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CE/SBT
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Dear Steve

RE: MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS

Following discussion with Emma Townsend, Health and Safety Manager I was informed that you recently considered issuing Caerphilly County Borough Council with an improvement notice on Asbestos Management. I understand that on this occasion you have decided not to issue a notice, however you expect us to make improvement to our existing asbestos management arrangements.

To outline our current position; at Caerphilly County Borough Council we recognise the potential risks associated with Asbestos containing materials and are committed to ensuring we have in place robust and effective arrangements to manage the risks. We currently have an Asbestos Management Policy, Asbestos Registers and logbooks (each premises is revisited annually and the register updated) and have recently provided Building Managers training covering asbestos awareness to all those who manage or control premises occupied by CCBC.

We acknowledge the gaps in our existing arrangements relating to the need to introduce Asbestos Management Plans for premises and to ensure we have in place effective arrangements to manage asbestos in housing stock including the provision of asbestos awareness information to tenants.

We are currently working to ensure we improve our existing practices and to introduce procedures to address any shortfalls. Work currently in progress includes:

- An Asbestos Sub-group chaired by the Chief Housing Officer to develop a strategy for managing asbestos in council houses including surveying housing types, recording information and ensuring information is communicated to those likely to carry out work. This group is also considering the best way to provide information on asbestos to tenants and an information leaflet is currently in draft.
- Asbestos Management Plans – the Corporate Health and Safety Unit are drafting a plan based on the Cardiff Council model, which will be subject to full consultation. It is proposed that each Building Manager will be visited and a copy of the Asbestos Management Plan delivered and explained.
- Policy Review – the current policy has been subject to an extensive review, the revised policy will be relaunched to link into the introduction of Asbestos Management Plans.
- Asbestos Training – training for front-line employees is due to commence in June and will form part of a rolling programme.
- Monitoring and auditing – this forms part of the work programme of the Corporate Health and Safety Unit. It is planned to increase the number of asbestos based audits to ensure arrangements for managing asbestos are effective in practice.

It is recognised that Asbestos Management is an area of HSE priority and as an Authority we are committed to ensuring we have in place improved arrangements to ensure legal compliance by the end of October 2007. Emma Townsend, Health and Safety Manager will ensure you are kept up to date with progress and will work with you to ensure our actions and timescales are in accordance with HSE requirements.

Please contact me if you have any queries or wish to discuss further.

Yours sincerely

Stuart Rosser
Chief Executive