

JANUARY 2015

# TPM<sup>4</sup> Schools Newsletter



## A thought for the New Year

Somebody once observed that the build up to Christmas was so drawn out that the only way you knew Christmas Eve had arrived was when the supermarkets began stocking their shelves with Easter eggs. For some of our European cousins, particularly in Spain and Portugal, it goes on longer as the presents are brought by the Wise Men and do not arrive until the feast of the Epiphany (6th January). In schools December can be frenetic with much of the extra organisation, preparation and delivery falling on teachers shoulders. I hope that having given so much of yourself for the children, the school and the community you found time for yourself and your family and maybe even a little time to rest.

This New Year will like all others bring some things we hope for and some we never saw coming. I am not sure whatever happens at the General Election in May will bring much cheer for the public sector. Funding will remain under pressure and that will bring its challenges for schools. Elsewhere in this newsletter I have reflected on how you might address tighter fiscal spending. I do however hope that a new government of whatever persuasion might refrain from constantly knocking the services provided by public servants particular in health and education. We need political leaders that can rejoice in what is good and accept that it is always easier for people to complain than to praise.

Good news, as most people realise, does not sell newspapers or make for good television. My wish for this year is that we can begin to change the culture that assumes that one bruise on an apple makes the whole apple bad. We need brave leaders who will challenge the tendency of regulators like OFSTED to react to concerns in one place by increasing inspection and regulation for all. We could reduce public spending significantly if we trusted teachers and clinicians and stopped dealing with issues in individual schools or hospital trusts as though they represented something which is endemic in the system.

As some of you know I had a hip replaced in the autumn at a Trust, Morecambe Bay, which has had more than its fair share of criticism for the care it provides. I have nothing but praise for the excellent care I received and cannot thank all those involved enough. I have written to them to say so but unlike the letters they have had criticising them it has not as yet made the newspapers! Can I also say a big thank you to all those who sent me good wishes. I am now fully recovered although it may be a bit before I run a marathon or more likely play 18 holes of golf.

## Asbestos Training

Asbestos is an issue in most schools but, if managed properly, should not cause any problems. The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 places duties on building owners and managers (Governors, Heads and Site Supervisors). This course will provide guidance on the legal requirements for schools and how to ensure they are met.

### Asbestos Webinar Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March at 4pm

Delivered over the web, the course can be viewed from any PC at school or home. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and all participants will receive a certificate.

The Webinar course costs £80 per school no matter how many participants.

To register - please email [info@tpm4.com](mailto:info@tpm4.com) We will acknowledge the email which will confirm your school is booked on the course. Details of how to join will be sent direct from the Webinar company, to the same email address you used to book on, 48 hours before the course. You will receive an invoice from DBE Services which will need to be settled before certificates are issued.

## Contact Details

**TPM Office 01254 584690**

8am - 5pm Monday to Friday  
All requests or enquiries

**Fax number 01254 584699**

8am - 5pm Monday to Friday  
Job requests during office hours

**Email [info@dbeservices.co.uk](mailto:info@dbeservices.co.uk)**

Job requests during office hours. At other times please use the emergency number

**Emergencies  
01254 584699**

Outside office hours and Bank Holidays

We can point to a number of issues in which schools have made the headlines which have led to politicians and regulators defaulting to the big stick approach. Recent events in one or two schools have led to concern that young people are being radicalised and it is now the duty of every teacher to report any concerns they may have about individuals as though this is an issue in every school - rather than one or two out of 25000.



Given all the other pressures it is easy simply to say there is nothing we can do this is just how the world is. It is also always easier to conform than to challenge especially when the challenge is against the state or the LA. Twenty five years ago the idea that smoking could be banned in public buildings would have been seen as impossible; ten years ago to have suggested that gay marriage would be legal would have found few supporters; this time last year the Scottish Independence vote was seen by most commentators as “a dead cert no” - it has now influenced not only powers in Scotland but also funding to English regions. There is a huge discontinuity in thinking by any government which espouses the success of the private school sector which is very lightly regulated but at the same time wants to act like “big brother” and increase the burden of regulation on its maintained schools. Perhaps DBE Services should become a conduit through which the schools we serve can proclaim their successes and begin to challenge the ever increasing burden of regulation and inspection. As always I would welcome your comments.

Happy New Year  
Peter

## Staff changes

Anne Beenham left us at Christmas. Anne took on the new role of Director of Operations earlier in 2014 and in the short time she has been with us has helped us develop our policies and systems as well as making a huge contribution to the day to day work. We are sad to see Anne go but wish her well in her new challenge - supporting her granddaughter who has a real medal prospect in the ice skating competition at the winter Olympics maybe in South Korea in 2018 and/or in 2022.

International success requires great talent and dedication, just hearing the details of the training regime makes me feel exhausted, but also relies on family and friends making huge sacrifices not least financial ones. If you know of a company, or individual philanthropist, who may be willing to sponsor a medal prospect, I know Anne and her family would be delighted to hear from them. I would be happy to pass on details. Should you wish you can read more about Anne’s granddaughter in the January edition of Lancashire Life.

I am delighted to announce that David Hopkins joined us on 2<sup>nd</sup> January as Director of Operations. David has a vast knowledge of servicing and reactive maintenance. In his previous role as Head of Facilities at Liverpool University he managed large contracts providing revenue and capital services to the University. His email address is [david@dbeservices.co.uk](mailto:david@dbeservices.co.uk)

## Dealing with Contractors

As you are aware the TPM scheme, unlike many other schemes, does not make any charge or mark-up for managing reactive maintenance. If you need quotes for work we are happy to provide them and if you decide to go ahead with the work we will place the order with your preferred contractor.

If we place the work, when the invoice arrives we will check that it is in accordance with the rates, or the quote we have agreed, before sending it on to the school.

We are also happy for you to go direct to contractors to arrange reactive work if you prefer or, following a quote, to make direct contact with the contractor.

If you choose to go direct to the contractor we are not able to check invoices as we do not know what it is that you have agreed with them and in these instances you will need to deal directly with the contractor.

For both schools and contractors we have stipulated that if we have placed the work, we will have allocated a DBER Job reference number which must be quoted on all correspondence.



## Keeping the school safe and legal

The TPM Service is fundamentally an advice and guidance service which schools can use for any aspect of the maintenance and development of the building. The provision of a Building Consultant who will work at risk providing advice, professional expertise, plans, costing and ultimately, if the school wishes to proceed with a project, acquire tenders and manage the work; all at no cost unless the project is funded and delivered when they will charge professional fees; has been available to Church of England Schools for fifty years and Community and all other schools for the last fourteen years. The development of revenue services to support schools with regular servicing, compliance and reactive maintenance extended the service to be a Total Property Management Service.



We will happily advise schools on what they need to do to be compliant (the phrase statutory compliance is loosely used as little is statutory)

If a school wishes us to put in place contractors to carry out the work we have undergone due diligence on contractors who can provide virtually anything a school will need.

We have developed our service to provide best value which means balancing service level and cost. We accept that you will be able to find contractors who will do things for less but would advise you to check that they will provide the service you may need if something goes wrong or you need them urgently. We are always happy to use a school's preferred contractor and will offer advice on how they compare to others on our list. The Head and Governors are responsible for their school so having offered our advice we offer a bespoke service tailored to meet the individual school needs and desires.

Local Authorities are increasingly moving from provider of services to having a more strategic overview. We welcome that and seek to have a close working relationship with them. Sadly they don't always want one with us. It concerns us that some LAs appear to require schools to do things in a particular way and give the impression that this is because it is required by "law". On a number of occasions we have written to LAs seeking to work with them and asking them to provide the details of requirements they seem to be imposing.

When I was Director of Education for Blackburn Diocese I encouraged schools to write to the Chief Executive of the relevant LA to ask for confirmation in writing of "statutory" guidance they had been given by officers when they felt that there had been a loose use of the word statutory. I saw very few written confirmations of such guidance!

We have spent a great deal of time working with consultants and contractors to decide what has to be done against that which, if money were not an issue, would be good practice. For sixty years schools relied on local authorities to provide them with services and simply to make sure that everything that had to be done was done. There is a lot about the management of the school building which was carried out in a particular way because "it was always done that way". We have spent a lot of time and resources establishing a service based on what needs to be done as opposed to what has always been done. Our review of Legionella testing resulted in big changes in practice and a consequential reduction in costs - in some cases by over 50%. Some schools did not want to make the changes so we happily continue to provide them with the service they have "always had" and they accept the costs for that.

We offer advice so you can have all the information to choose what suits your school. All our advice is based both on risk assessment and the amount of in-house regular assessment each school is willing to undertake. It is important that a school has done a risk assessment based on its own needs which relates to current guidance and it can clearly articulate the reasons for whatever pattern of service it chooses.

Every industry produces good practice guidance but that has to be balanced against many factors not least the availability of financial resources to fund it. Some "traditional" service patterns we recommend schools review in the light of current guidance

Ultimately you have a fixed budget and have to decide how best to spend it to give the children you serve the best education. It is always easy for people to advise on extra things you "ought" to do when



they don't have to find the money to do it. We are always very happy to discuss any aspect of school building management and offer advice on how to get best value.

## Making Changes to ASCs

For all schools (as opposed to Academies) this term we review your ASC in preparation for the new financial year. We write to every school and ask if there are any changes you wish to make to either the list of services we provide or the contractors who carry them out. We also take the opportunity to make recommendations for changes in contractor. This tends to occur when we have negotiated a “better deal” with an alternative contractor or we have concluded an existing contractor is not providing a good service and despite all our efforts to discuss this with them and seek improvement the only way forward is a parting of the ways.

We never change a contractor without consulting the school. We do however operate on a “negative resolution principle”. If you don’t respond to our communication about a change in contractor we normally make that change because we believe that ultimately you would want best value. We also send you an updated ASC showing this change.

Very occasionally a school comes back to us, sometimes months later, (in one case it was eighteen months later) to ask why we made the change and didn’t tell them. Invariably in these cases the school is unhappy by what they perceive as changes without their permission and wishes to reinstate the original contractor. We are always happy to reinstate a contractor although we make it clear to the school our reasons for making the change so they understand the consequence of that reinstatement for cost and/or level of service.

We understand why schools may feel aggrieved and have reviewed our policy. On balance we believe that schools seek our advice and expect we will strive to give them contractors who offer best value. We have therefore decided that we will continue with the “negative resolution” principle and encourage schools to check ASCs when we send them to them.

We would welcome your comments.

## Annual Autumn Survey 2014

The Annual Autumn Survey Report 2014, which asks all schools in our scheme to comment on our performance, was published in December 2014. A copy has been sent to all schools in the scheme. If you are not a member of the TPM<sup>4</sup>Schools scheme but would like a copy, please email [peter@dbeservices.co.uk](mailto:peter@dbeservices.co.uk)

We thought you may be interested in some of the headline data from the report. This data is crucial to DBE Services in the refinement and further development of our TPM<sup>4</sup>Schools product and always with you our ‘customer’ at the heart of everything we do.

Questions responded to promptly	93%
TPM Staff are always helpful	99%
Satisfaction with the service provided by TPM staff	98%
TPM is Value for Money	87%
Satisfaction with management of planned servicing	88%
Will definitely continue to use TPM in the future	89%
Would you recommend the TPM Service to others	85%

All results are either within, or exceed, TPM’s current targets for performance. However, we are always seeking to improve and the feedback gained will help us identify where we can improve even further. The full report gives an indication of any actions taken or planned as a result of the Autumn Survey.

## Recommend a new school and reduce your management fee

If you recommend a new school to consider joining TPM<sup>4</sup>Schools and they then join the service we will reduce the management fee, for both you and the new school, by £250 for the next year.

If you have recommended us to more than one school, who has subsequently joined the TPM<sup>4</sup>Schools scheme, the management fee would be reduced by £250 per recommendation.

Please let Peter have the contact details at [peter@dbeservices.co.uk](mailto:peter@dbeservices.co.uk)

## Biomass Boilers

If you are thinking of replacing your boiler, Peter is able to offer advice on Biomass Boilers and the substantial savings to be made. Contact Peter at [peter@dbeservices.co.uk](mailto:peter@dbeservices.co.uk)