Since October 2007 WATCH has been working on the following issue referred to it by HSE:

**WATCH is asked to develop what it considers to be the most scientifically robust positions on what can be said about the dose-response relationships for . . . (lung cancer and mesothelioma, for chrysotile, amosite and crocidolite)**

At its meeting in October 2008 (and via post-meeting consultation) WATCH adopted the position attached here as an Annex.

In relation to the concept of a “control-banding approach” referred to towards the end of the position given in the Annex, HSE/HSL (Health and Safety Laboratory) has since been working on developing a tool that might deliver such an approach. This work has been shared and discussed with WATCH at its last two meetings in June and November 2009.

At its November 2009 meeting, WATCH decided on a number of actions that it considered appropriate to reflect the views it now held, the messages it wanted to convey and its thoughts on how best to further progress its current work on asbestos. One of these actions was to produce a report from WATCH to ACTS and the relevant people in HSE – that is the purpose of this document.

The work done on the control banding concept holds some promise, but there are also a number of issues requiring further probing and consideration. Arising from the last WATCH meeting in Nov 2009, a small working group comprising members of WATCH and ACTS has been established to work with Garry Burdett of HSL on technical points. The results of the working group’s efforts will be reported back to the full WATCH committee during 2010.

From the discussions at the last few meetings of WATCH, the committee also considers that the following key points arise:

1. **Jobbing builders and allied tradesmen should remain a key target for warnings about the risks that can arise from exposure to asbestos and for advice on risk mitigation.** The advice given should be as simplified as possible.

2. **Clear and targeted messages should be produced specifying the types of task that could potentially result in levels of exposure of particular**
concern, if appropriate risk mitigation measures are not applied. It is envisaged that CONIAC could help in this task.

3. If a control banding tool appears viable, careful consideration needs to be given to clarify for whom the tool is being developed and for what purpose(s) it should be used. The presentation of the tool must be compatible with these aims (eg in the language used, the degree of complexity, the type of output etc).

At its meeting in Feb 2010 the full WATCH committee will be revisiting its position in Annex 1 to consider other points that arise from it, including its view on what statements can be made about the level of risk at levels of exposure lower than those in the table presented.

Any reactions to this report can be conveyed to the WATCH Chairman, Dr Steve Fairhurst, at:

steve.fairhurst@hse.gsi.gov.uk
tel: 0151 951 3509

WATCH Secretariat
26 November 2009