



**Somerset
Council**

HS21 Asbestos Policy



Organisation	Somerset Council
Title	HS21 Asbestos
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Owner	The Corporate Health & Safety Service
Protective Marking	Official - Unclassified
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Asbestos is a general term for several naturally occurring fibrous minerals that have crystallized to form fibres. These fibres are resistant to heat, fire, chemical degradation, and biological factors, making them mechanically strong. Because of their resilient make up, asbestos was commonly used in a variety of building materials until the year 2000, when it became illegal to use in the UK.

Asbestos can be found in many buildings built before the year 2000, some common places where asbestos can be found are: Insulation material for buildings, boilers, and pipes. floor tiles and textured coating on ceilings. Asbestos cement for roofing sheets and pipes.

Health Risks:

- Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause lung cancer and malignant mesothelioma.
- Exposure occurs when asbestos-containing materials are damaged, releasing fibres into the air.

This policy and associated guidance provide the Council's rules that must be followed, the standards to be maintained, and signposts to further guidance. It also highlights the risks to users, clients and the Council, and the potential consequences of breaching this policy.

This document and associated guidance will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council Staff, 3rd Party Contractors, Secondees and Volunteers.**

Key Messages

- Somerset Council will, identify and assess the risk from Asbestos in all premises, for which it is responsible.
- Premises Managers must ensure their responsibilities, as specified within this policy.
- Premises Managers are also required to undertake an Annual Review of their Asbestos via the Civica website, at least annually, or sooner if a significant change occurs to the building or the activities carried out.

This document and associated guidance will be available to: **All Elected Members, Somerset Council employees, Volunteers, and 3rd Party Contractors (on request).**

Terms of Reference

Corporate property – Land or building owned or managed by Somerset Council, used to support the delivery of public services. These may include:

- Operational properties: Buildings used directly for council services, such as offices, schools, libraries, and community centres.
- Non-operational properties: Assets not directly used for service delivery but held for investment purposes, such as commercial properties leased to businesses.

Housing Property – Buildings owned by Somerset council for the provision of social housing. These may include:

- Domestic premises such as Houses, flats or maisonettes.
- Communal housing blocks, including associated open spaces.
- Community hubs, when attached to communal housing blocks or domestic buildings.

Responsibilities

Somerset Council will:

- Establish the location and condition of ACMs (Asbestos Containing Materials) within premises owned by the Council (or regularly used by its employees).
- Ensure that it earmarks sufficient funds for the remediation of any ACMs when and where it is considered appropriate.
- Ensure that the removal and disposal of all ACMs on premises for which it is responsible is conducted in accordance with current regulations and Somerset Council policy.
- Continuously manage the known ACMs within all buildings owned or leased (depending on the lease agreement) by Somerset Council.
- If ACM's are inadvertently damaged, ensure appropriate remedial action is taken quickly to make the affected area safe.
- Ensure known ACM's are reinspected by a competent person every 1-2 years, or at a frequency established by the Asbestos survey.
- Ensure the condition of know ACM's are regularly monitored, and any changes reported and dealt with.
- Ensure that the risk from asbestos is managed effectively in those premises that employees, and others to whom a duty of care is owed, are present, using the Annual Review of Asbestos Management Return via Civica .

- Ensure that those individuals who, when exposed to asbestos fibres under the control of the Council, are correctly advised, supported and their details recorded on an “At-risk Register”.
- Provide support and training to all relevant staff as follows:
 - Somerset Council asbestos management procedures to people responsible for implementing the arrangements within this policy.
 - Asbestos awareness training to people who:
 - carry out work which is likely to involve disturbing the fabric of buildings (e.g. plumbers, electricians, IT installers, roofers, decorators, handymen).
 - supervise those identified above at work.
 - are the designated Premise Manager.
 - are responsible for planning or controlling work which involves disturbing the fabric of a building which may contain asbestos (e.g. building layout changes/extensions, room alterations, IT/heating/plumbing installation, redecoration, roof repairs)
- Ensure that adequate records relating to the management of the risk from asbestos are created and maintained.

Directors and Delegated Senior Managers will, where they have responsibility for:

- Premises with ACMs present: Have systems and delegated responsibilities in place to ensure that:
 - Premises managers are appointed and are competent to meet their responsibilities.
 - All relevant employees in those premises have been informed about the risks and how they are being controlled.
 - Non-native speaking or employees / visitors with sensory impairments should be presented the relevant information in a way that can be understood by them.
 - Specified employees have been trained to the appropriate level for their duties.
 - Tenants are provided with a copy the Asbestos Register (if required by the lease agreement) This includes Council owned domestic properties.
 - Local control measures are being correctly implemented.
 - When any premise is no longer required, a handover of responsibilities is arranged with the Property Services Estates Team or Housing asset Manager.
 - The Annual Review of Asbestos Management Return is regularly completed via Civica.

- Employees regularly working in non-SC workplaces, have systems in place to establish whether:
 - There is asbestos present or presumed to be present or there are satisfactory control measures in place.
 - SC employees in those premises, know about the risks from ACMs and how they are being controlled.

Somerset Council Housing service (SCHS) Will:

- Ensure all Communal Dwellings and their associated Community Halls which are under their control have a current asbestos record for that property available to all persons carrying out work on behalf of SC.
- Ensure all areas/ dwellings which are owned and maintained by SC Housing Service will have a minimum of an asbestos management survey to ascertain the type of product, location, extent, and condition of asbestos containing materials.
- Ensure all areas/ dwellings which are owned and maintained by SC Housing Service will undertake an asbestos refurbishment survey to ascertain the type of product, location, extent, and condition of asbestos containing materials, prior to undertaking any major refurbishment to a dwelling.
- Ensure all areas/ dwellings which are owned and maintained by SC Housing Service will undertake an asbestos refurbishment survey to ascertain the type of product, location, extent, and condition of asbestos containing materials, prior to undertaking any major refurbishment to the property.
- Only use approved asbestos contractors or asbestos consultants. This is to minimise the risk posed from contractors sub-contracting the works to companies who do not meet SC housing standards.
- Undertake remedial actions on all high-risk items to reduce possibility of accidental exposure, this may be full removal or introducing additional protective measures e.g., encapsulation, restricted access.
- Manage asbestos containing materials on a risk-based approach. They will remove all high-risk materials or restrict access to those areas until removal can be undertaken.
- SC recognise that they have a duty of care to their tenants to inform them of the presence of asbestos containing materials within their homes, and that at any point a domestic property owned by SC could become a workplace. Therefore, SC will ensure appropriate surveys (Management, Refurbishment and/ or Demolition) of its domestic stock will be undertaken to assist in planning and organising works in advance.
- Ensure a suitable set of procedures (HSG.ASB02) to ensure all staff members adhere to this policy.
- Secure, accurate and up to date data and property safety records are maintained.

Premises Managers will:

Premises Managers are responsible for the day-day to management of any asbestos identified in corporate buildings, they will:

- Ensure the completion and annual review of the site-specific Asbestos Management Plan.
- Complete asbestos awareness training.
- Ensure that as part of the induction process building users are made aware of the location of any asbestos containing materials.
- Ensure that the Register and location plans are always available and accessible to staff and contractors who work on the site.
- Ensure that there are written records to prove that the Asbestos Register was inspected prior to any work being carried out.
- Ensure the Asbestos 'on-site' white folder is kept up to date and well-organised.
- Ensure the current processes relating to asbestos control are followed in relation to any maintenance or refurbishment work on the premises.
- Use the Somerset Council, Asbestos Permit-to-Work system in relation to controlling work on or around ACMs or areas/items recorded as 'inaccessible, when it is appropriate.
- Report any ACM considered to have deteriorated in condition to the Asbestos Team.

The Somerset Council Asbestos Team¹ will:

- Advise all areas of SC on matters relating to the risk from ACMs and particularly those relating to Asbestos Management Procedures.
- Carry out asbestos site surveys to the appropriate standard in all premises built prior to the year 2000.
- Take and analyse samples of suspect materials when required.
- Create, maintain and update the Asbestos records for all leased and owned SC premises.
- Issue updated Asbestos Survey reports to premises managers or make them available via Civica.
- Liaise with the Records Team in Strategic Asset Management to ensure that site drawings are up-to-date following any significant changes.
- Monitor compliance by external contractors with the relevant regulations governing the removal of asbestos.

¹ The Asbestos Team undertake specific tasks regarding the identification and management of asbestos. Collectively the operational team is experienced in all areas of asbestos-related work. It is accredited by UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) to carry out all types of surveying, sampling and testing.

- Oversee the use of the Asbestos Permit to Work system within premises where SC has a responsibility to manage ACMs.
- Vet and oversee the work of approved contractors engaged in the removal of ACMs in SC premises.
- Complete or subcontract inspections/air monitoring of the areas where ACMs have been removed by specialist contractors prior to reoccupation.
- Organise remediation works for those ACMs identified in SC owned/leased buildings as being in poor condition.
- Provide Asbestos Awareness Training to relevant SC and school staff.

Property Services will:

- Ensure that all construction projects on existing premises for which they are responsible are planned and executed in consultation with the Asbestos Team.
- Ensure that all construction works are undertaken by contractors, who have received asbestos awareness training and satisfy regulation 10 of the Control of Asbestos Regulations – Further details contained in HSE ACOP “Managing and Working with Asbestos”.
- On being notified by the asbestos team in respect of premises for which SC has repair liabilities, cover the costs of asbestos remedial/removal work and associated air monitoring for those asbestos items identified as requiring immediate action to make safe.
- Where the council is the duty holder: Ensure that commercial tenants are provided with the latest asbestos survey report.
- Ensure that when SC leases new buildings, it obtains from the landlord the asbestos survey report and any relevant documents relating to the management of asbestos.
- Ensure that any empty or void property, is managed so as to minimise the risk from asbestos to any staff, contractors or visitors.

Employees will:

- follow local guidance or instruction in relation to the management of asbestos on the premises.
- Ensure that they are aware of the location of ACMs within the building they work in.

The Corporate Health and Safety Unit will:

- Maintain the At-risk Register.
- Maintain this policy within the H&S Manual.

- Support any contingency arrangements and investigations into incidents involving suspected asbestos release.
- Provide training to premises managers on the risks from asbestos and associated management arrangements they are required to follow as part of Premises Management Training.
- Monitor the local implementation of this policy as part of an audit programme.
- Liaise with the Asbestos Team as required regarding the development, implementation, and review of corporate control measures.

Governance Arrangements

Policy Compliance

If any employee is found to have breached this policy, they may be subject to Somerset Council's [disciplinary procedure](#).

Policy Governance

The following table identifies who within Somerset Council is Accountable, Responsible, Informed or Consulted with regards to this policy. The following definitions apply:

- **Responsible** – the person(s) responsible for developing and publishing the policy.
- **Accountable** – the person who has ultimate accountability and authority for the policy.
- **Consulted** – the person(s) or groups to be consulted prior to final policy implementation.
- **Informed** – the person(s) or groups to be informed after policy implementation.

Responsible	Corporate Health & Safety Unit
Accountable	Chief Executive
Consulted	Union Group, LGR H&S Sub-Workstream, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Steering Group (HSWSG)
Informed	All members, employees, contractors (on request), volunteers & 3rd parties (on request)

Review and Revision

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, for instance when there is a change in statutory requirements and/or HSE guidance is revised, but no less frequently than every 36

months. Policy review will be undertaken by rolling programme established by the CHSU and agreed by the Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Steering Group.

Version History

Revision Date	Author	Version	Description of Revision
06.10.16	Sharon Larkman Jayne Slocombe	V5.0	Revision
30.05.19	Sharon Larkman	DRAFT	
14.11.19	Jayne Slocombe	V6	Publish
15/09/2020	Daniel Thomas	V7	Added additional responsibility for Premise Manager
08/02/2021	Daniel Thomas	V8	New description of asbestos management plan

Document Notification

Approval	Name	Date
Corporate H&S Advisor		
Executive Director of Strategy Workforce & Localities and chair of HSWSG		
Asbestos Manager		
Head of Property Services		
Head of Housing Property		