The agony of the East End family still waiting for answers, a year after a crane collapsed onto their house, and killed their Aunt.

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A mother and son from Bow are calling for answers, a year after a collapsing crane destroyed their house, and killed their Aunt.

On 8th July last year, June Harvey, aged 85, was killed when a 20m crane crashed through the roof of the house she shared with her niece and great nephew, Jacqueline and Sam Atkinson. Jacqueline, 63, and Sam, 29, both suffered physical injuries, and their house was destroyed.

The companies involved did not ensure they were properly rehoused or treated for the psychological trauma they both suffered.

Jacqueline and Sam had to live in a hotel provided by their landlord Gateway Housing until January 2021. **They faced eviction** when they refused to accept an uninhabitable property without a kitchen from Tower Hamlets Council. Support groups and friends in the community rallied around to make the house fit to move into.

The crane was only removed in December 2020, and **the collapse is still being investigated by the Police and Health and Safety Executive.** Early indications are that the crane collapse was **caused by failure of the concrete base on which it was erected.**

A silent vigil for June Harvey is being held outside June's house on Thursday 8th July 2021. It has been organised by Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK) and the Construction Safety Campaign, to call for a speedy investigation and justice for June and her family. They want the vigil to highlight the need for a massive improvement in crane safety so no-one else is killed.

Helen Clifford, the lawyer representing the family said,

'**A year on, June's family's lives have been turned upside down. They still don't know what went wrong or why.**

This crane collapse was foreseeable, and could have been prevented. June and her family should have been safe.

Previous prosecutions by the CPS and HSE have taken a very long time. It's so callous that bereaved families not only suffer the unnecessary and negligent death of a loved one, but then have years of legal nightmares. This must not be allowed to happen in the case of the Bow crane disaster.'

NOTES TO EDITORS

The Atkinson family have been supported by local MP Apsana Begum, who intervened when she heard about the case. Families Against Corporate Killers (FACK), put Sam in touch with Helen Clifford a solicitor experienced in construction incidents and advocacy for families of those killed and secured counselling for the Atkinsons

The Construction Safety Campaign, CSC, campaigns for better crane safety, for 15 years with the Battersea Crane Disaster Action Group, BCDAG.

The UK has a poor record of tower crane accidents. Many other countries have stricter crane safety laws including compulsory licensing (certification) of all cranes.

Following a 2006 crane collapse on a building site in Battersea, which killed two people, the government enacted "The Notification of Conventional Tower Crane Regulations 2010", enforcing the registration of cranes.

In an article in the Evening Standard in December 2012, prime minister David Cameron declared his resolution "to kill off health and safety culture for good" and concluded that health & safety "is an albatross around the neck of British business". A review of health and safety law in 2011 recommended scrapping a number of laws including "The Notification of Conventional Tower Crane Regulations 2010"

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in 2013.

The effects of this health and safety law deregulation and cuts in its enforcement are not just felt on construction sites but on safety standards more widely, including the deaths in the Grenfell fire in 2017.

Since 2000, there have been at least nine other crane collapses, all over the UK. The Bow collapse brings the total killed since 2017 to 7, with 4 people injured.

The CSC calls for “The Notification of Conventional Tower Crane Regulations 2010’’ to be reinstated and extended to include all types of cranes. All cranes should be subject to testing and inspection by specialist crane companies who are independent of the crane provider and operator companies. There should be a shelf-life limitation on each crane after which they must be scrapped.

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