

ASBESTOS SAFETY POLICY

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Executive Summary:

This policy details how we manage asbestos in our homes. The policy provides reassurance to our tenants and residents that we professionally manage the risks to the highest recognised standard. The policy details the risks associated with asbestos and advice about how we manage and monitor asbestos in the home to maintain a safe home for our tenants and residents.

Policy Grouping/Directorate(s)	Customer & Communities	
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Notes:		
*Full review underway – This policy to remain in place until review is complete.		

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines Rochdale Boroughwide Housings (RBH) approach to Asbestos Safety across the Society. It sets out how we will comply with legislation in respect of the effective management of Asbestos, ensuring the health and safety of tenants, employees, contractors and the general public by minimising the risk posed by Asbestos.
- 1.2 In addition to this, the Policy provides assurance that measures are in place to identify, manage and/or mitigate risks associated with Asbestos. The Policy should be read in conjunction with the Asbestos Safety Procedures.
- 1.3 The Asbestos in premises owned, managed, rented or operated by RBH are to be managed and maintained so as to control any unavoidable risk to health as low as is reasonably practicable through the correct implementation of a written scheme of control and records kept. This policy covers both domestic and commercial properties.

2 Context

- 2.1 This policy has been developed to ensure that RBH is compliant with all relevant Asbestos safety legislation for managing Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM's) as part of its duties under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- 2.2 Asbestos is a silicate mineral, which occurs in nature as long thin crystalline fibres. The fibres have high tensile strength, flexibility, chemical resistance, heat resistance, thermal insulation and electrical insulation properties. Consequently, Asbestos has been widely used in many building materials. The period 1950 – 1980 covered the most extensive use of ACM's in buildings because it was cost effective and there was limited appreciation of the risks it posed to health.
- 2.3 The risk to health from asbestos airborne fibres may cause asbestosis, mesothelioma, pleural thickening/plaques and asbestos related lung cancer.
- 2.4 The risk from Asbestos occurs when fibres are released into the air and then breathed in. Provided that ACM's are intact and in a position where they will not be damaged they will not pose a significant risk to health.
- 2.5 In general, it is accepted that Asbestos, in its many and varied forms, where damaged or likely to be damaged or disturbed in the future, should be removed and substitute materials installed in its place. Asbestos containing materials are more hazardous in some forms and conditions than others.
- 2.6 There is no statutory requirement to remove Asbestos containing materials. There is, however, a statutory duty to prevent Asbestos creating a risk and the method of achieving this will require careful consideration in each individual case identified.
- 2.7 All common types of Asbestos must be treated equally and all ACM's whether licensable (works that require notifying to the HSE e.g. Asbestos Insulating Board) or non-licensable (works that is not notifiable to the HSE e.g. Artex materials/cement products) will be dealt with by approved contractors for Asbestos removal. RBH does not expect any of its employees to work directly

with any known Asbestos.

- 2.8 All employees, in repairs and maintenance teams will receive mandatory Asbestos awareness training so that they are able to recognise potentially suspect material for further analysis to be undertaken. All managers and employees will be offered training appropriate to their role.

3 Aims & Objectives

- 3.1 The promotion of Asbestos safety should be a mutual objective for employees, tenants, contractors and any other person or stakeholder who may work on, occupy, visit, or use its premises, or who may be affected by its activities or services. The policy is to be used to ensure everyone understands the obligations placed on RBH to maintain a safe environment for all.
- 3.2 RBH will follow a systematic approach to the management of Asbestos safety to ensure it meets the requirements set out in The Control of Asbestos Regulations and other relevant legislation relating to Asbestos safety. This is to ensure the safety of tenants, employees and members of the public.
- 3.3 The regulations require exposure to Asbestos to be prevented, or where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled. Specific advice on the measures that should be taken to control Asbestos is set out in The Control of Asbestos Regulations.
- 3.4 Since November 1999, no ACM's, except for a few specialist applications, should have been used in the UK. Therefore, all RBH properties, built post 2000 shall not form part of the management plan as it a reasonable assumption that ACMs have not been used in the building or maintenance of buildings since this date.
- 3.5 The key objectives are:
- Understand the duties in managing Asbestos safety
 - Asbestos safety management procedures and resources
 - Management, production and recording of 'suitable and sufficient' Asbestos report
 - The promotion of Asbestos safety to tenants, employees and contractors
 - Training

- 3.6 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

Responsibility - We build mutual respect. We have a responsibility to create great homes, communities and be a good employer, and we are rightly held accountable on that. We also care about and are responsible for each other and act with individual and collective integrity building mutual respect.

Equity - We seek fairness and equality. This is how we think and operate as a mutual Society, and why we strive for greater inclusion and equality within RBH, in our communities, and in the wider economy and society of Rochdale borough and elsewhere.

Democracy - We are democratic. Our democracy is rooted in our mutual status and evidenced in our governance through our Representative Body and Board. Our tenants, employees and communities have voice and power over what we do, and how we operate.

Pioneering – We innovate. We have pioneered mutuality and cooperation within the housing sector and wider. We will continue to strive to champion new innovations in creating excellent homes, a sustainable environment, and a just economy for our communities.

Collaboration – We are stronger together. We must be active listeners and partners, who respect diversity and tackle stigma. This empathy and deep collaborative ethos is the source of our strength and power.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Duties as an employer and landlord in managing Asbestos safety

4.1.1 We will provide well maintained homes and premises improving Asbestos safety.

4.1.2 A ‘responsible person’ will lead the management of Asbestos safety and ensure compliance is achieved and maintained.

4.1.3 Accurate records will be held for each property owned and/or managed that are covered by The Control of Asbestos Regulations. We will ensure there is a programme in place to survey each home and premise All surveys will record detail of Asbestos contained in home and premises and Asbestos safety measures that are in place.

4.1.4 We will periodically undertake an asset data review to ensure that Asbestos safety data held against each property is accurate and up to date.

4.2 Duties of employees in managing Asbestos safety

4.2.1 We will ensure that they fully understand the obligations placed on them to ensure their own and others safety is maintained. All employees should ensure they have read the Asbestos Safety Policy and associated Procedures.

4.3 Asbestos safety management procedures and resources

4.3.1 Asbestos Safety Group (ASG) is in place to monitor our robust approach to Asbestos safety. The ASG report to the Home Safety Assurance Group (HSAG).

4.3.2 Effective communication is essential in delivering the Asbestos safety policy and we will therefore ensure that information relating to Asbestos safety will be made available to residents and building users via leaflets and information on our website.

4.3.3 RBH have a robust process in place to gain access should any tenant or leaseholder refuse access to carry out essential Asbestos safety related inspection and remedial works or where tenant vulnerability issues are known or identified to ensure compliance with this policy.

4.4 Competent persons

4.4.1 RBH will ensure that only suitably competent contractors licensed by the HSE to work with asbestos will be procured and appointed. Independent air monitoring and sample identification will be undertaken by suitably competent independent analytical companies which are accredited by UKAS to meet the requirements of ISO17025.

4.5 Management, production and recording of 'suitable and sufficient' Asbestos Surveys

4.5.1 RBH will commission competent persons to undertake Asbestos Surveys with the purpose of identifying the general Asbestos safety.

4.5.2 We will ensure that the type and frequency of a survey carried out is appropriate to the building.

4.5.3 We will implement all necessary general Asbestos safety precautions and any other preventive and protective measures identified in the Asbestos report.

4.5.4 Any Asbestos survey of a building will be reviewed following change in building use, changes to working practices that may affect Asbestos safety, before refurbishment works to a building, or as and when required following an independent Asbestos safety audit.

4.5.5 Robust processes will be in place to address all significant findings identified by the Asbestos survey, where practicable. Items will be within a programme of works to be completed within a reasonable time scale.

4.5.6 RBH's approach in respect of the management of Asbestos surveys will ensure that all Asbestos surveys are reviewed when required.

4.6 The management and provision of Asbestos safety equipment

4.6.1 There will be programs in place for removal and maintenance in accordance with all relevant British Standards within buildings owned or managed.

4.7 The promotion of Asbestos safety to tenants, employees and contractors

4.7.1 Information about Asbestos safety is available to residents and building users. Up to date information on Asbestos safety will be available on our website.

4.7.2 We will ensure tenants are aware of the Asbestos safety management procedures for their home.

4.7.3 We will ensure employees, contractors and other relevant parties are aware of our management approach in respect of Asbestos safety.

4.7.4 Appropriate method statements will be agreed with contractors to ensure all relevant parties are fully aware of the extent to which works are being undertaken, access controlled and secured, so as not to endanger the safety of residents.

4.7.5 RBH will fully inspect an agreed proportion of work associated with Asbestos safety to ensure works have not impacted or compromised the Asbestos safety measures in place for the premises.

4.8 Training

4.8.1 We will ensure that we identify and provide employees managing this area of compliance suitable training to enable them to carry out their duties concerning Asbestos safety. We will assess those in-house roles across the Society which

require Asbestos safety training. The training will be provided by a suitably qualified competent person.

4.8.2 Training will be provided for those employees who need to have a basic understanding and awareness of Asbestos safety but who may not be actively involved in the delivery of the Asbestos safety policy. This will be basic Asbestos safety awareness training delivered online.

4.8.3 Toolbox presentations will be delivered (as required) to RBH RTMs and contractor partners in the form of appropriate Asbestos safety training.

4.9 **How RBH manage non-compliance**

4.9.1 Any non-compliance issues identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Director of Customer & Communities in the first instance.

4.9.2 The Director of Customer & Communities will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the operational team in order to address the non-compliance issue and report details of the same to the Executive Leadership Team.

4.9.3 The Executive Leadership Team will ensure the relevant Committee and Board are made aware of any non-compliance issues, so they can consider the implications and take action as appropriate.

4.9.4 In cases of a serious non-compliance issue the Executive Leadership Team and Board will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator.

4.10 **Accountability and responsibility**

4.10.1 The employer is represented by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive of RBH is therefore the overall 'Responsible Person' for ensuring that all Asbestos safety matters are implemented.

4.10.2 The Director of Customer & Communities is responsible for the implementation of this policy and associated procedure and is responsible for reporting performance to the Board.

5 Monitoring

5.1 All Asbestos safety work is monitored in the Asbestos Safety System; reports are issued to the Asbestos Safety Group. Key performance data is submitted monthly to ELT. Homes Safety Meetings are held regularly to discuss Asbestos Safety. In turn, reports are submitted to the Risk and Compliance, Audit Committee and finally Board.

6 Review

6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.

6.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

7 Links with Other RBH Documents

7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:

- Growth Strategy
- Health & Safety Framework
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Asbestos Safety Procedures