

## **Appendix 4**

### **Children and Families Committee April 2025 - Briefing note**

#### **Condition, Compliance and Health & Safety assessments in our schools**

##### **Overview**

Cheshire East are the responsible body for 36 schools (at the point of writing), this includes 3 secondaries, 30 primaries, 1 nursery and 2 special schools.

The remaining 119 schools are either Academies, Voluntary Aided (VA) schools or Free schools, CEC is not the responsible body, and information would need to be provided by the respective trust/diocese etc.

Annually we set a programme of works to undertake condition schemes in schools, this programme is set utilising information from a number of sources, this includes our condition surveys (we are in year 3 of a 3 year programme of condition surveys, of which 23 schools have been completed with the remaining 13 schools to be surveyed within the next few months), DfE CDC reports, feedback from compliance visits, information provided by schools, or issues that have arisen within our schools.

In addition to this schools are able to purchase packages for Health and Safety visits via the ChESS hub. These visits are undertaken by our inhouse team and reports are provided to the schools.

The DfE provides School Condition Allocations (SCA) on an annual basis for local authority-maintained schools only, this provides the Council with funding maintain school building infrastructures. In line with DfE guidance, investment is prioritised on keeping school buildings safe and in good working order by tackling poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, safeguarding concerns as well as health and safety and suitability issues.

The majority of our school building stock is in excess of 50 years old and whilst generally maintained and issues are addressed as needed, the majority of our school buildings are beyond their anticipated lifespan, this includes both maintained and academies. Whilst we rewire, replace boilers, reroof and re-fenestrate buildings, these works do not provide the necessary updates/ new builds that are energy efficient and suitable environments to take us forward for the future. There are issues with ventilation, light management, poor energy and building performance, external areas including playing fields that all require significant investment across the whole estate.

##### **Surveys and Visits to schools**

#### **1. DfE Condition Data Collection Programme**

From 2021 to 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) Condition Data Collection 2 (CDC2) programme has been visiting all government-funded schools, to collect data about the condition of their buildings.

This data will provide a comprehensive picture of the condition of the school estate in England.

These surveys are non-intrusive and undertaken by qualified professionals.

The schools are contacted direct by the DfE appointed surveyors to arrange the site visits. Completed surveys are sent to schools and for maintained settings a copy is sent to the LA.

## **2. School Condition Reports**

The Council's Facilities Management Team arrange for the undertaking batches of condition surveys, at Maintained schools, to ascertain the likely lifecycle of the building fabric and the installed plant and equipment.

The surveys are non-intrusive, undertaken via competent and qualified professionals, and provide an indication of the current condition, the likely remaining lifespan and indications of future replacement costs of individual assets.

The information gathered is collated and interrogated annually, alongside the DfE Condition Data, to prioritise and develop an annual programme of capital repair and refurbishment projects. This also ties in with formal enquires and requests received by schools, to look at specific issues and potential failures of the school's building fabric.

We are in year 3 of a 3 year programme of condition surveys, of which 23 schools have been completed with the remaining 13 schools to be surveyed within the next few months.

## **3. Statutory Compliance Liaison and Inspections**

The Council's Facilities Management Service provide Head Teachers with the advice and guidance necessary, to assist with the effective and safe management and servicing of school building premises, in order to enable schools to meet their statutory obligations.

All schools classified as 'Maintained' receive a complementary Building Compliance Inspection, from a representative of the Facilities Management Service, during the academic year.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide assurance that maintained schools are compliant in respect of the building fabric and the servicing of installed plant/equipment, to ensure that all statutory checks and servicing records are in place.

Non-maintained and Academy schools have the ability to purchase-back this service, along with access to the FM Property Helpdesk for advice and guidance, as a service provided via the ChESS Hub.

The Facilities Management Team's visit is to ensure that all building-related statutory legislation around inspection, examination and testing of the building fabric and its installed mechanical plant/equipment are met through a process of maintenance and servicing obligations, routine inspections and regular risk assessments.

The inspection includes (but is not limited to) the following key areas:

- Asbestos Management (annual reinspections are undertaken, where asbestos is present)
- Legionella Management (weekly / monthly monitoring plus risk assessments and cleaning regimes)
- Fire Safety Management (including the servicing of fire safety equipment and risk assessments)
- Electrical Safety (all installed electrical equipment is regularly tested and certified as safe)
- Gas & Oil Safety (all heating systems are regularly inspected, serviced and certified as safe)
- Lifting equipment (passenger lifts and hoists are regularly serviced)
- Tree Management (regular risk assessment and maintenance of trees within site boundary)
- Energy Efficiency Certification (DECs and EPCs)

The benefit of the inspection is to provide:

- Assistance to identify needs and shortfalls in meeting with relevant legislative requirements
- Professional advice on actions to achieve the identified legislative requirements
- Access to and use of the Council's competent statutory compliance Service Providers

As part of the inspection visit, a walk-around and discussion is encouraged with school management representatives, to assess if there are any issues arising in terms of the building fabric, such as windows, roofs, fire alarm systems and heating systems etc., which can then be fed through as considerations for future capital refurbishment projects.

An interrogation of maintenance and servicing records also provides an opportunity to assess the remaining lifespan of installed plant and equipment, i.e. fire alarms, heating systems etc.

#### **4. Health and safety visits to schools**

Schools are able to purchase 2 different levels of health and safety visits to schools, the full package or Prime only, the difference is detailed below:-

##### **Full health and safety package purchase**

The purpose of the Health and Safety visits is to assist and ensure that Head Teachers, Governors, Site Managers and staff are meeting their legal responsibilities to manage health, safety and welfare in their schools.

The Review Visit is to advise schools on health, safety and welfare issues but is not an enforcement visit. The Report does not give any scores, the purpose is a qualitative check rather than a quantitative check.

As part of the full cost Health and Safety Package the schools receive the following: -

- One formal Health and Safety Visit and Review Report per Academic Year.
- Telephone/Email health and safety advice, guidance and support service during school hours
- Access to health and safety information via the ChESS Hub and School Bulletins
- ChESS has several Health and Safety Policies/Procedures and Risk Assessment information available to the schools.
- Licence for using PRIME. Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) is undertaken by Corporate Health & Safety Team for all CEC non-Academy schools. All Academies and private schools are responsible for reporting their own RIDDORS.

### **Prime only purchase**

Any schools who purchase Prime only are responsible for reporting their own RIDDORS.

### **Overview of Visit and Report provided**

The visits consist the following: -

- Confirmation Letter for the visit
- Copy of their previous Health and Safety Review undertaken
- Health and Safety Checklist for help when collating documentation together for the visit.

At the time of the visit the previous Action Plan would be looked at to see if the school had achieved all actions and if not, an explanation given by the school which may mean extra time for an action to be completed.

The Review Report consists of the following 5 areas: -

#### **Leadership**

Health & Safety Policy in place; Designated Health & Safety Governor in place; Health & Safety Co-Ordinator in place; Health & Safety Monitoring; Training e.g. IOSH Managing Safely; Asbestos Awareness; Fire Awareness; COSHH Awareness; Legionella Awareness; Manual Handling; Working at Height; First Aid

#### **Building Compliance**

Asbestos Survey Report; Boiler Service dates; Building and Site Risk Assessment; Equipment service dates; Fire Risk Assessments in place; Fire Evacuation & Drills; Lockdown Procedures & Drills; COSHH Assessments; Legionella Risk

Assessments – ensuring all Risk Assessments have been signed, dated and are current.

### **Working Practices**

Educational Visits; Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs); Lone Working; Manual Handling; Pupil Handling; Office Safety and splay Screen Equipment Risk Assessments; Working at Height Risk Assessments; Work Experience Risk Assessments – ensuring all Risk Assessments have been signed, dated and are current.

### **Managing Health and Wellbeing**

First Aid Risk Assessments; First Aiders List; Medication; New & expectant Mothers Risk Assessments; Stress & Wellbeing; Animals on Site e.g. Therapy Dogs.

### **Site Arrangements**

Playground Management; Tree Surveys; Pond Risk Assessment; Swimming Pools; Out of school areas that are hired out to external persons/companies; Security on Site; Vehicular Movement on school premises.

### **Recommendations:-**

Any recommendations or issues would be put into an Action Plan with a realistic time frame for completion. These may be revisited by email to see how the school is getting on or if really minor issues would be looked at the next Review Visit.