



CRAIGOWEN HOUSING ASSOCIATION ASBESTOS POLICY & PROCEDURES

Approved by Board: January 2026

Next Review By Date: January 2029

Version: V5

Introduction

The following policy outlines Craigowen Housing Association's practices and procedures for the management of asbestos.

The purpose of this policy document is to: -

- Ensure that, in relation to the management of asbestos, the Association, meets its aim as stated in its Health and Safety Policy to take all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all its employees and others including committee members, contractors, consultants, visitors, clients, occupants, and members of the public who may be affected by its acts or omission.
- Ensure the Association complies with appropriate current legislation.
- Establish clear guidelines to be adopted whenever asbestos is encountered in premises owned by or occupied by the Association
- State the Association's policy that asbestos will not be removed where, following a detailed inspection and assessment, it is proved to be not in a hazardous condition and will not be damaged or otherwise exposed, nor will it affect future maintenance plans or activities.

It covers the following areas: -

- The Association's Responsibilities
- Policy Statement
- Asbestos Register
- Risk Assessment
- Monitoring Arrangements
- Asbestos Removal
- Staff Access to Risk Register
- Signage
- Training and Instruction
- Audit and Review

The Association's Responsibilities

Rationale

This policy is underpinned by Health & Safety legislation and places a duty on the Association to provide and maintain a safe working environment.

Responsibilities

The overall responsibilities for these arrangements lie with Craigowen Housing Association.

The Association's board's responsibility for ensuring implementation is managed through the board's chairman.

Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring staff and employees are aware of this policy and understand the method and timings for reporting incidents.
- Ensuring risk assessments, local policies and procedures are produced and that safe systems of work are adopted including emergency response arrangements.
- Ensuring that safety working procedures and safe systems of work implemented are subject to regular monitoring and reviewing to ensure effectiveness.
- Ensuring staff and employees receive appropriate information, instruction, training supervision and equipment.

Policy Statement

The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) is intended to protect those who work with asbestos and others who are liable to be exposed to asbestos. Duties on employers include risk assessment, written arrangements for the protection of those identified as at risk, and the maintenance of workplaces such that employees and others are protected.

The Association is committed to achieving the highest possible standards in the services it provides, providing properties of a standard which reflect legislative requirements, best practice and which meet occupants' reasonable expectations. The Association undertakes to comply with all relevant statutory provisions concerning asbestos by adopting the following strategy:

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The Association shall ensure that any employee, consultant, or contractor tasked with carrying out asbestos risk assessments, ordering of work with asbestos, specification of contractors, or monitoring of work involving asbestos removal, shall be competent to do so. The Association recognises that such tasks would necessarily require: -

- A knowledge of the legislation relating to asbestos;
- An understanding of the hazards and risks associated with asbestos, and the correct procedures to be adopted, including the use of personal protective equipment;
- Adequate practical experience in dealing with asbestos;
- The ability to arrange for asbestos testing by United Kingdom Accreditation Services (UKAS) accredited asbestos consultancy and to make sound judgements based on the results of those tests.
- A licensed UKAS contractor for working with asbestos insulation and asbestos coating.
- To hold UKAS registration to carry out and survey work.
- Contractors shall carry current professional insurance indemnity to cover all asbestos work to be carried out.

Furthermore, the Regulations place specific duties on people in control of premises to: -

- Take reasonable steps to locate materials likely to contain asbestos
- Assume that any material contains asbestos unless there is evidence that it does not
- Keep an up-to-date written record of the location of these materials
- Monitor the condition of these materials
- Assess the risk of exposure from asbestos and assumed asbestos materials, and
- Prepare and implement a management plan to control these risks.

This policy is intended to provide a framework whereby the Association will make suitable arrangements for conformity with the regulations and adequately address the specific requirements contained in the regulations. These relate to the identification, removal and/or control of asbestos on Association premises.

A management system shall be put into place to:

- Identify and record the presence of asbestos and suspected asbestos
- Assess the risks from any asbestos (or suspected asbestos) identified
- Duty holder to presume that materials contain asbestos, unless there is a strong evidence that they do not.
- Considering the presence of asbestos, suitably control work including maintenance work, by qualified UKAS accredited contractors
- Provide for the regular inspection and monitoring of the condition of all known asbestos
- Provide emergency arrangements should any asbestos materials become damaged
- Assess the risk of likelihood of anyone being exposed to asbestos
- Review the asbestos management system as a minimum every 12 months
- Co- ordinate awareness training for relevant staff, contractors and any other relevant persons.

No differentiation shall be made between the different types of asbestos. All types shall be considered harmful, and any release of asbestos fibres into the atmosphere shall be considered a risk.

Reactive Response

To be adopted where a material suspected of being asbestos is discovered either accidentally or during work. Those potentially exposed include all users of Association premises and others including contractors, carrying out work on behalf of the Association.

The person locating the suspected asbestos has a responsibility to inform the appropriate duty holder who will stop the work if this has already not happened, consider the desirability of vacating the building or part of the building to avoid exposure and appoint a UKAS consultant to advise the association. Procedures to adopt would be site specific and should as far as is practical take account of location/type/form/volume and condition of the suspected material.

Asbestos Register

An asbestos register will be held for all property owned by the association where asbestos is known to exist or is likely to exist. It will be held by the community's joint management agents with a copy held at the Associations office.

The purpose of the register is to formally record through management survey and inspection, the location and condition of asbestos in the Associations premises and provide the basis for a Risk Assessment and Management Plan. (See Appendix 1)

A management survey will be the minimum survey carried out to identify and record as far as reasonably practicable, the location of any materials suspected of containing asbestos and to assess the risk. Where material is accessible, and it is safe to do so, a representative sample may be taken and sent for testing to confirm or refute the surveyor's judgement and presumptions.

Where major refurbishment or demolition is contemplated, it will be essential to provide full access to all areas, to carry out any work in connection with that work.

The asbestos register/plan drawing will contain details of both material that has been identified as asbestos and to avoid subsequent confusion, material which is like asbestos in appearance, but which has been tested as non-asbestos. The information will include details identifying the building, room, corridor, etc, in which the material is contained, and the exact location of the material.

All entries in the register will be supported by appropriate certification from an accredited UKAS asbestos-testing agency.

Where possible specific locations will be numbered or otherwise identified, at the site, so that the location and the nature of the material can be readily identified on site.

The register shall be used as appropriate to inform contractors and others having access to the site of the presence of asbestos, possible asbestos and/or components resembling asbestos.

The master copy of the register shall be held with the nominated responsible person, and copies of the register listing for particular premises will be located on the premises to which it relates and also within the main office.

The accuracy of the information contained in the register will be assured by regular inspections when it will be the responsibility of suitably trained staff, nominated responsible person/s to assess the condition of the asbestos and make any necessary amendments to information contained in the register.

Where changes in the condition of asbestos are identified the inspector must immediately report the matter to all who would be affected by such change or changes.

The register must be as accurate as possible and must be brought to the attention of any person carrying out any alteration work to buildings, which may risk exposure to building materials/or asbestos on Association owned premises.

Risk Assessment

When compiling the premises register of asbestos the association shall assess the risk periodically arising from the materials identified. This will determine what action is required to manage and control the risks.

The following factors shall be taken into account: -

- Where the material is located
- Whether or not there is easy access to the material
- What condition the material is in
- The proximity to areas where people normally work
- The number of people likely to be exposed
- Whether or not the material is likely to be disturbed by maintenance work, including cleaning.

After this risk assessment has been made the following options will be considered –

1. If the material is in good condition and unlikely to be damaged accidentally then it may be left in place, provided no major refit or refurbishment is planned. Such material may be preserved by enclosing it or sealing it with a suitable agent. Signage may be erected to alert people to the presence of asbestos.
2. Remove the asbestos by engaging licensed UKAS contractors. This option will be chosen when the material is: -
 - Damaged
 - In poor condition
 - In areas where it is likely to be accidentally damaged
 - In areas where major refurbishment or structural alterations are planned.

For work involving, or near, asbestos

The regulations require the association to assess the risks associated with any potential exposure to asbestos. Consequently, the Association shall take full account, using the risk assessment process, of the relevant hazards and risks in respect of work activities involving or in the vicinity of asbestos.

A written risk assessment shall be undertaken prior to commencing any work involving asbestos, and a plan of work and the range of control measures to be used shall be provided for such work.

The association shall only use personnel deemed competent by virtue of possessing the relevant knowledge and skills as defined above to carry out the asbestos risk assessments.

As before, where the potential disturbance of asbestos has been identified, removal of the asbestos may not necessarily be the preferred risk control option because a greater risk can be created by the removal process.

Asbestos risk assessment will be reviewed where either there is reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid, or there has been a significant change in the circumstances to which the assessment relates.

Implementation of Risk Assessment Controls

An action plan will be developed by the association's nominated responsible person to carry out any work identified in asbestos risk assessment as necessary. This will most likely arise

from the creation or change of the asbestos register or from notification of damaged areas.
The action plan will identify: -

- The work required
- When the work will be completed
- The degree of risk identified
- The person(s) responsible for ensuring the work is carried out.

Monitoring arrangements

Arrangements shall be made to annually/biennially or whatever to: -

- Check the condition of any material listed in the asbestos register as being asbestos or suspected asbestos.
- Ensure early identification of any damage and an effective response
- Ensure that work by UKAS approved contractor is effectively checked and that appropriate and agreed methods of safe systems of work are employed.

Dealing with damage to known or suspected asbestos

Any damage to known or suspected asbestos should be immediately reported to the responsible person/s who should isolate the area and instigate corrective procedures using a maintenance request and inform the nominated responsible person, Association management immediately.

It is the responsibility of the responsible person/s to act promptly in dealing with damaged asbestos.

Where known asbestos is damaged, a competent person as defined above shall make an assessment of the extent of the damage and the likely release of fibres. Areas of limited damage may be sealed, taped, painted or covered by a suitable material to prevent fibre release. Extensive damage may result in the need for the asbestos to be removed.

The area in which the damaged asbestos is located will be suitably contained to prevent the disturbance of any dust and the exposure of personnel. This will normally involve making the room or area 'out of bounds'.

If it is not already known, a sample of the asbestos will be taken by an accredited consultant or licensed contractor to determine the nature and type of asbestos in the damaged material. If the damage has involved material subsequently found not to be asbestos this will be noted in the register.

Managers and those with responsibility shall ensure that anyone who may have been exposed to the asbestos during or after the damage 'incident' has this noted on their personnel record.

Personnel having a specific concern about the condition of asbestos or suspected asbestos should, in the first instance, report to association management or nominated responsible person/s.

Asbestos Removal

The Association shall use only UKAS licensed and approved UKAS asbestos removal contractors for asbestos removal work. During any such work the association will check to ensure that the quality of work and performance of the contractor is satisfactory.

Furthermore, the Association shall seek advice from the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland/local council area as necessary to ensure that the contractor is meeting licensing conditions.

Before the asbestos removal begins, the contractor must submit a method statement that will then be checked by the responsible person/s against the work to be carried out. This must include ensuring that work in other areas of the premises will not be affected, and checking that any ventilation or access to the asbestos work area does not connect with normal work areas.

The contractor must provide a written risk assessment before the work is carried out together with a written plan including the range and type of control measures to be used.

An onsite pre- work meeting shall be held to ensure the contractor is fully aware of the nature of the premises and the work arrangements to ensure that the method statement is appropriate.

A suitably competent person shall check all enclosures and air locks before the work is allowed to commence.

On the completion of work an independent clearance certificate shall be sought from an accredited asbestos UKAS consultancy. A further visual check on the area will also be made to confirm that the certificate is 'valid' and the area is dust free. The enclosure can then be removed, and the area returned to normal working.

Other Contractor working

The asbestos register will be used to inform other contractors undertaking any work not involving asbestos removal, of the presence or suspected presence of asbestos in the work area. The association shall ensure that no contract work is undertaken without an authorisation to show that asbestos is not involved or likely to be released as a consequence of the work being undertaken. Special attention will be given to work involving electrical, plumbing and heating, decorating contractors and any work involving fixing of items to walls, ceilings or structures.

Staff Access to Asbestos Register

All staff will have access to the asbestos register for the area in which they normally work or Association premises which they visit.

Any member of staff has the authority to stop a contractor or others working in an area which they know from the asbestos register to contain asbestos, unless there is an approved method statement in place to control the release of asbestos.

Signage

Where possible, areas will be clearly marked with suitably compliant signs to indicate the presence of asbestos and the danger. The signs shall reflect the information contained in the asbestos register. As far as is reasonably practicable, the signs will be placed where they are most likely to be seen either by contractors doing non-asbestos work or anyone who may accidentally damage the asbestos.



Figure 3 Asbestos label

An emergency telephone number will be provided so that any damage can be immediately reported.

Training and Instruction

All staff who may foreseeably encounter asbestos containing materials during their working day are to be trained to an appropriate level to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, their health, safety and welfare and that of others.

All staff with direct responsibility for inspection and management of asbestos containing materials (ACM) must receive specific training.

The qualification and competence of all contractors, consultants and service providers carrying out asbestos work will be assured through the associations procedures for awarding contracts.

Appointment of consultants will include a warning to consider and advise on the possible presence of ACM on association premises.

The Association requires its supply chain planned and reactive maintenance contractors to confirm that they have asbestos management training and practices in place for their operatives. Where an operative suspect that they have identified suspected ACM during the course of their work, they contact their employer who must advise the Association.

Audit and Review

This Policy shall be audited annually as part of the health and safety audit system and subject to review when applicable to any change in regulations or relevant legislation.

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For Use By:	All Staff
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Purpose

35 The purpose of the survey is to help manage asbestos in the dutyholder's premises. The survey has to provide sufficient information for: an asbestos register and plan to be prepared, a suitable risk assessment to be carried out and a written plan to manage the risks to be produced. The process is shown schematically in Figure 2.

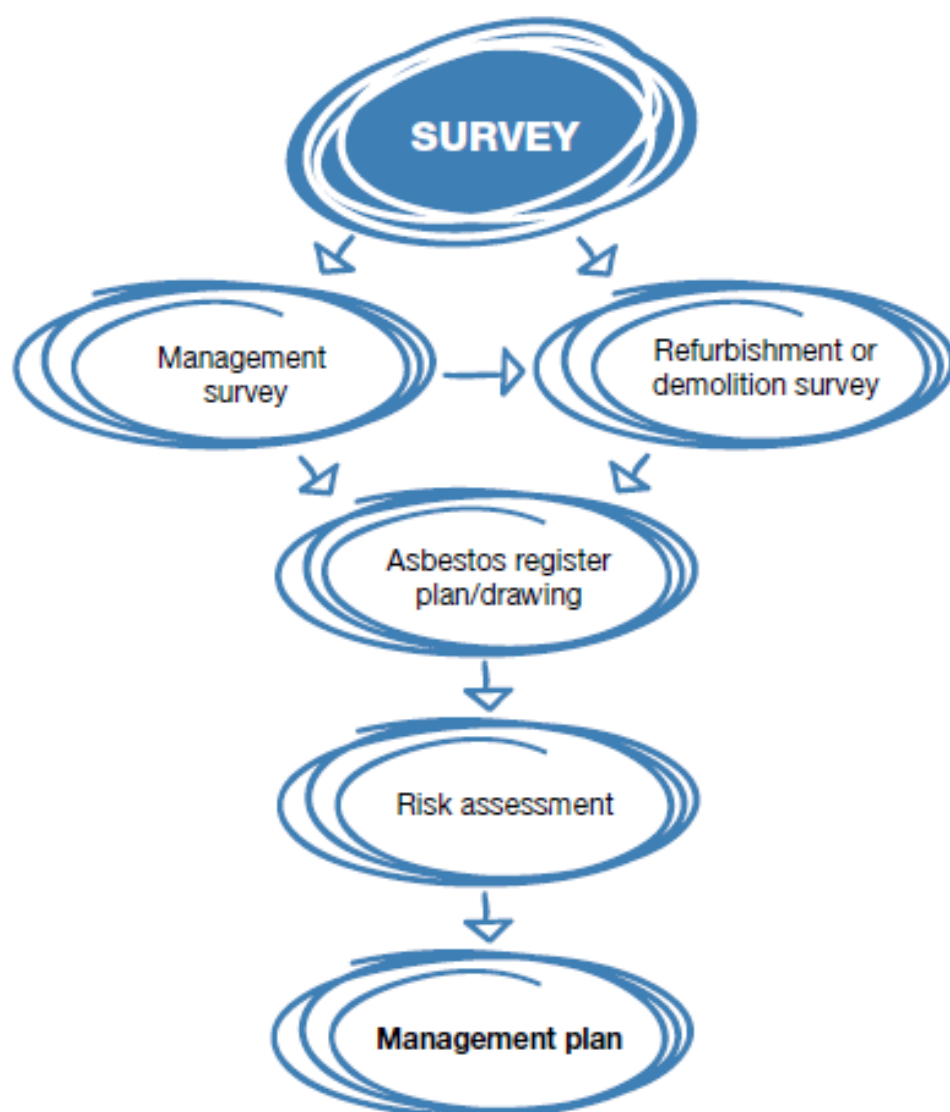


Figure 2 Schematic diagram showing the link between the asbestos survey and the management plan