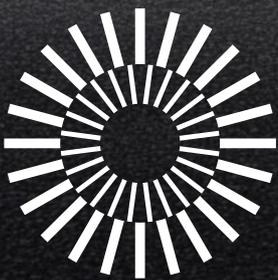




Foundation



### Perspectives

A thought leadership programme  
from Lloyd's Register Foundation

Mobilising global leaders to  
engineer a safer world.

# Safe work: shaping the future with evidence

A collective examination of what we know, what we don't know, and what we  
need to know to reduce harm globally

# Foreword

Workers across the world are exposed to safety hazards on a daily basis, with new risks constantly developing as a changing climate and the implementation of new technologies rapidly change the world of work.

To improve safety we need to collate and create evidence on the nature of these challenges and what works to address them, and ensure it is accessible to those who can and will use it to take action. This is the driving force behind the Lloyd's Register Foundation Global Safety Evidence Centre.

To understand what evidence is needed and how it should be applied, it is also critical that we engage with safety practitioners. That's why we took the opportunity to make the future of safe work the focus of the first event in our new Perspectives programme.

The Perspectives programme has been created as a way for us to support the sharing of diverse viewpoints, ideas and expertise on the world's most pressing safety challenges.

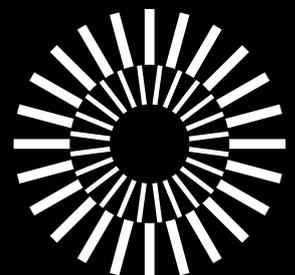
Inevitably, this will highlight where perspectives on the challenges and the best way forward may differ between stakeholders, bringing with it an opportunity to encourage debate and dialogue on core assumptions held both by the Foundation and the participants. But it will also create the opportunity to establish consensus and priorities for action.

As part of this programme, we hosted a high-level panel and participatory workshop with global experts and leaders in occupational safety and health on 3 December 2025, exploring what is needed to create a more effective global evidence base for improving worker safety. The key takeaways are laid out in this report.

It is often the work of the committed few that can drive forward meaningful change. Working with those people and supporting them to act can accelerate the adoption of innovations to address the hazards workers face. Sharing perspectives ultimately helps evidence providers better support practitioners to facilitate change. As summed up on the day; "We need to find – and support – that committed person. One per cent will be ready to act, and, with the right support, change will happen fast."



**Ruth Boumphrey**  
Chief Executive  
Lloyd's Register Foundation



# Event summary

## Different perspectives, shared mission

### Our purpose

To create a space for a wide mix of experts with different perspectives but a shared mission to explore ways to secure the future of safe work, and identify what evidence is needed next to make it happen.

### Why it matters

Traditional approaches to occupational safety and health (OSH) are being tested by new challenges that demand collective action: the decarbonisation of our energy systems, the adoption of advanced digital technologies, the need to adapt to a changing climate, and the changes that global population increases place on critical infrastructures, alongside a growing global workforce needing safe and decent work. We're committed to making sure that the global evidence base for safe work can anticipate and address the risks that workers face, now and in the future.

### About the event

**What:** High-level panel on the future of safe work

**When:** 3 December 2025

**Where:** The Lloyd's Register Building, 71 Fenchurch Street, London, UK

**Who:** An international collective of over 25 OSH subject-matter leaders, policymakers, researchers and frontline practitioners, representing professional bodies such as the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), intergovernmental organisations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), workers' organisations such as Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), global health and development authorities such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and private sector organisations such as ARUP and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

*Insights and recommendations in this report represent the range of expert perspectives expressed at the event on 3 December 2025, and do not necessarily represent the position of Lloyd's Register Foundation.*

### What we explored:

The panel and participants explored the global evidence base for safe work:

- How it's progressed and how it's made a difference.
- What it looks like now and what it should look like in the future.
- What gaps or barriers exist, and how they could be addressed.
- The potential impact of challenges such as emerging tech, climate pressures, global workforce transformation and decarbonisation.
- How best to address the new challenges while continuing to minimise harm in traditionally hazardous industries.

# The Panel

## Co-chairs



**Nancy Hey OBE**  
**Director of Evidence and Insight,**  
**Lloyd's Register Foundation**

Nancy leads the Foundation's [Global Safety Evidence Centre](#) (GSEC), including its flagship research programme, the [World Risk Poll](#). Previously, she founded and led the UK's [What Works Centre for Wellbeing](#), and led the set-up of the policy profession in the UK Civil Service.



**Joaquim Pintado Nunes**  
**Branch Chief, Occupational Safety and Health and the Working Environment, ILO**

Joaquim leads the ILO's global work on occupational safety, bringing decades of frontline and policy expertise to improving conditions for workers worldwide. Prior to this, he headed the planning, strategy and technical directorate of Portugal's national authority for working conditions.

## Panellists



**Dr Helen Balmforth**  
**Head of Data Analytics, Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**

Helen provides data analytical expertise to support the UK Government and private sector. She heads up HSE's recent sandbox initiatives and is Programme Director for the Lloyd's Register Foundation-funded [Discovering Safety](#) programme.



**Haslayati Hashim**  
**Consultant, OSH standards**

Haslayati is a sustainability consultant and globally recognised technical expert in OSH management, successfully implementing integrated management systems across diverse sectors throughout Asia.



**Ruth Wilkinson**  
**Head of Policy and Public Affairs, IOSH**

Ruth is a chartered health and safety professional and responsible at IOSH for developing the Institution's advocacy, influence and policy engagement. Ruth is also a volunteer trustee for the Hazards Forum.



**Ambet Yuson**  
**General Secretary, Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI)**

Ambet has led successful global negotiations with major industry multinationals to secure their commitment to the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and spearheaded global campaigns for safer working around mega-sporting events. He is especially interested in the rights and safety of migrant workers.

# The evidence base for safe work: progress

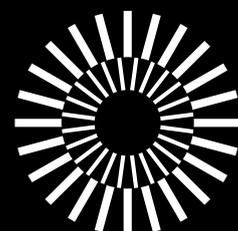
A snapshot of how Lloyd's Register Foundation and the ILO are building the evidence base to make work safer worldwide.

## Lloyd's Register Foundation

- Made safe work a priority focus of the newly-established [Global Safety Evidence Centre](#).
- Delivered an [OSH module](#) as part of the [World Risk Poll](#), identifying the most dangerous industries and those most at risk.
- Analysed [OSH leading indicators](#).
- [Synthesised evidence on interventions](#) from 4,000+ studies.
- Mapped where OSH research activity is happening globally.
- Clarified [what practitioners need](#) from an effective evidence base.
- Explored the impact of [emerging tech](#) and [climate change](#) on safety at work.

## International Labour Organization

- Built a [global picture of the scale and trends of harm from unsafe and unhealthy working](#).
- Assessed major occupational risk factors, including [long working hours](#) and climate change.
- Reviewed progress of [global ratification of OSH conventions](#).
- Evaluated the availability and reliability of OSH statistics worldwide.
- Applied strategic foresight to identify future risks.



# Key Insights

As expertise, experience and ideas were shared,  
five clear themes emerged



## Key Insights

## 1. Context matters

Safe work interventions work best when they're tailored to the ecosystem in which they operate.

- Safety outcomes can vary with the context, so adaptive, not prescriptive evidence and interventions could help.
- We need to check our assumptions. Contexts aren't always what they seem. For instance, International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards may assume OSH systems and awareness that don't exist in reality. For instance, briefings are not safety training but, in some contexts, they are treated as such.
- Data gathering and tools for work are more useful when they are contextualised and direct.



**To be strategic, we need to look at the whole ecosystem of a site and how it works. We must look at the supply chain, the visible workers, the underground economy, the whole thing.**



**Tell us the dos and don'ts in this context... I want tools that are practical, contextualised and ready to apply.**

### The context of safety

#### What to consider:



**People:** visible, invisible and vulnerable workers; their skills, training and experience; how they manage and are managed; their priorities and stressors.



**The organisation:** levels of trust, attitudes towards workers, leadership perceptions of safety.



**Supply chain and contractor norms.**



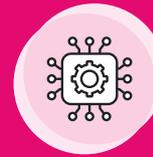
**Industry and societal culture and expectations.**



**Effectiveness of legal and compliance frameworks.**



**Effect of climate and environmental pressures.**



**Existing and emerging technologies.**

## Key Insights

## 2. Language: are we talking about the same thing?

Evidence for improving workplace safety is driven by dialect: we're all "talking safety" but not necessarily in a shared language.

- With inconsistent terminology and overlapping frameworks, it's difficult to aggregate data and evidence successfully. To build an effective global evidence base for safer work, we need a shared lexicon, with clearer definitions, standardised criteria, and a shared taxonomy.
- We must be robust about what counts as evidence, and more work could be done on broadening our concept of what good evidence looks like. It's not always about the numbers. Expert consensus and qualitative methodologies also have a valid place.
- To be fit for purpose, a robust global evidence base must speak the language of the people who can use it for the greatest impact. Often, these people aren't safety professionals. This loops back to contextualisation: there are many good, comprehensive data sets out there, but are they accessible, and structured into a format and language that works for the user?
- The relationship between health and safety needs more exploration. Despite the definition of health identified by the WHO constitution, there is a view that there is a wooliness around definitions of health, or of it being 'less' than safety.

“ **Taxonomy is fundamental. Without descriptors, we can't understand the data.** ”

“ **Qualitative evidence tells the story and explains the causes. It can show the 'how and why' beyond the 'what' of the quantitative data. There is a need to combine qualitative and quantitative information in the evidence base.** ”



## Key Insights

### 3. Data gaps: finding the missing pieces

The global evidence base to enable safer work is steadily gaining depth and momentum, and there's a strong willingness to collaborate across disciplines. Of course, despite progress, significant uncertainties and gaps remain.

- There are large data gaps for countries and sectors where the work culture is predominantly informal. Worker voice is patchy, with migrant workers virtually unheard.
- Many robust data sources are siloed. Evidence is weighted towards the US and Europe, and often aimed at researchers rather than a wider audience.
- Some felt evidence is weighted towards what's easier to measure, or issues that are easier to prove. For instance, more attention is given to "close to worker" issues, such as protective equipment, than long-term health outcomes.

“ **Psychosocial risks are part of the future of safety, but investment isn't keeping pace...** ”



## Key Insights

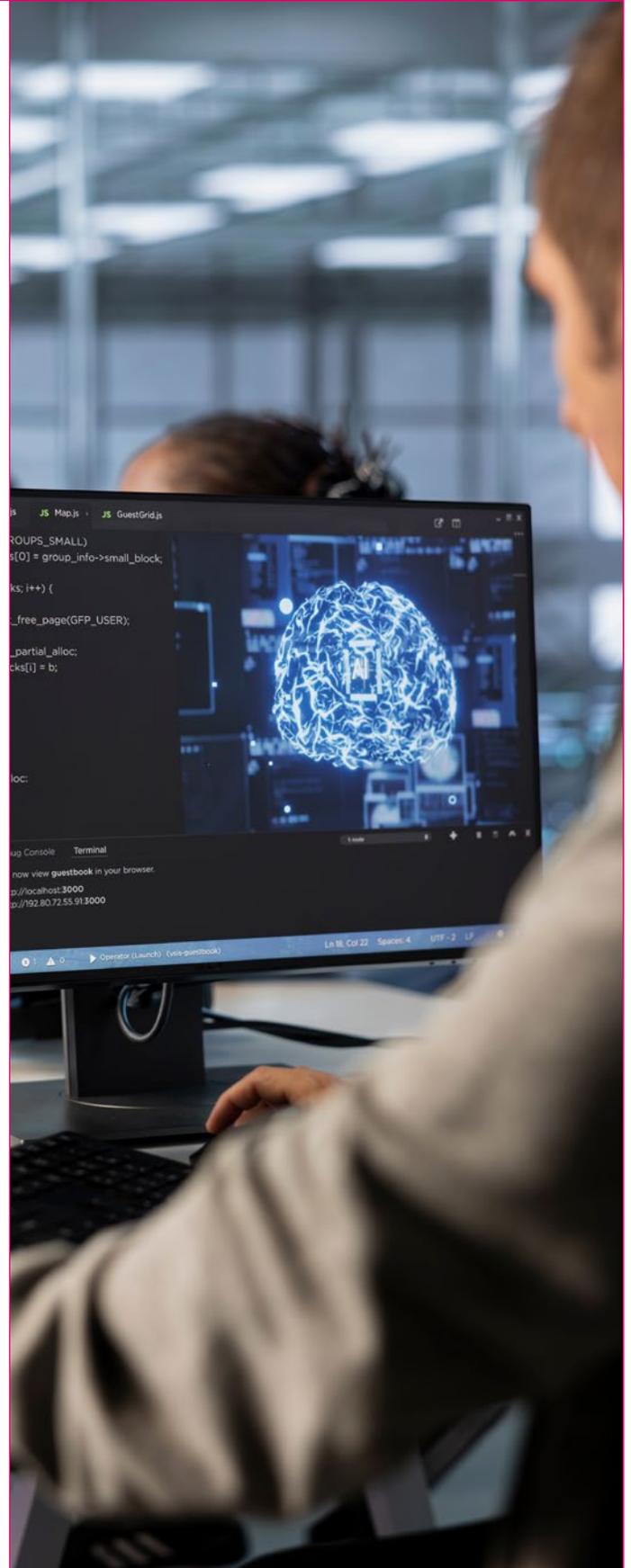
## 4. The role of AI

Emerging tech, and AI especially, holds a great deal of untapped potential towards building and sharing a more comprehensive and useful evidence base. Despite this, there's a perception that the safety community at large is more focussed on the risks rather than the opportunities.

Three consistent themes emerged:

- **Strengthening the evidence base:** There's no shortage of ideas for using AI and tech to support the evidence base, for instance: capturing data from informal workforces to highlight emerging hazards; collecting data in real time for faster and broader data capture and analysis; and accelerating the synthesis of evidence sources.
- **Creating safer work:** AI and tech are already enhancing workplace safety through practical solutions like health-monitoring apps, gas sensors, or collaborative robots. There are even greater opportunities ahead as tech advancement continues.
- **Creating less safe work:** What new risks, displaced hazards and unintended consequences does new tech and AI pose in the workplace?

“ Are we thinking far enough ahead? Let's be proactive.”



## Key Insights

## 5. The business case for safe work

There was strong interest in developing and framing a business case for safety that would ensure consistent investment in safety practices, on a par with areas like innovation and growth. There was lively debate about whether the successful driver for this would be the economic argument, touching on financial or reputational gains, or the moral imperative that keeping workers safe is simply the right thing to do.

- There is evidence for the value of safety, but it's siloed. How can we find it, free it and use it? What language are we using to make the case?
- Return on investment is a driver at an organisational level, but we must also think about it at the national level. Often, safety is under-resourced, and even if there's national commitment to safety, it's not translating into action.

“ Only one per cent of the labour budget goes to OSH; it's not been invested in... At a policy level they get it, but what tools do we use to get it into practice? ”



## Looking ahead

As key insights emerged across the discussions, the participants shared their views on what should be explored more fully, and what might be effective ways to address problems and gaps. While not prescriptive, there were clear areas of agreement.



# 1. Prioritise context

Evidence is most effective when it reflects the real conditions of work. Our challenge is to unpick and understand the complexities of interdependencies, nuances and contributing factors that make up each working environment. Context should be explicitly captured, described and designed into the evidence base, and produce contextualised, practicable ecosystem-appropriate guidance and tools.

# 2. Focus on language

It's important to create an evidence base that's both robust **and** usable, and to do this we should consider not just what we say, but how we say it. We could explore:

- Creating a shared language for the evidence base by standardising taxonomy and criteria.
- Improving levels of evidence literacy so that the shared language is understood.
- Translating the evidence base into the language and format that's accessible, relevant and usable for the people, often non-practitioners, who could make big impacts on safety at work.
- Finding the right methods for communicating safety impact in ways that lead to change.

# 3. Make invisible workers visible

Workers in low-income communities, informal economies and migrant workforces are underrepresented in the evidence base. We need to know their stories and find out how to make work safer for them. It's important that we explore new ways of gathering data, such as using the platforms that workers use, or learn from data-gathering apps in other sectors to build worker-led reporting tools.

## 4. Measure what's hard to measure

Health and psychological issues are hard to measure but we must find ways to fill the data gap. We could possibly focus on broadening the scope of surveys and longitudinal databases, as well as focusing on participatory work, co-designing evidence collection, using qualitative evidence more, and aligning self-reporting with organisational statistics.

## 5. Take advantage of AI

AI has great potential for improving the evidence base for safer work. A first step is to establish good practice and shared taxonomies when formulating AI for data gathering, analysis and evidence review.

It's also important to further track how people are using AI and tech to make work safer, as well as to explore and identify the new risks AI and tech create, and those they displace.

## 6. Create a compelling narrative for business

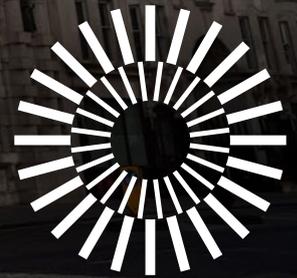
To make a more effective business case for safety, we should explore ways to connect safety and health to leadership priorities. It's important to understand the full range of drivers that motivate higher investment in OSH, for instance, using brand reputation or ethical arguments, and how to better reframe the safety and health of workers as necessary and achievable. We could also:

- Explore ways to quantify the commercial gains of existing or new safety measures.
- Use cost benefit analysis of safety initiatives to drive industry change.
- Synthesise evidence on safety interventions that have worked well.



Foundation

**Safe work: shaping the future with evidence:**  
A collective examination of what we know, what we don't know, and what we need to know to reduce harm globally



## About the Lloyd's Register Foundation Global Safety Evidence Centre

The Lloyd's Register Foundation Global Safety Evidence Centre is a hub for anyone who needs to know 'what works' to make people safer. The Centre collates, creates and communicates the best available safety evidence from the Foundation, our partners and other sources on both the nature and scale of global safety challenges, and what works to address them. It works with partners to identify and fill gaps in the evidence, and to use the evidence for action. To find out more about the Global Safety Evidence Centre, visit [gsec.lrfoundation.org.uk](https://gsec.lrfoundation.org.uk)

## About Lloyd's Register Foundation

Lloyd's Register Foundation is an independent global safety charity that supports research, innovation, and education to make the world a safer place. Its mission is to use the best evidence and insight to help the global community focus on tackling the world's most pressing safety and risk challenges.

## About the Perspectives Programme

The Lloyd's Register Foundation Perspectives Programme mobilises leaders across engineering, safety, science, and maritime communities to move beyond discussion towards action which addresses safety challenges around the globe. Through this programme, we aim to provoke new thinking and identify next steps and recommendations which accelerate progress to engineer a safer world.

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Registered Office:

71 Fenchurch Street, London, EC3M 4BS, United Kingdom

T: +44 (0)20 7709 9166

F: +44 (0)20 7488 4796

E: [info@lrfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@lrfoundation.org.uk)

W: [lrfoundation.org.uk](https://lrfoundation.org.uk)