

WATCH COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN'S COVERING NOTE FOR ASBESTOS PACKAGE FOR 27 OCTOBER 2010 MEETING

To WATCH members

This package of papers on asbestos consists of two distinct (although related) elements.

One is the pre-meeting consultation paper that was sent to you and placed on the WATCH Committee Web Community in the Summer, with a request for comments by 24 September. To date, three members (and a departmental assessor) have expressed a view and these comments are included in this package. My hope was that we would have had more individual members' views expressed, such that the consultation paper could have been re-shaped to reflect back to WATCH at the October meeting the balance of opinion and emerging picture from the consultation. In the current situation, I've concluded that all I can do is ask WATCH to address at the October meeting the same action in paragraph 23 of the paper, referring back to the bullet points in paragraph 9 of that paper – with the benefit of having seen the comments that have already been expressed by a few members. **The central theme here is the extent to which the WATCH "H&D-based" analysis of 2008 can be extrapolated/adjusted to account for other circumstances.**

The second element is a collection of new papers, not covered by the WATCH "H&D-based" analysis done up to 2008, and assessed in brief by HSE (Andy Darnton); copies of these papers are also included here. **The central theme here is whether or not the results of these new studies challenge the validity of the WATCH "H&D-based" analysis of 2008.**

At the October meeting I will start the asbestos item by asking each WATCH member in turn **what he/she thinks WATCH should say, for each fibre type, about:**

- risks at 0.1, 0.01, 0.001 and 0.0001 f/ml.years;
- age-related adjustment factors if exposure starts at age 0;
- age-related adjustment factors for children first exposed at a young age, with life expectancy to age 90;
- exposure levels for "acceptable" risk;
- exposure levels for risks that would be double those for spontaneous mesothelioma.

In preparing your thoughts ready to address these points, please will you consider all of the information you've had and the discussions you've experienced up until this September – and also will you now consider what additional impact on your views the new, post-2008 studies and their analysis have had.

It might be that between now and the October meeting further material is received by the Secretariat and sent out to you. If so, I will promise to keep this to modest proportions and I don't intend that it will change the intention to start this agenda item in the way I've indicated above.

So, please prepare your view.

I'm aware that one or two members cannot attend the October meeting. In these cases, it would be really helpful if you could indicate your views prior to the meeting, where you haven't already done so. In view of the limited period of time available, **please send them to me, copied to all fellow members.**

Many thanks

Best wishes

Steve Fairhurst
WATCH Chairman
8 October 2010