

Asbestos in the home

Guidance for Barnet Homes' residents

**Barnet
Homes**



Asbestos in the home

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a material that was used widely in the past, for building factories, offices, shops and homes. It was also used in car components and domestic appliances, because of its strength and resistance to heat and chemicals.

Is there asbestos in my home?

If your home is more than 20 years old, it is possible that there could be asbestos in your home. Asbestos was used during the 1950s to 1970s and we know some of our homes were built or refurbished then.

Homes built since the mid-1980s are very unlikely to have asbestos.



Am I safe?

Most asbestos poses no risk to residents in the home. It is perfectly safe as long as it is in good condition and has not been damaged.

Over the past 10 years our experts have surveyed more than 3,500 homes looking at all types of property. Repairs were done immediately when asbestos was discovered that was in poor condition. Where asbestos was found that was sound but required minor repairs to be fully satisfactory it was added to a maintenance programme.

Maintenance and removal of asbestos is an integral part of our refurbishment projects. All removal or repairs involving asbestos is done by specialist contractors working to the government's strict health & safety guidelines and enforcement laws.

All our staff and contractors have had asbestos awareness training. They have access to our asbestos records to ensure they work safely in your home.



The typical location and types of materials found by our surveys are as follows:

Insulation panels

Asbestos is often found in heating ducts, infill panels near doorways and windows, ceiling tiles, wall panels, partitions, boiler cupboards, stair cupboards, panels behind radiators and heaters.

Thermal insulation

Although asbestos was used to lag pipes this was rarely the case in domestic properties.

Asbestos cement products

This is the most widely used asbestos material. It is found as profiled sheets for roofing and external wall cladding, in flat sheets and partition boards linings, walls and ceilings, in bath panels, soffit boards, flue pipes, rainwater gutters and pipes, cold water tanks and as roofing tiles and slates.

Other materials and products

Asbestos was in a variety of other building materials, for example, in decorative textured coatings for ceilings and walls, such as Artex. Thermoplastic floor tiles and older linoleums can contain asbestos, as well as resin bonded materials like window sills and toilet cisterns. Many of these are still in place, but the use of textured coating containing asbestos has been prohibited since 1988.

What does Barnet Homes do to minimise risks?

Regular surveys

We have a comprehensive register that holds details of the whereabouts of asbestos within our properties. This list is updated each time we carry out a new survey. When we carry out a survey we find the asbestos is in a good condition, it is safe to be left in place. If the asbestos is in a bad condition, it is removed or made safe.

Working closely with customers

We are currently delivering a programme of surveys within void properties which will allow us to give individual tenants specific information about the presence of asbestos in their home.

We will also use the information for leaseholders and for tenants who wish to purchase properties through their Right to Buy.



Tenants

DIY must always be carried out with care. Details of the work you can do in your home are in your tenancy agreement. Remember by telling us what you intend to do in advance, we can confirm this is safe or if asbestos is present. If there is any doubt, we will arrange for an asbestos survey, or for one of our trained surveyors to inspect your home for you.

If you damage what you suspect to be asbestos, leave everything in place (tools, groundsheets), close the door leading to the room and contact us immediately. We will arrange to have a sample taken and tested to establish if it contains asbestos. If you think your DIY is likely to or may affect asbestos materials, seek advice by phoning **020 8080 6587**.

When asbestos materials need to be removed or made safe, we will employ contractors who are licensed with the Health and Safety Executive. As appropriate, they will seal off the area containing damaged asbestos with an airtight enclosure.

If necessary, an independent analyst from the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), will carry out an air check to make sure the area is safe. All work is done under the Control of Asbestos Regulations.

Please remember if you carry out DIY or let others do so on your behalf without our written permission, you are liable for the costs of dealing with asbestos and any necessary repairs.



Leaseholders

Under the terms of your lease, you are responsible for all fixtures and fittings within your property, including artex ceilings and floor tiles. Barnet Homes is responsible for the building structure. You must check to see if you require approval from Barnet Homes for any alterations you wish to carry out.

Leaseholders must make their own arrangements for removal of asbestos inside their homes. Before starting any DIY activities on products that may contain asbestos, you must seek specialist advice.

Leaseholders must arrange surveys and asbestos removal themselves. All work must be carried out by approved contractors. Any asbestos removed

from your property must be disposed of by approved asbestos removal contractors. If you do have asbestos removed or sealed, please inform us and future owners so that this information can be passed on for the safety of others.

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) provides lists of those who are accredited for asbestos work. The HSE has produced detailed guidance on asbestos removal standards for different types of products.

If you are concerned that a material in your home may contain asbestos, call our Contact Centre for guidance on **020 8080 6587**. If it is damaged or deteriorating, please seek advice. Don't try to deal with it yourself, phone the helpline.





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