

Repairs and Asbestos

A Guide for Tenants

Please keep this leaflet with your Tenants Handbook for information purposes.

This leaflet tells you more about asbestos, what it is and where it could be found in your home. It will help you to make sure that you and your family are not put at risk if there is asbestos.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the general name given to natural minerals, which are found all over the world. There are 3 main types of asbestos: known as blue asbestos (crocidolite), brown asbestos (amosite) and white asbestos (chrysotile). However, all types of asbestos are grey in their appearance.

Asbestos is very strong, flexible, stable and heat resistant. It was used widely in house building between the 1930s and the mid 1980s but mostly in the '60s and '70s. If your home was built or improved during this time, there is a good chance that it will contain some Asbestos Containing Materials. It is estimated that 75% to 85% of the county's houses built before 2000 contain asbestos material, including some homes throughout the district. In homes it is usually found mixed with other materials such as cement to give strength and heat resistance.

Where could I find asbestos?

These are some of the more usual uses of Asbestos Containing Materials around the home:

- Airbricks
 - Bath panels
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- Boilers and pipework
- Cold water tanks
- Corrugated cement sheeting – normally on sheds/garages.
- Decorative coatings eg. artexing
- Fire surrounds
- Flooring materials - vinyl type floor tiles; paper backing
- Flue pipes
- Rainwater guttering and downpipes
- Roof and exterior walls
- Waste pipes
- Sprayed coating on steel framed buildings
- Wall boarding – internal partitions, airing cupboard linings, duct and pipe covers
- Pipe lagging and duct linings

Are there any health risks?

Asbestos containing material that is undamaged does not present a health risk, but if asbestos materials are damaged, drilled, sawn, scrubbed or sanded, there can be a risk.

When asbestos containing material is damaged, fibres can be released into the air, sometimes getting into the lungs where they may stay for a long time. This may cause cancer and thickening of the lungs. The level of risk depends on how easily the fibres are released, the type of asbestos contained within the material, the length of exposure and the amount of damage to the actual material.

What is the Council doing about asbestos?

We have an Asbestos Management Policy for all Council homes, this sets out how we are going to identify and manage asbestos. We continue to carry out inspections to identify materials and to monitor their condition.

We are not aware of the highest risk materials being within our homes. If, during a check, we find material - damaged or otherwise - we will assess it and take necessary action to ensure you are not exposed to any undue risk. The work will be done by qualified contractors working to strict safety standards.

What happens if a workman finds or thinks there is asbestos in my home?

All of our workforce and contractors know about the potential for finding asbestos in homes and they take all necessary precautions when carrying out a job. If one of them thinks there may be a cause for concern they will immediately ask for an inspection to assess any risks or carry out the work safely, taking steps to minimise any risks.

What do I need to do?

- If you work on asbestos containing materials without training, expertise and personal protection, you can put yourself and your family at risk.
 - Alterations and changes to the structure of your home are not allowed under your tenancy agreement without prior written approval from the Council, including work to any artex covering.
 - If you want to carry out any improvements that could disturb any asbestos or if you are unsure if the work you are planning would disturb any asbestos, you must contact your Housing Officer on 01775 761161 in the first instance.
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- If you carry out any work or allow others to, without the Council's prior written approval, you will be liable for costs of dealing with any asbestos related incidents that may result as a consequence of the work you have undertaken.

What if I think I have damaged asbestos in my home?

If you think there is damaged asbestos in your home **DO NOT** try to deal with it yourself – contact our Property Services Team or Construction Services Unit on 01775 761161 immediately. We will assess the risk and take appropriate action.

For more information

Customer Service Centre: 01775 761161 or see these websites:

SHDC Website - www.sholland.gov.uk

The Health & Safety Executive

- www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm

Asbestos Information Centre Ltd - www.aic.org.uk

National Society for Clean Air - www.nasca.org.uk

Supplementary information regarding safety in the home and garden can be found in your Tenants Handbook.
