

23 December 2016

Our Ref : 33277565

Dear Liz Townsend

Asbestos Pipes

I'm sorry the information I sent you was incorrect in the last two emails regarding the asbestos clean water pipes, I appreciate how frustrating this would be. I had sought advice from a number of people who all advised me this material wasn't ever used. However I've been corrected by a specialist and you were correct in stating there were asbestos pipes in the area. We've had a meeting on 16 December 2016, to discuss Cranleigh's water improvement options.

We have approximately 14km of asbestos cement water mains in the Cranleigh area, and 35km of main made of other materials. We have around 792km of asbestos cement pipes out of our network of 31,500km water mains. It may be helpful to note that most failures of asbestos cement pipes are related to the connectors between sections of pipe, and not the pipe itself.

We provide additional training to all staff who work on asbestos cement pipes, to ensure they are aware of the special requirements for this material. We also adhere to the following as part of our Asset Standards when dealing with asbestos pipes:

- We will not use any new asbestos cement pipes
- If we find asbestos pipes when carrying out work, we take extra care to ensure our staff and customers are safe at all times. All pipes will be washed through to avoid the risk of asbestos entering our network.
- If we need to connect to an asbestos pipe we will use an existing connection point rather than make a new one.
- We will never cut any asbestos materials on site. However, we do have to cut the connectors between sections of pipe.
- Under no circumstances shall the cutting of asbestos cement pipes be carried out on site. However it will be necessary to cut existing collars.
- In line with Environment Agency Guidelines (EA Regulatory Position Statement 008, version 7 "Leaving decommissioned pipe in excavations" issued 2014), we are allowed to leave intact or damaged asbestos pipes, in the ground as long as:
 - a) Any sections removed to allow work to be carried out, or loose debris from broken pipe section are taken away for proper disposal.
 - b) We record the position of the decommissioned pipes on our records, and make this available to other utility companies upon request.

The health risks associated with asbestos cement water mains has been reviewed in studies by the Drinking Water Institute in "*Asbestos cement drinking water pipes and possible health risks review for DWI*" and the World Health Organisation in "*Asbestos in Drinking-water, Background document for development of WHO Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality*" which I have attached for your reference.

The consensus after studies of the effects of asbestos fibres in drinking water, show there is little evidence of any health concerns. Although some types of Asbestos can be hazardous when handled, it is not considered to be hazardous to human health when used in potable water networks. For this reason there are no plans to replace the current sections of asbestos piping, other than for an operational need.

The importance of the quality of our customers' water is paramount to ourselves and we are amongst the leaders in our industry for water quality. We test over 500,000 water samples annually within our region to ensure that our water is of the highest quality. Our water is also tested by the Drinking Water Inspectorate, who monitor and enforce water quality regulations on behalf of the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs. They assess the wholesomeness of our water, and carry out audits to examine all aspects of water quality, treatment, monitoring and analysis to ensure it adheres to the standards set out in the Water Supply (Water Quality) Regulations 2000.

The current regulations followed by the Drinking Water Inspectorate, refer to the World Health Organisation's guidance on the use of asbestos cement mains in potable water networks. The guidance advises that:

“Although well studied, there has been little convincing evidence of the carcinogenicity of ingested asbestos in epidemiological studies of populations with drinking water supplies containing concentrations of asbestos. There is therefore no consistent evidence that ingested asbestos is hazardous to health and thus it was concluded that there was no need to establish a health-based guideline value for asbestos in drinking water”

I've requested a copy of the mapping system for Cranleigh which will indicate where the asbestos pipes lay. I'm waiting for confirmation of whether I can obtain this map and send it to you for your reference.

Yours sincerely

Charlotte Lovett

Customer Relations