

Asbestos Management Policy

Originator:	Policy and Strategy Team
Executive Management Team Approval Date:	February 2024
Review date:	February 2027

1	Introduction
1.1	The scope of this Policy sets out One Vision Housing’s (OVH) responsibilities to comply with the relevant legislation in regard to asbestos within properties owned and / or managed by OVH.
1.2	OVH accepts that due to the age and construction of the housing stock and other buildings it owns and manages there may be Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) present within the fabric of the buildings (for all buildings constructed before 2000).
1.3	Asbestos in its various forms is known to pose a risk to health and safety if it is disturbed and releases airborne fibres, however, if properly managed these risks can be mitigated and controlled.
1.4	<p>This Policy sets out the provisions OVH has in place to effectively manage the presence or suspected presence of ACMs so as to minimise risks to customers, staff, contractors and other users of its buildings. The Policy also sets out OVH’s provision to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and record all occurrences of asbestos (in all forms) within the fabric of buildings owned and / or controlled by OVH • Raise customers’, contractors’ and other partner agencies’ (e.g. fire and rescue services) awareness of the presence of asbestos and the necessary precautions to prevent risk to health and safety • Safely remove and dispose asbestos if necessitated by its poor condition or by alterations, refurbishment or demolition of properties
1.5	<p>Key legislation and guidance includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 • Housing Act 2004 - Housing Health and Safety Rating System • Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 • Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 • The Defective Premises Act • The Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations • The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 • Approved Codes of Practice (ACoP) • Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations

1.6 The application of this Policy ensures compliance with the outcomes of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England adopted by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) as outlined below:

- Registered providers must provide an effective, efficient and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which they are responsible
- When acting as landlords, registered providers must take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas

1.7 **Access and Communication**

1.7.1 OVH is committed to ensuring that the services it provides are accessible to everyone. OVH will seek alternative methods of access and service delivery where barriers, perceived or real may exist, that may make it difficult for people to work for OVH or use its services.

1.7.2 Working with our customers we have established a Vulnerable Persons and Reasonable Adjustments Policy to ensure we make best use of every customer interaction to meet customers' needs in our service delivery and ensure this information is kept up to date.

1.8 **Equality, Diversity and Human Rights**

1.8.1 OVH is committed to ensuring that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out its duty with positive regard for the following core strands of equality; Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Gender Identity / Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation, Religion and / or Belief, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Maternity and Pregnancy.

1.8.2 OVH also recognises that some people experience disadvantage due to their socio-economic circumstances, employment status, class, appearance, responsibility for dependants, unrelated criminal activities, being HIV positive or with AIDS, or any other matter which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

1.8.3 OVH will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation and will make every effort to ensure staff and others with whom OVH works, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).

1.8.4 OVH staff can access procedure maps in relation to all aspects of Assets Management (in relation to this Policy) via the internal document management system.

1.9 The Policy should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Sovini Asbestos Management Plan
- OVH Health and Safety Policy
- OVH Repairs, Maintenance and Planned Works Policy
- OVH Access to Properties Policy

2	Statement of Intent
2.1	<p>OVH will manage asbestos in accordance with the relevant legislation and approved codes of practice to protect the health and safety of employees, customers, contractors, members of the public and users of the buildings it owns and / or controls to minimise the risks posed by the disturbance of asbestos materials.</p>
2.2	<p>To ensure effective management of asbestos, OVH will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take reasonable steps to determine the location of materials likely to contain asbestos • Presume materials to contain asbestos, unless there are good reasons not to do so • Keep and maintain an up-to-date record of the location, condition, maintenance, and removal of all ACMs and presumed ACMs on an Asbestos Register. • Share the above information as required with contractor and partner agencies • Assess, monitor and maintain the condition of ACMs and presumed ACMs • Have arrangements and procedures in place, so that work which may disturb the materials complies with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (CAR) • Assess the risk of exposure from ACMs and presumed ACMs and prepare a written plan of the actions and measures necessary to manage the risk (i.e. the Sovini Asbestos Management Plan) • Review the plan every six months and update if circumstances change or as a result of any significant procedural or legislative changes • Develop and work towards a managed programme of asbestos surveys in all domestic properties • Where possible and risks of airborne asbestos fibres are negligible, OVH will deal with ACMs in situ through effective management and control measures as a preference to whole-scale removal and disposal
3	Policy
3.1	<p>Identifying asbestos containing materials (ACMs)</p>
3.1.1	<p>In accordance with the Health and Safety Guidance 264 - <i>Asbestos the Survey Guide</i> OVH will carry out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management Surveys – designed to locate, as far as reasonably practicable, the presence and extent of any suspected ACMs in buildings owned and / or controlled by OVH which could be damaged or disturbed during normal occupancy, including foreseeable maintenance and installation and assess their condition. • Refurbishment Survey with Localised ‘Back to Brick’ - it is intended to be undertaken prior to any capital works. The survey will involve penetrations into the ceiling, each wall and all floor coverings within the bathroom/kitchen areas that is within that property’s scope for refurbishment. • Refurbishment and Demolition Survey – is intended to be completed before any refurbishment or demolition work is carried out. This survey will be used to locate as far as reasonably practicable the presence of ACMs, will be fully intrusive and as necessary may involve destructive inspection

3.2	<p>Management Surveys</p>
3.2.1	<p>In accordance with the Sovini Asbestos Management Plan, OVH ultimately aim to carry out management surveys of all its domestic properties and implement remedial works as recommended. OVH will, at the earliest opportunity and within normal business contingencies have conducted a management survey in each of the domestic properties owned by the landlords within the Group (unless previous survey information or the construction date of the property indicates there are no ACMs present in the property).</p>
3.2.2	<p>Following an initial management survey in communal areas of a property, condition re-inspections will be carried out once every twelve months where the previous survey results identify ACMs which are to be left in situ (including presumed) or there are significant changes to the property in accordance with CAR 2012.</p>
3.2.3	<p>OVH will carry out a management survey / re-inspection once every twelve months of the common parts of non-domestic premises (offices and commercial properties) including but not exclusive of foyers, corridors, and staircases.</p>
3.2.4	<p>OVH will also carry out management surveys in all voids (empty properties) during the void period if only standard safety checks and maintenance items are required to return the property to a lettable condition. Where more extensive void works are required that involve disruption to the fabric of the building OVH will carry out a refurbishment survey, unless the area has an existing and valid survey in place (See section 3.3 for details of refurbishment surveys).</p>
3.2.5	<p>Management surveys are usually non-intrusive and involve minimal disturbance to tenants or users of buildings. Where a management survey causes any damage to a tenant's property or minor intrusive works are required OVH will carry out any remedial works as necessary.</p>
3.2.6	<p>The results of any scheduled or ad hoc management surveys will be recorded in the OVH asbestos register / database and will inform future operation of the Sovini Asbestos Management Plan.</p>
3.3	<p>Refurbishment and Demolition Surveys</p>
3.3.1	<p>Where OVH intends to carry out refurbishment or demolition works to properties it owns or manages, OVH will ensure a refurbishment survey is carried out to the parts of the property due to be affected by the works. This will include taking intrusions through each layer of construction to its foundation (i.e. concrete floor, brick or roof including ceiling).</p>
3.4	<p>Refurbishment Surveys with Localised 'Back-to-Brick'</p>
3.4.1	<p>OVH will also ensure appropriate refurbishment surveys are conducted where it has intentions to carry out 'back-to-brick' renovations to properties that it owns or manages. This may usually include full depth penetrations to the structural components of the affected parts of the property in order to establish any existence of ACMs that may be hidden beyond its surface layers.</p>
3.5	<p>Where OVH is delivering programmes of refurbishment works (demolitions or capital works) to elements of properties (and to similar property types) a representative sample of surveys</p>

will be carried out until OVH is assured as far as is reasonably practical of the consistency and range of ACMs in each property type.

3.6 Due to the intrusive and destructive nature of refurbishment surveys, OVH will take all necessary precautions to ensure that no person is exposed to airborne asbestos fibres as a result of survey works. To this effect OVH will, as required:

- Isolate survey areas (e.g. full floor to ceiling partitions) and power / gas isolations
- Remove or protect furnishings
- Ensure only those persons qualified and required to carry out the survey are present when it takes place (OVH will, on a discretionary basis, assist tenants and occupiers of properties who may for any reason be classed as vulnerable or who would have difficulty in making their own arrangements, to find alternative facilities during the period of the survey works)
- Carry out any remedial works and if appropriate, in cases of significant disturbance, seek assurances that areas are safe to reoccupy through thorough cleaning and or air sampling

3.7 Where OVH is required to carry out destructive works to properties as a result of emergencies, and this can be achieved without further risk to the health and safety of individuals, a refurbishment survey will be carried out prior to works commencing. In all circumstances OVH will endeavour to ensure contractors carrying out emergency works are furnished with the most up-to-date asbestos survey information and have received training to recognise the risks of potential exposure to asbestos.

3.8 The results of any scheduled or ad hoc refurbishment or demolition surveys will be recorded in the OVH asbestos register/ database and will inform future operation of the Sovini Asbestos Management Plan.

3.9 **Emergency and out of hours reporting**

3.9.1 If OVH customers have any concerns that an area within a property containing ACMs is damaged or effected by some form of defect or emergency, e.g. as a result of a water leak, they should report this, as they would for any other emergency repair, via the OVH Customer Service Centre on 0300 365 111.

3.9.2 In most cases of this nature OVH operatives, who have received asbestos awareness training will be able to isolate the immediate source of the emergency through external means e.g. via external isolation taps for water supply. This will allow OVH time to carry out appropriate asbestos surveys as necessary (if no previous and valid survey data is available for affected areas) prior to rectifying the problem.

3.10 **Training**

3.10.1 OVH will provide Asbestos Briefing training via our E- Learning suite to staff who may be involved in dealing with enquiries relating to Asbestos.

3.10.2 To assist OVH in meeting its legal requirements and to ensure ACMs in premises are properly managed a 'Responsible Person' and deputies will be employed with day-to-day management responsibility for overseeing asbestos management and survey processes and maintenance of the asbestos register.

3.10.3 The Responsible Person and deputies will be able to demonstrate competence in the role by obtaining the British Occupational Hygiene Society P405 qualification for 'Management of Asbestos in Buildings' and have sufficient practical experience to carry out the role effectively.

3.11 Record Keeping

3.11.1 OVH will maintain an Asbestos Register (as required by CAR 2012) as attributes against each property. The register will contain information on the precise location and nature of ACMs, the date they were last inspected and their condition at the time. The register will also contain information on the planned dates for re-inspection based on the intervals outlined below:

Non-domestic premises	No more than 12-month intervals
Communal areas of domestic premises	No more than 12-month intervals

3.11.2 OVH will ensure all data relating to asbestos in the properties it owns and manages will be held securely i.e. only those with specific responsibility for updating the asbestos register will be able to make alterations. The information on the extent and condition of ACMs within properties will be updated when:

- A new or re-inspection survey takes place (including those that result from emergency repair action)
- When remedial actions are taken to maintain the condition of known ACMs
- When ACMs are removed from properties (by special licensed contractors)

3.11.3 All contractors acting on OVH's behalf will have access to existing survey data in properties. Where no survey data exists, the presumption will be that there are ACMs present, and operatives and contractors should proceed with any works with the appropriate level of caution.

3.11.4 Where routine inspection, ad-hoc inspection or other maintenance activities prompt action that requires removal of licenced and/or notifiable ACMs, OVH's contractors will inform the appropriate enforcing authority (Local Authority Environmental Health or the Health and Safety Executive) using the appropriate notification channels and documentation.

3.12 Customer Information

3.12.1 All new or internal transfer tenants receive information regarding common asbestos materials in occupied premises, this includes an advice leaflet developed in consultation with service users. The information advises on the type and common locations of any such materials and any associated health risks and precautions required (e.g. not to work with or disturb the material). When the tenancy changes OVH will ensure that all new tenants receive this information.

3.12.2 OVH provides website access to the Home Safety advice leaflet which includes details for potential asbestos that may be found in tenants homes.

3.12.3 Where a routine inspection, management survey (see section 3.2) or refurbishment survey indicates remedial action is needed and/or there is a possibility of occupants being exposed to airborne dusts from the ACM, customers will be advised on the nature of this action, the reasons why it is needed and the likely timescales for work to commence / be completed.

3.12.4	Customers who are concerned that a surface in their home may contain asbestos materials should contact OVH (0300 365 1111) and they will be provided with appropriate advice. OVH will arrange for a visual inspection by a trained operative before deciding on the most appropriate course of action.
3.12.5	OVH will send information in an appropriate format or language for example, large print, text message, etc. We will also provide home visits, where requested same sex or chaperoned visits will be provided, to explain information where required.
3.13	Use of Competent Contractors
3.13.1	Work with asbestos containing materials can in most cases only be carried out by suitable Health and Safety Executive licensed specialist contractors, except for certain categories of low-risk work, as defined in the CAR 2012. Less hazardous work, generally limited to products such as asbestos cement materials, floor tiles and textured coatings etc., can be carried out by appropriately trained and competent unlicensed contractors following a risk assessment.
3.13.2	Where it is necessary to remove asbestos from properties and buildings owned or managed by OVH a full risk assessment will be undertaken and any on-site works carried out by specialist licensed contractors.
3.13.3	OVH will ensure all contractors it employs to carry out asbestos works including, surveying, analysis and removal meet the required criteria and have appropriate accreditations through its procurement and preferred supplier checks.
4	Implementation
4.1	The OVH Asbestos Management Policy applies to all staff and there is a collective responsibility to prevent or minimise the risks to health and safety associated with asbestos management.
4.2	If staff become aware that there are problems with effective operation of the Policy or the procedures that support it, they should complete a 'change request' within the OVH document management system and these will be incorporated into the Policy / procedural review process.
4.3	OVH will have in place a Responsible Person who as part of the role will have designated responsibility to ensure there are appropriate resources and systems in place to manage ACMs effectively. The Responsible Person will also have specific overall responsibility for the upkeep and review of procedures that exist to support the effective implementation of the Policy.
4.4	A full list of roles and responsibilities is available in the Sovini Asbestos Management Plan.
5	Performance
5.1	OVH have a target to carry out all required asbestos re-inspections annually.

6	Consultation		
6.1	All OVH staff were consulted about the development of this Policy. The Tenants Policy Review Group have also been consulted on the review of this Policy.		
6.2	Specific reference has also been made to the relevant Health and Safety Executive Approved Codes of Practice and Guidance.		
6.3	Specialist advice and recommendations have also been sought from external asbestos consultants and advisers.		
7	Review		
7.1	The Policy will be reviewed at least once every Three Years from the date of approval to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness or as required by the introduction of new legislation or regulation that impacts on the obligations of OVH.		
8	Equality Impact Assessment		
8.1	Was a full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required?	No	
8.2	When was an EIA conducted and by who?	An EIA Relevance Test was undertaken by the Policy and Strategy Manager and the Quality and Inclusion Officer in January 2014.	
8.3	Results of EIA	The EIA recommendation is that where requested, customers will be provided with asbestos safety information in appropriate and preferred formats.	
9	Scheme of Delegation		
9.1	Responsible committee for approving and monitoring implementation of the policy and any amendments to it	EMT	
9.2	Responsible officer for formulating policy and reporting to committee on its effective implementation	Operations Director – Assets and Compliance	
9.3	Responsible officer for formulating, reviewing and monitoring implementation of procedures	Operations Director – Assets and Compliance	
10	Amendment Log		
Date of revision:	Reason for revision:	Consultation record:	Record of amendments:
21 st September 2021	Policy reviewed in line with review schedule	See section 6 above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change at 1.9- inclusion of 'Health and Safety' and Access to Properties Policies references

15 th November 2022	Policy reviewed in line with review schedule	See section 6 above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change at 3.10.1- Reworded the section to read that 'OVH will provide Asbestos Briefing training via E- Learning to staff who may be involved in dealing with enquiries 'relating to Asbestos. • Change at 3.12.2- Inclusion that OVH will also provide a website access of the Home Safety advice leaflet which includes details for potential asbestos that may be found in tenants homes.
20 th February 2024	In line with current operational practice	See Section 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant legislation updated at 1.5 • The EIA Relevance Test has been updated at Section 8 • In line with Board approved process the review period for this Policy has been extended to every Three Years rather than annually