



Mr. Alan Kelly, TD,
Dail Eireann,
Leinster House,
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

15th December 2020

PQ 39650/20 * To ask the Minister for Health if all health facilities have been surveyed to examine whether they contain asbestos hazards; the facilities and buildings that are known to contain asbestos in the building fabric; the timeline to remove these building materials safely from health facilities; the projected cost of this work by building; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -Alan Kelly

Dear Deputy Kelly,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The requirement for management of Asbestos is dealt with under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (SHWW) Act 2005 and Control of Asbestos at work regulations 2006-2010.

The HSE's duties under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006-2010 is to assess the risk to any employee's health or safety resulting from any activity from which an employee is, or may be exposed in their place of work to dust arising from asbestos containing materials (ACM's), and to determine the nature and degree of any employee's exposure to dust arising from such materials, and to lay down the necessary measures to be taken to ensure the safety and health of employees.

It is important to remember that as long as ACMs are not damaged or disturbed and remain in good condition, the risk of exposure from release of fibres is minimal and should not present any threat to the health of those occupying a building containing such materials. In good condition, ACMs do not necessarily require removal.

Within the HSE we have a policy and work practice in place to ensure that no refurbishment or demolition work (which could result in exposure of an individual to asbestos fibres) is undertaken without first ensuring that a detailed refurbishment demolition survey for ACM's is undertaken. This survey is either organised through local project managers for a project or through design teams on our behalf. For maintenance activities the survey is undertaken by the maintenance project manager for that task. The survey is then reviewed by the project manager/ and/or the design team and any remedial actions are undertaken prior to any works progressing to ensure that there are no risks to employees or any third parties who may be involved or in the vicinity. The cost of the asbestos remedial works is usually dealt with as part of the overall project cost.

Surveys are undertaken to HSG 264 (UK HSE) which is the standard requested by the HSA. The surveys undertaken include a risk assessment for ACMs which is assessed for the potential to release asbestos fibres. Where an asbestos survey has been carried out, the competent surveyor will provide recommendations, e.g. remove, repair or manage ACMs in the long term. These recommendations will normally be based on further parameters, such as occupancy levels, potential for disturbance, maintenance and human exposure potential.

In addition to the requirement to survey any works that may result in potential asbestos fibre exposure, many of our buildings also have Management surveys undertaken. We are currently working through a process of collating and ensuring that buildings that were built prior to 1999 also have a Management survey (ref HSG 264 HSE UK).

Relevant staff have received training in recognising and dealing with asbestos material within their workplaces. This training is updated on annual basis.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JC' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Jim Curran
National Director, Estates