

| Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances Paper |                  | ACTS/10/2008       |      |
|--|------------------|--------------------|------|
| Meeting date:                                | 11 November 2008 | Open Govt. Status: | Open |
| Type of paper:                               | For information  | Paper File Ref:    |      |
| Exemptions:                                  | None             |                    |      |

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES

### UPDATE - HSE Progress on Nanotechnology Issues

#### A Paper by Brian Fullam, Christine Northage – HSE

#### Issue

1. Progress with developing advice on the control of exposure to manufactured nanomaterials.

#### Timing

2. Routine.

#### Recommendation

3. ACTS is asked to consider and note the contents of the paper.

#### Background

4. At the July ACTS meeting Brian Fullam informed the committee that he planned to seek advice from WATCH on the possible endorsement by HSE of the BSI published document PD 6699-2. In particular we were seeking views on benchmark exposure levels included in the document. WATCH considered this matter last Friday, the outcomes are included below.

#### Discussion

5. The detailed conclusions of WATCH on the BSI guidance will be available in the minutes in 3 weeks. However, the outline conclusions of WATCH were:
  - i. The document as a whole is very useful, but in any future revision more needs to be done to identify its target audience and tailor the content to that audience.
  - ii. The use of Benchmark exposure levels could be a cause of confusion as they may be mixed up with enforceable limits.
  - iii. HSE are advised that they should not endorse the document in its present form, but they should track its future development.

6. The guidance has been accepted by ISO for development into an ISO guide. HSE are monitoring the development of this guide and will ensure that its views are included in the drafting process. In the meantime the BSI document will be updated towards the end of 2009 and we will reassess our position on this document then.
7. HSE has drafted advice on risk management for the handling and use of carbon nanotubes (CNTs). The technical content has been agreed and the document is currently going through our publication process. We hope to have this published next month along with a NanoAlert special detailing a synopsis of the current exposure and health information on CNTs.
8. HSE has taken a number of practical steps to meet our H&S obligations in the area of nanotechnology. As part of our research effort we are funding HSL to assess exposure levels in a number of Universities and recently an industry site. An occupational hygiene Specialist Inspector attends on these visits, both to observe the range of practices being used and to pass on advice and information on good practice. In order to get the message out to a relevant audience HSE gave a presentation at the meeting of University Safety Officers in July 2008 to promote our understanding of best practice in the handling and use of nanoparticles. An occupational hygiene inspection has also been undertaken the only UK manufacturer of CNTs. Acceptable standards of control of exposure to nanomaterials were being applied.
9. Our website (<http://www.hse.gov.uk/horizons/nanotech.htm>) provides a central point for us to disseminate advice as it becomes available. The NANOSAFE project dissemination report details some important points on respiratory filters and personal protective equipment (PPE).
10. Our experts are available for internal and external consultation. HSE's Infoline service has a general brief on Nanotechnologies but for detailed technical queries they will call on our technical experts and the wider HSE/HSL NanoTeam.

### **Action**

11. Members are requested to note the information provided.

### **Contact**

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