Responses and comments on the HSL provisional report and HSL's reply

Comments from Neil Todd January 2010
These relate to radiological hazards with no comments on mercury

Comments from John Churcher "Evidence of remediation prior to 1999."
Reply: HSL report para 2.3.2 specifically commented on the 1960s replastering work, but it was not considered necessary to point out that this would have been unlikely to affect airflows from under the floor. A phrase has been added in to expand this point: "…but this would have had no effects on either the amount of mercury under floors or vapour migration."
Comments from John Churcher in the 'annotated pages from HSL.
Section 2.1 first para " over the period 1976 to 2004" – why this period?
Reply – We are not sure where this came from – text deleted
Section 2.1 second para comment on the sentence involving the Bragg building
Reply – text deleted

Page 33 Table of significant events – insert 'C14'
Reply – text inserted

Comments from John Churcher in the 'covering email to Prof Coggon
Section 3 The nature of the ventilation system in the building.
Reply Thank you for pointing this out. In view of the uncertainties of whether the ventilation system described by Schuster worked, their effectiveness, together with when fume cupboards were installed, whether they ran continuously or intermittently and their effectiveness, make it difficult to say much about historical airflows. We have deleted the original text and added: There is very little information about ventilation systems or the presence, use and effectiveness of fume cupboards in the building over the years. There is, however, a description of the ventilation system in *some* rooms (Todd, 2008, p84) suggesting that at the time when radiochemistry was being performed in the building an enhanced level of air-exchange was induced in "rooms…likely to be crowded or to require a rapid change of air…" At least one room had "a large opening…in the wall" which would have reduced the likelihood that air would have been drawn into the room from beneath floorboards.

However there is no information on what extraction remained when the psychology department moved into the building, apart from a reference to a letter to Prof. Coggon, which implies that fume cupboards had been removed by the late 1950s or early 1960s. If this is reliable, it suggests that one of the one of the potential causes of airflows from beneath floorboards into the rooms had been removed at that time. Such fume cupboards as remained when the psychology department occupied the building, if not intentionally in use, are not likely to have created significant negative pressure that would have drawn airflows from beneath the floors.