

Huw Lewis AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Addysg a Sgiliau
Minister for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref HL/00686/16
William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

05 April 2016

Dear William

Thank you for your letter of 21 March to which you attached comments from Mr Cenric Clement-Evans following my appearance at the Petitions Committee last autumn.

For ease of reference I will address the issues which Mr Clement-Evans raises in the order in which they appear in his letter.

Accessing Asbestos Information Online

I note the points raised by Mr Clement Evans but, as I have explained, I do not intend to require local authorities to make information about asbestos management available online.

Asbestos Management in School Working Group in Wales

Mr Clement-Evans queried whether the initial meeting of the Working Group was held in the summer of 2014. I would like to clarify that a meeting was in fact held on 29 June 2015 to discuss the review of policy by the Department for Education in England (DfE). As we considered that the group's input was of value to Wales we agreed that it should be established formally as an Asbestos Management in Schools Working Group. A further meeting was then held in January 2016 to discuss the draft terms of reference for the group and to agree the way forward.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

English Enquiry Line 0300 0603300
Llinell Ymholiadau Cymraeg 0300 0604400
Correspondence.Huw.Lewis@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The members of the group continue to monitor progress in England. When developments occur the Welsh Ministers will consider the implications for Wales with respect to guidance and policy decisions. It is at this stage that additional key stakeholder groups will be consulted, including the teaching unions.

Terms of reference

The petitioner has highlighted that the terms of reference for the Welsh Asbestos Management in Schools Working Group differ from those for the DfE Asbestos in Schools Steering Group. This reflects the complementary role of the two groups. As asbestos in schools presents similar problems in both England and Wales, we are satisfied that the work carried out in England will provide Wales with enough information to take any appropriate action.

Department of Education Steering Group

My officials continue to liaise with colleagues in England, so that the Welsh Government is kept informed of developments in this area. They attended the DfE Asbestos in Schools Steering Group meeting on 31 March and will also attend future meetings.

The health and safety of children and staff are very important to me and I would like to assure you of my continued commitment to this issue



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