



## **Pictons Comments on Alton Towers Fairground Disaster**

Following the terrible accident at Alton Towers Resort on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June, when a rollercoaster ride resulted in a crash into a stationary car, seriously injuring four passengers, it is clear that even in the best run entertainment centres health and safety disasters can still happen.

While Alton Towers Resort investigates the cause of the accident, rumours are already circulating that the Smiler Ride was problematic during the day of the crash, which happened later in the afternoon. As sixteen passengers had to be painstakingly rescued from the crashed car, which was dangling at a precipitous 25 metres above the ground, it became clear that something had gone seriously wrong in the health and safety procedures at this internationally renowned fairground park

[Melanie Neale](#), a [Personal Injury](#) specialist executive at leading regional law firm Pictons says “What was supposed to be a fun and joyous day out has ended in the tragedy of at least four people being seriously injured. Fairground rides are meant to be safe and trusted and certainly the big corporations like Merlin Entertainment, who own Alton Towers Resort and other major entertainment venues tend to ensure that health and safety are a major priority at all of their locations.

“However, when things do go wrong it usually means a serious injury or worse. As the rides get bigger the technical aspects become more complex to appeal to the public’s craving for extra thrills and excitement. The problem is at what cost. The Health and Safety Executive, who will have the ultimate responsibility to decide what went wrong at Alton Towers, will no doubt be undertaking a very thorough investigation.

“Questions will certainly be asked as to why, if the ride had a problem earlier in the day, was it allowed to proceed and put passengers at risk? It is understood that the Smiler holds the world record for the rollercoaster with the most inversions. Does this mean it is prone to more problems? The rollercoaster suffered a series of setbacks and ride incidents – including one that occurred during its preview event – that delayed its official opening and resulted in a high number of temporary closures. All of these factors will not be overlooked.

“I have acted in a similar case on behalf of one of my clients, Reece Nee who as a teenager was involved in a dreadful fairground accident when he was thrown from a ride and was seriously injured. I believe those involved in the commissioning of these rides have a responsibility to the public to make sure than the rides are safe and they should be legally obliged to close them in the event of any concerns.