

Title: Asbestos Removal

Information/Discussion Report – Information

Recommendations: The DMC is asked to note the report.

Report Summary: This report outlines Camden Council’s arrangements for effective management of asbestos within its property portfolio. It also notes the responsibilities of tenants when carrying out the minor alterations to their homes.

1. Background

1.1 At the last DMC a request was raised regarding the approach to management of asbestos. Below is an overview of our approach.

2. What is Asbestos?

2.1 Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material. Asbestos fibres do not dissolve in water or evaporate, they are resistant to heat, fire, chemical and biological degradation and are mechanically strong.

2.2 Thanks to these properties, asbestos had been historically used in many industries and in many products, including the insulation material for buildings, boilers and pipes, floor tiles, insulating boards to protect buildings against the fire, or asbestos cement for roofing sheets.

2.3 However, due to health risks and the negative effects on the human body when the asbestos fibres are inhaled, the use of asbestos in the UK was banned in 1999. However, it’s impractical to remove all asbestos from the buildings built prior to that. Landlords, including Camden Council, therefore, have a duty to manage asbestos.

3. Duty to Manage Asbestos

- 3.1 We have a duty to hold asbestos surveys to all communal areas of residential properties, as well as commercial and corporate buildings.
- 3.2 In general, as long as asbestos containing materials are in good condition, they are left in situ unless they will interfere with refurbishment works.
- 3.3 Information about asbestos is provided on our website:
 - https://www.camden.gov.uk/asbestos?p_l_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3D%3Dasbestos
 - https://www.camden.gov.uk/asbestos-advice2?p_l_back_url=%2Fsearch%3Fq%3D%3Dasbestos

4. Asbestos Surveying and Removal Process

- 4.1 Prior to any disruptive refurbishment works are carried out, the presence of asbestos containing material is established. This is generally done via the review of existing records held on our system, known as Asbestos register. Should the information on the register be insufficient – not specifically stating the presence, or the lack of presence, of asbestos, the Asbestos survey is then carried out.
- 4.2 Asbestos survey can only be carried out by the competent and certified asbestos surveying consultants/contractors.
- 4.3 If the presence of asbestos is confirmed in the work area, it must be removed prior to any further works are carried out.
- 4.4 The removal of asbestos can only be carried out by the competent and certified asbestos removal consultants/contractors.

5 Individual alterations to tenants' properties

- 5.1 Tenants must not carry out any alterations to their properties without a written permission from Camden Council. Apart from prevention of other building safety risks, this is to avoid disturbance of asbestos containing materials and putting themselves and others around them in harm's way.
- 5.2 Unauthorised alteration is considered a breach of tenancy agreement, and is noted within the respective tenancy agreements, and within [Camden council tenants guide](#).

5.3 Additional information about the requirements to notify us about the tenants' intentions to carry out alterations to their properties has recently been promoted in the Autumn edition of Housing News.

Report Ends