



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Underground worker receives £25,000 compensation**

A man from Norfolk who worked on the London Underground has received £25,000 compensation after he was injured while removing part of a vandalised train seat, even though Transport for London used video surveillance to try to prove he was not badly hurt.

David Wilson, 51, from Downham Market, had worked as an upholsterer for the company for 28 years. In May 2000 he was working the night shift at Stonebridge Park depot when he needed to remove the back of a row of seats to repair broken arms. No-one was available to help; the seat fittings were stiff and gave way suddenly, and Mr. Wilson suffered an injury to his upper back and neck.

Mr. Wilson tried to continue working, but in June 2000 he began a year's sick leave while his back was treated. He returned to work in the summer of 2001. His condition had improved and he was promised more help, which never materialised. Gradually his health deteriorated again and in January 2003 he had to retire on medical grounds.

"This has absolutely ruined my life," he said. "I'm still in pain. I can't enjoy any of the hobbies I did before, like riding and golf, and it's affected my family too, because they have to look after me and do the things I can't."

While he was working Mr. Wilson had undertaken a general manual handling course, but had received no specific training in removing train seats, which are

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very heavy, though his task was to repair broken and vandalised carriages. He asked for specialist equipment to help do the job, and even designed a suitable tool, but none was provided.

"I'd been asking for proper training for years," said Mr. Wilson, "but no-one was interested. I was just told to get on with the job. Even after I was hurt, no-one cared."

Caroline Klage, from Islington based solicitors Bolt Burdon Kemp, took up the case. Transport for London set up surveillance on Mr. Wilson to try to prove the injury was not serious.

"The surveillance made him nervous as he knew they were watching him, said Caroline Klage. "They even videoed a man who went to do some work on Mr Wilson's house, which made the workman upset and unwilling to return."

Just before the case was due in court, Transport for London accepted 95% liability, and compensation was agreed.

"I'm happy it's been resolved," said Mr. Wilson, "but money was never an issue. They called me a liar and I couldn't have that, it would have affected my children and I didn't want anyone else to go through what I've gone through. I'm really grateful for Caroline Klage's help - she's been fantastic."

"We all expect to be safe when we travel on the tube," said Caroline Klage. "Those who work on the trains have a right to be safe too. This was an accident waiting to happen, and Mr. Wilson deserves every penny of the compensation."

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