

## **JUAC backs parliamentary group's asbestos action report**

"The Joint Union Asbestos Committee (JUAC)\*, a national asbestos trade union campaign group, has backed ***Asbestos in Schools: the need for action***, a report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health that highlights the level of danger from asbestos in Britain's schools.

The report shows that more than 75 per cent of Britain's state schools contain asbestos. Much of that is badly maintained, meaning that children and staff are exposed to this killer fibre. Over 140 school teachers have died from mesothelioma (a cancer that is almost exclusively caused by exposure to asbestos) in the past ten years. An unknown number of cleaners, administrative staff, caretakers, cooks and diner ladies have also died.

The report confirms that the number of children who might die as adult as a result of exposure to asbestos while at school is unknown; but in the US it was estimated that for every teacher's death nine people will die from their exposure as a child, but because of the very long latency their deaths will be many years later as adults. That would mean that over 100 people die every year in the UK as a result of exposure when they were at school.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health report highlights the case for urgent action. It not only outlines the problem but makes six clear and simple recommendations about how we can prevent future exposure in our schools.

Jim Sheridan MP, Chair of the All-Party Group said: "This is a national scandal. Urgent action is needed to prevent more pupils, teachers and other staff being exposed to this deadly killer dust. We need both far greater awareness of the risks that this material poses and a programme for its phased removal."

Michael Lees, founder of the Asbestos in Schools Group (AIS), said: "This report highlights the continuing threat from asbestos in schools. It is essential and imperative that the Government undertakes an urgent audit of asbestos in schools, provides training for schools on how to manage it safely and draws up a programme for its phased removal."

### **Notes for Editors:**

\***JUAC** is a trade union campaigning committee comprising the six main education unions: Association of School and College Leaders; Association of Teachers and Lecturers; National Association of Head Teachers; NASUWT; National Union of Teachers; Voice; plus the education sections of Unite, UNISON, UCATT and the GMB: <http://www.juac.org.uk>. The Group has the objective of making all UK schools and colleges safe from the dangers of asbestos. All the unions in JUAC are members of the Asbestos in Schools (AIS) campaign.

**AIS** is a campaigning and pressure non-party political group of organisations and individuals with an interest in making schools safe from the dangers of asbestos. The aim of the AIS is to make United Kingdom schools safe from the dangers of asbestos both for staff and pupils: <http://www.asbestosexposureschools.co.uk>.

***Asbestos in Schools: the need for action:***

<http://www.jimsheridanmp.org.uk/asbestosinschoolsreport.pdf>

**Further information**

Please contact:

Michael Lees of AIS

[ml@asbestosexposureschools.co.uk](mailto:ml@asbestosexposureschools.co.uk)

tel 01409 241496

[julie.winn@juac.org.uk](mailto:julie.winn@juac.org.uk)

JUAC Chair Julie Winn on 07736 490357.