WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Approved by Resident Volunteers

Wokingham Borough Council

Asbestos Safety Policy

August 2026



This is the Policy for Asbestos Safety for Wokingham Borough Council's Housing Service.

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SIGNING OFF SECTION

This Policy has been subject to consultation, proof-reading, ease of reading and sign off with the following:

- Asset Management and Compliance Team.
- Repairs and Maintenance Consultative Panel.
- Local Housing Companies (Loddon Homes Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd).
- Legal Services.
- Housing Leadership Team.
- Housing Innovation Partnership.

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Asbestos Safety Policy

1. Policy Overview

1.1 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) manages approximately 3,000 residential properties, and within this stock will be the presence of asbestos containing materials (ACM) in domestic and non-domestic locations for properties constructed and refurbished prior to the year 2000.

1.2 This policy provides a framework within which the risks associated to asbestos will be managed. It will include the associated roles and responsibilities, as well as the governance arrangements to ensure WBC is meeting its legal and moral duty to ensure that council tenants, employees, contractors and visitors are adequately protected from all foreseeable asbestos risks that may arise in homes owned and managed by the Council.

1.3 This Policy will be supported by an Asbestos Safety Management Plan (ASMP), which provides operational details to managing asbestos including monitoring arrangements, risk management, access procedures, and emergency protocols. The operational procedures in the ASMP set out how WBC will meet the statutory obligations outlined in this policy; therefore, the ASMP is enforceable through this policy.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ACMs within the homes and buildings owned and/or managed by Wokingham Borough Council are identified, monitored, well maintained and in a safe and compliant condition.

2.2 This policy is designed to protect the health and safety of tenants, residents, staff, contractors and visitors by minimising the risk of exposure to asbestos fibres.

2.3 This policy outlines the statutory and regulatory obligations applicable to WBC and states the governance arrangements in place to meet these.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all residential properties owned and managed by Wokingham Borough Council which were built or refurbished prior to the year 2000.

3.2 It covers:

- Council-owned tenanted dwellings,
- Temporary accommodation provided by the Council,
- Garages and garage block,
- Communal areas of residential blocks,

- Gypsy, Roma and Travellers (GRT) sites,
- Properties managed by Wokingham Borough Council on behalf of a client.

3.3 The policy applies to all employees, contractors, and agents acting on behalf of the Council in the delivery of asbestos safety management services. It does not apply to commercial or corporate properties, which are governed by separate health and safety arrangements.

4. Legislation and Regulatory Requirements

4.1 Wokingham Borough Council recognises its statutory and regulatory obligations in relation to asbestos safety, as well as the available codes of practice, which can be found listed below:

- Health and Safety Executives (HSE) Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) 143 2013
- Health and Safety Executives (HSE) HSG264 Asbestos: The survey guide
- Health and Safety Executives (HSE) HSG247 Asbestos: The Licenced Contractors' Guide
- Health and Safety Executives (HSE) HSG248 Asbestos: The analysts' guide for sampling, analysis, and clearance procedures
- Health and Safety Executives (HSE) HSG227 A Comprehensive guide to Managing Asbestos in premises
- INDG223 Managing Asbestos in Buildings
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Defective Premises Act 1972 (Section 4)
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992
- Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) 2006
- Hazardous Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2009
- Equality Act 2010
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Reporting of Injuries Diseases & Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023; Consumer Standards framework – Safety and Quality Standard

4.2 To comply with these requirements WBC will ensure compliance with the relevant statutory requirements. This will include but is not limited to the following activity:

- Ensure that works in relation to asbestos are carried out by a suitably qualified and competent person in line with regulations.
- Ensure that all parties contracted/commissioned by WBC to carry out works in relation to asbestos are working to current regulations and standards.
- Ensure an annual reinspection (management survey) of non-domestic properties (communal areas) takes place to actively monitor and manage asbestos containing materials (ACM's) in situ.
- Where actions and works are identified from the annual reinspection programme, carry out the necessary activities to remove or reduce the risk within the required timescales.
- Maintain an asbestos register which records the presence of ACM's in the housing stock, including survey date, asbestos type, location and risk.
- Carry out refurbishment and demolition surveys where property maintenance works are likely to disturb the fabric of the building, and there are no existing or suitable asbestos surveys.
- Provide information about the presence, location and condition of ACM's to employees, contractors and any other persons who are liable to disturb these materials.

5. Definitions

5.1 For the purpose of this Policy and the ASMP, the following definitions apply:

- WBC: Wokingham Borough Council.
- Tenant: a person that has signed a tenancy agreement to rent a home from WBC.
- Licensee: a person who is granted permission to occupy a property without acquiring tenant rights.
- Resident: a person that is registered as living in a WBC home.
- Leaseholder: a person that owns a home within a WBC owned building.
- Visitor: a person that visits a WBC home / building and is not referenced amongst the above definitions.
- Employee: a person that is employed and works for WBC.
- Contractor / Agent: a person / company that works on behalf of WBC.
- Duty Holder: The person responsible for ensuring the requirements of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 Regulation 4 are carried out. Under Regulation 4, landlords have certain duties towards their customers to minimise the risk of exposure to asbestos.

- Asbestos: is a group of fibrous minerals and was used in construction materials pre 2000 due to its durability, fire resistance and insulation properties. Inhalation of asbestos fibres is extremely hazardous and can cause a number of serious health conditions.
- ACM: Asbestos Containing Material.
- HSE: Health and Safety Executive, a non-departmental public body in the United Kingdom responsible for the encouragement, regulation and enforcement of workplace health, safety and welfare, and for research into occupational risks in England and Wales and Scotland.
- ASMP: Asbestos Safety Management Plan, a document that sets out how asbestos in premises will be managed, including monitoring, communication, and responsibilities.
- Asbestos Register: a live system that records the location, type, condition, and risk of known or presumed ACMs in properties owned or managed by Wokingham Borough Council.
- Refurbishment and Demolition (R&D) survey: a detailed, intrusive inspection conducted to locate and assess all ACMs before any refurbishment or demolition work begins.
- Management survey: to locate, as far as reasonably practicable, the presence and extent of any suspected ACMs that could be damaged or disturbed during normal occupancy, including maintenance and installation work. This type of survey is generally non-intrusive, meaning that surveyors do not carry out extensive destructive sampling, but may take small samples from suspected ACMs.
- Licensed removal: activity to remove high-risk and friable (bonded) ACMs by a licensed contractor. All licensable work must be notified to the HSE at least 14 days before the work starts.
- Unlicensed removal: activity to remove lower-risk and non-friable ACMs. A license isn't required for such removal; however workers must have appropriate training and adhere to safety guidelines to minimise exposure levels.
- PPE: Personal Protective Equipment e.g. face mask, gloves, eye goggles etc.
- UKATA: UK Asbestos Training Association - set standards and audit and manage the list of asbestos training providers.
- UKAS: the United Kingdom Accreditation Service who are the 'sole national accreditation body recognised by Government to assess, against internationally agreed standards, organisations that provide certification, testing, inspection and calibration services'.
- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013): Requires the reporting of asbestos-related incidents that cause death, or major injury.
- HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System): A risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is the landlord responsible for ensuring the statutory and regulatory obligations are met.

6.2 The Chief Executive is the appointed Duty Holder (Responsible Person) and has the overall responsibility for health and safety across the organisation and will nominate appropriately qualified and
suitable experienced people to discharge those duties in relation to the management of asbestos and controlling the risks associated to ACMs.

6.3 The Cabinet Member for Housing Services is responsible for ensuring performance on housing safety and compliance is reported to tenants and Members as appropriate.

6.4 The Service Director for Housing Services is responsible for ensuring that sufficient resources are provided for ongoing delivery of the policy and that employees have the appropriate competencies and qualifications, and for setting budgets that are sufficient to meet compliance requirements.

6.5 The Strategic Asset Manager is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Policy. They are also responsible for procuring services within the respective budgets allocated, as well as adhering to the Housing Services landlord assurance framework in relation to asbestos safety and controlling the risks associated to asbestos exposure.

6.6 The Building Compliance Manager is responsible for the contract management of suppliers and contractors as well as the performance monitoring and management of these agreements to ensure compliance with legislation. They are also responsible for ensuring that relevant employees and contractors have the necessary qualifications and training to undertake their roles in respect of asbestos safety and controlling the risks associated to asbestos exposure.

6.7 The Compliance Officer is responsible for the day-to-day operational duties to ensure asbestos monitoring inspections are carried out within the required timescales, certification and service records are checked and stored, with the respective systems and documents updated. They will also support the Building Compliance Manager with the contract management duties of the suppliers and contractors engaged to deliver asbestos safety works.

6.8 Contractors will employ competent operatives who will have the knowledge, skills and experience to complete surveying, encapsulating, and removal works. They will arrange appointments with tenants and administer the required communications to arrange access. Upon completion of the relevant asbestos checks/works, they will provide the relevant certification, documents and reports to WBC.

6.9 Tenants will allow reasonable access to their homes for the purpose of asbestos surveys and removal works when requested. They will follow guidance provided by the Council on asbestos safety. They will also report any damage or concerns relating to property

materials which may contain asbestos and avoid disturbing any known or suspected ACMs.

7. Governance

7.1 Asbestos safety performance reports will be produced and presented to several internal groups and forums, aligned to the Housing Services landlord assurance framework, to provide evidence of compliance and ensure suitable operational and strategic oversight.

7.2 Asbestos safety performance will be submitted externally to the Regulator of Social Housing, on an annual basis, in accordance with BS03 of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM).

7.3 In addition, the following quality assurance activity is undertaken:

- The Compliance Officer will check all asbestos records and certificates, and associated documents, for completeness and compliance and will liaise with the respective contractor regarding any concerns until a satisfactory conclusion.
- Internal audit will provide independent assurance on the operation and effectiveness of controls regarding asbestos safety. The frequency is agreed as part of the Internal Audit Programme and reported to the respective WBC Committee.
- A third-party supplier, independent to the contractor completing the asbestos surveys, encapsulating or removal works will complete a percentage of post-inspection checks.

7.4 Employees undertaking key roles within the delivery and management of asbestos safety will have access to training and support applicable to their roles.

7.5 Asbestos related accidents, incidents and near misses will be reported on WBC's health and safety system in accordance with the Council's health and safety procedures and will be investigated by a member of the Asset Management and Compliance team. Any RIDDOR reportable incidents will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

8. Policy Review

8.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner, if and whenever there are any relevant changes to legislation, regulatory requirements, case law or good practice that would impact this policy, as well as any required service improvements identified through internal audits, service reviews, learning from complaints or regulatory judgements.

8.2 The review process will:

- Assess the effectiveness of existing procedures and controls.
- Incorporate feedback from audits, inspections, and performance monitoring.

- Reflect any organisational changes or lessons learned.
- Ensure continuous improvement in asbestos safety management.

8.3 The Strategic Asset Manager will lead on future policy reviews and any revisions will be approved through the appropriate governance channels and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 Wokingham Borough Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in the delivery of all its services, including asbestos safety. The Council recognises that some residents may have specific needs or vulnerabilities that require reasonable adjustments or additional support to ensure they can comply with asbestos safety requirements and access services safely.

9.2 In implementing this policy, the Council will:

- Ensure communication and information relating to asbestos safety is accessible and available in a range of formats and languages, where required.
- Make reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities, health conditions, or support needs, including offering alternative access arrangements or involving support services.
- Treat all residents with dignity and respect, free from discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Monitor the delivery of asbestos safety services to identify and address any inequalities in outcomes or access.

9.3 This commitment supports the Council's broader responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and its duty to foster good relations, eliminate discrimination, and advance equality of opportunity.

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment Form



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