

***Taking simple, low-cost steps – like promoting open reporting, using QR codes to streamline processes, and framing safety conversations in more approachable language – can have a meaningful impact.***

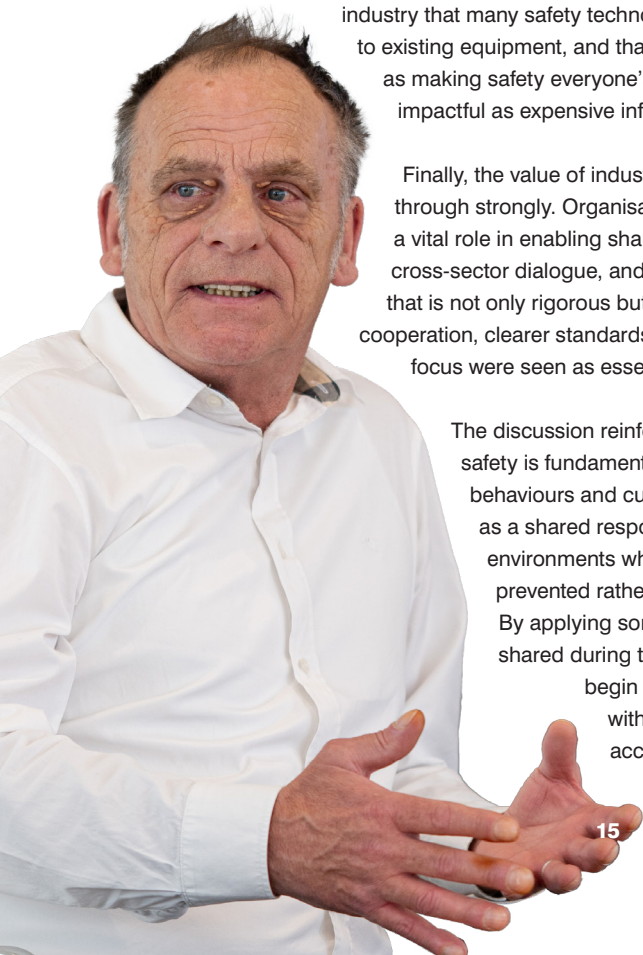
## The UKMHA Safe User Group

The UKMHA Safe User Group has been formed to provide all users of Materials Handling Equipment with the latest best practice information on the safe use of their MH equipment.

Being a member of the UKMHA Safe User Group gives you access to a comprehensive resource offering a wealth of safety-related guidance, helplines and tools, all specially designed to help end users of material handling equipment improve their safety protocols.

Members also have opportunities to voice concerns to Government agencies such as the HSE and receive expert advice on best practices, including Thorough Examination. A free expert helpline offers support on a range of forklift-related queries.

To view all the benefits visit: [ukmha.org.uk/safe-user-group](https://ukmha.org.uk/safe-user-group)







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[www.nationalforkliftsafetyday.co.uk](http://www.nationalforkliftsafetyday.co.uk)