Asbestos Policy

Summary

This policy explains how we safely manage asbestos in your home and in communal areas.

It sets out what asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) are, how we manage any risks, and what you should do if you have concerns.

Our priority is to keep residents, staff and contractors safe. We do this by identifying, monitoring and managing asbestos in line with the law and best practice.

This policy also explains how you can contact us for advice or to report a concern.

Effective date

1 October 2024

Review

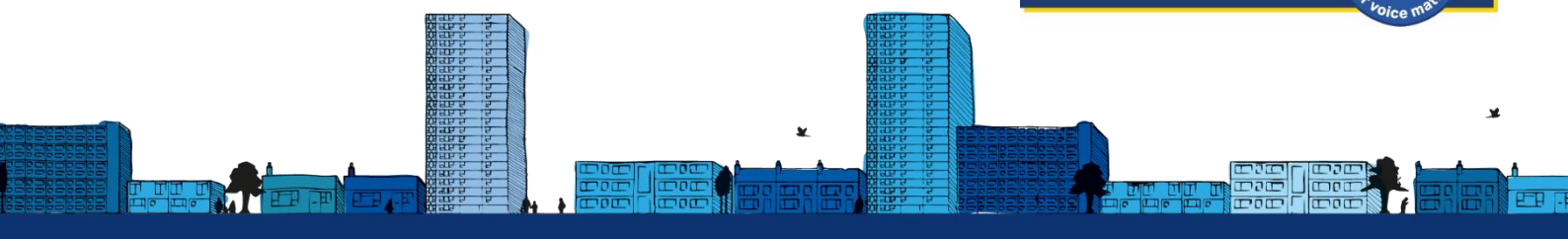
Latest review date: 4 November 2026

We will review this Policy every 3 years or when there has been an update to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational changes.

Version

Version 1.4

This policy was written with the help of residents of Portsmouth Homes



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Who does this apply to?

This policy applies to all homes and buildings managed by Portsmouth Homes where we are responsible for repairs, maintenance and asbestos management.

This includes:

- Homes (dwellings)
- Communal areas in blocks of flats
- Sheltered and supported housing
- Garages
- Other housing-related buildings where we have responsibility

In some buildings, such as leasehold or mixed-tenure blocks, responsibility may be shared.

We are responsible for managing asbestos in communal and shared areas where we are the duty holder.

Leaseholders and shared owners are responsible for managing asbestos in the parts of their homes covered by their ownership and repairing obligations under their lease.

In these cases, we will work with other parties to make sure asbestos risks are managed safely.

Asbestos containing materials (ACM) may be present in some older homes, particularly those built before 2000.

Common examples include:

- Textured coatings (such as Artex) on walls and ceilings
- Floor tiles and underlays
- Wall panels or boxed-in areas (for example around pipes or meters)
- Soffit boards (roof overhangs)
- Garage or shed roofs made from cement sheets

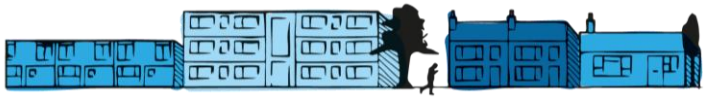
This list is not complete, and asbestos cannot be identified just by looking at it.

Any reference in this policy to ‘we’, ‘our’ or ‘us’ refers to Portsmouth Homes.

Any reference in this policy to 'tenant', 'customer' or 'resident' refers to a Portsmouth Homes secure tenant, leaseholder or shared owner.

Why we have this Policy

We will fulfil our duty to manage asbestos in the communal and non-domestic parts of buildings where we have responsibility, in accordance with Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.



This policy explains how Portsmouth Homes manages asbestos-containing materials safely in your home and in the communal and non-domestic parts of buildings we are responsible for.

We do this in line with our legal responsibilities and safety requirements to help keep residents, visitors, staff and contractors safe.

Our aim is to:

- Keep residents, staff and contractors safe by reducing the risk of exposure
- Meet our legal and regulatory responsibilities
- Provide clear, accessible information and reassurance to residents
- Use a proportionate, risk based approach based on the condition and location of materials
- Make sure asbestos risks are understood, monitored and managed effectively

We regularly review how we manage asbestos to make sure our approach is effective and keeps people safe.

Management of asbestos

We manage asbestos containing materials in line with our responsibilities as a social housing landlord and in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

Asbestos is only harmful if fibres are released into the air. This can happen if materials are damaged, deteriorating or disturbed. Where asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) are in good condition and left undisturbed, they do not pose a risk.

We identify, assess and manage ACMs to make sure they remain safe.

Risk based approach

We take a risk based approach to managing asbestos containing materials. This means we consider:

- The condition of the material (for example, whether it is damaged or deteriorating)
- The likelihood of it being disturbed during normal use, repairs or maintenance

This helps us decide what action is needed to keep people safe.

Management options for asbestos

Based on the level of risk, we will take appropriate action, which may include:

- Leaving ACMs in place where they are in good condition, show no signs of deterioration and unlikely to be disturbed, with regular monitoring
- Sealing or encapsulating materials to prevent damage
- Repairing and sealing minor damage where appropriate
- Removing ACMs where they are damaged, deteriorating or likely to be disturbed

Where asbestos removal or remedial work is required, this will be carried out by suitably trained and competent contractors. We use licensed asbestos contractors where required by law.

Inspection and monitoring

We inspect and monitor asbestos-containing materials in homes and communal areas where we have responsibility. In leasehold and shared ownership homes, our arrangements reflect our responsibilities under the lease and applicable law.

- In communal areas, we inspect known ACMs at least once a year, or more frequently where risk is higher
- Inside homes, we review available asbestos information when a property becomes empty or before work is carried out.
- We have chosen to do this as an additional safety measure for residents, staff and contractors.
- We may inspect materials more frequently where there is a higher risk.
- If a material deteriorates or becomes damaged, we will take appropriate action to make it safe.

Contaminated Land

Where asbestos is identified in land or ground, we will assess the level of risk and take appropriate action.

Any investigation or remediation will be carried out in line with:

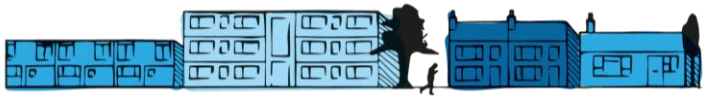
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Relevant guidance on asbestos in soil
- Testing will only be carried out by UKAS accredited laboratories to ensure accuracy and safety.

Asbestos Management Plan

We have an Asbestos Management Plan, which sets out how we manage asbestos across the homes and buildings we are responsible for. The plan includes:

- Information from our asbestos register
- How we assess and manage asbestos risks
- Our monitoring and inspection arrangements
- What to do if asbestos is damaged or disturbed
- How concerns and changes should be reported

Where a building has particular or increased asbestos risks, a competent person within our Compliance Service will determine whether a site-specific Asbestos Management Plan is required. This decision will be based on the individual building, the asbestos information available and the risks identified.



Repairs service

When carrying out repairs, maintenance or servicing, our staff and contractors take all reasonable steps to prevent accidental exposure to asbestos. Before any work starts, we will:

- Check the asbestos register to understand whether asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) are known or suspected in the area
- Assess the level of risk and take appropriate precautions
- Take a cautious approach where asbestos information is limited or not available If asbestos is known or suspected:
- Work will not proceed if there is a risk that asbestos could be disturbed
- An appropriate asbestos survey will be arranged where required
- Materials will be treated as containing asbestos until confirmed otherwise

Where work involves asbestos, contractors and operatives must:

- Hold appropriate asbestos awareness training and any task-specific training required for the work they are carrying out
- Be suitably trained and competent
- Use appropriate control measures and safe working methods
- Ensure licensed asbestos contractors are used where required by law
- Provide us with relevant information following surveys, inspections, removal or remedial work so that asbestos records can be updated

During and after works:

We will update our asbestos records after surveys, inspections and work we arrange. We will also review relevant asbestos information received from leaseholders, shared owners or their contractors and update our records accordingly.

- Any damage or suspected disturbance of ACMs will be reported immediately
- Work will stop straight away if asbestos is disturbed, and the area will be made safe
- Specialist advice will be obtained where needed
- Asbestos records will be updated following surveys, inspections and any work carried out.

These measures help ensure repairs are carried out safely and protect residents, staff and contractors.

Items or equipment suspected of asbestos contamination will be assessed by a competent person. Where they cannot be safely decontaminated, they will be contained and disposed

of in accordance with relevant legal requirements and waste procedures.

Void Properties and New Tenancies

When a property becomes empty, we use available asbestos information to plan works safely and manage any risks.

When a property is empty, we will:

- Review existing asbestos information to support safe working practices
- Carry out additional surveys where more intrusive work is planned
- Record any new asbestos information in our systems

Before a new resident moves in:

- Provide relevant information about the known or suspected location and condition of asbestos-containing materials in their home
- Explain that asbestos-containing materials should not be disturbed
- Explain that they must contact us before carrying out any DIY, alterations or home improvements and obtain any permission required.
- Explain how to report any damage, deterioration or concerns

This helps understand where asbestos may be present and what they need to do to avoid disturbing it.

Planned Projects

When carrying out planned maintenance, refurbishment or improvement works, we ensure asbestos risks are identified and managed before work begins. For projects that may disturb the building fabric, we will:

- Arrange appropriate asbestos surveys in line with legislation and guidance, including refurbishment or demolition surveys where required
- Identify, review and use relevant asbestos information when planning works
- Provide clear asbestos information within health and safety and tender documentation so contractors can work safely
- Ensure contractors are competent and put suitable controls in place to prevent asbestos exposure
- Use licensed asbestos contractors where required by law

These measures help ensure works are delivered safely, minimise disruption, and protect residents, staff and contractors.

Shared Responsibility for Asbestos (Leaseholders and Mixed Tenure Buildings)

Where responsibility is shared all parties must co-operate and share asbestos information before, during and after works.

In some buildings, such as leasehold or mixed-tenure blocks, responsibility for managing asbestos may be shared between Portsmouth Homes and other parties. Where this applies, we work together to ensure asbestos risks are identified and managed safely.

Responsibilities are as follows:

- Portsmouth Homes is responsible for managing asbestos in communal and shared areas where we are the dutyholder
- Leaseholders and shared owners are responsible for managing asbestos in the parts of their homes covered by their ownership and repairing obligations under their lease
- All parties must cooperate and share relevant asbestos information before, during and after any work to ensure risks are managed safely

If a leaseholder, shared owner or resident plans to carry out work in their home and has received any necessary permission, they must:

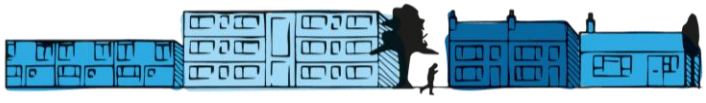
- Follow any asbestos information and advice provided by us
- Take reasonable steps to avoid disturbing known or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- Ensure any contractors they use are suitably trained and competent
- Tell their contractor about any known or suspected asbestos before work starts
- Stop work and contact us immediately if asbestos is damaged or disturbed
- Provide us with relevant asbestos survey, removal or remedial-work information after the work is completed so that our records can be updated
- These arrangements help ensure asbestos is managed safely and everyone in the building is protected.

Share any relevant asbestos survey or removal information with Portsmouth Homes after the work is completed. These arrangements help ensure asbestos is managed safely and that everyone in the building is protected.

What Happens if Asbestos Is Damaged or Disturbed (Emergency Situations)

Asbestos is only harmful if it is damaged or disturbed. If you think asbestos may have been damaged:

- Stop using the area immediately
- Do not touch or try to clean the material
- Keep people away from the area



Contact the Customer Repairs Team straight away so that we can assess the situation and take appropriate action.

We will:

- Arrange for the area to be made safe
- Arrange for a qualified asbestos surveyor to inspect the material
- Carry out any necessary repairs, sealing or removal using trained and competent contractors
- We will keep residents informed about any impact on their home or communal areas. Where necessary, we may temporarily restrict access to protect residents, staff and visitors.

We record and review all asbestos incidents to identify learning and make improvements to how we manage asbestos. In some cases, we may need to refer to our Alternative Accommodation (Decant) policy if it is not safe for you to remain in your home.

Where required, asbestos-related incidents will be reported to the relevant enforcing authority in line with statutory reporting requirements.

Monitoring and Ongoing Inspections

How we keep asbestos safe over time

- When asbestos is found and left in place, we regularly check it to make sure it stays in good condition.
- Asbestos in communal areas is inspected at least once a year.
- Asbestos inside homes is checked when a property becomes empty or when work is planned.
- The frequency of checks depends on the condition and location of the material.
- If inspections show that asbestos has changed or become damaged, we will take action to repair, seal or remove it.
- Residents can help by:
    - Reporting any damage they notice
    - Contacting us before carrying out DIY, alterations or home improvements and obtaining any permission required.

Asbestos Register and Keeping Information Up to Date

We maintain an up to date asbestos register within our designated repairs and maintenance system.

This records:

- Where asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) are located
- Their condition
- What actions are being taken to manage them

We use this information to plan repairs, manage risks and keep people safe.

Portsmouth Homes tenants can request an “Asbestos in Your Home” report if they are planning DIY or making changes to their home. This helps you understand where asbestos may be present and how to avoid disturbing it.

This report is not available to leaseholders or shared owners, who are responsible for arranging any necessary asbestos surveys within their homes in line with their repairing obligations under their lease. Portsmouth Homes remains responsible for managing asbestos in communal areas where we are the dutyholder.

We share relevant asbestos information with contractors and emergency services where needed so work can be carried out safely.

Asbestos Safety Panel

Portsmouth Homes has an Asbestos Safety Panel to provide oversight and assurance of how asbestos is managed across our homes and buildings.

The panel is chaired by the Head of Compliance and includes senior representatives from Housing, Neighbourhoods and Building Services, along with other teams where needed.

The panel meets quarterly, it's purpose is to:

- Oversee how asbestos is managed across Portsmouth Homes
- Ensure risks are identified, understood and managed in a consistent and proportionate way
- Make sure there are sufficient resources and controls in place to manage asbestos safely
- Provide assurance that we are meeting legal requirements, regulatory standards and best practice
- Support clear communication and the provision of accessible information to residents, staff and contractors

The panel reviews the effectiveness of asbestos management by monitoring:

- Delivery of inspection and reinspection programmes, including asbestos surveys
- Staff training and the information provided to residents
- Asbestos-related incidents, including ensuring learning and improvements are acted on
- Changes in legislation, guidance and best practice, and how these are applied

Where needed, the panel will recommend changes to policies, processes and resident communications to support continuous improvement and keep residents safe.

Your responsibilities

Asbestos is only harmful if it is damaged or disturbed. If asbestos containing materials are in good condition and left undisturbed, they do not pose a risk to health.

You can help us keep your home safe.

Tenants, leaseholders and shared owners can contact the Customer Repairs Team with asbestos enquiries or concerns.

Phone: 023 9284 1311

Email: **CustomerRepairsTeam@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Enquiries may be referred to the relevant team where appropriate.

If you are planning DIY, alterations or home improvements, you must contact us before work begins and obtain any permission required under your tenancy or lease. We will provide relevant asbestos information and advice.

You must:

- Follow the asbestos information and advice provided
- Avoid disturbing known or suspected asbestos-containing materials
- Use suitably trained and competent contractors where required
- Tell your contractor about any known or suspected asbestos before work begins
- Stop work and contact us immediately if asbestos is damaged or disturbed
- Provide us with relevant survey, removal or remedial-work information so that our records can be updated

Your voice

We provide residents a wide range of meaningful opportunities to influence and scrutinise the Landlord Strategies, policies and services including the Resident Consortium together with repairs and maintenance focus groups.

If you would like to be included in future resident engagement focus groups and would like to know how to get involved, please contact us for more information:

You can contact our team by:

- Email: **housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**
- Phone: 02392 834835
- Website**:** visit the **Resident engagement and community resources on our website**

What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

We completed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the **Equality Act 2010**. This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.

Regulation and legislation

We recognise the variety of legislation, and we will continue to monitor relevant legal guidance. The list below reflects some of the existing legal framework and relevant publications:

- **Code of Practice - GOV.UK**
- **The Building Regulations 2010**
- **The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012**
- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974**
- **The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999**
- **The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015**
- **The Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013**
- **Housing Act 2004**
- **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985**
- **Defective Premises Act 1972**
- **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023**
- **Safety and Quality Standard - GOV.UK**
- **Consumer Standards Code of Practice - GOV.UK**
- **The Hazardous Waste (England and Wales)Regulations 2005**
- **The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009**
- **Equality Act 2010**
- **Managing and working with asbestos - HSE**

Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- **Portsmouth Homes policies, strategies and reports - Portsmouth City Council**

- Tenancy Agreement / Leasehold Agreement
- Asset Management Strategy
- PCC Corporate Asbestos Management Plan 2025

How to feedback

If you have any questions around the policy or would like to know more about its application, please contact the relevant service in the first instance.

You can get this policy in large print, braille, audio or in another language by contacting your Housing Office. More information is available **translation, interpreting and audio information**.

Compliments

To help us provide the best service we can. We would like to hear customer views on the services that they use. If the customer is pleased with a member of staff or service, please let us know.

- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: **HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Complaints

If a customer is unhappy, they can refer to our Landlord Complaints Policy.

- Online complaint form at **Make a housing complaint**
- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: **HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk**

Housing Ombudsman Service

If a customer is unhappy, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice and guidance at any time.

- Online complaint form on **the Housing Ombudsman Service website**
- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- For more information, visit **Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code**