

British Society of Master Glass Painters members survey on blood lead levels

Q1

Location

Choice	Total
Scotland	11
Wales	9
North East England	1
North West England	7
Yorkshire & Humber	18
East Midlands	7
West Midlands	3
East of England	5
London area	12
South East England	18
South West England	19

Q2

What is your biological sex:

Choice	Total
Male	23
Female	87
Prefer not to say	0

Q3

If female, are you a 'woman of reproductive capacity':

Choice	Total
Yes	24
No	64

Q4

Age:

Choice	Total
Under 30	6
30-40	14
40-50	10
50-60	19
60-70	41
70-80	13
Over 80	7

Q5

How do/did you use lead (tick any that apply):

Choice	Total
New work	99
Restoration	65

Choice	Total
Conservation	48
Teaching	57
Other	7

Q6

How many years have you worked with lead:

Choice	Total
Less than 1 year	0
1-5 years	11
5-10 years	14
10-20 years	24
20-30 years	19
30-40 years	26
Over 40 years	16

Q7

Which activities do/did you mainly do (tick any that apply):

Choice	Total
Glass painting with leaded paint	88
Leading	107
Soldering	106
Dismantling old leaded windows	67

Choice	Total
Other	10

Q8

How intensively do/did you work with lead:

Choice	Total
Most of my working time	36
Half my working time	36
Less than half my working time	37

Q9

How do you describe yourself:

Choice	Total
Hobbyist	8
Semi-professional (it isn't my main source of income)	30
Professional (please add detail, e.g. accredited conservator, contemporary artist, glass painter)	72

Q10

Within stained glass are you:

Choice	Total
Self-employed	59

Choice	Total
An employee	24
An employer	3
Retired	11
Trainee/ apprentice	1
Student (please specify below if full-time/part-time/adult education or attending occasional workshops)	2
Other (please add detail below)	10

Q11

Do/did you teach stained glass:

Choice	Total
In an institution such as a university	16
In adult education	30
Independent workshops	49
I don't teach	41
Other	8

Q12

Have you ever had a blood test for lead:

Choice	Total
Yes	70
No	40

Q13

If you had a blood test, did you have to pay for it:

Choice	Total
My employer paid	32
My GP did it free of charge	26
I paid (how much was it?)	29

Note: reported costs were £40 / £45 / £80 / £110 / £160

Q14

If you had a blood test, are you willing to share the result:

Choice	Total
No	23
Yes	65

Q15

If yes, please state: What was your latest result. What it was measured in - µg/dL or µmol/L. When it was.

- Edinburgh College of Art may have retained the studio air quality test (annual) but there was never any comeback. Privately with a GP - can't remember
- 7 µg/dL Three months ago
- 17 µg/dL
- 4 ug/dL Winter 2025/2026
- The tests were many years ago and I no longer have the results however I do remember the doctor telling me that my levels were less than those expected in a member of the public who didn't work with lead.
- 6 µg/dL, January 2026
- Don't remember but it was low.
- 6 µg/dL
- On all the occasions I have my lead levels have always been within the safety levels for a child.
- 12 ug/dl

- Cannot remember exactly but it was between 5 -13 . 13 was the highest and it happened only once.
- I am willing to share if I could remember what it was. I have not had a recent test.
- Last result was 7. Results are always reported to my employer.
- 21µg 2021 5µg 2023
- 11 µg/dL. January 2026.
- 11
- 3µg/dl, but I had been doing a lot of paperwork and computer work in the lead up to the test
- 12 micrograms per decilitre This was in December 2025
- 4.9 ug/dl (borderline)
- 19th May 2026 10.8ug/dL
- This month, waiting for results
- 19 µg/dL
- 1.19 measurements are in umol/L
- 0.45 µmol/L. Test result on 13th June 2025
- I've only had 1 blood test in 1992 when I was pregnant. I don't remember the results.
- one month ago
- I have never had a blood test for lead.
- 7 µg/dL January 26
- 18µg/dl. April 2025
- I retired from making stained glass windows and panels because I often found them too heavy to lift and transport. During the 30 very enjoyable years I regularly drank DANDELION and BURDOCK tea , the herbal remedy for getting rid of heavy metals in the blood.
- 0.6
- 9 ug/dL, March 2026
- Summer 2023 - 7 ug/dl
- µg/dl 7 March 2025
- 0.07 umol/L (<0.24)
- never received the result, only that it was fine and normal.
- 2024 7.5 µg/dl
- 14.71 mg/dl (0.71µmol/L) 2025 9.53 mg/dl (0.46µmol) 2022 12.85 mg/dl (0.62µmol) 2021
- 11th August 2025. 0.23 µmol/L
- 15
- Can't remember it was so long ago!
- 25µg/dL - tested in October 2023
- 0.21 - 4.0 I was told I am within normal ranges.
- I haven't had a blood test since I retired, but it was normally between 12-15. It once spiked due to using a different technique, which I identified as a localised-to-the-bench technique and took PPE action immediately. My blood lead levels dropped quickly back to normal levels.
- 0.57 µmol/L October 2015
- If I had a blood test, I would be happy to share the result, but I have never had a blood test
- 5 µg/dL 0.26 µmol/L
- Unfortunate I don't have the past results from 8 years ago when I last had a test done, but I believe it was 16 either µg/dL or µmol/L. After that I stopped working with lead. During my 30 years working with lead I had an annual test, always between 10 -18 µg/dL or µmol/L
- 15 µg/dL January 2026
- I have never had a blood test
- Don't know was 30 yrs ago

- So long ago I don't remember but my GP told me 'it was fine'!!
- 13 µg/dL (Jan 2026)
- µg/dL 10 within last 12 months
- Can't remember but it wasn't any higher than normal levels
- 0.07 µmol/L Mar-26
- I have not had a blood test
- 7 µg/dL August 2025
- Sorry, not had a blood test but, if I did, I am willing to share the result.
- i didn't have a test
- January 2026 0.36
- I haven't had a test as my work has been part time after a break to care for my parents
- I have never had a blood test for lead
- 0.3 µmol July 2025
- sorry cant find the info but it was just slightly higher than normal
- 6µg/dL November June 2025
- No blood test
- Cant remember. Havent has a test since early 2000's

Q16

If you have had more than one test, have your results:

Choice	Total
Increased over time	1
Decreased over time	14
Remained about the same	35
Fluctuated	19

Q17

Intuitively, do your results correspond to your working practice such as time spent in the studio and implementing more safety measures:

Choice	Total
Yes	44
No	4

Choice	Total
Not sure	32

Q18

What safety measures do you regularly employ (tick any that apply):

Choice	Total
Wash hands after working with lead	110
Wear gloves / barrier cream	79
Wear apron / overalls	99
Use high grade dust mask	65
Use low grade dust mask	31
Use a fume trap when soldering	29
Use Local Exhaust Ventilation (extractor fan)	45
Eat and drink in a separate area	97
Clean work area regularly	95
Wash overalls regularly	80
Completely decontaminate when leaving studio	21
Measure air quality, the amount of lead particulates in the air	4
Other	15

Q19

How likely are you to be affected by the new HSE proposals:

Choice	Total
Definitely	29
Very likely	30
Not at all	13
Don't know	38

Q20

How much impact will the new proposals have on your life:

Choice	Total
None	15
Some	43
Significant (please specify)	50

Q21

How confident are you that you can adjust your working practice to meet the new proposals, if necessary:

Choice	Total
Confident	12
Not at all confident	47
Unsure (please detail)	50

Q22

Are there any financial consequences of meeting the new proposals:

Choice	Total
No	15
Unsure	45
Yes (please specify)	47

Q23

Have you filled in the HSE questionnaire:

Choice	Total
Yes	58
No	26
Not yet, but I will before 7 June	25

Q24

Have you got any feedback on the HSE questionnaire:

Choice	Total
No	65
Yes (please specify)	31

Q25 Yes (please specify):

- **Obviously it was quite involved and seemed unnecessarily lengthy, especially the second half about costs and potential costs. It would be interesting to hear what has lead them to want to change these lead levels now and if there is any practical evidence for foetus harm from working in the stained glass industry. What other industries are women of childbearing age working in where they are exposed to lead? I would have thought it would be more helpful to look at the specific industries involved and scrutinise health and safety practices within those industries as there are probably only a few where women and lead are involved.**
- **Very technically worded**
- **A lot of the questions I didn't know how to answer**

- They admit to having little scientific research on the effects of lead and on the harm caused at incremental levels. There's been no nationwide survey to research background levels of the general public compared with lead workers.
- As a former registered nurse I understand the concerns about lead toxicity. However, the proposals are poorly thought through and set out. Any target or objective should be SMART (Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic; Time-orientated. The proposals are specific and measurable, but not achievable, realistic or time orientated. The questionnaire is not well set out and does not appear to address the real issue which is how potential harm can be reduced as opposed to an arbitrary target
- It's not appropriate for artists like me.
- It's not aimed at hobbyists/sole traders
- Very long! Lots of questions I couldn't answer.
- Overly long, tedious and based on a complete lack of research on the baseline lead levels of the general population
- It was incredibly long winded and far too 'generic'. There should have been separate sections for different industries and recognition that many artists are self employed so having to trail through loads of questions about medium/large industries was not applicable.
- I don't understand how the new recommendations will affect crafters and hobbyists.
- Far too complex
- Very difficult to understand what was being asked, and best way to respond effectively
- It is so hard to understand and fill in I'm sure many people will have given up which is counter to the purpose of the questionnaire. It seems to be based on Stats rather than actual feedback from professionals. In 20 years of working with glass I can't remember ever hearing that anyone has suffered from lead poisoning.
- Too long and complicated
- I just don't know the answer to a lot of it!
- Way too repetitive a difficult to follow. Much of it irrelevant to practitioners in my situation
- The bulk of the questionnaire appears to focus on the cost implications of the proposed measures (3/4 of the questionnaire). However, arguably more important consequences, such as the wholesale loss of our heritage and historic craft disciplines, appear to have been utterly ignored.
- Many of the questions were not relevant to me
- It was incredibly difficult to follow and to fill in. Without the help of colleagues I would not have been able to complete it.
- Was asked for more information on two points. I responded
- Unnecessarily repetitive
- Not a user friendly form. Extremely wordy and complicated.
- I completed it before the helpful guidance from BSMGP - it was very long and didn't present enough on the data on our sector's workers's children's health as evidence.
- Questions are shaping the answers towards the proposed changes being implemented
- It is very hard to understand as there is an assumed high level of technical knowledge and how to implement it.
- Overly complex and repetitive. It took over four hours to fill in plus independent research to understand the questions.
- Omg where to begin? Mostly seemed irrelevant regarding stained glass
- It will have put a lot of people off as it was so lengthy and not particularly user friendly.
- The language used is impenetrable
- Please do not change the levels. We are all ok managing ourselves and do not need any outside body putting more regulations in.
-

What can the British Society of Master Glass Painters do to support you:

Choice	Total
Include up-to-date information	90

Choice	Total
on website	
Lobby HSE and Government	97
Other (please specify)	16

Q26

Any other comments:

Date	Answers
17 minutes ago	I thought this was a HSE questionnaire!! Contacted my MP with full details/consequences of the proposal by referring him to Derek Hunt's YouTube video. He has written to The Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP Minister for Employment, DWP and shall let me know once a response has been received.
22 hours ago	I have been teaching stained glass for a really long time City Literary institute, Central Saint Martins, Community Education Lewisham, SGS Stroud College, Bristol Adult Learning and Creative Glass Guild. I have watched the decimation of different educational departments which has led us to this broken training situation. Education needs fully funding and supporting. These restrictions will not only affect teachers and educators as much as artists and conservation in Stained glass. I am hoping to retire to make more of my own work. I have survived thus, far and intend to continue to work with lead into the future in a responsible and safe way.
23 hours ago	Thank you for your help and support with this issue. It was really helpful having the zoom meeting to explain the HSE form and for Sarah's amazingly helpful video. I am self-employed and as such am thinking I can do what I like at work as I only have me to think about. However, I would really love to pass on my stained glass experience and knowledge. I also could really do with some help as I am not getting any younger and it is quite a physical job. But I am now quite concerned that I wouldn't be able to get an employee as it would just to too expensive to do the necessary safety steps in order to employ someone. I say this as someone who already takes lead safety extremely seriously.

Date	Answers
	<p>Throughout my 26+year working life I have often been the one to implement safety practices or encourage employers to do so: remove carpet from floors so it doesn't harbour lead dust, purchase a Hoover with HEPA filters, remind workers to wash hands, discourage eating and drinking in work spaces, the use of masks, gloves and work wear that can stay at work. I am sorry to say I find it is often men that need reminding of best health and safety practices, women are often already aware and willing to put things into practice. I have had two children over my career and both are fine and as far as I am aware have been unharmed by my choice of career (maybe others would say otherwise!! :D). With both pregnancies I stressed to doctors that I worked with lead and was told I was well within limits and that everything was fine. It was fine, the kids are fine. I feel we need to know more about how foetus's might be affected before this blanket lowering of levels. Have they looked at any similarities between the children of lead workers?? Thanks for doing this survey.</p>
1 day ago	<p>Appreciate all you are doing to feedback to HSE</p>
1 day ago	<p>Thank you for leading this campaign.</p>
1 day ago	<p>Having lived in London for the past 40 years, I wonder how much of the lead level in my blood is the result of air pollution especially prior to when leaded petrol was banned in the UK. Also, I'm curious if any viable alternatives to lead came have been investigated.</p>
1 day ago	<p>Stained Glass is a small and ancient profession and needs professional understanding and skill</p>
2 days ago	<p>Thank you for all the work you are doing! I started working with lead aged 21, I am now 49. Thankfully I've had 2 healthy children. Stained glass needs to continue, please do everything you can to make this happen. Thank you</p>
2 days ago	<p>Recommend specific models of personal safety equipment (masks, extractors, etc.) for different lead-based tasks (i.e. face masks suitable for glass paint, extractor fans suitable for lead soldering). We are very confused by which face masks we should be getting!</p>
2 days ago	<p>I've had a wonderful 30 years making stained glass windows and panels. THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT. www.carolynbarlow.com</p>

Date	Answers
3 days ago	Thank you BSMGP!
3 days ago	I found the HSE questionnaire very difficult to fill in as a part time semi-professional working on my own in a small home studio. I gave up!
5 days ago	I have never had a lead blood test as GP would not authorise.
5 days ago	Thank you for bringing this to our attention otherwise we would not know that the rules would be changing
6 days ago	The HSE form was not fit for purpose. It was too broad ranging and didn't take into account the myriad differences between different types of people and industries who work with lead. It didn't even have a category specifically for stained glass!
6 days ago	Thank you so much for everything you are doing!
May 29	I'm sorry that I don't have enough experience to be able to help with the HSE survey. I tend to do a project with lead about once a year. My wife has completed it though, despite being a hobbyist and most of the questions didn't apply to her
May 29	Scotland lost virtually all its medieval glass, not because of windows being smashed in the Reformation but because the workshops where they could be made, repaired and replaced were shut down. The same thing will happen again - there is constant work in Scotland repairing and conserving. If this goes through, our glorious stained glass heritage will disappear.
May 29	I am now retired from teaching and doing much less physical work in the studio, due to ill health (cancer and heart disease - not lead related!).
May 29	The craft of stained glass must continue as it is essential for our country's continuing heritage and employment in architecture. I think people take care when working with lead.
May 29	I am fortunate to have retired from stained glass, and having been self-employed for most of my working career, my testing was always voluntary rather than mandatory. HOWEVER, I am very sympathetic to the situation of those who will be drastically affected by the proposals. Apart from one small temporary spike in my blood lead levels over 45 years in the craft due to an experimental technique, my practice and my levels

Date	Answers
May 29	<p>have remained constant. I have not done any significant SG work for several years now, so it would be interesting to see how my levels have changed, if at all. When my children were young, I had them tested as well, as I had a home studio. They both came back as almost zero, which was encouraging to see that my own lead levels were studio bench based and not background / environmental within our home, and that all my H&S measures were working. Raising awareness of H&S / Lead is a positive thing which is coming out of this situation, BUT, I, like others, feel that the changes are much to prohibitive for an already endangered craft to survive.</p>
May 29	<p>Although I have moved into sandcasting, I still periodically make panels, especially after working for Goddard and Gibbs for many years. We did get blood tests done at the time (20 years ago) but I will carry on with making panels as I take all necessary precautions. If all precautions are taken, I hope this will not impact the work that many Artists do for a living and access to lead will not be affected.</p>
May 29	<p>Thanks for your constant support to all the stained glass community.</p>
May 29	<p>Thank you for all you are doing to help the stained glass industry with this. I believe that self employed people will be less affected but we need the big studios to be able to keep running- it would be a tragedy to lose that wealth of experience and the industry's ability to work on major projects</p>
May 29	<p>As usual people who make regulation guidelines etc have little or no experience in the field concerned and no concern for the outcomes and results their legislation may have on participants of the profession they are trying to regulate</p>
May 28	<p>Much of what I have thought about these proposals were included in my first draft of the MPs letter which moved around - feel free to use any or all of that if it benefits the cause.</p>
May 28	<p>Couldn't submit without answering blood test questions but as I have never had one please ignore these responses.</p>
May 28	<p>I am incredibly grateful for the assistance and continued prompting that the BSMGP have given us members. However, there were some questions that I</p>

Date	Answers
May 28	Had to fill in about blood tests even though I have never had one so those answers are a bit nonsensical.
May 28	There was no box for people to add their pre-working with lead levels. This would be the most important data to gather.
May 28	Thank you
May 28	I do feel the HSE is taking retrograde steps in terms of the craft and especially for women. The different levels are sexist and do not allow for personal or informed choice, something which women have fought for and now is being legislated away from us. I worked with lead as a women of reproductive age and took all the precautions necessary. I was taught by an amazing woman who taught me to work safely and I now teach young women as well who would like to not be told that the fact they were born with ovaries mean that they have legislation restricting their future choices and access to making and working in a craft, whilst men of the same age are allowed to carry on with slightly less stringent rules.
May 28	The new lower levels will put people off participating in workshops and entering the field either professionally or as a hobby.
May 28	Thank you and lets hope SG gets a realistic result due to the nature of the craft.
May 28	I really appreciate all the work the BSMGP has put into challenging these new proposals and supporting the glass industry! Thanks for all the hard work everyone!
May 28	Am retired now so my exposure to lead is less than when I was teaching and working independently