

Request Title: Asbestos in NHSPS Properties

FOI Reference: PSC-91539-F6G3

Date of Disclosure: 21/06/2022

Date Range: 2017-2022

FOI Request:

I am reporting on the presence of asbestos in public buildings in the UK and how duty-holders are managing the risk. Please treat this as a request under both FOI/EIR legislation, whichever you deem appropriate.

As part of your 'duty of care' NHS Property Services (NHSPS) is required to undertake

Asbestos Management Surveys of freehold (solely owned) properties to identify any ACMs that are readily accessible in the building.

According to recent articles, nine out of ten NHS Trusts say they have hospitals containing asbestos.

Please can you detail what information you have about the presence of asbestos in the buildings you have surveyed in the last five years, from 2017-2021. Please provide percentages of how many surveys located asbestos; whether any of the asbestos could cause a risk to the public and staff; and what action was then taken after the Material Risk Assessment was carried out, in terms of remedial action.

Our Response:

The Management of Asbestos in our buildings sits within the Health & Safety function of NHSPS. There is a dedicated team of asbestos specialists who advise and support our operational teams in the management of asbestos containing materials across the NHSPS Estate of Freehold Buildings. which constitutes around 10% of the NHS Estate.

From its conception, NHSPS has managed the Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs) across our property portfolio. In order to update and standardise the format of our information on ACMs in our Freehold buildings we are undertaking a National Asbestos Management Survey Project which started late 2019 and will complete June 2023. The project is split into 2 phases – phase 1 is all solely owned properties – i.e. freehold properties and phase 2 is leasehold properties where the 'duty to manage' has been passed to us in contract. Phase 1 is near completion - there are 1290 freehold properties constructed before the year 2000 in the NHSPS property portfolio that we have duty holder responsibility for. Of those, 1230 have

had a new survey under the project so far. The remaining sites in phase 1 are due to be completed shortly and phase 2 will be undertaken immediately thereafter.

The risk posed by the presence of each ACM is assessed during the survey by the Asbestos Surveyor. During the quality assurance processes, the recommendation on the management or remedial action for each ACM is assessed. Generally, the management action is to ensure the presence of the material is identified and a routine reinspection of the material is undertaken at regular intervals. Any remedial actions are prioritised based on the risk posed by the ACM. Remedial actions have a Remedial Work Schedule (RWS) set against them which will then be actioned to a Service Level Agreement (SLA) based on the potential risk and mitigation required.

The assessment of the materials provides the risk categorisation applied in the Asbestos Building Risk Profile (ABRP). This is a site specific management plan for the property which contains all current asbestos data for each site. The risk profile of a property is updated once the remedial action is carried out. The ABRP is held on the organisation CAFM system and is available on site to NHSPS colleagues responsible for the management of the building, or tenants responsible for works at the property and contractors undertaking the work.

Of the 1230 surveys undertaken, 1113 of the properties were identified to contain 1 Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) or more.

NHSPS operate a 24hour Helpdesk by which the escalation of any damage to ACMs can be made and the Facilities Management team have a standard process to follow to limit any potential exposure, prevent people accessing an area until the materials has been made safe or removed. An assessment of potential exposure is always undertaken. We take a proactive approach to the management of asbestos in our properties.