

## ASBESTOS POLICY – PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

### 1. Policy Statement

Loddon Homes Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd, herein referred to as the Local Housing Companies (LHC), recognise the risks associated with asbestos that is not properly controlled and managed. The vast majority of buildings adopted by LHC or any group subsidiary will be new build and, as such will, not contain asbestos-containing material.

In the event that older housing stock is purchased or refurbished, LHC will manage the risks by carrying out the appropriate asbestos surveys that will inform our contractors, residents and any other party that may come into contact with asbestos-containing material. Where asbestos is confirmed as being present, appropriate action will be undertaken to maintain the asbestos in a safe state or, if this cannot be achieved, remove it, such that there is no risk to residents, contractors or any other persons that may reasonably come into contact with it. Staff and contractors must not take any action which could result in a release of asbestos fibres to air.

Where LHC acquires a building that was built or refurbished before the year 2000, an appropriate asbestos survey will be undertaken. Where asbestos has been confirmed or is presumed, LHC will fulfil its duty to manage asbestos as laid out in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, the associated Approved Code of Practice and in accordance with the HSG264 guidance.

The remainder of this Policy sets out how asbestos shall be managed within LHC such as to achieve the aims of this statement.

### 2. The risks associated with asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous mineral that was commonly used in the construction trade from the 1950s due to its hard wearing, fire resistant and insulating qualities. Although its use was banned in the late 1990s, asbestos can still be found today in any industrial or residential building built or refurbished before the year 2000, typically in the following:

- Asbestos cement products e.g. pipes, flues, roofs etc.
- Lagging on pipes and boilers etc.
- Water tanks and toilet cisterns.
- Asbestos insulating board (AIB) which closely resembles typical plasterboard.
- Loose asbestos in ceiling and wall cavities.
- Sprayed coatings on ceilings, walls, beams and columns.
- Textured decorative coatings (commonly referred to as artex).
- Floor tiles.

- Textiles and composites.

If asbestos-containing materials remain in good condition and are left undisturbed and undamaged, the risk posed to health is negligible. However, if disturbed or damaged, asbestos can become a danger to health as this may release fibres into the air.

Should asbestos fibres be inhaled, they can cause a number of harmful diseases such as Mesothelioma and Asbestosis, the health effects of which only become apparent after many years. Because of the delay in symptoms appearing, the potential scale of the health risk only became known in this country after asbestos had been widely used and many people had already been exposed.

There are three main types of asbestos that can still be found in some premises these days, commonly called 'blue asbestos' (crocidolite), 'brown asbestos' (amosite) and 'white asbestos' (chrysotile). All three are dangerous carcinogens, although blue and brown asbestos are more hazardous than white. Despite their names, the different types of asbestos cannot be identified just by colour.

LHC will make every endeavour to ensure that asbestos fibres are not released from any asbestos material under the LHC's control, however, should there be an incident where asbestos is inadvertently disturbed with a significant risk of fibres being released Emergency Procedure can be found in Appendix A

### **3. The Law**

#### **The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**

Under Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work Act, employers must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all their employees.

Section 3 (1) requires employers to carry out their undertakings in such a way as to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that they do not expose people who are not their employees to risks to their health and safety.

#### **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**

These Regulations require the assessment of risks to employees and others, and the putting in place of arrangements to reduce these risks to the extent that is reasonably practicable.

Employers are also required to ensure the provision of health surveillance to staff where appropriate.

Employers must establish appropriate procedures for foreseeable events likely to result in serious or imminent danger to persons at work or other persons likely to be affected by the undertaking.

Employers must provide comprehensible and relevant information to employees on risks to their health and safety and the measures available to control those risks and should appoint a competent person to assist them unless sufficiently knowledgeable themselves.

## The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

These Regulations bring together the three previous sets of Regulations covering the prohibition of asbestos, the control of asbestos at work and asbestos licensing. The Regulations prohibit the importation, supply and use of all forms of asbestos. They continue the ban introduced for blue and brown asbestos in 1985 and for white asbestos in 1999. They also continue to prohibit the second-hand use of asbestos products such as asbestos cement sheets and asbestos boards and tiles; including panels which have been covered with paint or textured plaster containing asbestos.

**REMEMBER:** The ban applies to new use of asbestos. If existing asbestos containing materials are in good condition, they may be left in place; their condition monitored and managed to ensure they are not disturbed.

These Regulations cover all work with asbestos and the precautions needed. They place a duty on the employer to prevent the exposure of employees to asbestos, or if that is not possible, to reduce exposure to the lowest reasonably practicable level. A work method which avoids any disturbance of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) should be chosen and certain types of work should normally be carried out by a licensed asbestos contractor. If this is not possible, before carrying out any work which is liable to expose employees or others to asbestos, an assessment must be made of the likely exposure and the control measures required to protect employees and others affected by the work. It is important that this assessment is made even when exposure to asbestos only happens by chance.

The duty to manage the risk from asbestos requires that persons in control of nondomestic premises must:

- Take reasonable steps to find asbestos on their premises and assess the condition of any ACMs they find;
- Presume that materials do contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that they do not
- Prepare and keep up to date records of the location and condition of ACMs or presumed ACMs;
- Assess the risks of anybody being exposed to fibres from those materials;
- Develop and implement a plan for managing the risk from this material;
- Periodically review and monitor the plan and the arrangements; and
- Provide information on the location and condition of the material to anyone who is liable to work on it or disturb it.

The specific “duty to manage” asbestos in the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 covers all non-domestic premises. However, included within that category are some common areas, e.g. foyers, corridors, lifts, staircases etc. of certain types of domestic premises, such as purpose-built flats or houses converted into flats, although the individual flats themselves are not included.

There is other legislation which, although more general in nature, still places a legal obligation on LHC to provide information on asbestos, irrespective of the type and status of the property.

These duties fall under the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015..The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publication HSG264 'Asbestos: The Survey Guide' sets out clear parameters for registered social landlords and states that management surveys should be used as the primary method of managing routine maintenance work in domestic premises, supported by refurbishment/demolition surveys for larger scale refurbishment projects where works go beyond routine maintenance.

#### **4. Information for tenants**

LHC is committed to ensuring good liaison and communication with its tenants, including that of raising awareness of the health and safety hazards related to their tenancy, their individual and personal responsibilities as tenants, and how they can help protect themselves and others in their homes from potential risks.

Tenants will be notified about asbestos which has been found or is likely to be present in their homes and will be advised of the following:

- Where the asbestos is or is likely to be located.
- The approach being taken by LHC in respect of the management of the asbestos.
- What they as tenants should do to minimise the risk.
- Who the tenant/resident should contact in the event that the condition of the material deteriorates.

Whenever significant changes to the information about asbestos in a tenant's home arise, e.g. the asbestos is removed, the tenant will be advised of the change.

Information about asbestos present or likely to be present in the property will be included in the information pack given to new tenants.

#### **5. Information to employees**

LHC will make all staff where asbestos is present in the buildings they use regularly and what is being done to ensure there is no risk to their health. It is good practice to make information as freely and widely available as possible. All staff should be made aware of the LHC's Asbestos Policy on induction and be given access to it.

Staff or Contractors who are involved in maintenance or building work or any activities that might bring them into contact with ACMs, for example, building caretakers, should receive adequate information, training and instruction, in line with 'HSE EM2 Asbestos Essentials' which should include the following:

- The risks to their health from asbestos.
- The location of the building's Asbestos Register and Asbestos Management Plan.
- An instruction to always presume that materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence to the contrary.

- Being made familiar with the local procedure for when ACMs or presumed ACMs are accidentally disturbed; and an instruction to halt work immediately and alert their line manager if they discover material that they suspect may be asbestos. No disciplinary action will follow for a member of staff stopping work for this reason, even if asbestos does not prove to be present.

It is unlikely that any survey, however comprehensive, could identify all asbestos across a large number of properties. It is, therefore, essential that all staff and contractors presume that materials contain asbestos unless proven otherwise and are aware of the possibility of coming across unidentified asbestos.

Asbestos awareness and management training is mandatory for the Operations Manager, responsible managers in service buildings and relevant employees, whose role and tasks could expose them to ACM. As with all employee health and safety training, a record should be kept locally.

## **6. Responsibilities**

The Operations Manager is responsible for the implementation of this policy, should it become necessary to do so due to the acquisition of buildings either built or refurbished before the year 2000. In such circumstances, the Operations Manager would be deemed LHC's nominated 'Duty Holder'.

### **Contractors**

The criteria for contractor selection should include health and safety and ensuring that the contractors used have the necessary competence to carry out the job properly and safely; this includes asbestos awareness.

Only HSE licensed and approved asbestos contractors should be used when the removal or disturbance of asbestos is necessary. The Duty Holder must be consulted should the necessity arise.

Contractors carrying out construction, repair or maintenance work on behalf of LHC could be at risk of disturbing asbestos. Before contractors are asked to do work on a building which could disturb asbestos, a survey of the building for the presence of asbestos should be carried out and the results recorded in the Asbestos Register. This information must be shared and discussed with contractors before they start work.

Contractors are required to provide the client with a risk assessment for the work they will be carrying out and a method statement detailing how they will go about the work. The client is responsible for ensuring the adequacy of these documents. Contractors should be asked to sign an acknowledgement that they have seen the Asbestos Register.

Contractors must be reminded to be alert at all times for the presence of unidentified asbestos and instructed that if they suspect that asbestos may be present in the material they are working on or that they have inadvertently disturbed some known asbestos they must stop work

immediately. They should then report to their site supervisor if applicable and LHC's nominated point of contact for the building and the work being carried out e.g. the Buildings Manager should be informed immediately. Contractors must not resume work until they are explicitly instructed that it is safe to do so by the Duty Holder.

## 7. Reporting of Asbestos Related Incidents

All asbestos related incidents, including near miss events, are expected to be reported. Each incident will demand a proportionate investigation along with a written report detailing findings and the action to be taken to prevent a recurrence.

Under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR) any unplanned release of asbestos fibres to air such as might seriously damage the health of any individual must be reported as a dangerous occurrence. In practice, it is not possible to be sure how many fibres might have been released where asbestos is disturbed in an unplanned manner, nor to be sure whether health damage will result in anyone exposed. It is the policy of LHC that any asbestos incident generating an internal report should receive proper consideration for a report to be made to the HSE unless this is clearly unnecessary, for example, a near miss event.

**In the case of an asbestos RIDDOR notification the HSE will most likely request a copy of the internal report when this is complete or may choose to carry out its own investigation.**

## 8. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed in line with any regulatory or legislative changes or by the scheduled review date as per the information provided in document control, whichever is sooner.

### DOCUMENT CONTROL

Issue date	Approval date	Planned review date	Actual review date
April 2017	January 2018	June 2018	April 2019
		August 2020	August 2020
	December 2020	August 2021	

## Appendix A

# Emergency Procedures

Loddon Homes Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd will make every endeavour to ensure that asbestos fibres are not released from any asbestos material under their control, however, should there be an incident where asbestos is inadvertently disturbed with a significant risk of fibres being released, the following procedures apply:

- Evacuate the immediate area and barrier the area off.
- Seal off the area and do not permit access.
- Call the relevant Building Manager/Responsible person immediately and await further instructions.

The relevant Responsible Manager will take control of the affected area and any surrounding areas that he/she sees fit.

The Responsible Manager will ensure a competent “Asbestos Officer” is available to provide advice and can inspect the area if it is safe to do so and decide on further action based on an assessment of the risks; they will make the necessary arrangements for a sample of a suspected material to be taken for analysis by an accredited laboratory.

The “Asbestos Officer” will notify the Operations Manager as Duty Holder without delay.

Where asbestos has been confirmed the Operations Manager or relevant Responsible Manager will arrange for a licensed asbestos contractor to come on site to carry out the clean-up operation under controlled conditions. Contaminated items will be double bagged and removed by the licensed asbestos contractor and taken to a licensed waste site for safe disposal.

Following satisfactory air clearance sampling by a NAMAS accredited for asbestos fibre counting, once the area is declared safe by the Asbestos Officer control of the area will be returned to the manager of the area or Operations Manager.

### **What to do if people have been contaminated**

If people have asbestos material and fibres on their clothes and hair the safest course of action is to wet them immediately and thoroughly to stop the fibres becoming airborne and being inhaled, therefore, the following action should be taken:

- Usher all people involved into showers, fully clothed.
- If showers are not available request the “Asbestos Officer” organise for a licensed asbestos contractor to bring a decontamination unit on site.
- If contaminated people have to wait for shower facilities, get them to wait outside in the open air where fibre levels will be diluted as far as possible.