



Member wins £800,000 after long struggle



Community member Baldev Singh (pictured below) went to work as usual at Dudley Port Rolling Mills, Tipton, West Midlands on 11 April 2000. Baldev was 37, a father of three children. He was hard working, well regarded and a long standing employee with 17 years service. He was an assistant roller at the steel mill, frequently working long hours in overtime, often double shifts to make sure the job got done.

At 1.20pm on that day, events happened that changed Baldev's life for ever and have involved him in a fight for justice against his former employers.

During the course of his duties, he had to make adjustments to a guide box in the steel mill when his leg became trapped and was dragged between live rolls. The accident resulted in Baldev having to have his left leg amputated.

The accident was caused by basic health and safety failings of the company, failings that should not exist in this day. They included failing to put a guard on the machine. The company were prosecuted by the Health and Safety Executive and convicted of failing to ensure the work place was safe.

The company accepted liability and further gave assurances to Baldev that they wished to do everything possible to aid his recovery and ensure that he received the best artificial limb. They acknowledged he was hard working and someone who very much enjoyed his job. They would find employment for Baldev at the factory or elsewhere within the company when he was ready. Sadly, those promises were simply never followed through.

Three years after the accident occurred, and after accepting fault in full, the company sought to go behind that admission and blame Baldev for the accident. At the time of doing so, the factory had long since closed and liability evidence long gone.



Despite strenuous attempts by the company to now blame Baldev, the Court dismissed in full all the allegations of blame against Baldev. Attempts by the company to appeal further from that dismissal were after time, withdrawn by the Defendants.

Not deterred by this, the company then began lengthy periods of video surveillance. That surveillance was not disclosed until a few months before the final court hearing. The earlier assurances of employment and best prosthetic limbs had now changed to arguments that Baldev should have NHS inadequate prosthetic limbs (despite even the NHS Consultant agreeing that the NHS provision would be wholly inadequate), and that after the factory closure he would have been unlikely to have been chosen to move to one of the company's other sites even if the accident had not happened.

In an attempt to reduce Baldev's damages to a minimum, there followed a series of offers of £250,000, £400,000 and £563,000 over the years that followed. Refusals to make, (without Court Orders), proper interim payments to enable immediate medical needs to be met.

Baldev had to fight to the end for justice.

Supported by Community and solicitors Russell Jones and Walker, Baldev secured financial justice part way through a two day trial on the 8 December 2006 of £800,000.

Baldev says: 'I have worked all my life, I was hard working and loyal to the company. Sadly that loyalty was not returned to me when my life was so devastatingly changed by this accident.

'The injury and treatment I have had to suffer over the years has not only affected myself but also my family. The compensation I have received can never replace the life I had before the accident. Hopefully, it will allow me to be able to afford suitable accommodation and pay for proper prosthetic limbs to make my life a bit more comfortable.

'There is no doubt that without the support of my union, Community, to bring this claim, and the dedication of my solicitor Angela Fitzpatrick, I would not have been able to achieve a proper settlement.'