

Joint Union Asbestos Committee (JUAC)

2011 SUMMARY REPORT

The Joint Union Asbestos Committee (JUAC) is formed from the union members of the AIS. It works in conjunction with the AIS and supports its aim and objectives.

The Joint Union Asbestos Committee (JUAC) is a non-party political group of trade unions (ASCL, ATL, GMB, NAHT, NASUWT, NUT, UCATT, UNISON, UNITE and VOICE) with a common interest in making schools and colleges safe from the dangers of asbestos, both for staff and pupils. In the long term we wish to see all asbestos removed from all schools. However we recognise that, realistically, the focus in the short and medium term must be on safe management of asbestos in schools and colleges.

Asbestos In Schools Group (AIS)

The Asbestos in Schools Group (AIS) is a campaigning and pressure non-party political group of organisations and individuals with an interest in making schools safe from the dangers of asbestos. AIS are represented on the DfE asbestos steering group. JUAC aims to work within the group to improve the asbestos management in schools.

DfE Asbestos Steering Group

JUAC and AIS are represented on the DfE asbestos steering group. JUAC aims to work within the group to improve the asbestos management in schools.

THE AIM

The aim is to make United Kingdom schools safe from the dangers of asbestos both for staff and pupils.

Campaigning Objectives

1. Audit of extent, type and condition of asbestos

JUAC campaigns for a national audit of the extent, type and condition of asbestos in all schools.

2. Audit of standards of asbestos management.

In order to bring the standards of asbestos management in all schools up to those of the best, schools that are failing to manage asbestos have to be identified and given assistance.

JUAC campaigns for a system of on the ground inspections to be evolved and an audit to be carried out of the standards of asbestos management in all schools.

JUAC calls for thorough asbestos surveys to be made mandatory.

3. Risk Assessment.

Schools are a special place because they contain large numbers of children. JUAC campaigns for an assessment to be undertaken of the risks from asbestos to the occupants of schools. In particular JUAC calls for the Government to commission an assessment of the risks to children from asbestos.

4. Training

JUAC campaigns for all headteachers, building managers, teaching staff, support staff, governors and relevant local authorities officials to be trained in asbestos awareness and, where applicable, asbestos management. The courses should be tailored to their role. This should include people entering the profession and those in post. Standards should be set and the training should be mandatory.

5. Guidance

JUAC campaigns for specific guidance to be issued as a one stop reference for managing asbestos in schools. It should clearly define areas of responsibility. It should give clear definitions and examples of best practice. It should specify the standards to be achieved in training.

6. Phased Removal

JUAC campaigns for the adoption of a national policy of phased removal of all asbestos from all schools, with priority being given to the identification and removal of the most dangerous asbestos materials.

SUMMARY OF JUAC CAMPAIGN WORK IN 2011

1. Audit of extent, type and condition of asbestos

JUAC responded to The James Review in 2011 calling for a national audit of the extent, type and condition of asbestos.

2. Audit of standards of asbestos management.

JUAC sourced and published its own data by carrying out a national survey of H&S reps in schools to challenge the HSE own survey on LA schools. JUAC responded to The James Review in 2011 calling for a national system of inspection to be evolved.

3. Risk Assessment.

JUAC welcomes the research by CoC in to the issue of the relative vulnerability of children to asbestos recognising that schools are special places because they hold huge numbers of children. JUAC will attend the COC meetings next year.

4. Training

JUAC is a member of the DfE Steering Group - asbestos in schools; which is a working group attempting to find solutions to the problems posed by asbestos in UK schools.

JUAC are supporting the new DfE web-site online asbestos training package. The project is still in its design phase. JUAC are represented on the editorial steering group and will contribute to the development of the training content and will engage in user testing.

JUAC is working to improve awareness at grass roots level amongst H&S Reps and lay members and are in the process of setting up a JUAC web-site which can host advice sheets, carry the JUAC responses to the various consultations, connect to HSE online

training and further connect education union members to JUAC and their own unions' information and advice sources.

5. Guidance

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6. Phased Removal

JUAC is working with AIS to raise political awareness and support for the ultimate objective of phased removal. JUAC attends the APPG meetings and works with and supports the Asbestos Forums. A joint JUAC/AIS booklet for MPs is shortly to be distributed by the APPG Occupational Health sub-committee group on asbestos.

JUAC has during 2011 responded to the following Government consultations:-

HSE classroom risk assessment/classroom checklist consultation
The James Review
The Loftstedf Review
The HSE Proposals on revised Control of Asbestos Regulations

JUAC understands the importance of raising public awareness whilst recognising that this must be handled with sensitivity.

JUAC attended meetings with the London Borough Asbestos Group and the Bradford Borough Asbestos in Schools Group.

JUAC/AIS presented at the Yorkshire and Humberside TUC H&S Forum.

JUAC also reports to and liaises with its lay members to raise awareness of the issue at grass root level. This is achieved by members of JUAC reporting back through their own internal committee structures, annual health and safety briefings H&S working groups and issuing information via union health and safety communications.

JUAC has raised public awareness during 2011 to the wider public through JUAC press releases.

End.