

**For the Attention of the Chief Executive  
Local Authority**

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011

Dear Sir or Madam

### **Coal Authority Mine Entry Disclosure and Inspection Programme**

I am writing to inform you of the work that the Coal Authority is undertaking throughout England, Scotland and Wales. The Coal Authority is the government body that owns the un-worked coal and abandoned coal mines in Britain. Its statutory responsibilities include the management of the legacy remaining from coal mine working and the provision of information relating to coal mining.

In the interest of public safety and to ensure that the risks associated with past coal mining are correctly considered by the public and other parties the Coal Authority is planning to broaden it's disclosure of coal mining information. We have already been working with representatives from Local Authorities to share coal mining data on property owned or managed by the council. This will assist in the formulation of any risk assessment and strategy for dealing with any coal mining legacy issues that may exist in these areas.

As a further part of the disclosure programme the Coal Authority is undertaking work to raise awareness where old mine entries (shafts and adits) lie on residential properties. Over the past few years we have inspected over 42,000 of the recorded 171,000 mine entries in Britain. It is now intended to focus on the estimated 50,000 mine entries that lie within urban areas, some 18,000 of which lie within the boundary of residential properties. We intend to inspect all shafts located on residential properties by July 2012. There are mine entries within each coalfield Local Authority area, the majority of these are located in the rural and general urban environment however, some are located on or within the boundary of a residential property.

As we are writing directly to the occupiers of residential properties with mine entries it is possible that a member of the public may contact you about this matter. I have enclosed a briefing pack containing frequently asked questions with answers and a copy of the information that we send to residential properties. This information has been provided to the MPs and Local Councillors.

The Coal Authority is aware of the sensitive nature of this work. Some home owners will have been told about mine entries near to their property at the time of purchase by means of a mining report from their solicitor or they may be aware via general local knowledge. Reaction from the public on the mine entries inspected to date has been positive. We have also had substantial support from other MPs, and Councillors who we have worked with in other areas.

Mine entry inspections involve our trained staff looking around the outside of the house and garden, which should take approximately 5-10 minutes. During the inspection the engineer will answer any questions and leave an information leaflet with contact details. Following the inspection a report will be sent to the occupier. In the event of any further work being required the occupier and owner will be informed. Liability in the majority of cases for damage caused by old coal mine workings and mine entries lies with the Coal Authority. This process is necessarily reactive after damage or indications of potential problems have been reported.

If a member of the public does contact you and you feel unable to answer their questions please direct them to Coal Authority's general enquires telephone helpline: **0845 762 6848** or email [mine-entries@coal.gov.uk](mailto:mine-entries@coal.gov.uk)

If a mine entry is in a dangerous condition, has caused damage or allows access to a mine, please call or direct people to call our 24 hour emergency telephone line: **01623 646 333**

Should you require further information on this work please do not hesitate to contact me, however members of the public must be directed to the general enquiries telephone helpline.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Iwanskyj', is written on a light-colored rectangular background.

**Bohdan Iwanskyj**  
**Principal Manager – Mine Entry Inspections**