ACCIDENT PREVENTION AT WORK SCOPS TOP OCCUPATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY PRIZE

A project which has made a significant contribution to boosting safety levels in the workplace and preventing serious injuries and fatalities has scooped top prize in the first-ever award for The Occupational Psychology Practitioner of the Year. The project, carried out by Ronny Lardner and Richard Scaife, beat off the challenge of four other short-listed candidates in the inaugural competition, held by the British Psychological Society's Division of Occupational Psychology.

The companies commissioning the work, BP and Balfour Beatty Rail, were keen to look at ways of further increasing safety levels in hazardous industries and identifying improvements which could eliminate all incidents. Lardner and Scaife developed a practical set of human factors analysis tools (HFAT) which were rolled out worldwide via a two-day training course to incident investigators within both organisations. A year on from the training, investigators reported that HFAT had significantly enhanced their understanding of human behaviour and that they had been able to make better recommendations to prevent future accidents.

Presenting the award, Deutsche Bank Head of HR, Noel Hadden, said:

"Most organisations are people-centric and occupational psychologists have a degree in people, which means they can make a real and positive difference to the way our organisations operate.

This award makes me optimistic about the direction in which the discipline is going and the quality of work and research that occupational psychologists are delivering."

Speaking on behalf of the Division of Occupational Psychology, David Towner said he believed the award would help create a better public understanding and provide a great opportunity to showcase the work of occupational psychologists externally.

For the winners, Ronny Lardner told the audience at the award ceremony:

"We are really encouraged by this award, which we feel is a great idea to emphasise the practical benefits applied psychology can bring to organisations."