



# MEDIA STATEMENT

9<sup>th</sup> August 2018

## **Rockfall at Staithes, North Yorkshire**

A rockfall took place yesterday (Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 2018) at Staithes, tragically killing a nine year old child.

Staithes is a village on the North Yorkshire coast where there are steep cliffs of Jurassic-age. These cliffs are formed from Staithes Sandstone and Cleveland Ironstone Formations. The Staithes Sandstone forms the lower part of the eastern cliff section and consists of alternating sequences of weak siltstones and strong blocky sandstones. The overlying Cleveland Ironstone is a sequence of predominantly weak siltstones and strong blocky ironstones, which forms the upper section of the cliff face. The weaker layers can be more easily weathered and eroded leaving unsupported blocks which can ultimately fall as a rockfall.

[Dr Helen Reeves](#), Science Director for [Engineering Geology](#) at the BGS, said:

“Recent weeks have seen an increased number of cliff falls reported around our coastline in the UK. Landslides, including rockfalls, are commonly triggered in the UK by rainfall. In this instance, the recent unprecedented warm dry weather is likely to be a contributing factor. Current research has linked rockfalls to temperature fluctuations, but the research to fully understand this process is still ongoing.”

“We would like to reiterate the warnings that the RNLI and Local Councils give regularly about staying away from cliffs. Take notice of warning signs. Do not go directly under or on top of cliffs as our coast is a dynamic environment that is changing all the time.”

**\*Ends\***



**For further details or to arrange media interviews please contact:**

Clive Mitchell, British Geological Survey Press Office, Keyworth, Nottingham, NG12 5GG

Office +44 (0)115 936 3257 Mobile: + 44 (0)7815 537 439

Email: [cjmi@bgs.ac.uk](mailto:cjmi@bgs.ac.uk) Twitter @CliveBGS

**Notes for Editors**

The following is available for interview:

- Dr Helen Reeves, British Geological Survey

For additional information go to: [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)

BGS rockfall video:

**Keep safe at the coast this summer: top tips on how to avoid a rock fall**

<https://youtu.be/CvfaGWlyDxc>

Further information on rockfall and landslides from the BGS here:

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/research/engineeringGeology/shallowGeohazardsAndRisks/landslides/home.html>

**British Geological Survey**

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