

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## Tenant Services Management Board – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016

### Housing and Communities Service – Asbestos and communications with tenants and residents

#### Report of the Housing Services Lead – Stephen Boland

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Terry Beale)

#### 1. Executive Summary

This report sets out the Asbestos Communication Strategy and related letters and newsletter articles.

The Tenant Services Management Board is invited to comment on the strategy, letters and newsletter articles.

#### 2. Background

##### 2.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council Asbestos Compliance Review.

Good progress has been made over a period of years by those responsible for managing both the corporate and housing portfolio to address asbestos related risk management at Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC). This is evidenced by the appropriate use of specialist surveyors and contractors, a proactive survey program over a period of years with corresponding accumulated data and related operational processes and documentation. Notwithstanding this, it is evident through the process of review, there remain a number of concerns which, in the event of an incident inspection by Health and Safety Executive, may result in a less than satisfactory assessment.

An action plan sets out actions that to be considered and/or taken.  
(Source: Ransom, J. (2015). Taunton Deane Borough Council: Asbestos Compliance Review; Savills (UK) Limited, London).

An Asbestos Working Group has been formed to act as an operational group to help drive the asbestos compliance/ improvement agenda on behalf of all stakeholders within Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council. This is principally to practically implement the recommendations arising from the Savills report and recommendations (dated 2015).

### **3.0 Asbestos Communication Strategy and related template documentation**

A key function of the Asbestos Working Group is to develop, monitor and review the Asbestos Communications Strategy and related template documentation.

Attached for your information and comment are the following documents:

1. Communication Strategy: Informing residents about asbestos;
2. TDBC asbestos information leaflet;
3. Survey appointment letter 1;
4. Survey appointment letter 2;
5. Survey results letter 1;
6. Survey results letter 2;
7. Asbestos FAQ's;
8. Newsletter article 1; and
9. Newsletter article 2.

Note: Several members of our Tenants' Forum have been involved in reviewing the content of the letters and articles.

### **4.0 Recommendation**

1. The Tenant Services Management Board is invited to comment on the strategy and related documents.

**Contact:** Stephen Boland – Housing Services Lead  
Direct Dial No: 01823 356446  
[e-mail: s.boland@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:s.boland@tauntondeane.gov.uk)



## Communications Strategy: Informing Residents about Asbestos

### Intention:

This strategy explains how Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC), inform our residents about asbestos:

- what it is, any potential health issues and the relevance to our residents;
- how Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) are managing asbestos within its properties;
- where asbestos containing materials are likely, or known to be within your home; and
- general 'dos and don'ts' about asbestos and who to contact for further information.

This strategy is regarded as an extension of one of our stated key objectives to

- "Work with our communities to keep Taunton Deane a great place in which to live, work, learn and enjoy".

This strategy reflects the principles stated within both the TDBC Corporate Strategy and Housing Related Support Charter and specifically to ensure we:

- will promote tenants well being, health and quality of life;
- make schemes as safe as possible for all tenants, and ensuring communal areas comply with Health and Safety legislation;
- will provide a Housing function that delivers value for money, customer focussed services to our tenants and others living on our estates; and
- will be honest, do what is right and stick to it.

### Summary:

A duty to inform all Taunton Deane Borough Council residents about asbestos is recognised by TDBC, however in order to avoid unnecessary alarm or anxiety, we wish to do so in a coordinated and responsible way.

## Background:

In April 2012 Regulation 4 of the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations came into force which concerns the 'Duty to manage the risk from asbestos in non domestic premises'. The 'duty holder' (in this case TDBC and WSC), is required by this regulation (amongst other things):

*"Provide information on the location and condition of the materials to **anyone** who is liable to disturb them."*

As asbestos containing materials which may be present in their homes could be disturbed accidentally by our residents (tenants, or leaseholders), TDBC and WSC take the view that this obligation extends to those occupying TDBC and WSC properties. These could equally be individual homes, or public buildings, or places of work (shops and commercial premises).

Domestic property (flats and houses) are also now referred to within relevant HSE guidance. TDBC and WSC interpret this as a logical extension of the regulations concerning working safely with asbestos which apply to contractors/ workers/ employees, insofar that domestic premises also become a 'place of work' whenever refurbishment work or a repair is undertaken.

## TDBC's Approach:

In order to categorically determine where asbestos is, and as importantly, where it is not, TDBC and WSC is conducting an on-going programme of specialist survey and inspection of its properties. This has been underway for a number of years already and incorporates all relevant areas of TDBC and WSC buildings constructed before the year 2000, when the use of all asbestos containing materials was banned in the UK. The range of buildings surveyed public and commercial buildings, as well as flats, houses, communal areas, sheds, bin stores, and garages. Given that TDBC manage a large number of dwellings, this inspection programme will take time to complete and not all properties have been inspected yet.

Rather than wait for all individual surveys to be completed, TDBC has therefore decided to advise all residents at the outset as to the potential presence of asbestos, as well as the potential risk posed. If there is any possibility that asbestos could be present, we will presume that it is (until proven through survey that it is not) and advise residents/ building occupants accordingly. This document helps explain how this will be done.

## Involvement and Consultation:

In order to provide valuable practical feedback as to what concerns residents are likely to have, TDBC will undertake early consultation with a group of residents willing to participate. This will also include key TDBC staff and those with specialist knowledge able to best explain relevant aspects. All asbestos related advice, letters, documentation and general information intended to help communicate with our residents can then be vetted via a residents 'editorial panel'. The aim is to ensure an easily understood, consistent, and appropriate approach will continue to be reflected.

To help 'de-mystify' the topic and any information issued to residents, TDBC will also endeavour to use plain language, or where appropriate, append a key to any 'jargon' or specialist terms used.

In order to manage both the reaction and reasonable expectations of our residents, TDBC and WSC recognise that clear and effective communication is essential.

Initial concern is understandable, however the experience of other similar Councils/ housing providers indicates that providing asbestos information directly to residents need not necessarily result in a 'panic' response. TDBC and WSC do appreciate however that the way in which information is passed on is critical. Our deliberate intention therefore is to provide accurate, concise and unambiguous information regarding the potential risk posed by asbestos.

If provided in a effective and timely manner asbestos related advice, information and guidance should not raise undue concern, indeed many of the potential risks can only be avoided if residents are provided with the correct information in a way which can be simply understood. Experience by other councils and housing providers apply confirms that excessive anxiety or panic, whilst anticipated by some, was in the end avoided by exercising care and a consultative, responsible approach.

The HSE sets out the framework for an appropriate risk management regime, however TDBC and WSC consider the need to simply highlight things our residents need know **not** to do are just as important.

These messages will include:

- **No need to panic** – if safely managed asbestos doesn't present a health hazard. Asbestos materials are more dangerous when disturbed than left alone.
- **It is not necessary to remove all asbestos** - removing asbestos which is in good condition will represent a greater risk than simply containing it.

The way in which TDBC and WSC coordinate the various processes through which we assess and then manage asbestos containing materials within the property we own, manage and maintain is contained within the Asbestos Management Plan. To provide confidence to those occupying, visiting or working within TDBC and WSC related property that their homes, public buildings or places of work are and will remain a safe environment, we set out to convey the key aspects of this on-going Asbestos Management Plan, and to keep our tenants updated about the steps being taken to manage asbestos in our resident's homes.

Conducted in the right way, TDBC regard early and clear communication with our residents in respect of this sensitive subject to be the best policy and that if it is conducted sensitively, need cause no alarm.

## Communication:

TDBC and WSC will employ existing paths of communication wherever possible in order to help provide a cost effective communication route which is already well rehearsed and readily understood by our residents.

Housing Services produce a quarterly newsletter called 'Housing', which provides information to both TDBC tenants and leaseholders. Our tenants also produce their own magazine for TDBC tenants called 'Tenants Talk'. Periodic articles regarding asbestos issues will be posted within these publications to both raise general awareness and inform residents regarding TDBC's on-going survey programme and management plan. Other briefings will be given to TDBC tenant forums and Tenants' and Residents' Associations as preferred to both provide information and encourage consultation. TDBC have already collated an asbestos information leaflet (Winter 2015, copy appended) and provided a newsletter article to promote and distribute the information within it. Every effort will be made to ensure articles are engaging and relevant. Over time it is hoped that residents will also be invited to contribute to these, or submit their own articles where appropriate or helpful to do so.

As part of the 'duty to manage', the HSE guidance requires TDBC and WSC to monitor and review our asbestos management plan and its practical implementation periodically. We regard the provision of periodic (at least annual) communication updates for our residents to constitute a component of this.

Although not an exhaustive list, other relevant processes or points at which TDBC considered it will be appropriate to provide specific asbestos information to our residents, building users, occupants, or other partners will include:

- Our office reception areas (leaflets and posters)
- Our website
- New tenants information packs

- As part of the mutual exchange procedure
- As part of the pre-assignment RTB/RTA procedure
- Tenant Handbook
- Leaseholder Handbook
- At renewal/ commencement of commercial/ business leases
- Resident Planned Works Information Packs
- In responses to tenant own alteration (DIY) work requests\*
- Disabled Adaptation referral procedure

\* Provided that they notify and obtain permission first, secure tenants within TDBC property have a right to undertake improvements to their home. We will however remind residents that they **must not** commence any alteration or improvement work until permission has been provided in writing by TDBC. This permission will include suitable advice and guidance regarding the potential risk from asbestos associated with the work proposed. The process of approval may also necessitate additional specific survey inspection and testing which TDBC may need to commission in advance of granting approval.

A number of the documents referred to within this strategy can (or subsequently will) be found included in the appendices. Access will also be provided via the TDBC and WSC website.

It is our intention as part of this strategy to carefully review and continue to coordinate all resident and building user focussed asbestos communication, in order that any advice or information made available is consistent for all service users/ customers.

In order to best address any potential concerns arising, all TDBC residents will be contacted prior to asbestos survey via letter. This will incorporate simple explanatory information and copy of our asbestos information leaflet, as well as provide contact details by which immediate queries may be raised with those most appropriate to answer them and in advance of a visit by the specialist contractor.

When initially publicising the (on-going) annual survey programmes and the subsequent provision of asbestos survey information to our residents, TDBC will encourage residents to phone/ e-mail us directly to address any concerns they may have. Queries will be responded to via staff with appropriate training to best provide clear and consistent information to help avoid unnecessary concern or confusion. TDBC will monitor the number and nature of asbestos related enquires received and attempt to reflect these within on-going communication adopted. The experience of others who have undertaken a similar process indicate that after an initial brief period, the number of enquiries received reduce significantly in order these may then be appropriately responded to as part of our normal communication.

## **Training and awareness (of TDBC and WSC staff):**

To help address the queries and potential concerns of our building users, residents or partner contractors, this strategy sets out to ensure clear communication at all levels required. To aid this objective, TDBC and WSC ensure a regime of carefully targeted training amongst a range of staff teams which include technical officers as well as those dealing with direct enquiries from residents or the public, or those partners delivering services upon our behalf. Asbestos awareness training is provided periodically to a wide range of our staff including relevant managers within both our housing and corporate management teams. Although they may not be required to deal directly with this aspect, TDBC and WSC consider suitable knowledge is appropriate in order to provide an appropriate context and awareness enough to appreciate the potential risk associated with the work they take responsibility to manage. In many instances having identified a potential concern, the associated procedure will then direct them or their staff to refer the matter to other TDBC or WSC staff provided with sufficient training to best deal and manage the problem directly.

TDBC and WSC employ specialist contractors licensed by the HSE specifically to remove, work on, or repair most asbestos containing materials. It is not therefore generally necessary to train our own staff in the detail relating to these tasks, but only sufficient to understand when their services are necessary and what information is required both before and following related tasks. For some specific routine tasks relating to asbestos containing materials however, TDBC have a specialist team as part of our direct workforce (the TDBC DLO) who are trained and equipped to carry out a limited number of asbestos related tasks. This is to enable them to undertake their maintenance and improvement work efficiently. This remains a closely regulated area however and specialist training for this team is undertaken annually together with on-going auditing to ensure the required quality of work is maintained for this sensitive area.

TDBC also employ specialist certified asbestos inspection and survey companies to undertake building surveys, manage work in progress and provide retained general advice when required in response to work commissioned or queries received from our residents or our other working partners.

Those otherwise involved with commissioning, inspecting, or managing repair or improvement works upon TDBC and WSC property are provided with thorough general awareness and site recognition training sufficient to appreciate and anticipate potential asbestos related risk.

As communication with TDBC residents will often be direct (if not face to face), we will continue to ensure our front line staff teams (including the Customer Service Centre Advisors), are made aware of the key principles sufficient to deal with asbestos related questions positively and clearly.

To assist with this function, a number of standardised 'frequently asked questions' together with associated responses has been collated. This set of questions and answers (appended) will be as part of the training syllabus and updated periodically to best reflect actual patterns of enquiry received from our customers.

As part of TDBC and WSC's strategic asbestos management structure, a number of 'responsible persons' have been designated and will therefore receive training at an enhanced level in order to support other staff teams and resolve more detailed enquiries. All training will be subject to on-going refresher training and express repeat cycles to ensure knowledge is up to date and reflect current practice.

## **Accessibility:**

As part of our commitment to equality, diversity and social inclusion, TDBC is committed to advancing equality of opportunity and providing fair access and treatment in employment and when delivering services. We Therefore want everyone we house, provide services for, or otherwise communicate with to be able to understand us clearly.

As well as our usual contact details, Information issued by TDBC regarding asbestos will therefore carry the following statement and following translation table:

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If you would like this document translated into another language or in braille, large print, audiotape or CD please telephone 01823 356423 or email us on [enquires@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquires@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

<b>English</b>
If you would like this document translated into other languages or in Braille, large print, audio tape, or CD please telephone us on 01823 or e-mail us at @tauntondeane.gov.uk
<b>Bengali</b>
অপনি যদি এই দলিলপত্র অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনুবাদ করে চান, বা ব্রেল, বড়ো ছাপার অক্ষর, অডিও-টেপ বা সিডিতে চান, তাহলে আমাদের টেলিফোন করুন এই নম্বরে 01823 বা অথবা ই-মেল করুন @tauntondeane.gov.uk
<b>Chinese</b>
如果你要這文件翻譯成其他語言或盲人凸字,大號字,聲帶,或光碟,請致電我們,電話 01823 或電郵 @tauntondeane.gov.uk
<b>Hindi</b>
अगर आप इस दस्तावेज़ का अनुवाद दूसरी भाषाओं या ब्रेल, बड़े अक्षरों वाली छपाई, ऑडियो टेप, या सीडी में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया हमें इस नंबर पर फ़ोन कीजिये 01823 या यहाँ ईमेल कीजिये @tauntondeane.gov.uk
<b>Portuguese</b>
Se desejar a tradução deste documento para um outro idioma ou em Braille, letras grandes, cassete de áudio ou CD, contacte-nos pelo telefone 01823 ou pelo endereço de correio electrónico @tauntondeane.gov.uk
<b>Polish</b>
W celu uzyskania niniejszego dokumentu w innym języku, w języku Braille'a, wydrukowanego dużym drukiem, nagranego na taśmę dźwiękową lub CD prosimy o kontakt pod numerem telefonu 01823 lub na adres @tauntondeane.gov.uk

## Conclusion:

TDBC regard the risk to health associated with exposure to asbestos fibres as a highly important issue. The HSE's statistics prove it is "...the greatest single cause of work related deaths in the UK" (HSE) and as such the consequences can be extremely serious.

As TDBC consider our homes as well as our public and commercial buildings effectively constitute a 'place of work' when undertaking refurbishment or responsive repair, we consider it appropriate to regard our responsibility to our residents an extension of our duty to workers, contractors and staff.

Similarly we consider a duty of care to inform our residents as to the potential presence of asbestos containing materials and what to do in respect of them applies as they may reasonably wish to undertake their own redecoration and/or minor improvements or repair.

If undertaken in a straight forward, consultative manner, experience suggests that providing guidance and general advice in respect to the potential risk posed by asbestos, need not necessarily cause alarm or panic to our residents or building users.

TDBC understand that it is how we communicate such advice and information which is often significant and it is important to ensure we train appropriate staff, especially those who deal directly with our residents, and are therefore likely to receive queries or become aware of concern. As an extension of a robust asbestos management plan, this communications strategy is intended to help set out how we will continue to provide accurate, concise, and timely information to make sure our customers are kept informed and retain confidence in TDBC's approach.



## Key to Abbreviations / Terms:

ACM	-	Asbestos Containing Material
CAR 2012	-	Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
DLO	-	Direct Labour Organisation
TDBC	-	Taunton Deane Borough Council
Domestic Premises	-	Houses/flats (not commercial buildings like shops/offices/industrial buildings)
DIY	-	Do It Yourself
Duty Holder	-	Person in control of the maintenance activity to the property concerned
FAQs	-	Frequently Asked Questions
HSE	-	The Health and Safety Executive
Licensed Contractors	-	Specialist contractors licensed by the HSE and Commission to undertake asbestos related work
RTB / RTA	-	Right to Buy / Right to Acquire
WSC	-	West Somerset Council

# Appendix

# APPENDIX 1

Asbestos Information Leaflet / Resident  
Asbestos Related Survey Results /  
Letter Templates / FAQ's

(Note: Some intended as initial working copies  
for co-development with resident editorial  
panel)



# Your Guide to Asbestos

For Council Tenants and Leaseholders



In good condition, asbestos is not a health hazard. But if items in your home do become damaged or deteriorate, then you and others around you may be at risk from asbestos fibres in the air.



## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong fibrous rock, which can resist heat and chemicals. It was commonly used in building materials between the 1950s and 1980s. Almost all buildings built or changed during this period are likely to contain asbestos. Products containing asbestos can look the same as those that do not. The difference can only be found under a microscope by a specialist laboratory.

## Am I at risk?

Before starting any major DIY activities you must obtain written permission from Taunton Deane Borough Council's Property Services.

Seek specialist advice regarding your homes asbestos content.

You will not be at risk if products containing asbestos are undisturbed or undamaged. In good condition, asbestos is not a health hazard.

If items do become damaged or deteriorate, then you and others around you may be at risk from asbestos fibres in the air.





### **Am I at risk?** (continued)

DIY activities such as drilling or sanding may disturb and possibly damage products containing asbestos. If you inadvertently damage what you suspect to be asbestos, leave everything in place (tools, ground sheets etc.), close the door leading to the room and contact us immediately.

#### **Do not put yourself at risk.**

Please seek specialist advice before carrying out any work. If you are a council tenant, we will arrange to have a sample taken and tested to establish if it contains asbestos.

Further works can be undertaken if necessary. This service is free for tenants. Leaseholders must arrange surveys and removal themselves.

All work must be carried out by approved contractors licensed by the HSE for certain types of work.

Asbestos is not dangerous if it is in a good condition. We assure tenants and leaseholders that their health and safety is our most important consideration.

**You may like to think of Asbestos in the same way as live electricity...  
a constant presence in our homes and quite safe until it is tampered with.**

## Where could I find asbestos in my home?

Not all homes contain asbestos. Below is a list of common places where asbestos has been found in properties. This list is not exhaustive.

### Common places where asbestos has been found in properties.

#### Exterior of building

- Roof sheets and tiles
- Fascia boards
- Exterior cladding
- Guttering & drain pipes

#### Boilers

- Some interior workings of boilers
- Boiler flue pipes
- Linings to the boiler cupboards or doors
- Gaskets and seals

#### Interior surfaces

- Textured wall and ceiling coatings (e.g. artex)
- Duct panels (access to pipe work)
- Infill panels (above, below or next to doorways/windows)
- Panels behind radiators or heaters
- Floor tiles
- Suspended ceiling panels
- Underside of stairs
- Ceilings

#### Electrical

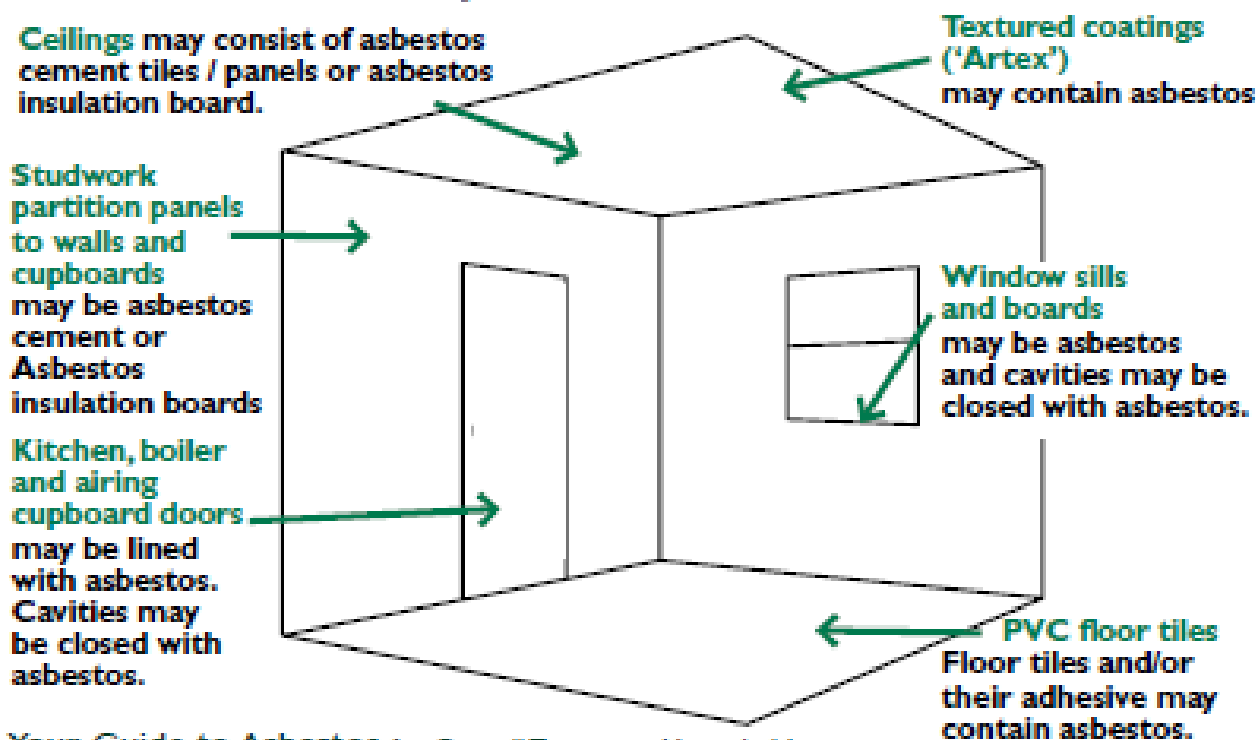
- Old fuse boards
- Storage Heaters

#### Other areas

- Bath panels
- Fireplace panels
- Pads underside of sink
- Water tank
- Pipe lagging
- Garage and shed roof
- Insulation
- Fire doors, loft hatches

All of the items in this list could contain asbestos and should be treated as such unless you know otherwise. If you are concerned about asbestos, please contact Taunton Deane Borough Council. Contact details can be found at the end of this leaflet.

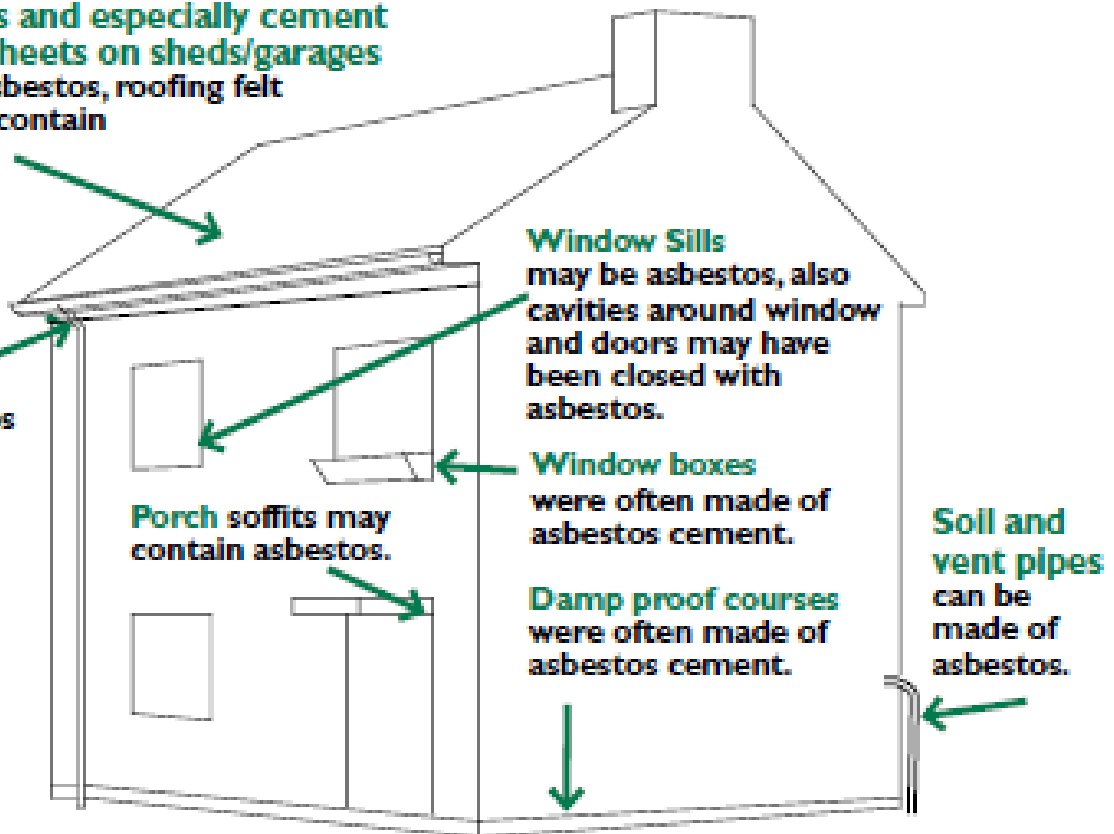
### Where you might find asbestos inside the home



## Where you might find asbestos on the exterior of a home

Roof tiles and especially cement roofing sheets on sheds/garages may be asbestos, roofing felt may also contain asbestos.

Soffits, fascias and rainwater fixtures may be of asbestos cement.



## What is Taunton Deane Borough Council doing about Asbestos in their properties?

Taunton Deane Borough Council holds a list of properties where asbestos has been found or is believed to exist. This list is continually being updated as we carry out more surveys across the council's housing stock.

We are happy to share with you any information we have regarding asbestos in your home. We are also embarking on a programme of updated surveys and will share the results of these with you in writing.

**Where we think asbestos is present tests are carried out.**

If the asbestos is in a good condition, it is best practice to leave it in place. However, if the asbestos is in a bad condition, it will be removed or made safe. Leaseholders must make their own arrangements for survey and removal unless the work is part of a major project. Where major projects are being undertaken, tenants and leaseholders are formally consulted as a group and advised on the full process such as how the asbestos will be removed and, if necessary, what precautions are needed and for how long.



## Services to tenants

Taunton Deane Borough Council provides a free survey and removal where appropriate service for council tenants. Please contact Property Services if you are worried about asbestos in your home.

When asbestos materials need to be removed or made safe, we will employ contractors who are licensed with the Health and Safety Executive. They will seal off the area containing damaged asbestos with an air tight enclosure if necessary. They then collect and secure the material under the Waste Management Licensing regulations.

If necessary, an independent analyst from the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), will carry out an air check to make sure the area is safe. All work is done under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.

## Services to leaseholders

Under the terms of your lease you are responsible for all fixtures and fittings within your property, including artex ceilings and floor tiles. Do not attempt any DIY on materials you suspect could contain asbestos without speaking to a specialist first. Property Services can offer information and advice but you will have to organise and pay for the work to be done.

Taunton Deane Borough Council remains responsible for the building structure and the asbestos in any shared /communal areas (stairwells, landings, halls etc.)

Remember that items you suspect contain asbestos are best left in place if in good condition. If you do have asbestos removed or sealed, please inform future owners so that this information can be passed on. Any asbestos removed from your property must be disposed of by approved asbestos removal contractors.

**Remember: Asbestos dumping is illegal.**

## **For information and advice on asbestos**

**Under no circumstances attempt any removal or work on items you suspect may contain asbestos.**

If you have any questions about asbestos or need some information and advice, contact Taunton Deane Borough Council Property Services.

**Taunton Deane Borough Council Property Services**

Phone: 01823 356333

Email: [housing.maintenance@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:housing.maintenance@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Post: Housing Repair, Taunton Deane Borough Council, Priory Depot, Priory Way, Taunton TA1 2BB

Information and advice is also available from several other organisations:

### **Health and Safety Executive**

Phone: 0845 345 0055

Post: Health and Safety Executive,  
Rose Court, 2 Southwark Bridge,  
London SE1 9HS

Web: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

### **United Kingdom Accreditation Service**

Phone: 44 (0) 20 89178400

Email: [info@ukas.com](mailto:info@ukas.com)

Post: UKAS, 21-47 High Street,  
Feltham, Middlesex TW13 4UN

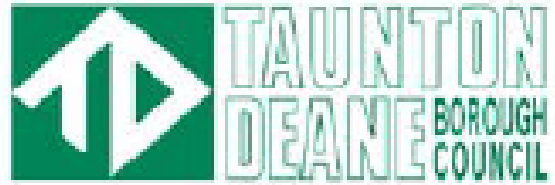
Web: [www.ukas.com](http://www.ukas.com)

### **The Asbestos Removal Control Association**

Phone: 01283 531126

Post: ARCA House, 237 Branston Road,  
Burton upon Trent, Staffordshire DE14 3BT

Web: [www.arcaweb.org.ukdom](http://www.arcaweb.org.ukdom)



**For other information please contact:**

**Taunton Deane Borough Council**

The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1HE

Telephone: 01823 356356

Email: [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Web site: [www.tauntondeane.gov.uk](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk)

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**English**

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**Bengali**

অপনি যদি এই মসিলপত্র অন্য কোন ভাষায় অনুবাদ করে চান, বা ব্রেল, বড়ো ছাপার অক্ষর, অডিও-ট্যেপ বা সিডিতে চান, তাহলে আমাদের টেলিফোন করুন এই নম্বরে 01823 356356 বা অথবা ই-মেল করুন [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

**Chinese**

如果你要這文件翻譯成其他語言或盲人凸字,大號字,聲帶,或光碟,請致電我們,電話 01823 356356  
或電郵 [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

**Hindi**

अगर आप इस दस्तावेज का अनुवाद दूसरी भाषाओं या ब्रेल, बड़े अक्षरों वाली छपाई, ऑडियो टेप, या सीडी में चाहते हैं, तो कृपया हमें इस नंबर पर फोन कीजिये 01823 356356  
या यहाँ ईमेल कीजिये [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

**Portuguese**

Se desejar a tradução deste documento para um outro idioma ou em Braille, letras grandes, cassete de áudio ou CD, contacte-nos pelo telefone 01823 356356 ou pelo endereço de correio electrónico [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

**Polish**

W celu uzyskania niniejszego dokumentu w innym języku, w języku Braille'a, wydrukowanego dużym drukiem, nagranych na taśmę dźwiękową lub CD prosimy o kontakt pod numerem telefonu 01823 356356 lub na adres [enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

## Survey Appointment: Template Letter 1

**SURVEYING CONTRACTOR NAME/LOGO**



**Taunton Deane Borough Council  
Housing Services**  
Deane House  
Belvedere Road  
Taunton  
TA1 1HE

Dear *Name (resident)*

### **TDBC: Asbestos Management Survey**

In order to be sure that we continue to manage any asbestos that might be within our properties safely, and to ensure the health and wellbeing of our tenants, we wish to undertake a survey of your home.

As part of our on-going inspection programme for this work, our appointed specialist '*Contractor Name*' are helping to update surveys for our properties.

As part of this, '*Contractor Name*' are planning to survey your property to update our information during the next month. As part of the survey, small samples may be taken from the surface of walls, ceilings, floors etc for testing. The items sampled may not necessarily contain asbestos, but in any event the sampling process will pose no danger to you.

It is important to stress that conducting these surveys does not necessarily indicate that there are any asbestos containing materials present. If identified through survey however, this will allow us to make sure it is not disturbed and to continue to manage it appropriately. We hope you may find the enclosed information leaflet helpful in explaining what asbestos is and the key aspects to be aware of. We will be providing further information for residents through our newsletters also later in the year.

*Contractor Name* will contact you to agree a suitable appointment shortly. Once the survey results are known, we will contact you to let you know and explain the results and what (if any) additional action we may anticipate.

In the meantime, if you have any queries in respect of the asbestos survey, please do not hesitate to call us on **01823 356356**. Taunton Deane Borough Council are grateful for your co-operation.

Yours Sincerely

*Name*  
*Job Title* TDBC

## Survey Appointment: Template Letter 2

PARTNER SURVEYING CONTRACTOR  
LETTER HEAD/LOGO/ADDRESS

Dear *Name (resident)*,

### TDBC: Asbestos Management Survey

With reference to the introductory letter to you from Taunton Deane Borough Council , we write to confirm that we are undertaking asbestos surveys in your area during the next **2 weeks**.

As part of the survey we may require access to all parts of your property. This will typically include roof spaces, outbuildings, garages or sheds. In order that any potential risks can continue to be appropriately managed, it is very important the sampling and testing carried out during our visit is thorough. Our surveyor will be ready to help explain what he will be doing and to answer any other questions you have when he arrives.

Identity badges (with the surveyors photograph), will be carried by all our staff and we encourage you to ask to see this before allowing them into your home. Although they may vary, the surveys should take no longer than an hour.

Photographs will need to be taken, inside and out, as part of the survey. These are to identify the exact position of samples tested and locations/ materials referred to and will not be used for any other purpose.

We will contact you again soon to confirm a convenient date and time to visit and carry out the survey. If when we call you are not at home, we will leave a calling card with our contact details in order you can contact us and re-arrange another more convenient time. If however you are happy to contact us now to confirm an appointment direct, please call us on **01823 .....**

Taunton Deane Borough Council and '*Contractor Name*' thank you in advance for your co-operation regarding this important matter.

Yours Sincerely

*Name*  
Asbestos Contract Manager  
For and on behalf of *Contractor Name*

## Survey Tenant Results: Template Letter 1



### Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services

Deane House  
Belvedere Road  
Taunton  
TA1 1HE

Dear *Name (resident)*

#### TDBC: Results of Asbestos Survey

Following the recent survey conducted at your home, please find enclosed a copy of the results. These are designed to provide you with a summary as to location of any asbestos containing materials identified in your home and to confirm what TDBC intend to do about them (if necessary). It is possible asbestos containing materials could also be in locations that could not be accessed/reached at the time of the survey (a list of these locations can also be provided upon request). In future, if you think one of the materials indicated has sustained damage, or you are considering undertaking any work yourself within your home, **it is essential to contact TDBC and advise us immediately** or before starting work.

We are pleased to assure you that the presence of asbestos containing materials in your home does not in itself warrant any cause for concern. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommend that such materials in good condition should be left in place undisturbed. We may monitor their condition periodically, however it can be thought of in a similar way to live electricity: 'a constant presence but quite safe unless tampered with.'

The asbestos sampling surveys are part of TDBC's overall asbestos management plan and are being conducted to update our information and, over time, identify all potential asbestos material within our property.

TDBC require the information to review, and as appropriate in each case, continue our prioritised, on-going programme of monitoring, removal or encapsulation as required.

In the light of this letter, if you would like another copy of our asbestos information leaflet, or wish to discuss any questions or concerns arising, please do not hesitate to contact myself or one of my colleagues on telephone number **01823 356356**, and we will be happy to help.

Yours Sincerely

*Name*  
*Job Title* TDBC



## Results from Asbestos Management Survey

<b>Property address:</b>	
<b>Asbestos survey date:</b>	
<b>This report compiled/ printed:</b>	

<b>Location within property (sample point)</b>	<b>Finding (Result of sample testing)</b>	<b>Risk Code (pto for key)</b>
<b>Room:</b> Porch <b>Item:</b> Cement Soffit	Asbestos detected	<b>D</b>
<b>Room:</b> Hall <b>Item:</b> Floor Tiles	Asbestos detected	<b>D</b>
<b>Room:</b> Kitchen <b>Item:</b> Sink pad (below basin)	Asbestos detected	<b>E</b>
<b>Room:</b> Kitchen <b>Item:</b> Pipe Boxing in corner	Asbestos detected	<b>C</b>
<b>Room:</b> Kitchen <b>Item:</b> Floor Tile	Asbestos detected	<b>D</b>
<b>Room:</b> Bedroom 1 <b>Item:</b> Textured Ceiling Coating	No asbestos identified	-
<b>Room:</b> Bedroom 1 Cupboard 2 <b>Item:</b> Floor Tiles	No asbestos identified	-
<b>Room:</b> Roof Void <b>Item:</b> Gas boiler flue boxing	Asbestos detected	<b>C</b>

**Samples taken have been laboratory tested. These were taken during the survey and from locations wherever the surveyor considered there could be a material which may have contained asbestos. The findings from the test results are tabulated above.**



**Key to Taunton Deane Borough Council Asbestos ‘Risk Code’:**

<b>Category A</b>	<b>High risk</b> material in poor condition: Restrict access and remove material as soon as practicable.
<b>Category B</b>	<b>Medium Risk</b> material likely to be damaged or in <u>poor condition</u> : Remove / encapsulate material within 6 months.
<b>Category C</b>	<b>Medium risk</b> material in <u>fair condition</u> : Encapsulate/ repair and seal damaged areas within recommended timescale then monitor condition annually.
<b>Category D</b>	<b>Low risk material</b> : No Action Required. Monitor condition periodically.
<b>Category E</b>	<b>Very low risk material</b> : No Action Required. Monitor condition periodically.

**Notes to Resident:**

Materials identified to contain asbestos (as tabulated overleaf), must not be damaged or disturbed in any way.

**Please contact us immediately if one of these materials has been damaged or has deteriorated and we will assist.**

**Also Please Remember:**

- Breaking up asbestos containing materials or products with any tool, or cutting or abrading asbestos with electric tools in any way is dangerous and must be avoided at all times.

**Similarly:**

- Do not drill a hole into any asbestos containing boards or material
- Do not rub down textured coatings (Artex) or asbestos board/ panels
- Do not break off or cut into any asbestos products or boards
- Do not remove asbestos sheets, boxing or panels to gain access below (example: bath panels to access water / drainage services)
- Do not use wallpaper scrapers on asbestos products

If you wish to make some improvements to your property yourself (tenants own improvements or DIY) and this may potentially involve disturbing any of the items in the locations listed overleaf, you must contact Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) for the appropriate advice first. As part of your tenancy agreement, you should in any event always ask permission from TDBC before commencing any work on your property. We will help by checking the relevant information in order to be sure if what you wish to do is safe first.

If you think that one of the items listed overleaf has been damaged, you should contact the TDBC Customer Services immediately and we will send someone to have a look at it and decide whether any repairs will be needed.

If you have any questions or concerns about the asbestos in your home, want any further information, please contact us on telephone number **01823 356356**.



## Survey Tenant Results: Template Letter 2



### Taunton Deane Borough Council Housing Services

Deane House  
Belvedere Road  
Taunton  
TA1 1HE

Dear *Name (resident)*

#### TDBC: Results of Asbestos Survey

Following the recent survey conducted at your home, I write to request an appointment convenient to you in order to explain the findings in more detail and to plan some precautionary work to follow.

I have tentatively arranged a provisional appointment to visit you, accompanied by our specialist contractor, at *time* on *date*. Should this date be inconvenient for you, please call me directly on telephone *01823 356356* and we can arrange another appointment.

The survey results which I will bring with me are designed to provide you with a summary as to location of any asbestos containing materials identified in your home and to confirm what TDBC intend to do about them (if necessary). It is possible asbestos containing materials could also be in locations that could not be accessed/reached at the time of the survey (a list of these locations can also be provided upon request). In future, if you think one of the materials indicated has sustained damage, or you are considering undertaking any work yourself within your home, **it is essential to contact TDBC and advise us immediately** or before starting work.

We are pleased to assure you that the presence of asbestos containing materials in your home does not in itself warrant any cause for concern. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommend that such materials in good condition should be left in place undisturbed. We may monitor their condition periodically, however it can be thought of in a similar way to live electricity: 'a constant presence but quite safe unless tampered with.'

The work we will meet with you to discuss purely preventative and can be regarded as a precautionary measure. There is no reason to be concerned in the meantime and I look forward to discussing this with you to explain what will be undertaken before anything is undertaken.

In the light of this letter, if you would like another copy of our asbestos information leaflet, or wish to discuss any questions or concerns arising before my visit, please do not hesitate to contact myself or one of my colleagues on telephone number *01823 356356*, and we will be happy to help.

Yours Sincerely

*Name Job Title* TDBC



# Asbestos FAQs

For use by the customer contact centre in response to potential tenant enquiries

(modify for corporate or leaseholder enquires)

## GENERAL ASBESTOS ENQUIRIES

**• *I've had this letter about asbestos – what does it mean?***

As a result of prevailing legislation, Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) is reviewing how we deal with asbestos and updating our records. The information sheet you were sent explains where you might find asbestos in your home. We advise you accordingly not to carry out DIY on items if you think they may contain asbestos.

**• *Does this mean that there is asbestos in my home?***

The majority of properties contain asbestos. We believe that there is asbestos in most of TDBC's homes and generally will assume so until definitively proven otherwise.

**• *If there is asbestos in my home, isn't that a risk to my health?***

No. Asbestos is only a risk to health if it is in poor condition, broken, or if you are actually working on it. You may like to think of it in the same way as live electricity – a constant presence and quite safe until tampered with.

**• *How do I know if there is asbestos in my house?***

The information sheet you were sent includes information on those areas that typically might contain asbestos. The only way to be completely sure of exactly where asbestos is located in every property is by carrying out a detailed survey. This is an expensive process and TDBC is undertaking an on-going programme of representative surveys. If there is doubt as to whether asbestos is contained within a material within your home, we will assume that it is until proven otherwise.

**• *My shed roof/garage roof, etc, contains asbestos – does this mean I can't use my shed / garage?***

If the sheeting is not damaged, there is no danger from the asbestos contained within it.

## REPAIRS TO PROPERTY

- ***Part of my house that might contain asbestos is damaged (eg, a bath panel, rainwater pipe, etc.) What are you going to do about it?***

We will either arrange for the item to be inspected to check whether there is a risk and/or replace the item in an appropriate manner.

- ***Some work was carried out at my home last week/month. Does that mean that I now have asbestos in my home?***

Replacement materials used by TDBC and its contractors will not contain asbestos.

- ***You replaced my shed roof/WC cistern, etc, last week and the old one is still in my garden, and I think it contains asbestos. When are you going to collect it?***

Redundant materials removed, should have been taken away and appropriately disposed of. However, if in any doubt, please contact TDBC with your name and address and we will resolve this for you.

## TENANTS OWN IMPROVEMENTS (DIY)

- ***Am I safe to carry out DIY work in my home?***

We advise that you not to carry out DIY to any item if you think it may contain asbestos. Contact us first to confirm.

- ***I replaced a bath panel (or whatever) recently and now you're telling me it contained asbestos. Does this mean I'm at risk?***

The risk to householders from carrying out minor repairs is minimal. However, to avoid any risk, we advise you not to carry out any further work on items that might contain asbestos.

## WHATS TDBC DOING ABOUT IT?

- ***What are you going to do to get rid of the asbestos from my home?***

If asbestos is not damaged or disturbed, the safest thing to do is to leave it where it is. If there is some damaged asbestos in your home, we will immediately assess the risk, and then decide the best course of action to deal with it to ensure your family is not exposed to any potential risk.

## THREATS AND DEMANDS

- ***I'm not staying in this property – will you move me?***

No. TDBC believes that, like the majority of buildings built before 1990, most of TDBC's buildings will contain asbestos. There would therefore be no point in moving you to another property which is also likely to contain asbestos.

- ***If anything happens to my kids, I'm going to hold you responsible.***

If you follow the guidelines set out in the leaflet provided, you and your household should not be at any risk.

- ***Would you have your kids living in a house with asbestos?***

Almost all properties built before 1990 contain some form of asbestos, so almost all people do.

- ***I'm going to the papers/MP/Councillor.***

You are fully entitled to do so, although we would prefer to review and discuss the matter with you fully before hand, as from experience this may dispel your immediate concern.

- ***My dad died of asbestos-related diseases and lived in an TDBC property. Can I sue TDBC?***

TDBC can't answer that question for you: you would need to take independent legal advice.

- ***I'm not paying my rent until you've got rid of the asbestos from my house.***

TDBC does not accept this as an appropriate course of action, or a valid reason for withholding your rent. If you get into rent arrears, we will take action against you to recover the debt in the usual way.

**EXAMPLE / POSSIBLE DRAFT TDBC NEWSLETTER  
ARTICLE 1:**



## Keeping you safe .... Asbestos

### What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a fibrous natural mineral which evolves in the earth. Its ability to withstand high degrees of heat and electrical currents meant that it was widely used in buildings during the 1950s to 1980s. These fibres can be harmful when breathed in. If the material containing any asbestos is intact and in good condition, then the risk is minimal.

### Where is it likely to be found?

The list below illustrates some **typical** places where materials containing asbestos **could** be found in a domestic building (house / flat).

Please note: this list does not include every possibility.

Outside the home	Inside the home
Guttering and rainwater pipes	Boilers and flues
Foulwater drainage pipes	Linings to boiler cupboards
Roof sheets and tiles	Panels behind radiators/heaters/electrical distribution boards
Exterior cladding	Textured wall and ceiling coatings (e.g. Artex)
Fascia and Soffit Boards	Suspended ceiling panels
Garages and garage roofs	Boxing to soil pipes and pipe work
Outbuilding/ shed roofs	Floor tiles (older thermo plastic type)
	Bath panels
	Water tanks
	Older electrical storage heaters

### What are the risks to your family's health?

Asbestos is not a risk if it is in good condition and is not disturbed. When asbestos materials become damaged, for example, when they are sanded, sawn, scrubbed or drilled, they can release fibres into the air. These can be too small to be visible. If you think that there is damaged asbestos material in your home, please contact us on **01823 XXXXXX**.

### What is Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council doing about Asbestos?

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and West Somerset Council (WSC) are implementing an Asbestos Management Plan that sets out how we identify and manage asbestos in our housing, corporate **and public** property. An on-going programme of updated surveys has been commissioned to confirm where asbestos

is present within our stock. A register is compiled where TDBC and WSC record where asbestos has been found, or is believed to exist. This register is continually updated and then checked before any works are carried out.

If asbestos is found, TDBC and WSC will make sure the materials containing asbestos are in a safe condition and then may monitor it periodically. In the cases found necessary, the material will be sealed or removed – this will depend on its condition.

The presence of asbestos containing materials in your home does not in itself warrant any cause for concern; these materials are very common in building across the UK. Prevailing guidance recommends that such materials in good condition are best left in place undisturbed. We may monitor their condition periodically, however **asbestos can be thought of in a similar way to live electricity: 'a constant presence but quite safe unless tampered with.'**

### **Your responsibilities** *(or contribution?)*

It is important that TDBC and WSC information is kept up to date. If you wish to carry out any work to your home, you must obtain our approval before you carry out the work. This will give TDBC and WSC the opportunity to ensure that materials which may contain asbestos are identified at an early stage. This could include decorating, especially if Artex (textured coatings used upon ceilings or walls) is involved.

Remember, alterations are not allowed under your tenancy agreement without written approval from *the housing team*, so please obtain permission before you carry out the work. Please contact your *Area Housing Officer* for details.

If asbestos is found in your property, it is added to our register to allow TDBC and WSC to review and periodically monitor its condition. We will also inform any maintenance contractors who attend your property on behalf of TDBC and WSC of its location. We also employ specialist contractors to work with or remove asbestos containing materials safely where appropriate.

In the unlikely event that an asbestos containing material is, or becomes damaged, please keep away from the material or any dust or debris associated and contact Taunton Deane Borough Council or West Somerset Council immediately. We will arrange for specialist contractors to repair or remove the material. Over time we intend to survey every property, however this will take some time. Until your property has been surveyed, if you think there is material which contains asbestos in your home, especially if it has been damaged or is in poor condition, or have any related queries, then ring us on *01238 XXXXXX*.

### **Remember**

- Don't panic! Asbestos products are not a health risk unless disturbed or damaged.
- Don't disturb the material. Particularly do not remove, sand, wire brush, break or drill any material you suspect may contain asbestos in your property.
- If you have any concern, contact your *Area Housing Officer* as soon as possible.

If you have concerns please contact us on *01238 XXXXXX* or *01823 356356*

Note: All calls made from mobile phones to 0800 numbers may cost more than the standard rates.

**Possible Additions:**

Date asbestos stopped being used in UK (2000 onward ..... not a problem)?

Confirm TDBC will inform residents of the results of survey?

Communication Strategy being compiled?

Refer to new TDBC Leaflet and availability?

Use the ACM location diagrams rather than table?

**EXAMPLE / POSSIBLE DRAFT TDBC NEWSLETTER  
ARTICLE 2:**



## **ASBESTOS IN THE HOME:**

For most of us, asbestos is one of those things you feel worried about finding in your Home, but you're probably not sure why. It's true that asbestos can pose health risks. But, **like gas or electricity in the home, if it is managed properly, it is actually no cause for concern.**

What is Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council doing?

- Over the next **three** years, our specialist contractor will carry out surveys of all our properties to make sure our records are up to date and to check that we are safely managing any asbestos in our homes.
- When we are ready to carry out surveys in your area, we will write to you and let you know that a surveyor will be contacting you to make an appointment.
- During their visit, surveyors will need access to all parts of your property, including any roof spaces.
- The surveyors will all carry identity badges and the survey itself is perfectly safe.
- The surveyor will be very happy to explain the survey to you and answer your questions when they visit.
- We will let you know the results of the survey and whether we need to carry out any work. If you have any concerns or questions regarding asbestos in your home then please contact us