



CYNGOR PARTNERIAETH Y GWEITHLU
WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL

Workforce Partnership Council (WPC) Joint Statement on Managing Asbestos in Public Buildings

The Workforce Partnership Council (WPC) is a tripartite social partnership structure of the trade unions, employers and Welsh Government covering the devolved public services in Wales and the forum for cross-public services workforce matters.

The WPC is issuing this Joint Statement to devolved public service organisations across Wales in recognition of the serious health hazards associated with exposure to asbestos and the importance attributed to the safe identification and management of asbestos wherever it is found in public buildings. It reflects our commitment to raising awareness of those issues that can affect the health and well-being of our public services workforce and requests a renewed commitment by public service organisations to the management of asbestos within public buildings, to protect the workforce and those they serve.

Dangers of Asbestos

Annually asbestos related illnesses kill approximately five thousand people in the UK. Often the presence of asbestos is not known until it is revealed through wear or damage. Since the year 2000 it is illegal to use asbestos in the construction or renovation of premises in the UK but a significant amount of the material remains in place. Whilst asbestos can pose a risk to the public and employee's alike, workers involved in building refurbishment or maintenance and other similar trades are most at risk.

Managing Asbestos in Public Buildings

The WPC wishes to promote a review and a renewed commitment by public service organisations to the management of asbestos within your estates. It recognises that asbestos management is a complex issue but the very serious threat asbestos poses means public service organisations need to remain pro-active and maintain a focus on action to ensure asbestos is effectively managed.

The WPC wishes to ensure that all of those accessing our public buildings are reassured that the processes that exist to protect them are pro-actively managed and regularly reviewed, and that appropriate measures are in place in line with the Control of Asbestos Regulations (2012), Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Guidance and the Asbestos Management in Schools Guidance (updated 2019) published by Welsh Government.

Ystadau Cymru, the public sector estates management group, has committed to explore the issue of asbestos management in public buildings. A dedicated Sub-group is being established to undertake a strategic review of the issue.

Further information:

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/632/contents/made>

Asbestos Management in Schools Guidance (Updated 2019)

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-08/asbestos-management-in-schools-19.pdf>

Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Asbestos Management Advice

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/duty.htm>