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All you need to know about asbestos and staying safe in your home

This leaflet contains information about asbestos, what it is, where it can be found and what to do if you think you may have asbestos in your home.

As a Social Housing Landlord, we have a duty of care under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 to manage asbestos in all communal areas of our buildings built before 2000.

We are also required to carry out asbestos surveys before any refurbishment or maintenance work takes place.



What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that is very strong and fire resistant. It has been used for many years and was commonly used in building materials, including homes between the 1950's and the 1980's.

Asbestos was often used to fireproof buildings but was also used as a general building material. Almost all buildings built or changed during this period are likely to contain some form of asbestos.

It can be difficult to identify asbestos. Products which do contain asbestos can often look the same as those that do not.

Asbestos can be dangerous because it has very thin fibres which can't always be seen but, can be breathed in causing damage to the respiratory system.

The greatest risk occurs when materials containing asbestos are drilled, sawn, sanded or scrubbed which may release fibres causing high levels of exposure. However, if the asbestos is looked after properly, it is not a risk to your health or home.



How are we managing asbestos?

In communal areas

We have surveyed all our communal areas, including plant rooms, corridors and communal rooms to find out if any have asbestos. In the areas where asbestos was found we have completed a risk assessment and checked the overall condition of the asbestos. These areas will be re-inspected at least once a year and a new risk assessment will be completed at each inspection.

In your home

It's not always easy to spot areas that could contain asbestos, especially if they have been decorated or covered over by other materials. Experienced surveyors are best able to identify them.

We have a record of our homes and properties where asbestos has been found or is believed to exist. This register is updated each time we survey your home or remove some asbestos. If asbestos is found and it is in good condition, we will risk assess whether it is safe to leave in place. However, if the asbestos is in poor condition or has the potential to cause harm, we will remove it.

Your tenancy agreement requires you to get permission before you carry out any improvements, alterations or make additions to your property. This is to help control and monitor any asbestos which may be in your home.

Where can asbestos be found in homes?



Inside the home

Asbestos may be found in:

- A: Water tanks (especially older ones made from asbestos cement)
- B: Pipes (covered with asbestos insulation)
- C: Loft insulation (loose fill type)
- D: Ceilings (textured coatings like Artex)
- E: Ceiling tiles (made from asbestos insulating board)
- F: Bath panels (sometimes made from asbestos board)
- G: Toilets (older seats and cisterns)
- H: Fuse boxes (backed with asbestos board)
- I: Airing cupboards or boilers (sprayed insulation or board)
- J: Partition walls (made from asbestos board)
- K: Window panels (interior ones made from asbestos board)
- L: Boiler surroundings (insulated with asbestos board)

- M: Floor tiles (vinyl tiles may contain asbestos)
- N: Fireplaces (asbestos board behind the fire)

Outside the home

Asbestos may be found in:

- O: Gutters and downpipes (made from asbestos cement)
- P: Soffits (roof edges, possibly asbestos board or cement)
- Q: Window panels (external ones made from asbestos board)
- R: Roofing (asbestos cement sheets)
- S: Wall panels (asbestos cement)
- T: Roof felt (may contain asbestos)

Before work is carried out in your home

If there are any asbestos products in your home, it's important that you don't damage or disturb them in anyway. If you carry out DIY on asbestos products you could be potentially putting yourself in danger.

Before you make any changes to your home you must contact your Neighbourhood Coordinator to request permission. You can find their contact details on our website in the 'Get in touch' section. Please give as much detail as possible about the work you are proposing to do to your home. Your Neighbourhood Coordinator will then arrange for an Asbestos Surveyor to visit your home and complete an asbestos survey. You are unable to make any changes until the survey has been completed, if the surveyor can't gain access to your home, we will refuse the permission.

If the surveyor finds asbestos in your home, you are unable to remove it yourself. It must be removed by qualified licenced contractors. Asbestos waste can't be placed in your bin. By law it must be disposed of by a licensed waste carrier.



If you think you have found asbestos

If you believe you have found materials in your home which contain asbestos, please contact us. We will arrange for an Asbestos Surveyor to visit your home and take a sample of the material.

If you think you may have disturbed asbestos in your home, please leave the area and do not return until advised it is safe to do so. Report this to us by calling 0191 525 5000 and press 2 to report a repair.



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