

Dear Colleague

Welcome to the latest in a series of termly e-bulletins for NUT health and safety representatives. The aim of this bulletin is to support you in the valuable work you undertake on behalf of your colleagues in making your school a healthier and safer place to work, and to assist you in using health and safety as an organising tool in your school.

NUT asbestos survey

In the run up to Annual Conference, the NUT conducted a short on-line survey of 10,000 members about their knowledge and experiences of asbestos in schools. The responses have confirmed concerns that asbestos management in many schools is not of an acceptable standard. The findings have also highlighted that there is a long way to go to ensure that messages about the risks to staff and children from asbestos are fully understood.

The key findings included;

- 44% of respondents had not been told whether their school contains asbestos. This is concerning considering that approximately 86% of schools do contain asbestos.
- Of the 46% who were aware that their school contains asbestos, 40% had not been told where it is located; meaning they and their pupils could be at risk of disturbing it.

- More than 75% of respondents did not know that the death rate amongst teachers linked to asbestos is increasing.
- Only 20% were aware that children are more at risk than adults from exposure to asbestos, due to the long latency period for mesothelioma.
- 99% of respondents agreed that there should be a long-term government strategy for removing asbestos in schools.

It is very important for staff to be aware if their school contains asbestos, and if so, where it is and how it is being managed. If you haven't already done so, please request this information from your employer.

NUT Conference 2015 – asbestos motion passed

A motion on asbestos was passed at the 2015 Annual Conference. Over the next year, the NUT will continue its work with other unions and groups (e.g. Joint Union

Asbestos Committee and Asbestos in Schools) to campaign for the government to introduce policies which will deal more effectively with the risks of asbestos in schools.

These include: funding removal of asbestos in all schools, more extensive use of air sampling, and mandatory on-site inspection of asbestos management plans in schools.

Updated Government asbestos guidance

In March, the Department for Education (DfE) released revised guidance for managing asbestos in schools, which is aimed at school leaders, governors, local authorities and academy trusts. The document provides information on the risks of asbestos, responsibility for safe management of asbestos and the steps involved in day-to-day management. It is available [here](#).

Whilst the NUT is pleased that the DfE has published more up-to-date information, there also needs to be guidance aimed at teachers and support staff; the DfE has said they will be publishing supplementary guidance, and they have been asked to ensure this is relevant to teachers and support staff.

In addition, the guidance does not include a warning on warm air cabinet heaters, which the DfE had previously stated they would provide. Again, they have been asked to confirm the secondary guidance will include this information. The full Joint Union Asbestos Committee (JUAC) warning on such heaters is available [here](#). It is also important to be aware that the example management plan on page 9 is of poor quality, and will lead to bad practice in schools. Therefore, it should not be used. JUAC will be providing the DfE with examples of effective plans.

- Circulate the guidance to school leaders, whilst making them aware that the example management plan should not be used.

Tuberculosis in schools

The National Institute for Clinical and Care Excellence (NICE) has up-to-date guidance on dealing with cases of tuberculosis (TB) in schools. The document 'Contact tracing and screening after a person is diagnosed with active TB' has information on the steps which should be taken if a pupil or member of staff is diagnosed, and it is available [here](#).

TB is a notifiable disease, and as such, any registered medical practitioner making a diagnosis must inform the Local Authority's

'proper officer'. In most cases this will be the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control employed by the local Health Protection Team (HPT). The local HPT can also provide guidance if there is a concern that a pupil or member of staff may have TB. You can find the details of your HPT [online](#).

- In light of some recent cases of TB in schools, please advise your head teacher that guidance is available, should a diagnosis in your school occur.

2015 National Hazards Conference

The 26th National Hazards Conference is being held on 4th-6th September 2015 at Keele University in Stoke-on-Trent. The conference is aimed at all union health and safety representatives, and this year's theme is 'Reclaiming the H&S Agenda'. The conference workshops will focus on areas such as 'safety reps and organising' and 'campaigning with members'. There will be a NUT Health and Safety stand at the event, and the Union is sponsoring the event nationally.

Costs are £295 per delegate for residential and £175 for non-residential. The closing date for applications is Friday 8 August 2015.

For more information, or to book a place, contact the Greater Manchester Hazards Centre on 0161 636 7557 or by email at hazconf@gmhazards.org.uk.

2015 Stress Network Conference

The 2015 Stress Conference ‘Workplace Stress – What Cost?’ will be held on 28-29 November at Hillscourt Conference Centre in Rednal, Birmingham. Health and Safety reps will be all too aware of the high levels of stress amongst teachers, and this continues to be one of the key H&S concerns of the NUT.

The conference will include keynote speakers, workshop sessions and discussions. Non-residential costs are £115 for Saturday only and £140 for both days, with residential costs £225 and £285 respectively. There is also a 10% discount for tickets booked before 15th September 2015. For more information or to book a place visit www.workstress.net or email Les Roberts at ukworkstress@live.co.uk.

‘Safety representatives and safety committees’ – copies available

The TUC has provided us with copies of the new print run of ‘Safety Representatives and Safety Committees’ also known as the ‘Brown Book’. The book contains the regulations, codes of practice and guidance relating to Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, as well as any other health and safety legislation which requires employers to consult with safety representatives or employees.

If you would like a copy of the booklet, free of charge, please email Sophie Ward (s.ward@nut.org.uk) to advise how many copies you would like, and to which address they should be sent. Alternatively, electronic copies are available at the Safety Reps section of the NUT website:
<http://www.teachers.org.uk/healthandsafetyreps>.