

Living in Hackney Scrutiny Commission 30th September 2019 Item 4 - Management of asbestos in Council-managed homes	Item No 4
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Outline

Materials containing asbestos were commonly used for a wide range of construction purposes until 1999, when all use of it was banned. Many buildings still contain asbestos.

Where asbestos-containing material (ACM) is in good condition, and is not being or going to be disturbed or damaged, there is negligible risk. However, if it is disturbed or damaged, it can become a danger to health.

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 sets a defined duty to manage asbestos in 'non-domestic premises'. Owners of buildings¹ are defined as one of the holders of these duties. This means that the Council is a duty holder in relation to a wide range of sites, for example schools, depots and other service buildings. Housing comes into the duty to manage criteria in so far as the definition of 'non-domestic-premises' includes the common areas of residential properties including halls, stairwells, lift shafts and roof spaces.

Measures required of duty holders as part of the duty to manage include establishing and maintaining a record of any asbestos in premises and the condition it is in; assessing risk of anyone being exposed to fibres from materials; preparing, following and updating a plan of how risk will be managed; and establishing a system providing information on the location and condition of material to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb it. The Health and Safety Executive sets out guidance around how these duties can be met.

The Health and Safety Executive operates an asbestos licensing scheme. Most higher-risk asbestos work must only be carried out by contractors licensed by the Health and Safety Executive. In order to be granted a license, an applicant needs "to demonstrate that they have the necessary skills, competency, expertise, knowledge and experience of work with asbestos, together with excellent health and safety management systems".

¹ You are a 'dutyholder' if: ■ you own the building; ■ you are responsible through a contract or tenancy agreement; ■ you have control of the building but no formal contract or agreement; or ■ in a multi-occupancy building, you are the owner and have taken responsibility for maintenance and repairs for the whole building.

This item has been scheduled for Members to explore the Council's approach to approach to managing asbestos, with a focus on housing.

Guests Expected:

Ajman Ali, Director, Housing Services

Donna Bryce, Head of Resident Safety, Housing Services

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A paper has been provided along with two appendices, which appear on pages 3 – 13.

Action

The Commission is asked to review the paper enclosed in advance of the meeting. They are invited to hear opening comments from guests and to then ask questions.