

Special recognition at the BCC Pledge Awards

Representing the collective interest of all sectors of the UK ceramic industry, the British Ceramic Confederation (BCC) actively promotes environmentally responsible and sustainable manufacturing. Running for over 15 years, the BCC Health and Safety Pledge is an industry-wide commitment to engage in a process of continuous improvement in health and safety. The programme was initially set up as a direct response by the industry to the then Government's challenge to "revitalise" its health and safety performance. It is now in its fourth phase, with the industry working collectively alongside the Health and Safety Executive and the trade unions in a collaborative and progressive manner. Michelmersh has always been committed to investing in ongoing improvements with regards to health and safety, whilst making training for its staff a high priority. This year's Pledge accolades are proof that the British manufacturer's unified approach to a substantial rolling programme of investment has been reflected in significant improvement awards yet again.

Michelmersh acquired the Carlton site in 2017 and is thrilled that just one year on, it has been recognised for 'Collaborative Work to Improve Health and Safety Management' at the BCC Pledge Awards. A 'General Safety Concern System' was introduced to reflect Michelmersh's commitment to improve the Health and Safety culture on site, reducing accidents and increasing worker involvement. Special attention was also given to the shared responsibility of audits from the whole Health and Safety committee. This involved practical and financial support by senior management to make physical and administrative improvements, whilst training was delivered in collaboration with Unite. The BCC stated that these measures have resulted in fewer tangible accidents and the judges remarked: "This was a large piece of work, involving workers and trade unions, to make a change in health and safety management, with significant capital investments to equipment."



Left to right: Kevin Spacey -Carlton Works Manager, Andrew Bowker -HM Inspector of Health and Safety, Ceramic Sector Lead

In addition, Michelmersh is proud to have received special recognition for its Blockleys site for 'Teamwork to Reduce Manual Handling and Working at Height Risks'. Michelmersh was concerned about the access to high machinery and the safety of maintenance tasks at high levels in an area where it is necessary to erect scaffolding each time that repairs are undertaken. This made breakdown situations problematic and valuable production time could be lost if the scaffolding company was unavailable. Due to the design of the area, permanent access platforms were not cost effective. After analysis, it was decided to take down the main office spiral stairs and replace with a linear stair case, giving enough room to drive a cherry picker past and enabling better access to the tricky high areas in a safe way.



Left to right: Dean Hampson -Engineering Manager, Lee Taylor -Works Manager, Karl Cuzner -Production Manager

Peter Sharp, Joint Chief Executive Officer of Michelmersh, commented: "As one of the first companies to sign up to Pledge's Phase 4 initiative, we have devoted ourselves to being a resourceful and active member, sitting on the Ceramic Industry, Health and Safety Pledge Monitoring Board as well as several other committees within the BCC. It's fantastic to continuously be rewarded for our health and safety initiatives, as we have shown to promote a proactive culture, engaging and empowering our teams across the business. We appreciate the extensive and comprehensive group effort taken by all our staff resulting in us receiving these awards, especially to the teams at our Blockleys and Carlton sites for being expressly recognised this year."

The Company continues to focus on human behaviours at a practical level, encouraging all employees to get involved in safety measures, and anticipates ongoing improvements to all working environments through consistent investment and upgrades. Michelmersh is grateful to the BCC for leading the industry and vows to continue supporting the work of the Confederation, making a difference to accident, injury and absence reduction in all ceramic sectors.