

Parliamentarians call for urgent action on asbestos in schools

A report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health has exposed the level of danger from asbestos in Britain's schools.

The report, sent to MPs and Peers today, shows that more than 75 per cent of Britain's state schools contain asbestos. Much of that is badly maintained, meaning that children and staff are exposed to this killer fibre.

Over 140 school teachers have died from mesothelioma in the past ten years. An unknown number of cleaners, administrative staff and caretakers have also died. The number of children who have died as a result of exposure to asbestos while at school is unknown but in the US it was estimated that for every teacher's death nine children will die. That would mean that over 100 people die every year in the UK as a result of exposure when they were at school.

The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Safety and Health report highlights the case for urgent action. It not only outlines the problem but makes six clear and simple recommendations about how we can prevent future exposure in our schools.

In launching the report, Jim Sheridan MP, Chair of the All-Party Group said "This is a national scandal. Urgent action is needed to prevent more pupils, teachers and other staff being exposed to this deadly killer dust. We need both far greater awareness of the risks that this material poses and a programme for its phased removal."

Jim Sheridan MP
Chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Occupational Health and Safety