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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012 (CAR 2012) imposes a duty on the Association to manage asbestos in any non-domestic property. However, under the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974, if any of our contractors undertakes works in a property then that property is classed as a place of work.
- 1.2 Asbestos is a term for a group of minerals composed of fibres. The use of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) was widely used in the construction industry from the mid-1940s until their prohibition in 1999, primarily due to their excellent fire resistance, insulating properties and durability.

However, when ACMs are damaged or disturbed, they can release microscopic Asbestos fibres into the air. These fibres are easily inhaled and can penetrate deep into the lungs, where they may cause serious health conditions including asbestosis (a fibrotic lung disease), pleural thickening (changes in the lining of the chest cavity), and cancers such as Mesothelioma and asbestos related lung cancer.

Due to the well-established link between asbestos exposure and life threatening illnesses, often decades after initial exposure, the use of asbestos was progressively restricted and ultimately banned in the UK in 1999 to protect public health and workplace safety.

- 1.3 Due to the progressive introduction of legislation controlling the use of asbestos materials, buildings constructed after 2000 are unlikely to contain any asbestos material. Those built between 1985 and 2000 may contain limited amounts, while buildings constructed before 1985 are likely to contain substantial quantities of asbestos material - particularly in insulation, flooring, roofing, ceilings, and wall materials.
- 1.4 The presence of asbestos containing materials (ACMs) does not in itself pose a danger, they become hazardous only when disturbed, potentially releasing harmful fibres into the air. As the majority of properties in the Association's ownership were built from 1989 onwards, the overall risk of asbestos is low. However, the Association can acquire and renovate older properties, which increases the likelihood of staff and contractors encountering ACMs.

2. Responsibilities

- 2.1 Under the CAR 2012, the Association as the owner and controlling body for maintenance and repairs of its properties is classed as the Duty Holder.
- 2.2 As Duty Holder the Association will:
- Take reasonable steps to determine the location and condition of all materials likely to contain asbestos.
 - Provide and maintain an Asbestos Register.
 - Assess the risk of anyone being exposed to fibres from the material.
 - Prepare and implement a plan for the effective management of the material to minimise the risk.
 - Freely provide such information to tenants, contractors and other parties likely to disturb any identified material.
 - Ensure that relevant staff likely to manage and/or encounter ACMs receive suitable training.
- 2.3 On behalf of the Association, the Director of Housing & Operations will be designated as the “Asbestos Co-ordinator” and will be responsible for the above duties.
- 2.4 The Asbestos Co-ordinator will report to Management Committee when a suspected asbestos containing material is identified.

3. The Asbestos Register

- 3.1 Information on the location, type, condition, and extent of asbestos within the Association's assets is recorded in an Asbestos Register. This is a working document, kept up-to-date and made available to anyone who may work on or disturb identified ACMs.
- 3.2 Development & Properties staff will undertake surveys of properties to locate, as far as is reasonably practicable, any materials likely to contain asbestos and assess their condition. The surveys will be carried out during other routine visits when possible.
- 3.3 Due to the nature in which our schemes are developed, a minimum of 10% of the properties within a scheme will require to be surveyed.
- 3.4 Where the Association acquires properties, an initial survey will be undertaken by staff then specialist surveyors as required. Testing will be instructed if necessary.
- 3.5 As asbestos cannot be detected by sight, all materials suspected of containing asbestos will be assumed to do so until testing is carried out to prove otherwise.

- 3.6 All survey results and risk assessments shall be logged in the Asbestos Register and the original survey log sheets retained for record purposes by the Asbestos Co-ordinator.
- 3.7 The Asbestos Register will be updated by the Asbestos Co-ordinator as and when remedial works or repairs are carried out.
- 3.8 Where suspected ACM is identified in a property the tenant will be informed in writing detailing the location, nature and action taken to manage the risk.
- 3.9 The Asbestos Register must be consulted prior to any works being instructed in a property and the contractor notified of any suspected asbestos containing material.
- 3.10 Any property owned or managed by the Association that contains known or suspected ACMs shall have a corresponding notification set within the integrated housing management system. This alert will ensure that staff and contractors are made aware of the presence of ACMs and are provided with access to the Asbestos Register prior to carrying out any works or activities within the property.

4. Management Plan

- 4.1 ACMs in good condition and left undisturbed do not pose a significant risk to health. Therefore, if a material is confirmed or presumed to contain asbestos but remains sound and undamaged, it can be safely managed in situ through regular monitoring.
- 4.2 In general, the Association adopts a structured approach to asbestos management based on the following key principles:
 - **Assess:** Identify and evaluate the presence, location, condition and extent of suspected or known ACMs through surveys and inspections, and test where required.
 - **Record:** Accurately log all relevant information in the Asbestos Register.
 - **Inform:** Ensure staff, contractors, and any relevant parties are made aware of ACMs before any works or activities take place and are provided access to the Asbestos Register.
 - **Monitor:** Carry out regular inspections and re-assess the condition of ACMs, updating the register and management actions as needed.
- 4.2 Management of suspected or known ACMs will vary depending on the location, extent, and condition. It will follow the principles of Assess, Record, Inform and Monitor, and will generally involve one of the following approaches:

- **Monitor and Manage:** Where ACMs are in good condition and not likely to be disturbed, they may be left in place, clearly marked (if possible), information logged in the Asbestos Register, and monitored regularly.
 - **Enclose or encapsulate:** If an ACM material is at risk of disturbance and is possible to do so, it may be sealed or enclosed to prevent fibre release. Information shall be logged in the Asbestos Register and the material shall be monitored regularly.
 - **Remove:** If an ACM is damaged or likely to be disturbed during future works, it will be removed by a licensed contractor only, with information logged in the Asbestos Register.
- 4.3 Development & Properties staff will undertake scheduled inspections of any known or suspected ACMs to assess their condition and ensure the Asbestos Register is updated accordingly.
- 4.4 Where any material is found to be damaged or deteriorating, the Association will prepare an appropriate risk assessment and arrange testing. Where necessary, remedial action or removal of the material will be undertaken by a contractor that is certified and licensed by the Health & Safety Executive.
- 4.5 Any contractor who is to undertake works on the Association's properties must be informed of any known or suspected ACMs in their work area, including the specific location and condition of the material. If works are required on or near the material, then the contractor must:
- Provide a method statement detailing safe systems of work; and
 - Obtain written approval of the method statement before commencing any works.
- 4.6 If, during the course of any work, a contractor discovers the possible presence of ACMs not previously identified through the Asbestos Register, they must:
- Cease work immediately.
 - Make the area safe and secure, ensuring any tenants present are informed and that disruption is minimised.
 - Notify the Association's Development & Properties staff without delay.

5. Plan Review

- 5.1 This Plan shall be reviewed in five years or when changes to the staffing structure or legislation require it to be updated.