

The latest news and announcements from Derbyshire UNISON

Asbestos removal

Cancers related to asbestos - including mesothelioma - remain one of the biggest causes of work-related deaths in the UK



UNISON welcomes asbestos report

UNISON has broadly welcomed this week's report from the work and pensions committee, which calls for a deadline for the removal of asbestos in all public buildings.

With cancers related to asbestos - including mesothelioma - remaining one of the biggest causes of work-related deaths in the UK, the committee highlighted the risk of disturbing the material and exposing workers to it when retrofitting buildings in response to net zero plans around energy efficiency. It also reported on a woeful lack of inspection and enforcement activity by the Health and Safety Executive.

The committee made a number of recommendations including:

- more funding for the Health and Safety Executive to boost inspection and enforcement activity;
- a clear strategy, and deadline of within 40 years, for the removal of asbestos in 300,000 public and commercial buildings, prioritising high-risk areas such as schools;
- government to develop a central, digital asbestos register, containing

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information on asbestos in schools and hospitals as well as other public buildings.

UNISON has long campaigned for the phased removal of asbestos in buildings and for increased inspection activity and a robust approach to enforcement by the Health and Safety Executive.

The union submitted written evidence to the committee as a member of the joint unions asbestos committee, which has called for the removal of asbestos in schools to be prioritised.

UNISON national officer for health and safety Kim Sunley said: "Many of our members are living with the legacy of previous asbestos exposures and the devastation a diagnosis of mesothelioma can bring.

"The government must act now with a strategy to protect workers and future generations from this preventable cancer."

[Read more about the committee's report](#)