

# Keeping your home safe from Asbestos

Our plans, information and guidance



# Contents

Asbestos in your home - and why we need to check for it	03
– What is it?	03
– When is it dangerous?	03
– Why am I likely to be safe?	03
– How do the fibres get released?	04
Keeping yourself safe	04
– Your responsibilities	04
– Our responsibilities	05
Where is the asbestos?	05
Our plan to keep you safe	06
Do's and Don'ts	07
How to get advice	07



# Asbestos in your home – and why we need to check for it.

**This document is to reassure you about the safety of your home, and how we plan to keep it safe by checking for asbestos.**

## What is it – and why might it be in my home?

Asbestos is a natural mineral – made of small fibres. It's added to products for strength, fireproofing, insulation and noise reduction. It can sometimes be a problem if the products it's used in get damaged. That's when it can be a health risk. So this is why we must check your home for it. We need to check if it's in your home, and that it's still safe.

If your home was built after 1999 its very unlikely there will be asbestos in your home.

Asbestos is most commonly found found in homes built between 1940 and 1980 – and some as late as 1999. It's use can be found dating back thousands of years. Even if there is asbestos in your home there's very little risk to your health

Most asbestos in housing is low risk. If it's in good condition, it's unlikely to harm your health.

## When is it dangerous?

If it gets into the air, you can inhale asbestos fibres deep into the lungs where they can lodge themselves. Although this can then cause an infection that could lead to lung diseases, including cancer, this is not necessarily the case as the fibres can remain in the lungs for years without causing any problems. Unfortunately infection can still sometimes happen.

## Why am I likely to be safe from asbestos?

Any asbestos in your home will be locked inside whatever product it was used in. It's only a risk if these products get damaged. That's why we need to check your home. **Think about it like electricity. It's perfectly safe unless it is interfered with.**

It's hard to tell whether a product contains asbestos just by looking at it. So we need to take samples and test them in a lab.

So remember, there's no danger unless the fibres are released and inhaled into the lungs.

### How do the fibres get released?

If it happens at all, it's when accidentally disturbed, or during DIY and maintenance, and only then if something gets damaged in the process. Asbestos-containing materials in good condition won't release asbestos fibres.

## Keeping yourself safe



### Your responsibilities.

If you ever suspect asbestos, from any damage or deterioration in your home – do not touch it. Don't try to clean it up. Just call us straightaway at our Customer Service Centre on **0303 123 1890** and we'll get someone out to inspect it.



**Home improvements** – For any home improvements you want to do, always check with us first. We'll be able to make sure you; your family and the person doing the work are safe.

**For tenants** – you will need written approval from us before you start the work. We'll arrange for any samples and testing and we won't charge you for them.

**For leaseholders** – you will still need written approval, and you will need to arrange surveys and removal yourself. You'll need to get contractors licensed by the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) for certain types of work.

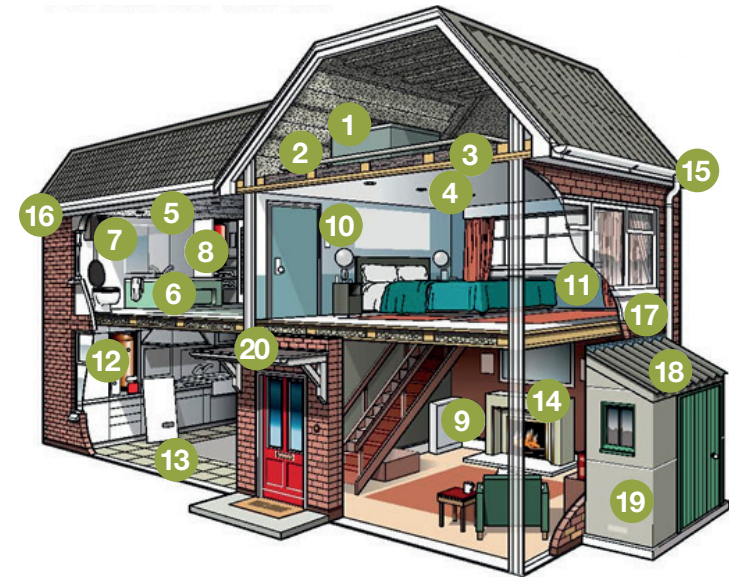
If you're ever not sure about what you need to do, just call our Customer Service Centre. We'll be happy to help.

### Our responsibilities.

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 says that we must manage any asbestos risk in our offices or the communal areas of the homes we manage. This is because we have a responsibility to our staff and contractors. So we class something like the communal walkway of a block of flats for example, as a place of work for our staff. That's because they might have to be there for work purposes. The same will apply to the inside of your home. This is because our staff or contractors may need to be in your home as part of their job.

## Where is the asbestos?

Places where there might be asbestos in your home include:



- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Water tank                                       | 9. Boiler cupboard panelling or insulation coating to boiler | 15. Gutters and down pipes                        |
| 2. Pipe lagging/insulation                          | 10. Partition walls  | 16. Soffit and fascia boards                      |
| 3. Loose insulation                                 | 11. Internal panels below windows                            | 17. External panels below windows                 |
| 4. Textured decorative coatings e.g. Artex ceilings | 12. Panels around boilers                                    | 18. Outbuilding, shed and garage corrugated roofs |
| 5. Ceiling tiles                                    | 13. Floor tiles and vinyl floor coverings                    | 19. Outbuilding and shed wall panels              |
| 6. Bath panels                                      | 14. Panels behind fires                                      | 20. Roofing felt                                  |
| 7. WC cisterns and seats                            |  |   |
| 8. Panels behind fuse boxes                         |  |   |

## Our plan to keep you safe

As a responsible landlord we explain the likely location and any associated risks from asbestos-containing materials in your home.

We've surveyed all the communal areas and will make sure that we monitor and maintain any asbestos-containing material in a communal area. If it is ever damaged, we will seal it or remove it.

We'll do a new asbestos survey. This is to update existing information of our homes, before any planned work we do or when a home becomes empty. If we find any asbestos-containing material, we'll manage it for you. Our maintenance surveyors and housing officers have received Asbestos Awareness training.

Our Asbestos register is made available to our in-house contractor Guinness Property. Our external contractors use it too to check that repair workers and residents stay safe. We can also share any results of new asbestos surveys within your home with you. If you'd like to see the current asbestos information held on our register for your home, please contact our Customer Service Centre.

If you see anything in your home you think might contain asbestos, or you suspect we might not be aware of it, let us know. Just call us at our Customer Service Centre and we'll arrange for a specialist contractor to take a sample of it. We provide a free survey and removal for tenants where appropriate.

### Will you remove all asbestos from my home?

Not necessarily. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommend we leave in place asbestos containing materials that are in good condition. It's safer to leave this undamaged asbestos – rather than risk releasing more fibres into the air by disturbing it.

### How we remove asbestos for our tenants.

When we need to remove or make safe asbestos, we'll employ contractors who are licensed with the HSE. They'll seal off the area containing damaged asbestos with an air-tight closure if necessary. They then collect and secure the material under the Waste Management Licensing regulations. If necessary, an independent analyst from the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) will do an air check. This is to make sure the area is safe. All work is done under the Control of Asbestos regulations 2012.

## Services to Leaseholders

Under the terms of your lease you're responsible for all fixtures and fittings in your home. This includes Artex ceilings and floor tiles. Do not attempt any DIY on materials you suspect could contain asbestos without speaking to a specialist first. We'll be happy to offer information and advice - but you'll have to organise and pay for the work to be done. We are responsible for the building structure and the asbestos in any shared or communal areas, so stairwells, landings and halls etc.

Please remember anything you suspect contains asbestos is best left in place if in good condition. If you do have asbestos removed or sealed, please let future owners know so that this information can be passed on. You must use approved asbestos removal contractors. Asbestos dumping is illegal.

## Dos and DONTs of living with asbestos

### Do...

- Treat asbestos-containing material with respect and tell us if you think it's been damaged or has deteriorated.
- Contact us if you want to do any DIY in your home that might affect asbestos-containing materials, or if you're not sure.
- In most cases, only a specialist, so licensed, contractor can remove and dispose of asbestos-containing materials.

### Don't...

- Don't worry – asbestos-containing material is only a problem if it gets disturbed.
- Don't drill, sand, cut or disturb an area that is known to contain asbestos. If you don't breathe in asbestos dust, then it can't harm you.
- Don't sweep, dust or vacuum disturbed asbestos.

## How to get advice

If you'd like any further advice or information, please contact our Customer Service Centre on **0303 123 1890**. We'll be happy to help.

# We can translate this document into your preferred language. We can also provide it in large print or audio format on request.

## Arabic

نحن نستطيع ترجمة هذه الوثيقة إلى اللغة التي تفضلها.  
ويمكننا أيضاً أن نقدم اليك هذه الوثيقة مطبوعة بالخط الكبير أو على هيئة

## Bengali

আমরা এই কাগজটি আপনার পছন্দদে  
ভাষায় অনুবাদ করতে সক্ষম।  
অনুরূপে। অথবা, আমরা এটি বড়  
অথবা অডিও আকারেও দিতে সক্ষম।

## Chinese

我們可以將文件翻譯成你首選語言。  
我們也可以應要求提供大字版和語音版本。

我们可以将文件翻译成您首选的语言。

我们也可以应要求提供大字版和语音版本。

## French

Nous pouvons traduire ce document dans la langue de votre choix.  
Nous pouvons également l'éditer en gros caractères ou en format audio sur demande.

## Portuguese

Podemos traduzir este documento para o idioma da sua preferência. Também podemos fornecê-lo, a pedido, em letra de tipo grande ou em formato áudio.

## Polish

Dokument ten może zostać przetłumaczony na wybrany przez Państwa język. Na Państwa prośbę możemy go również dostarczyć w formacie audio lub dużego druku.

## Punjabi

ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਤਰਜੀਹੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।  
ਅਸੀਂ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ 'ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਫਟਿ, ਜਾਂ ਆਡੀਓ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਮੁਹੱਈਆ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹ

## Somali

Waxaan u turjumi karnaa dukumintigan luuqadda aad doorbidayso. Waxaan sidoo kale ku bixin karnaa iyadoo ah qoraal far weyn ah, ama qaab cod ah codsi haddii la codsado.

## Tamil

உங்களுக்கு விருப்பமான மொழியில் இந்த ஆவணத்தை எங்களால் மொழிப்பெயர்க்க முடியும்.  
கோரிக்கையின்பேரில் பெரிய அச்ச அல்லது ஆடியோ வடிவிலும் எங்களால் வழங்கமுடியும்.

## Urdu

ہم اس دستاویز کا آپ کی پسند کی زبان میں ترجمہ کروا سکتے ہیں۔  
ہم درخواست پر اسے بڑے پرنٹ یا آڈیو

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