Autumn 2026 | Issue 133

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NEWS

The Journal For Asbestos Management Professionals





The Audits That Stand Behind the ARCA Brand



New Leak Testing Guidance



ARCA's Achievements in 2025/2026

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All comments included in content were made/are correct at the time of going to print.

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All Member companies may submit news articles to be considered for inclusion in the publication.

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Engagement, Evidence and the Direction of Travel



Steve Sadley, Chief Executive

Welcome to the autumn edition of ARCA News. This issue covers a busy few months, and I would start with the one that reaches beyond our own industry.

On 28 July the National Asbestos Taskforce wrote to the Prime Minister calling for asbestos to be treated as the public health issue it is, and I was among the signatories on behalf of ARCA. The Taskforce brings together victim support organisations, trade unions, researchers, campaign groups and industry, which is not a combination that agrees on everything. It agrees on this. Asbestos remains the leading cause of work-related death in this country, the recommendations made by the Work and Pensions Committee in 2022 have still not been implemented, and management alone will not prevent the exposures of the next thirty years. You can read the full article in this issue.

Closer to the day job, our annual analysis of ASB5 notifications is also in these pages, and it makes good reading for members. Of the 325 licensed contractors who notified work to the HSE between July 2025 and June 2026, 81 per cent belonged to a trade association, and 60 per cent of those were ARCA members. Our members averaged 85 jobs each over the year, up from 83, on contracts averaging 7.4 days against 6.6 days for those outside any association. More members winning work, and winning larger contracts, is the clearest measure we have that membership carries weight with clients.

That reputation rests on the audit programme, and there is an article in this issue that looks at it from an angle we have not published before. Our auditors visited 444 live sites between January and July. After each visit we ask the supervisor who hosted it and the manager who receives the report what they thought. Nearly 200 replied, and they scored our auditors an average of 9.8 out of 10. What strikes me is not the number but the language members used. Professional appeared 70 times in the written comments, fair 27 times. That is the standard we ask our auditors to hold, and members are telling us they are holding it.

You will also find our round-up of the past year. Among it, Silver Corporate Partner status with Mesothelioma UK, to whom we have now donated £3,200 in e-learning course fees; joining the CITB Training Provider Network; 40 free training places for new operatives; an extended partnership with Assure 360; and a 30 per cent improvement in average site audit scores across the membership, with failure rates halved. That last figure belongs to members rather than to us, and it is the one I would put in front of a client.

On the technical side, the Asbestos Network Technical Working Group has approved its leak testing guidance for publication, and we have summarised it in this issue. It sets out how to decide whether leak testing is needed on a given job, where it should be concentrated, and how the decision has to be recorded. I would draw your attention to two points in particular. Where a negative pressure unit vents internally, leak testing should always be carried out at the discharge location. And where you decide not to leak test, that decision must be recorded specifically in the plan of work. A generic statement will not do. I sit on the working group on behalf of members, and I would encourage anyone with a technical issue they want raised nationally to bring it to me.

That is the value of the association in a sentence. Individually we are contractors competing for work. Collectively we are the industry's voice, and it is being heard.



Steve Sadley
Chief Executive

OUR MISSION

To give the best possible service and support to assist ARCA members and customers in providing safe, effective and ethical management of asbestos, thereby safeguarding the public.

OUR VISION

We envision being an essential strategic partner, through membership of ARCA and ATaC, to all companies providing asbestos management and licensed asbestos removal services, or services to those companies, by providing solutions which contribute to the overall success of their businesses and provide reassurance to their clients.

OUR VALUES

Our values define the culture at ARCA. The values of integrity, service, excellence, teamwork and responsibility guide the way we work, our behaviour and our commitment to support members, customers and colleagues.



ARCA Joins National Asbestos Taskforce Call for Urgent Government Action

ARCA has joined fellow members of the National Asbestos Taskforce in calling on the Prime Minister, Andy Burnham, to take decisive action to address the UK's ongoing asbestos crisis, following the publication of a letter sent to Downing Street on 28 July.

The National Asbestos Taskforce, which brings together victim support organisations, trade unions, researchers, campaign groups and industry representatives, has urged the Government to prioritise asbestos as a major public health and occupational safety issue. The letter warns that asbestos remains the UK's leading occupational killer and calls for a renewed commitment to preventing future asbestos-related deaths.

As a member of the Taskforce, the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) supports the group's call for meaningful action and long-term policy reform. The Taskforce was established to campaign for the removal of asbestos from UK buildings and to promote the implementation of recommendations made by the Work and Pensions Committee in 2022.

In the letter, Taskforce members highlighted concerns that successive governments have failed adequately to address the risks posed by asbestos in schools, hospitals, workplaces and homes. They argued that while asbestos management has long been the cornerstone of UK policy, a more strategic approach is needed to reduce future exposure and protect generations to come.

The correspondence also challenged the perception that asbestos-related deaths are solely a legacy of historical industrial exposure. The Taskforce pointed to concerns over continuing environmental exposure, particularly within public buildings, and warned that increasing numbers of women and younger people are being affected by asbestos-related diseases.

Among the recommendations put forward, the Taskforce called for implementation of the Work and Pensions Committee's recommendations and significant reform of the Health and Safety Executive's approach to asbestos regulation and enforcement. The group also offered to work with government officials to help develop effective solutions.

ARCA representative, Steve Sadley, was among the signatories to the letter, alongside representatives from Mesothelioma UK, the National Education Union, Merseyside Asbestos Victims Support Group, the Communication Workers Union, Airtight on Asbestos, Asbestos Information CIC and leading researchers in the field of mesothelioma and occupational health.

Commenting on the publication of the letter, ARCA reaffirmed its commitment to supporting practical measures that improve asbestos management, facilitate safe removal where appropriate and ultimately reduce the impact of asbestos-related disease across the UK.

The National Asbestos Taskforce said it hopes the new Prime Minister will engage with stakeholders and take forward reforms that deliver lasting improvements in public health and worker protection.



2025–2026 Achievements

From July 2025 to June 2026, the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA) accomplished several achievements to enhance its services and support for members:

1 ARCA Achieves Silver Corporate Partner Status with Mesothelioma UK

ARCA has been awarded Silver Corporate Partner Status by Mesothelioma UK in recognition of its ongoing support and commitment to the charity. As part of this partnership, ARCA donates all course fees generated from its certified e-Learning Asbestos Awareness training courses. ARCA has contributed £3,200 to support Mesothelioma UK's vital work in providing care, information, and support to those affected by Mesothelioma.

2 ARCA Joins National Asbestos Taskforce



This has been formed to challenge this reality with evidence-based arguments. It advocates a government-mandated, phased programme to remove all asbestos from UK buildings, with early action focused on high risk or damaged asbestos materials.

3 ARCA Members Achieve Record-Breaking Performance Standards

ARCA members have achieved one of the most significant collective performance improvements we've ever recorded in site audit results, demonstrating a 30% improvement in average audit scores whilst simultaneously cutting failure rates in half.

4 ARCA Joins the CITB Training Provider Network



ARCA reaffirms its commitment to delivering training that not only meets regulatory requirements but genuinely contributes to a safer, more competent construction workforce.

citb Training Provider Network
Approved Member

5 Exclusive Partnership with Assure 360

Following the successful launch of complimentary access to Assure360's personal monitoring module last year, the partnership has now evolved to include a Combined 4–Hour Time Weighted Average Report. This new feature represents a meaningful advancement in how contractors can manage and demonstrate workplace exposure compliance.

6 Complimentary Training for New Operatives

ARCA offered a total of 40 free training places for new operatives entering the asbestos industry. This initiative is our way of supporting members in building strong teams while helping to maintain the standards the industry depends on.



7 Exhibiting at Contamination & Land Remediation Expo 2025/26

ARCA participated in the Contamination & Land Remediation Expo 2025/26, where we highlighted how our members can assist in managing and removing asbestos safely and the legal responsibilities of property owners and managers.

8 Site Audit Accreditation Scheme

ARCA conducted 812 audits, which included 666 unannounced audits across various asbestos removal sites, demonstrating our ongoing dedication to high standards across the asbestos management industry.



9 ARCA Member Satisfaction Survey 2025

More than four in five members continue to report satisfaction with overall services, industry understanding, and responsiveness.



10 ARCA's 40th Annual General Meeting 2025

ARCA's milestone 40th Annual General Meeting featured keynote speaker Adrian Hodkinson, head of the HSE Asbestos Unit. This event offered valuable industry insights and networking opportunities.





Analysis of HSE Licenced Asbestos Jobs, July 2025–June 2026

ARCA has examined lists of ASB5 job notifications submitted by Licenced Asbestos removal contractors (LARCs) to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the year from July 2025 to June 2026 inclusive.

325 LARCs notified the HSE of standard-licence works in the year, of which 262 (81%) were members of at least one Licenced Asbestos Removal Trade Association, of which 60% had ARCA membership.

Breakdown by Jobs

There were 22,021 notifications of licenced asbestos removal work in the year, averaging 7.4 days each in duration for ARCA members, 6.9 days for other Licenced Asbestos Removal Trade Association (TA) members, and 6.6 days for non-TA-members.

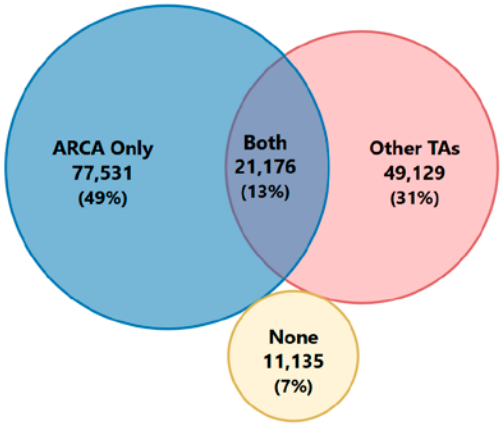
Of these jobs, 93% were from members of a TA. ARCA members averaged 85 jobs each, up from 83 last year, members of other TAs averaged 77 jobs, and non-TA-members only 27.

This combination of more ARCA members winning job contracts, and individual members winning more and longer contracts, illustrates the increasing strength of our members even compared to last year's results.

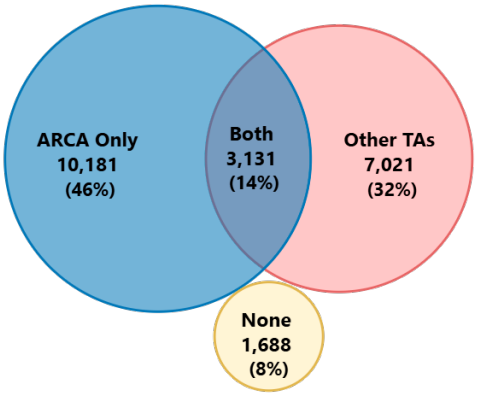
Number of LARCs Jul 2025-Jun 2026 (Total 325)



Number of Days (Total 158,971)



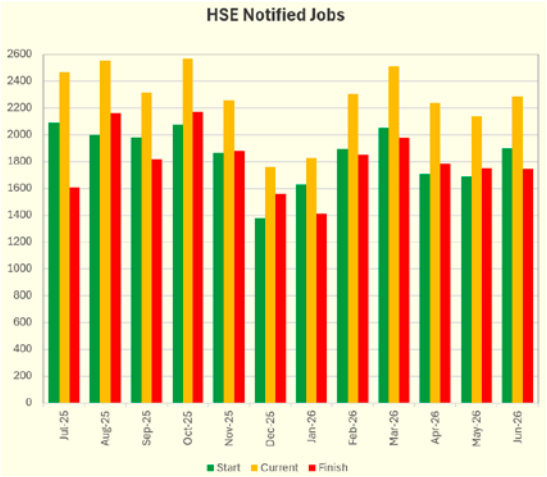
Number of HSE registered jobs Jul 2025-Jun 2026 (Total 22,021)



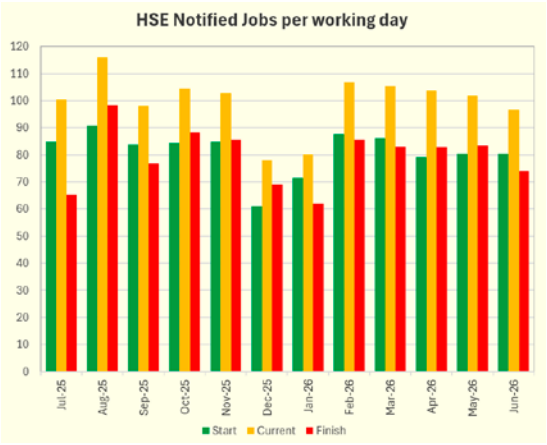
Annual spread of work

The number of jobs in each month was recorded with the orange bars being the main indicator, showing the number of jobs that took place. The green bars show the number starting in the month, the red bars the number finishing.

The figures show an average of 2228 jobs taking place in each month with highs of ca 2500 jobs in progress during the summer and March end of financial year, down to a low of ca 1800 in midwinter, most of which are suspended over the Christmas/New year holiday. The December dip had gone down to under 1600 the previous year and January was also lower, meaning this year work and therefore workforce were distributed more evenly.



With months being of different lengths the number of jobs in a month was divided by the number of working days (including weekends where applicable). This gives an alternative viewpoint of monthly jobs "per working day" though this is a notional figure, not a literal figure of jobs being done on a typical day (as most jobs last several days).



News in Brief

Introducing ARCA's New Site Audit Scheme Auditor: Lee Knibbs



We're delighted to welcome Lee Knibbs to his new role as ARCA Site Auditor.

With 18 years in the asbestos industry, Lee has extensive practical and supervisory experience, having spent three years as an asbestos removal operative followed by 15 years as an asbestos removal supervisor.

In his role with ARCA, Lee will conduct both unannounced and additional audits for ARCA members, ensuring the continued excellence and integrity of ARCA's audit standards.

We are delighted to have Lee join the team and wish him every success in his new role.

ARCA SMS Feedback Q1/Q2 Winners

ARCA collects valuable feedback through its SMS Feedback Service. Responses received from training courses, events, meetings, and site audits are automatically entered into a prize draw for a chance to win a £150 Amazon voucher.

We are delighted to announce the following winners for the first half of 2026:

- Q1 2026 Winner: Lee McCormick, Supervisor at Core Environmental Services Ltd
- Q2 2026 Winner: Roman Kania, Supervisor at Rilmac Insulation Ltd

Congratulations to both winners and thank you to everyone who has taken the time to share their feedback.

We continue to receive survey responses throughout the year. Our next prize draw will be for Q3 2026, covering feedback submitted between July and September 2026. The winner will be announced in early October 2026.

The audits that stand behind the ARCA brand

ARCA's site auditors scored an average of 9.8 out of 10 across the first seven months of 2026. The more telling detail is who awarded it. Every rating came from a site supervisor or company manager at a member company that had just been audited.

ARCA carried out 444 site audits between January and July, on live licensed removal jobs across the country. Two surveys follow each visit, one to the supervisor who hosted it and one to the manager who receives the report. Neither is compulsory, yet almost 200 members replied.

ARCA SITE AUDITS, JANUARY TO JULY 2026

Seven months, 444 audits, one verdict

Feedback collected from the site supervisors and company managers who hosted every ARCA audit.

9.8/10	85%	444	92
Average score given to ARCA auditors	of all scores were a perfect 10	site audits on live licensed jobs	member firms represented in the replies

Source: ARCA post-audit feedback surveys, 197 responses covering 591 individual scores.

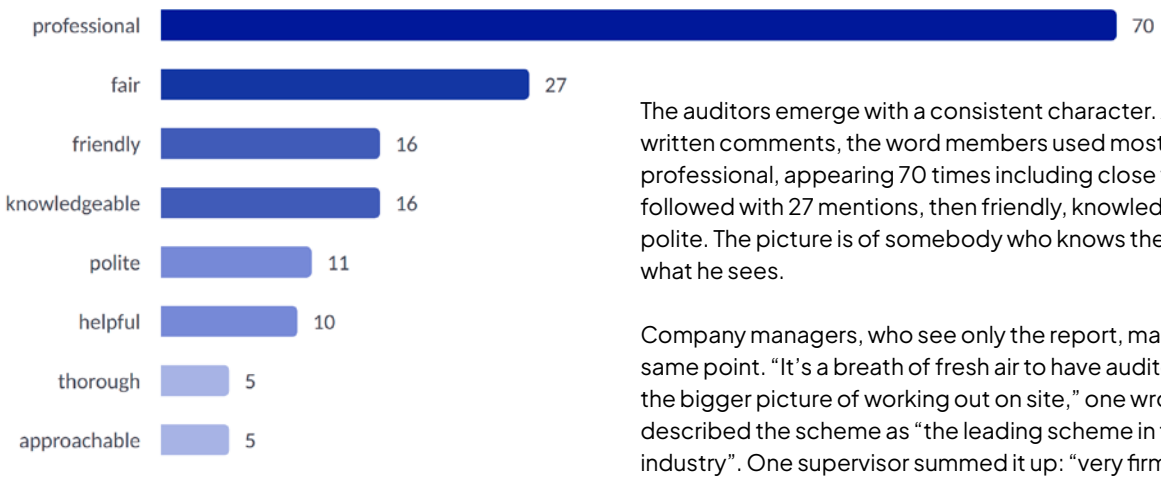
"Very professional, could talk to him and put your side of the audit," one supervisor wrote. Another: "Auditor was very thorough and fair, let me explain job and set up." A third: "Good honest helpful guy, keeps our boys right."

A member company does not choose whether it is audited, because the audits come with membership. What it does choose is how it receives the auditor, and the comments show supervisors treating the visit as useful rather than as something to endure. On a licensed site, where the consequences of getting it wrong fall on people rather than paperwork, that attitude counts.

IN MEMBERS' OWN WORDS

Professional, and above all fair

The words members used most often when asked what influenced their answers, across 170 written comments.



Counts include close variants, for example professionalism and fairness.

The auditors emerge with a consistent character. Across 170 written comments, the word members used most often was professional, appearing 70 times including close variants. Fair followed with 27 mentions, then friendly, knowledgeable and polite. The picture is of somebody who knows the job and says what he sees.

Company managers, who see only the report, made much the same point. "It's a breath of fresh air to have auditors that see the bigger picture of working out on site," one wrote. Another described the scheme as "the leading scheme in the asbestos industry". One supervisor summed it up: "very firm but fair".

The numbers hold up. Of the members who replied, 185 said they would be likely to speak positively about ARCA audits, giving nine or 10. Of the 591 scores given, 500 were a straight 10.

WHERE THE SCORES LANDED

Five out of six scores were full marks

Every score given by a member in seven months, on a scale of one to 10. Not one fell below six.



591 scores from 197 responses. Members rate professionalism, accuracy and fairness, and likelihood to recommend.

For any client choosing a contractor, this is the part that matters. Anybody can produce a policy. An ARCA member has had its work examined on site, while the job was live, by an auditor reporting to the association rather than to the contractor. That is a different order of assurance from a document review, and it is not something a company can arrange for itself.

It also says something about the companies in the scheme. These are contractors who accept independent scrutiny as a normal cost of working properly, and who then rate it at 9.8 out of 10.

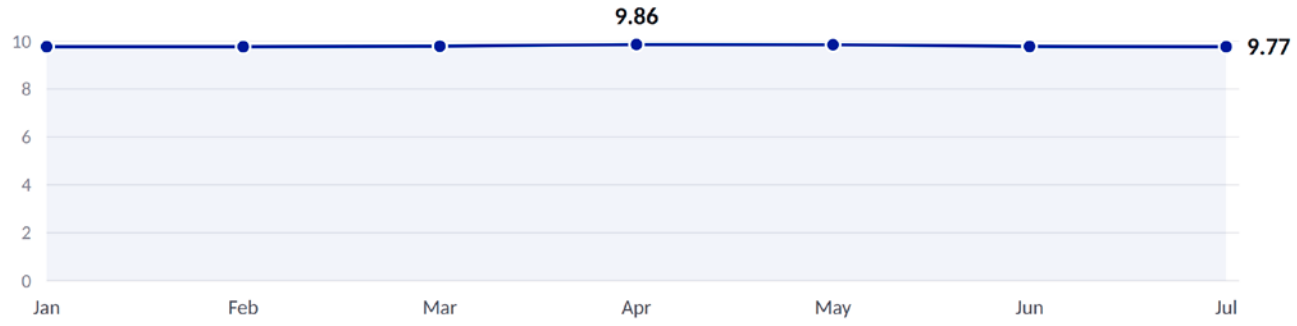
Members can also commission additional audits, on the contracts and at the times of their choosing, and a growing number do. Clients increasingly ask for evidence that licensed work has been checked by somebody other than the contractor, and an internal inspection, however diligent, does not answer that question.

For contractors outside the association, the audit programme is what gives membership its value. Membership is not a logo. It is a standing commitment to have your sites visited, your work graded against a published standard and your results held on record, and that is what counts with the client reading your tender.

MONTH BY MONTH

The line barely moves

Average score across all questions, by month. Eight auditors, hundreds of sites, a range of 0.09 of a point.



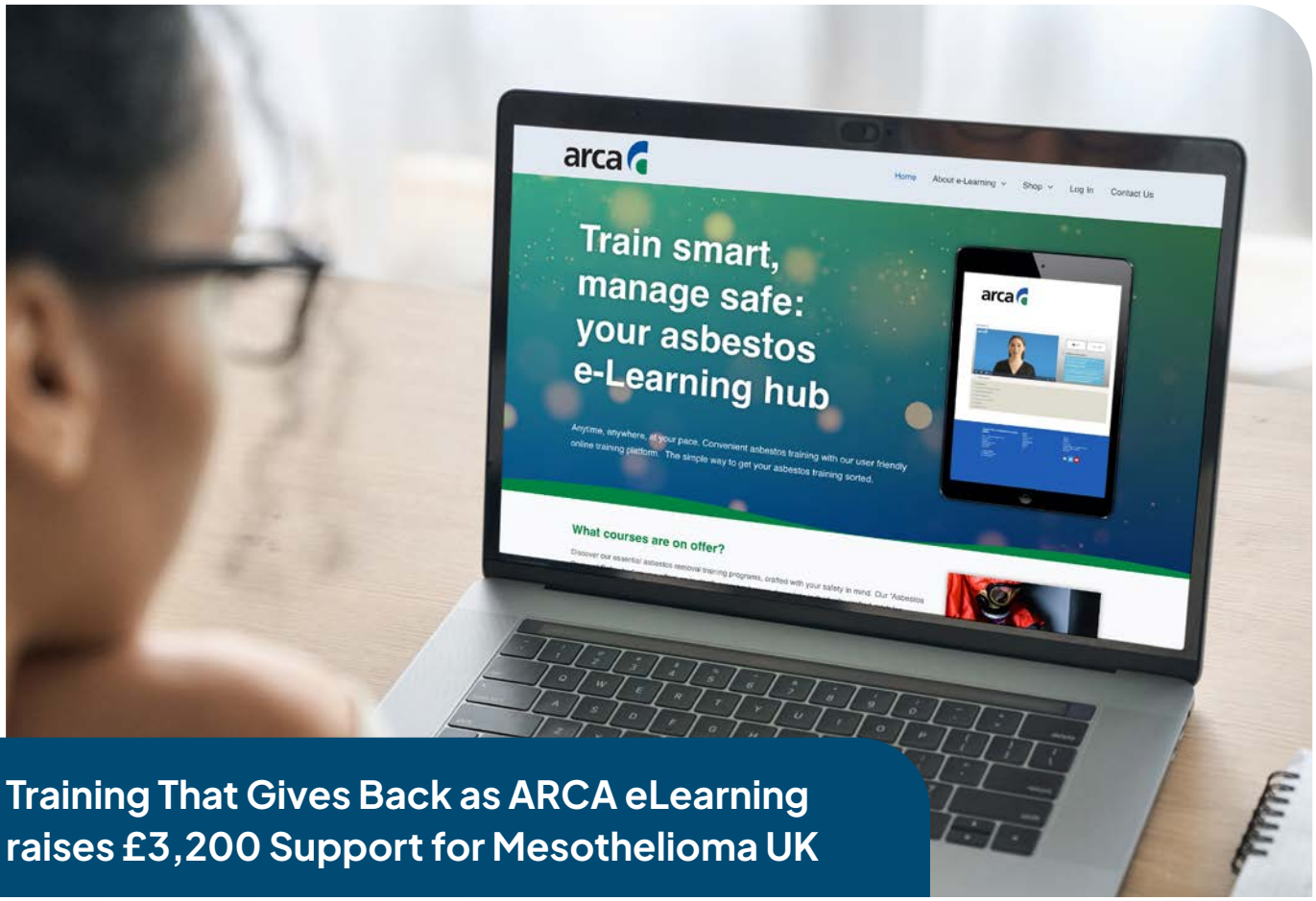
Lowest month **9.77** · highest month **9.86**

Members booking an additional audit are not gambling on which auditor turns up.

Consistency reassures too. Monthly averages have moved only between 9.77 and 9.86 since January, so members are not gambling on which auditor arrives, and neither are their clients.

The last word belongs to a supervisor who, asked what influenced his answers, did not talk about the audit at all: “The helpfulness of auditors and the knowledge what ARCA brings to the asbestos industry.”

Members and prospective members wanting to know more, or to arrange additional audits, should contact the ARCA office.



Training That Gives Back as ARCA eLearning raises £3,200 Support for Mesothelioma UK

ARCA has donated a further £2,000 to Mesothelioma UK in 2026, taking the total raised through its certified Asbestos Awareness eLearning course to £3,200 since the first contribution of £1,200 in 2025. Every penny of that total comes from the course itself, which turns every delegate's training into a direct contribution to people living with the disease that training exists to prevent.

Mesothelioma is a serious legacy of asbestos exposure and often appears decades after the exposure that caused it. Mesothelioma UK meets that reality head-on, funding specialist nursing, practical support and research into better treatments for patients and families across the country.

"Supporting Mesothelioma UK is an important extension of what we already do," said Steve Sadley, ARCA CEO. "Training people to work safely with asbestos is only part of the picture. Our courses also support raising funds for the research that will help improve outcomes for the future."

The £3200 has been built course by course by the members, delegates and training participants who have taken ARCA's certified asbestos awareness eLearning. It shows that good practice and good cause are not separate things in this industry. They are the same effort, pointed in two directions at once.

As the leading trade association for the asbestos removal sector, ARCA continues to champion the highest standards of safety, professionalism and training. Its partnership with Mesothelioma UK sits comfortably alongside that mission, raising awareness of the risks asbestos still poses and standing behind those who live with its consequences. Every course completed adds to the total and every contribution counts. Together, ARCA and Mesothelioma UK are working to make sure that awareness, support and research keep moving forward for everyone affected by asbestos.

MESOTHELIOMA UK
SILVER CORPORATE PARTNER

ARCA Gold Site Audit Award Winners

Congratulations to the 2025/2026 winners *

The Gold Site Audit Award is a prestigious recognition given to our members that demonstrate exceptional compliance and risk management levels.

"Huge congratulations to all our members who have achieved the award. It is in recognition of the continuing high standards that each of these members has achieved," commented Matthew Boulton, Site Audit Coordinator for ARCA.

To gain this award asbestos removal companies need to achieve Grades A to C*, with an average of at least a B Grade, across all unannounced programmed site audits over 2 consecutive membership years.

*A-B if no live works observed
*May 2026 to July 2026

- Ashbee Solutions Ltd
- Aspect Contracts Ltd
- Econ Group Ltd
- Enviraz (Scotland) Ltd
- Heston's Environmental Ltd
- J England Environmental Services Ltd
- Reliable Environmental Ltd
- SJ Walchester Environmental Services Ltd
- TES Environmental Services Ltd

Diary Dates

ARCA Regional Meetings

Southwest & Wales Regional Meeting	Tue 3rd Nov 2026 at 1.30pm	Almondsbury Interchange Hotel, Bristol
Midlands Regional Meeting	Wed 4th Nov 2026 at 1.30pm	ARCA Head Office, Burton-on-Trent
Northwest Regional Meeting	Thu 5th Nov 2026 at 1.30pm	The Pennine Manor Hotel, Huddersfield
Scottish Regional Meeting	Wed 11th Nov 2026 at 9.00am	Motherwell FC, Motherwell, Lanarkshire
Northeast Regional Meeting	Thu 12th Nov 2026 at 9.00am	Holiday Inn, Washington
Southeast Regional Meeting	Tue 17th Nov 2026 at 9.00am	The Thurrock Hotel, Essex
Remote Regional Meeting	Thu 19th Nov 2026 at 10.30am	Via Zoom

Attendance Certificate

When attending a remote member regional meeting, attendees are logged and issued with an attendance certificate. The certificate is intended to complement training records, by recording that the individual named received the information, instruction and training listed on the certificate.

ARCA AGM
ARCA Annual General Meeting
Friday 2nd October 2026
IET Savoy Place, London

Competence, Accreditation and Certification: Why Understanding the Difference Matters

In the UK asbestos industry, few terms are used more frequently, or misunderstood more often, than competence, accreditation and certification. They appear throughout tender documents, procurement specifications, audit reports, training records and regulatory guidance, yet they are not interchangeable.

The confusion is more than semantic. Misunderstanding the difference can lead to poor procurement decisions, inadequate assurance, legal liability, compromised survey and analytical quality and, ultimately, an increased risk of asbestos exposure.

At the heart of the issue lies a simple principle: competence is the objective; accreditation and certification are evidence that helps to demonstrate it. That distinction matters to Dutyholders, clients, surveyors, analysts, consultants, contractors and anyone else responsible for managing asbestos risk.

Competence: the foundation of safe asbestos management

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (CAR 2012) and the accompanying Approved Code of Practice, L143, place significant emphasis on competence. While the legislation refers to training and qualifications, its primary concern is whether individuals and organisations can carry out asbestos-related activities safely, effectively and consistently.

Competence is best understood as a combination of knowledge, skills, training, experience, judgement, behaviour and ongoing professional development. A qualification alone does not create competence; nor does experience in isolation. A newly qualified surveyor may possess strong theoretical knowledge but limited practical experience, while an individual with decades in the industry may not be familiar with current legislation, guidance or best practice if professional development has not been maintained.

True competence is demonstrated through performance: the ability to apply knowledge correctly under real-world conditions and to make sound decisions in complex situations.

Accreditation: independent assurance of organisational capability

While competence concerns capability, accreditation concerns the systems that support and verify that capability. In the United Kingdom, accreditation is provided by the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS), appointed by government as the national accreditation body. The distinction is worth underlining, only UKAS accredits. Organisations do not accredit one another – they certificate, a point returned to later. Accreditation involves independent assessment against internationally recognised standards to determine whether an organisation is technically competent to undertake specific activities.

Within the asbestos sector, two accreditation frameworks are particularly significant.

UKAS RG8 and asbestos surveying

UKAS RG8 supports accreditation to ISO/IEC 17020 for organisations carrying out asbestos surveys. It places considerable emphasis on:

- staff competence and authorisation procedures;
- experience requirements;
- reporting quality;
- independence and impartiality;
- quality management systems and audits;
- contract review;
- insurance.

The emphasis is not solely on documentation: it is on ensuring that organisations can consistently deliver reliable, technically sound survey work.

UKAS LAB 30 and analytical services

For laboratories and analytical services, UKAS LAB 30 provides industry-specific guidance for accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025. This framework assesses:

- technical procedures, documented in line with HSG248 (Asbestos: The Analysts' Guide);
- quality control systems;
- equipment suitability;
- staff competency arrangements;
- ongoing performance monitoring and internal audits;
- participation in external proficiency testing schemes – RICE for fibre counting, AIMS for bulk identification and AISS for asbestos in soils;
- contract review;
- insurance.

Accreditation therefore provides valuable independent assurance that an organisation has robust systems in place to manage and maintain competence. It should not, however, be mistaken for a guarantee of perfection.

Accredited organisations can still make mistakes; accreditation reduces risk and increases confidence, but it does not eliminate human error. What it does require is that processes exist to identify, correct and learn from errors when they occur – through nonconformity reporting, corrective action and ongoing UKAS surveillance.

Certification: evidence of compliance

Certification is the third element of the relationship. It confirms that an individual, product, service or management system has been assessed against specified requirements – and it helps to consider its two most common forms separately.

For individuals, examination bodies such as RSPH and BOHS set and award recognised asbestos qualifications, and training providers issue certificates of training. These confirm that a syllabus has been examined or a course completed.

For organisations, certification bodies – themselves generally accredited by UKAS – issue certification against management system standards such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001, and third-party contractor certification schemes operate on the same basis.

This is also why the terminology matters in practice: examination bodies award qualifications, certification bodies certificate, and only UKAS accredits. An individual or organisation cannot be "accredited" by an examination body.

Certification demonstrates that a defined standard was achieved at a particular point in time. It is useful evidence, and often an important component of competence. What certification and examination do not do is prove ongoing capability. A surveyor may hold a recognised qualification yet lack sufficient experience; a company may hold numerous management system certificates while lacking the technical expertise to conduct survey or analytical work effectively. Certification is valuable evidence – but it is not a substitute for competence.

The most common industry misconceptions
Confusion surrounding these concepts continues to create challenges throughout the asbestos sector.
One of the most widespread misconceptions is that a qualified individual is automatically competent. In reality, a qualification is only one component of competence and must be supported by practical experience, supervision, assessment and continuing professional development.
Another is that accreditation and certification are the same thing. They are not: certification confirms conformity with specific requirements, whereas accreditation provides independent recognition of technical competence and organisational capability.

Many clients also assume that if a company is accredited, every employee within it must be equally competent. Accreditation requires organisations to establish systems for training, assessing and monitoring personnel, and – importantly – it is designed to ensure that the person who actually undertakes the work is competent to do it. It does not mean every member of staff has reached the same level.

Equally problematic is the belief that experience alone guarantees competence. Industry standards, guidance, working practices and legislation continue to evolve; long service is valuable, but only when combined with current knowledge and ongoing development.

Perhaps the most dangerous misconception of all is that competence can be purchased. Appointing an accredited consultant or qualified contractor does not transfer legal responsibility away from the dutyholder – and where a non-accredited organisation is appointed, the dutyholder should be able to demonstrate the equivalent steps taken to satisfy itself of that organisation's competence. The dutyholder remains responsible for managing asbestos risks and for ensuring that suitable, competent professionals have been appointed.

The legal consequences of getting it wrong

The distinction between competence, accreditation and certification becomes particularly significant when legal liability is considered. If an asbestos-related incident occurs, regulators are unlikely to focus solely on whether certificates existed or whether a company held accreditation. They are likely to ask a more fundamental question: was the individual or organisation competent to carry out the work?

Health and Safety Executive investigations may examine training records, experience levels, competency assessments, authorisation procedures, supervisory arrangements and quality management systems. Where competence cannot be demonstrated, enforcement action may follow regardless of how many certificates or accreditations are held.

Similarly, in civil litigation, clients may face claims arising from inadequate surveys, incorrect asbestos identification, project delays, remedial costs or exposure incidents. The ability to demonstrate that reasonable steps were taken to verify competence often becomes a central issue.

A further risk arises when clients misunderstand the scope of accreditation. An organisation may be accredited for specific services but not for every asbestos-related activity. Failure to verify the scope of accreditation can lead to procurement errors, contractual disputes, insurance difficulties and regulatory scrutiny.

A better approach to procurement and compliance

For Dutyholders and clients, the most effective approach is to look beyond simple credentials and ask more searching questions. Rather than asking only, “Are you accredited?”, “Do your staff hold qualifications?” and “Are you certified?”, they should also consider:

- What relevant experience does the organisation possess?
- How is staff competence assessed and maintained?
- What supervision arrangements exist?
- What is the organisation’s track record?
- Does the scope of accreditation match the service required?
- How is continuing professional development managed?
- How are errors and complaints investigated and corrected?

Accreditation and certification provide valuable evidence, but they should form part of a broader assessment of genuine capability.

The bottom line

A useful rule of thumb is this:
Certification demonstrates achievement. Accreditation provides independent assurance. Competence demonstrates capability.

Ultimately, it is all of these factors combined that protect people.

In an industry where mistakes can have life-changing consequences, understanding these distinctions is essential. Competence remains the fundamental requirement underpinning CAR 2012 and the wider asbestos regulatory framework; accreditation and certification are important tools that help demonstrate and support it, but they can never replace it.

The most effective organisations – and the most informed clients – understand that competence is not a certificate on a wall. It is the proven ability to perform work safely, correctly and consistently. In asbestos management, that distinction can make all the difference.



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What the HSE Mystery Shopper Study Really Tells Us About Asbestos Laboratory Performance

A covert Health and Safety Executive (HSE) exercise has provided the asbestos industry with a rare opportunity to compare laboratory performance under routine commercial conditions with performance in the long-established Asbestos in Materials Scheme (AIMS).

The findings of the AIMS Mystery Shopper study have divided professional opinion; do the headline figures appear concerning or does the detail tell a more balanced story? There are clear areas to address, but does the sector's core ability to detect asbestos remain sound?

AIMS: a strong baseline – but not the real world
AIMS, established in the mid-1990s, remains the UK benchmark for laboratory proficiency, however, analysts are aware when they are looking at an AIMS sample and typically devote more time to it. More significantly, UKAS compliance requires every analyst in a laboratory to examine the AIMS samples creating a level of internal verification that routine commercial work does not receive. In routine work, only around 14–16% of the samples analysed on any given day are rechecked (itself an improvement on practice before Edition 2 of HSG248). Comparing AIMS scores with routine performance is therefore not a like-for-like comparison: it compares two fundamentally different quality assurance environments. Even if the UKAS requirement were relaxed tomorrow, most laboratories would probably continue the practice, but the distinction matters when interpreting the mystery shopper findings.

Mystery Shopper: What the study found
Between October 2024 and February 2026, the HSE, working through a third party, submitted four previously validated AIMS samples to 59 laboratories across Great Britain. The samples were represented as materials taken from a doctor's surgery prior to refurbishment and sent out with no reference to the HSE.



Sample 1: asbestos insulating board (AIB) containing chrysotile and amosite



Sample 2: cement containing chrysotile, amosite and crocidolite



Sample 3: non-asbestos textured coating (later issued as a deviating sample)



Sample 4: vinyl floor tile containing chrysotile in both the tile and its adhesive

Because the samples had featured in earlier AIMS rounds, HSE could compare known performance directly against the mystery shopper results.

Sample	AIMS error rate	Mystery shopper error rate
Sample 1 – AIB	0.6%	25.4%
Sample 2 – cement	35.1%	76.3%
Sample 3 – textured coating	n/a (non-asbestos)	No false positives
Sample 4 – floor tile	1.6%	2%

The positives
Although the headline figures appear concerning, they need to be read through the lens of what actually matters to a dutyholder. Across the 236 samples analysed over the study there was one true false negative and no false positives; a 99.6% success rate in detecting asbestos where it was present, arguably the most meaningful measure of practical risk. On that measure, laboratories are highly reliable at the job that matters most.

Sample by sample, the picture softens further. On Sample 1, every laboratory detected the amosite; missing the chrysotile does not change the Material Risk Assessment score, and the omission would be unlikely to affect the Dutyholders management decisions. On Sample 2, every laboratory detected the chrysotile, and missing the amphiboles moves the score by only two points, a change that would not normally alter the surveyor's recommendations which are driven primarily by product type, condition and surface treatment. The errors were concentrated in known challenging multi-type samples, and their pattern could be consistent with analyst behaviour under routine commercial pressures rather than with a lack of technical competence. Such as analysts stopping once the first asbestos type has been identified, and amphiboles being overlooked where chrysotile is abundant.

If the mystery shopper results were extrapolated across three AIMS rounds, 78% of laboratories would fall into the "unsatisfactory" category. However, this figure should be treated as a stress-test scenario rather than a prediction: it assumes identical samples used repeatedly, the same errors endlessly being repeated, and quality control never intervening. Taken together, those assumptions do not reflect how laboratories actually operate. The verification gap between AIMS and routine work is precisely why the two sets of results differ: AIMS, with every analyst examining the sample, measures best-case capability, while the mystery shopper study measured a single analyst's routine work, two fundamentally different quality assurance environments. The weaknesses identified are procedural and training-related, deviating sample awareness above all, and they are manageable weaknesses within an otherwise technically competent system.

The negatives
The industry should recognise the significance of what the exercise has actually highlighted. HSE carried out this exercise for a reason: not to reassure laboratories that everything is broadly acceptable, but to identify where improvements can be made under normal working conditions, that should be the focus.

Technical competence is not simply a matter of knowing how to identify asbestos under the microscope; it also means following procedures properly, carrying out a thorough examination, and ensuring the quality system is robust enough to prevent mistakes. If an analyst misses asbestos because of stopping searching after finding the first fibre type, is this a behavioural issue or a laboratory competence issue to be addressed through procedures, training, and quality control? A strong quality system should minimise the opportunity for those behaviours to occur in the first place.

Missing additional asbestos type may not change the Dutyholders management decisions, but our role as laboratories is to identify every asbestos type present within a sample, as accurately as possible; whether an additional fibre type changes the assessment score should not determine whether missing it is considered acceptable.

Laboratory Managers should be encouraging analysts to look harder, question more, and never stop once the first fibre has been identified. The goal should always remain the same: to identify every asbestos type present.

Next steps for industry improvement
For all the difference in emphasis, both perspectives agree on more than they dispute:

- recognition of deviating samples – reported by only 7% of laboratories, despite being a requirement of HSG248 and ISO 17025 – must improve, through procedures, training and internal audit;
- errors on multi-type ACMs are real, identified and addressable, through targeted training and competency checks on secondary-type identification;
- every missed fibre type should be treated as something to learn from, whatever its effect on the risk assessment;
- routine quality control deserves scrutiny, so that recheck rates reflect risk rather than minimum compliance;
- the absence of false positives, and the detection of asbestos in almost every case where it was present, are genuine strengths worth stating;
- HSE's framing of improvement rather than enforcement is the right one, and future mystery shopper rounds should be seen as independent verification of what quality systems actually deliver and not another proficiency scheme.

Conclusion
Bulk analysis is fundamentally a reliable sector with manageable weaknesses; however, the industry should acknowledge any issues and learn from them. The mystery shopper study should not be seen as a criticism of laboratories, but as an opportunity. Continuous improvement sits at the heart of every quality management system, and laboratories that treat these findings accordingly; root-cause analysis, corrective action, a review of effectiveness. Either way, the Mystery Shopper study has told the industry something about itself that announced proficiency testing could not. The poorest response would be to waste it.



New leak testing guidance approved for publication

Industry group finalises appendix setting out when enclosures should be leak tested and how the decision must be recorded

New industry guidance on leak testing has been approved for publication by the Asbestos Network Technical Working Group, which signed off the final wording at its meeting on 3 August. The appendix will be issued shortly as a free PDF on the Asbestos Network section of the CONIAC website. It is aimed principally at licensed asbestos removal contractors, and is intended to help them decide whether leak testing is required on a given job and, if so, where and how often to perform it.

The Asbestos Removal Contractors Association was represented on the drafting group throughout by its Chief Executive, Steve Sadley.

What the guidance says

The appendix opens with the legal position. Regulation 16 of CAR 2012 requires employers to prevent, or reduce to the lowest level reasonably practicable, the spread of asbestos. Paragraph 416 of the ACOP identifies where to check: the enclosure perimeter, airlock and baglock positions, and the discharge of extraction equipment where it is sited internally. Regulation 11 expands the duty to prevent exposure to cover not only an employer's own employees but any other person who may be affected by the work. Paragraph 79 of L143 spells out who that means: other contractors and employees on the premises, other occupants, members of the public and visitors. Their protection has to be built into the risk assessment, the plan of work and the control measures.

Ahead of the leak testing considerations, the group has placed a point about planning at the top of the document. Where reasonably practicable, licensed removal should be scheduled when occupied premises are vacant. Eliminating occupancy is identified as the preferred control measure, since it reduces the consequences of an unforeseen loss of enclosure integrity rather than merely detecting one. Weekends, holidays and planned closures are the opportunities cited. Excluding those who have no need to be in the area should be a primary consideration during risk assessment, and CDM 2015 is cited in support of the coordination this requires.

The single unqualified requirement in the document concerns internally vented equipment. Where a negative pressure unit does not vent to atmosphere outside the building, leak testing should always be carried out at the discharge location. That is not subject to a balancing exercise.

Beyond that, the decision is risk based, and the appendix sets out a table of considerations covering occupied areas, the vicinity of the enclosure, sensitive areas and anticipated fibre levels.

Where areas near the enclosure are occupied by anyone other than removal operatives, analysts, auditors and HSE inspectors, leak testing should be carried out. Good planning with the client should preclude that where reasonably practicable, and access for deliveries, maintenance, cleaning and security should be considered wherever it is reasonably foreseeable.

Vicinity is deliberately not defined by distance, since it varies with the job and the building. The question posed is whether, were the enclosure to fail, fibres could migrate into that space and affect anyone other than those professionally engaged in the work. Waste and transit routes, shared ventilation and air handling systems, corridors, stairwells, lift spaces, voids, ducts and pipe penetrations all fall within scope, as do external areas near an NPU discharge to which people have access or which sit close to open windows.

Sensitive areas are those where the consequences of a leak would cause significant disruption to normal business operations, shut down vital services, force an evacuation, or interrupt operations in the building or services on which the wider community depends. Schools, care homes, hospital wards and secure 24–hour control rooms are the examples given.

Anticipated fibre levels sit apart from the others, because the concern is what would escape rather than who is nearby. Some jobs generate higher levels inside the enclosure, so the consequences of losing containment are greater, and the appendix contrasts lower and higher risk tasks. Cleaning small quantities of AIB debris, removing intact AIB from a non-asbestos frame by a method that eliminates breakage, and residual insulation beneath paint on plant room walls sit at the lower end. Spray coating

removal, lagging removal and AIB removal where significant breakage is likely sit at the higher end. The appendix pairs the two, directing the risk assessment to consider the anticipated fibre levels within the enclosure and the duration of the work together.

The table ends with a summary question that pulls the considerations together. Could anyone other than the site team or those professionally engaged with the work foreseeably be exposed to asbestos fibres, or could a sensitive area become contaminated, were the enclosure to fail?

Where the assessment points to leak testing, a second table turns to the strategy itself and where the testing should be concentrated. It pairs particular removal situations with the strategy design considerations each one raises. Cutting pipes that run through the enclosure wall directs attention to pipework outside that may be subject to vibration. Removing AIB ceilings that expose voids may uncover penetrations that were not apparent at smoke test. Sprayed coating removal is flagged because HSE research associates it with high airborne concentrations. Where live building systems interface with the enclosure, services that penetrate or extend beyond the walls are clear leakage routes and should be tracked and monitored. Areas difficult to seal, identified by smoke testing, should be targeted for increased vigilance. The appendix is explicit that these are examples rather than an exhaustive list.

Recording the decision

Where a contractor decides not to leak test, the appendix requires that decision to be recorded specifically in the plan of work, and states plainly that a generic statement is not sufficient. Standard wording appearing on every plan regardless of the circumstances will not meet the requirement.

Annex 1 answers five questions put by industry, among them why smoke testing, airflow readings and flap deflection are not sufficient on their own, and why a sustained run of clean results is not a reason to stop. A pinhole in the HEPA filter of an NPU, the document notes, can produce a fibre leak with no significant change in pressure detectable across the filter.

Frequency is addressed by reference to HSG248, which advises daily short-term sampling shortly after removal begins, using higher flow rates so that significant leaks can be detected quickly on site, with two or more side by side replicate samples pooled to reach a minimum volume of 480 litres, followed by extended duration sampling each day. Any single result above 0.010 f/ml should stop work and trigger investigation.

The appendix should be read alongside L143, HSG247 and HSG248.



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Beach closed again after asbestos found in sand



Mount Batten beach has been closed "until further notice" Image source, Grace Stickland

A beach has been closed after asbestos was discovered for a second time.

Plymouth City Council said "high levels of asbestos fibres" were found in the sand at Mount Batten beach, Plymouth, which could pose a risk to health.

The authority said asbestos fibres were found in 14 of 16 sand samples taken, so the beach would remain closed "until further notice" while investigations and tests were carried out.

Prof Steve Maddern, Plymouth's director of public health, said the "latest sand samples are concerning and we must prioritise the safety of the public".

A small amount of asbestos was first found at the site in April 2019.

The council said it was found in one of 16 sand samples.
It said a total of 500kg of asbestos containing material, such as small pebbles or rocks was collected from the beach in 2019 and had continued to be collected every two months.



The beach has been cordoned off by the council.
Image source, Grace Stickland

It said due to the low levels of asbestos fibres found seven years ago, the beach was felt safe as long as signage remained in place to warn beachgoers.

However, it said: "A recent review of the risk assessment showed that since 2019, the volume of asbestos material being collected from the beach has not reduced over time."

'Risk to health'

Plymouth City Council said: "Repeat sampling of the sand in recent weeks has found asbestos fibres in 14 of 16 sand samples, with two asbestos types present and at levels deemed 'hazardous waste' by the contactor.

"These fibres represent a risk to health if inhaled."

It said asbestos was previously used in building construction and was only hazardous to health if it broke down and fibres were released into the air.

The UK Health Security Agency said, external "all forms of asbestos fibres are hazardous as they can induce cancer following inhalation exposure".

Maddern said the risk of airborne fibres would be accessed and urged people to stay off the areas marked by signs and fencing.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cz0jzz2249go

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Council asbestos failings prompt £500k repair bill



The Health and Safety Executive said the council had failed to prepare an adequate asbestos management plan for Whitehaven Civic Hall. Image source, Cumberland Council

Asbestos failings at council buildings could cost £500,000 to rectify.

Cumberland Council said it had requested the "contingency funding" to address asbestos concerns raised by inspections of eight of its buildings by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

A report published ahead of a meeting of the council's standards committee on Wednesday showed HSE issued it with an improvement notice for Whitehaven Civic Hall on 20 April. HSE also raised concerns about "other contraventions" at council buildings.

In the document the Labour-led authority said it treated the HSE's notices with the highest importance and was "committed to getting health and safety right".

'Safety improvements'

A council spokesman said the authority was taking "the necessary steps to address the concerns raised by the HSE". The HSE enforcement notice for Whitehaven Civic Hall said the council had "failed to prepare an adequate written plan" of how it would manage the risk from asbestos likely to be present on the premises.

Failure to comply with the notice is a criminal offence which can result in prosecution and the council has until 24 July to fix issues.

Last month the local authority shut the wedding and entertainment venue without notice to carry out "safety improvements" and said it hoped it would reopen in the summer.

The council confirmed these related to fire management and were separate from the asbestos issues raised by HSE. The spokesman said: "While the building is closed to carry out the fire safety improvements, the council is taking the opportunity to also address some of the asbestos-related issues on the site."

Fees for action

The council report said HSE visited eight buildings owned or managed by the council including Netherhall School in Maryport, the civic centre in Carlisle and Ashfield Junior School and the Helena Thompson Museum in Workington.

A Notice of Contravention (NOC) letter was issued by HSE, setting out "other matters which were found by the inspectors at the various sites" and giving advice to address these.

The council did not publish details of the improvements needed, saying they were exempt from being made public because they concerned financial information.

The report said while the NOC was not a prosecution, it marked "the start of formal enforcement action".

It added: "It also triggers fee for intervention charges, meaning a business will be invoiced for the time the HSE spends dealing with the issue.

"There is a risk that further inspections may be required by the HSE and this may increase the fee for intervention that the council will be required to pay."

The council said it was working on a plan to comply with the recommendations.

The report said: "The council is treating the recommendations in the letter with the highest importance and is developing an action plan overseen by the internal board."

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cq6149gyenpo



Work-Related Fatal Injuries in Great Britain 2025/26: Key Findings

The latest Health and Safety Executive (HSE) statistics provide a valuable snapshot of workplace safety across Great Britain.

While fatal workplace accidents are now far less common than in previous decades, each death remains a tragedy for family and colleagues. In 2025/26, 126 workers and 104 members of the public were killed in work-related accidents. These provisional figures will be finalised in July 2027.

The statistics cover only fatal accidents and not occupational diseases. Conditions such as mesothelioma, an asbestos-related cancer, continue to have a significant impact, with 2,146 deaths recorded in Great Britain in 2024. The HSE also estimates that around 13,000 deaths each year are linked to occupational cancers and lung diseases, many related to asbestos work. These figures highlight the ongoing importance of workplace health as well as safety.

Worker Fatalities Remain Near Historic Lows

A total of 126 workers died in work-related incidents during 2025/26, two fewer than the previous year. Excluding the years affected by the coronavirus restrictions where a sudden drop in numbers was followed by a large rise as delayed projects were rushed to completion, this is provisionally the lowest annual total recorded.

The long-term trend remains encouraging. Worker fatalities have fallen from 495 in 1981 and 217 in 2005/06, reflecting sustained improvements in safety standards. Accounting for workforce growth, the current figure equates to a fatal injury rate of 0.37 deaths per 100,000 workers. However, while the long-term rate declined continually from 1980, it has levelled in the 2020s.

Construction and Agriculture Continue to Dominate Fatality Statistics

Construction and agriculture, forestry and fishing remain the sectors with the highest number of workplace deaths, accounting for nearly 40% of all worker fatalities in 2025/26. Construction recorded 25 fatalities, making it the industry with the highest number of worker deaths despite an improvement compared to recent years. Agriculture, forestry and fishing recorded 22 fatalities, remaining broadly in line with the five-year average.

However, fatal injury rates rather than numbers provides a clearer picture of risk. Over the past five years, workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing face a death rate 21 times higher than the overall average, while waste and recycling workers experience a rate 10 times higher. Construction workers are around five times more likely to be killed than the national average.

These findings demonstrate the need for continued focus on high-risk sectors where employees are regularly exposed to machinery, vehicles, hazardous environments and working at height.

Falls From Height Remain the Leading Cause of Death

The majority of workplace fatalities continue to arise from a small number of accident types. 82% of worker deaths in 2025/26 were linked to only five accident categories.

The most common cause of fatal injury remains falls from height, which has consistently been the leading cause of workplace death for more than two decades. Between 2021/22 and 2025/26, falls from height accounted for an average of 37 deaths per year, representing 28% of all worker fatalities.

Other significant causes included being struck by a moving object and being struck by a moving vehicle, each responsible for an average of 22 deaths annually. Together, these three causes accounted for 62% of all worker fatalities over the five-year period.

The data also highlights industry-specific risks. More than half of all construction fatalities were caused by falls from height, while vehicle-related incidents were particularly common in agriculture, transport, and waste and recycling activities.

Older and Self-Employed Workers Face Greater Risks

The statistics reveal clear differences in fatality risk by age. Workers aged 60 and over accounted for 32% of all fatalities, despite representing only 12% of the workforce. Fatal injury rates rise significantly with age, with workers aged 65 and over facing a risk around four times higher than the all-worker average.

Gender differences also remain pronounced. Men accounted for 93% of worker fatalities, largely reflecting the concentration of male workers in higher-risk sectors such as construction, agriculture and transport.

Self-employed workers are also disproportionately affected. Although they make up around 15% of the workforce, they accounted for approximately one-third of all workplace fatalities in 2025/26. Across all industries, the fatal injury rate for self-employed workers is around three times higher than the rate for employees.

Fatalities Among Members of the Public

Work-related incidents do not only affect workers. During 2025/26, 104 members of the public were killed as a result of work-related accidents, an increase of eight fatalities compared with the previous year.

Following the reductions seen during Covid restrictions, public fatalities have now returned to previous levels. Of these deaths, 32 occurred on railways, while 59 occurred within service sector industries. Additional fatalities were recorded in agriculture, construction and waste management sectors. In addition, drowning was a cause of 15% of public deaths in tha past 5 years, compared to only 2% of workers. These figures reinforce the need for organisations to consider the safety of customers, visitors, contractors and the wider public alongside the protection of their own workforce.

Conclusion

The 2025/26 HSE statistics show that workplace fatalities in Great Britain remain near historically low levels, reflecting decades of safety improvements. However, significant risks remain. Construction and agriculture continue to account for a large proportion of deaths, falls from height remain the leading cause of fatal injury, and older and self-employed workers face disproportionately high levels of risk.

At the same time, employers should not lose sight of occupational health risks. Diseases such as mesothelioma continue to claim thousands of lives each year, reminding us that workplace health is just as important as workplace safety. Continued investment in hazard control, training, supervision and health protection will be essential if workplace deaths are to be reduced further in the years ahead.



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HSE confirms targeted reform of asbestos regulations

The Health and Safety Executive will pursue targeted reforms of the Control of Asbestos Regulations, chief executive Sarah Albon told the regulator's annual general meeting on 28 July, saying it would act where evidence shows further work is needed to cut exposure.

Setting out HSE's plans for 2026–27, Albon said: "Our work on asbestos will also continue, including targeted reforms of the Control of Asbestos Regulations to address where evidence shows that further action is needed to reduce exposure. And this will be alongside a prioritised research programme to deliver the evidence base to support further interventions."

That single sentence was the only substantive reference to asbestos in a meeting lasting almost two hours. Albon gave no timetable, no indication of which parts of the 2012 regulations fall within scope and no date for consultation. Nor was the point picked up during the hour of questions that followed.

The commitment sits inside a wider inspection programme. HSE will carry out 14,000 ill health inspections during the current year, including 1,600 respiratory risk inspections, more than 3,000 noise inspections and around 900 covering musculoskeletal disorders.

The contrast with engineered stone was striking. Where asbestos received one sentence, silica dust ran to several minutes. Albon said evidence now shows some workers developing silicosis after as little as four years working with man-made composite stone, against the decades of exposure historically associated with the disease. HSE has launched a campaign of 1,000 visits, updated its guidance to make clear that dry cutting is prohibited, and is finding significant non-compliance, including material breaches on dry cutting and failures to carry out health surveillance. "In the future, no solution will be off the table," she said.

For an industry that has spent more than 40 years building a licensing regime around a respiratory carcinogen, the read across is worth noting. The pace of HSE's response on stone, and its stated openness to further restriction, gives some indication of how it may approach the asbestos review.

Mesothelioma was raised twice from the floor, on both occasions by Luke Collins, national health and safety adviser at Unite, who cited it alongside falls from height as an established risk that must not be lost as attention shifts to newer hazards. Collins asked whether it was time for a strategic review of the health and safety legislative framework. Both Albon and the chair rejected the idea, arguing that the goal setting structure of the Health and Safety at Work Act has adapted well across 50 years and that reopening it would risk losing the tripartite arrangements written into it.

One exchange carries direct read across for the licensed sector. Dan Shears of the GMB asked about recent enforcement action taken against an occupational health provider. Jane Lassey, HSE's director of regulation, said the regulator would use section 37 of the Health and Safety at Work Act to hold third party advisers to account where a duty holder fails to comply because it relied on their advice. "There are a lot of duty holders, especially small to medium sized employers, relying on the advice of third parties, and it is just not right that they can effectively get away with shoddy work," she said, adding that HSE should be doing more of it. Members who rely on external consultants, analysts and medical providers should take note.

Performance figures for 2025–26 were presented by David Murray, director of planning, finance and performance. HSE completed more than 14,900 proactive ill health inspections, issued 4,870 enforcement notices of which nearly 1,200 were prohibition notices, and brought 265 prosecutions with an 88% conviction rate and £34.5 million in fines. Running costs were £341 million. Some 92% of duty holders surveyed after inspection agreed the outcome was proportionate to the risk identified.

The meeting also confirmed that HSE's response to the RIDDOR consultation, which closed in early June, will take a further couple of months, and that a consultation on workplace temperatures is planned for this year. Separately, the Building Safety Regulator completed its move out of HSE last month, taking 550 staff with it.

The theme of the AGM was leadership, and delegates were repeatedly invited to lead within their own sectors rather than wait for the regulator. On asbestos, that invitation now arrives with a reform programme attached and no published detail behind it. We will press for early sight of the scope and will report as the research programme and consultation timetable emerge.

Introducing DOT: ARCA's New Direct Online Testing System

A smarter way to assess, record and report candidate performance

Earlier this month, ARCA launched its new Direct Online Testing system, known as DOT, marking a significant step forward in how candidate knowledge is assessed on ARCA training courses.

DOT is currently live for both the Operative Refresher and Supervisor Refresher courses, with plans to roll it out across all ARCA courses that use this form of assessment over the coming twelve months.

What Prompted the Change?
The development of DOT came directly from feedback from ARCA members. Member companies told us they wanted more from the testing process. Specifically, they wanted quicker access to results, a clearer picture of how their candidates had performed, and the ability to use that information to identify where individuals needed additional support.

Furthermore, members wanted access to certificates promptly following a successful outcome, without having to chase for them. In short, they wanted a system that worked as hard for them as their candidates do in the training room. ARCA listened, and DOT is the result.

How Does It Work?
The process is straightforward. Candidates log into the DOT portal and confirm their details. The trainer then records their attendance and, following the assessment, their score is captured directly within the system.

Each candidate has two attempts at the test, which is a deliberate and considered design decision. Misreading a question is not the same as not knowing the answer, and the two-attempt approach ensures that a single lapse in concentration does not unfairly disadvantage an otherwise well-prepared candidate.

The question bank itself is comprehensive, drawing on 40 questions for both Operative and Supervisor assessments. This is considerably broader than the shorter assessments used previously, and it reflects the depth of knowledge we expect candidates to demonstrate across the subject matter covered on their course.

What the Results Are Telling Us
I'm pleased to say that since launch, candidates have been scoring on average in line with results from the previous written and Zoom Poll assessment methods. This is reassuring and confirms that the transition to DOT has not disadvantaged anyone in the process.

However, the real benefit of DOT goes beyond simply recording a pass or fail. Because the question bank is far more extensive than earlier assessments, ARCA can now test knowledge across a much wider range of topics within a single sitting. This gives us, and more importantly member companies, a much richer picture of what an individual actually understands and where any gaps might lie.

A Training Needs Analysis Tool Built In
Once a candidate has completed the assessment, the member company can access a breakdown of performance through the ARCA member portal. This shows not only whether the candidate passed, but what they know well and where they may benefit from further support or reinforcement.

Importantly, the feedback goes further than simply flagging incorrect answers. A mistake will prompt targeted guidance explaining what is wrong and pointing towards the relevant areas of the subject matter. This applies even to candidates who have passed their assessment.

If a candidate passes but answered a couple of questions incorrectly, they will still receive that individual feedback, because knowing where a small gap exists is just as valuable as knowing they passed overall.

The feedback is not sent to the candidate alone. The individual who booked the candidate onto the course, typically the employer or training manager within the member company, also receives the same information. This means the right people within the business are kept informed and can take any follow-up action they feel is appropriate, without having to rely on the candidate to pass on the information.

For training managers and supervisors, this is useful information. Rather than simply knowing that an operative attended a refresher course, you now have an evidence base to support ongoing development decisions. Certificates for successful candidates are also available directly through the ARCA member portal, removing the delay that could sometimes occur previously.

What Comes Next
Following a successful trial period, the ARCA Training Committee agreed to extend DOT across all courses that use this form of assessment. The rollout is planned to be complete within the next twelve months.

We are encouraged by the response to DOT so far and look forward to sharing further updates as the system expands across the full range of ARCA training courses.

For further information about DOT or any aspect of ARCA training, please contact Satish Patel, Training Manager, at satish.patel@arca.org.uk

NVQ Qualification Success

To all the dedicated candidates who have diligently worked and earned their NVQ qualifications between May and July 2026: Your exceptional skills and unwavering commitment are being recognised in this edition of ARCA News, and we congratulate you all on this achievement. Thank you to all the individuals for giving ARCA permission to include your names in this congratulations piece.

RSPH Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Removal of Hazardous Waste (Construction) – Licensed Asbestos;

Adam Brych	Erith Contractors Ltd
Alex Wilson	Rhodar Industrial Services Ltd
Ashley O'Brien	AIB Solutions Ltd
Jack Owen	Rhodar Industrial Services Ltd
Jake Wollaston	Rhodar Industrial Services Ltd
Joe Thompson	Rhodar Industrial Services Ltd
Kevin Pattinson	ARG Europe Ltd
Mackenzie Toyne	Rhodar Industrial Services Ltd
Mathew Hayes	LAR Ltd
Rafal Wiaczek	Erith Contractors Ltd
Scott Newland	ARG Europe Ltd
Simon Birt	Rhodar Industrial Services Ltd
Steven Spence	Asgen Ltd

RSPH Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Supervising Licensed Asbestos Removal (Construction);

Kevin Lewis	MGL Demolition Ltd
Randle Weatherhead	LAR Ltd
Sergiu Epure	Envirocall Ltd
Simon Mogridge	Reddish Vale Insulations Ltd



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Northampton asbestos consultancy recruits 13 new starters in six months



A growing asbestos consultancy in Northampton has welcomed 13 new employees during the first six months of 2026 as it continues to expand.

Acorn Analytical Services has recruited for a wide range of operational, technical, commercial and administrative roles between January and June.

The appointments include experienced asbestos surveyors and consultants, laboratory analysts, account managers and support staff, as well as trainees and apprentices taking their first steps towards careers in the asbestos industry.

The recruitment drive began in January with the appointment of Operations Administrator Evie Riley. Then, in March, the company welcomed Asbestos Surveyors Joe Szor and Leia Cameron, alongside Laboratory Analysts Sebastian Robinson and Mussamat Uddin.

Commercial Manager Ben James and Accounts Assistant Lisa James joined the business in April, together with experienced Asbestos Consultant Dave Davies-Evans.

Acorn continued to invest in developing new talent during May, recruiting Trainee Asbestos Surveyor Ben Whitehouse. In June, Apprentice Asbestos Consultants Lewis Manton and James Williamson, Housing Account Manager Shaun Thomas and Asbestos Consultant Billy Baker also joined the company.

The new appointments reflect growth across the business and the variety of career opportunities available within the asbestos industry.

Sam Savage, Managing Director of Acorn Analytical Services, said: "Welcoming 13 new colleagues in just six months is a big achievement for Acorn and reflects the continued growth of the business.

"What is particularly exciting is the variety of roles we have created. Our new starters include experienced professionals who bring valuable knowledge to the company, as well as trainees and apprentices who we can support as they build long-term careers in the asbestos industry.

"We want Acorn to be a place where people can join us at any stage of their career and develop their skills with a clear route for progression. Investing in our people has always been central to our growth and we are proud to be creating new employment and training opportunities."

The company is continuing to grow its workforce and is keen to hear from people interested in developing a career within the asbestos industry. To find out more about Acorn Analytical Services and its latest career opportunities, visit **http://www.acorn-as.com**.

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ARCA Member Asbestech Ltd Receives Royal Recognition

The team at Asbestech Ltd is immensely proud to announce that our company has been granted a Royal Warrant of Appointment by His Majesty King Charles III. This prestigious Royal Warrant, awarded for the Supply of Specialist Building Services, recognises our many years of dedicated service to the Royal Household. The warrant was granted following a thorough and rigorous vetting process conducted over the course of a year, and it authorises Asbestech to proudly display the Royal Arms.

Daniel Chalkley, Managing Director of Asbestech said, "Receiving the King's Royal Warrant is recognition of our team's hard work for over 7 years, supporting the Royal Household with their asbestos removal strategy. The individual projects are often technically complex pieces of work that require detailed planning and collaboration to ensure the nations structural heritage is protected. We are all honoured to have been granted this distinguished symbol and remain dedicated to maintaining the exceptional standards that have earned us this singular honour."

"I'd also like to thank both my management and site teams. Their dedication, hard work and commitment is the foundation for our Royal Warrant award and supports our reputation as a trusted contractor."

What is a Royal Warrant?

The tradition of Royal Warrants dates back to 1155, when King Henry II issued a Royal Charter to the Weaver's Company. The criteria for qualification are exceptionally stringent. The Royal Warrant Holders Association evaluates only those companies or individuals who have supplied goods or services to the Royal Household for a minimum of five years and who consistently meet strict qualifying standards.

All Royal Warrant holders are united by a shared commitment to delivering the highest standards of quality, service, and reliability, while also proactively promoting exemplary environmental credentials.



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Hertfordshire

Tracker
Asbestos

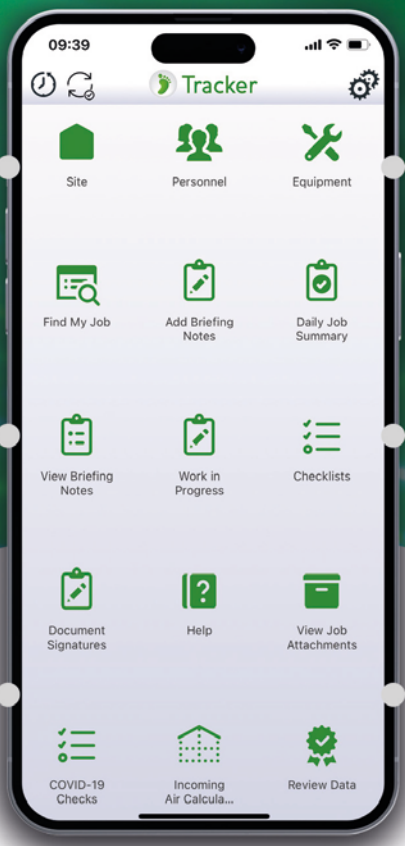
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Windsor Waste Management Launches Qwikzip to Improve Hazardous Waste Containment

Windsor Waste Management has announced the launch of Qwikzip, an innovative new range of heavy-duty liners designed for 20-yard roll-on roll-off (RORO) containers and tippers, offering customers a safer and more efficient solution for containing hazardous waste.

Developed to support the demolition, construction, and hazardous waste sectors, Qwikzip creates a protective barrier between waste and the container, helping to reduce contamination while simplifying the loading, transport and disposal of hazardous materials. The integrated double-zip closure securely seals the liner once loaded, helping to contain waste throughout the collection process.



The launch forms part of Windsor Waste Management's ongoing commitment to improving safety, operational efficiency and compliance for businesses managing hazardous waste across England and Wales.

Qwikzip has been developed by industry professionals – for industry professionals. The design features two robust zippers (in line with HSE and ADR regulations) and are double-lined heavy-duty polythene. Rated 5 stars in industry trials, the liner can be installed in as quickly as 5 minutes, delivering a cost saving on site through reduced labour and consumables. By providing an efficient waste packaging solution, Qwikzip is the ideal solution for large-scale hazardous waste management.

Suitable for asbestos-contaminated materials, hazardous soils and a variety of other hazardous waste streams, Qwikzip is expected to benefit licensed asbestos removal contractors, demolition companies, remediation specialists and other organisations requiring reliable containment solutions.

"We're continually looking for ways to make hazardous waste management simpler, safer and more efficient for our customers," said Roland Archer for Windsor Waste Management. "Qwikzip is a practical innovation that not only standardises hazardous waste containment but also helps save time on site and support compliance throughout the waste management process."

Suitable for use in both 20-yard rolonof containers and tippers, Qwikzip complements Windsor Waste Management's nationwide asbestos disposal services, which include asbestos skip hire, licensed asbestos waste transfer stations, asbestos van collections and contaminated soil disposal.

Since 2000, Windsor Waste Management has built a reputation as one of the UK's leading hazardous waste specialists, providing reliable nationwide services to the demolition and asbestos removal industries. The introduction of Qwikzip represents the latest addition to the company's growing range of specialist waste management solutions.



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"It's cost and time effective - much easier for the site teams." *Steven Greenhalgh, Clifford Devlin*

"Paperless is very efficient way of doing site paperwork and the way it helps contracts managers is a godsend." *Phil Neville, Asbestech*

"I would highly recommend Assure360 Paperless, it saves us time and money massively." *Ben Ives, Horizon*

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Training and Qualifications

ARCA Training Terms & Conditions and Policies are available at
www.arca.org.uk/page/arca-training-terms-conditions-and-policies
Course dates and availability are correct at the time of going to print and may be subject to change.

Remote *Training Courses*

Industry Refresher for Asbestos Removal Operatives (Remote) — 1 DAY COURSE

October	November	December
14, 19, 24	3, 9, 21	3, 10, 15, 19
Members fee £145.00 (excl vat)		Non Members fee £160.00 (excl vat)

Industry Refresher for Asbestos Removal Supervisors (Remote) — 1 DAY COURSE

October	November	December
6, 20, 24, 26	5, 13, 21	4, 14, 19
Members fee £145.00 (excl vat)		Non Members fee £160.00 (excl vat)

New Licensed Contract Manager (Remote) — 2 DAY COURSE

October	November	December
26		15
Members fee £250.00 (excl vat)		Non Members fee £285.00 (excl vat)

Licensed Contract Manager Update (Remote) — 1 DAY COURSE

October	November	December
2, 23, 30	23	1, 11
Members fee £145.00 (excl vat)		Non Members fee £160.00 (excl vat)

Risk Assessments & Plans of Work (Remote) — 1 DAY COURSE

October	November	December
1		17
Members fee £160.00 (excl vat)		Non Members fee £175.00 (excl vat)

Asbestos H&S Management of Senior Managers & Directors (Remote) — 1 DAY COURSE

October	November	December
		17
Members fee £250.00 (excl vat)		Non Members fee £270.00 (excl vat)

Asbestos Awareness (Remote) — HALF DAY COURSE

October	November	December
9	6	14
Members fee £60.00 (excl vat)		Non Members fee £85.00 (excl vat)

Asbestos Removal for Administrators (Remote) — 1 DAY COURSE

October	November	December
	2	
Members fee £145.00 (excl vat)		Non Members fee £160.00 (excl vat)

Centre-based *Training Courses*

New Asbestos Removal Operative

3 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	7	23	
Rayleigh		17	
Glasgow		9, 30	
Stockton on Tees		30	

Members fee £460.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £515.00 (excl vat)

New Asbestos Removal Supervisor

3 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Rayleigh		30	

Members fee £460.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £515.00 (excl vat)

New Licensed Contract Manager

2 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	12		
Darlington	21		

Members fee £350.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £430.00 (excl vat)

Air Management Workshop

HALF DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent		27	
Rayleigh	16		

Members fee £105.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £135.00 (excl vat)

HSE Licensed Scaffolders

1 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	30		
Rayleigh		20	

Members fee £170.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £190.00 (excl vat)

Industry Refresher Training for Asbestos Removal Operatives

1 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	2, 16	5, 7	2
Rayleigh	1, 10, 13	2	4, 5, 8
Manchester			11
Glasgow		4	3, 9
Darlington		3	

Members fee £170.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £190.00 (excl vat)

Industry Refresher Training for Asbestos Removal Supervisors

1 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	8, 10	10	5, 8
Rayleigh	2, 14, 28	7	7
Glasgow	1		
Manchester	15	30	
Stockton on Tees	30		

Members fee £215.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £250.00 (excl vat)

Licensed Contract Manager Update

1 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	5		7
Rayleigh	15	20	
Manchester		6	
Darlington			2

Members fee £185.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £210.00 (excl vat)

Personal Air Monitoring Workshop

HALF DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent		27	
Rayleigh	12		

Members fee £105.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £135.00 (excl vat)

Use, Inspection & Routine Maintenance of RPE

1 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	9	6	14
Rayleigh		16	

Members fee £105.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £135.00 (excl vat)

Dates shown in Red denote a Saturday

Asbestos Removal *Qualifications*

ARCA Qualification Terms & Conditions and Policies are available at
https://www.arca.org.uk/qualifications/qualification-terms-conditions-and-policies/

Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Removal of Hazardous Waste (Construction) – Licensed Asbestos

Fees (excl VAT)

On-Site Assessment and Training (OSAT)

This qualification is achieved by assessment.
Assessments are held weekly/monthly so please call for latest availability.

Notes on Fees: Assessment fees are ex VAT. There is no VAT on the registration fee.
Assessment fees are based on assessing two candidates on-site on the same day.
Assessing one candidate on-site will incur additional costs.

Employers that are registered with the CITB for Levy purposes can claim grants from the CITB and might be eligible for up to £600.00 per candidate.

Member	Non Member
Assessment £1,190.00 Registration £88.50	Assessment £1,390.00 Registration £88.50

Experienced Candidate Assessment Route (ECAR)

This qualification is achieved by assessment.
Assessments are held weekly/monthly so please call for latest availability.

Notes on Fees: Assessment fees are ex VAT. There is no VAT on the registration fee.
Assessment fees are based on assessing two candidates at an ARCA Centre on the same day.
Assessing one candidate on-site will incur additional costs.

Employers that are registered with the CITB for Levy purposes can claim grants from the CITB and might be eligible for up to £600.00 per candidate.

Member	Non Member
Assessment £1,300.00 Registration £88.50	Assessment £1,500.00 Registration £88.50

Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Supervising Licensed Asbestos Removal (Construction)

This qualification is achieved by assessment.
Assessments are held weekly/monthly so please call for latest availability.

Notes on Fees: Assessment fees are ex VAT. There is no VAT on the registration fee.
Assessment fee is based on three assessment days (on-site) for one candidate.

Employers that are registered with the CITB for Levy purposes can claim grants from the CITB and might be eligible for up to £600.00 per candidate.

Member	Non Member
Assessment £2,100.00 Registration £88.50	Assessment £2,400.00 Registration £88.50

RSPH Level 4 Diploma in Asbestos Removal for Contract Managers

1 DAY COURSE Non-Consecutive

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent		30	7
Rayleigh		30	7
Glasgow		30	7

Members fee £640.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £855.00 (excl vat) | Registration fee £88.50

Asbestos Testing & Laboratory *Qualifications*

ATaC Qualification Terms & Conditions and Policies are available at www.atac.org.uk/page/atac-qualification-terms-conditions-and-policies

RSPH Level 3 Award in Asbestos Surveying

3 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	5		7
Rayleigh		17	

Members fee £565.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £620.00 (excl vat) | Registration fee £88.50

EXAM ONLY DAY

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	7		9
Rayleigh		19	

Members fee £195.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £215.00 (excl vat) | Registration fee £88.50

RSPH Level 3 Award for Asbestos Air Monitoring & Clearance Procedures

4 DAY COURSE

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent		9	
Rayleigh	20		

Members fee £805.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £860.00 (excl vat) | Registration fee £158.00

EXAM ONLY DAY

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent		12	
Rayleigh	23		

Members fee £195.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £215.00 (excl vat) | Registration fee £158.00

RSPH Level 3 Award in Asbestos Bulk Analysis

EXAM ONLY DAY

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	CALL FOR AVAILABILITY		
Rayleigh	CALL FOR AVAILABILITY		

Contact for fee | Non Members fee £330.00 (excl vat) | Registration fee £88.50

Exams can be held in-house.

RSPH Level 4 Certificate in Asbestos Laboratory & Project Management

3 DAY COURSE Non-Consecutive

	October	November	December
Burton upon Trent	CALL FOR AVAILABILITY		
Rayleigh	CALL FOR AVAILABILITY		

Members fee £1570.00 (excl vat) | Non Members fee £1730.00 (excl vat) | Registration fee £88.50

Membership Update

arca Members List

New ARCA Member:

Amiante Abatement Solutions Ltd
Unit 14 Owen Drive, Liverpool, Merseyside L24 1YL
T: 01513 230136 **W:** www.aasolutionsltd.co.uk

Savtech Asbestos Solutions Ltd
Prospect House, Prospect Business Park, Crookhall Lane,
Consett, Durham DH8 7PW
T: 07787 755037 **W:** www.savtechasbestossolutions.co.uk

SRK Scaffolding & Industrial Services Ltd
Haywards Lane, Chelston, Wellington, Somerset TA21 9FD
T: 01823 650792 **W:** www.srkscaffold.co.uk

Total Asbestos Control Ltd
6 Graphite Business Park, Graphite Way, Hadfield, Glossop,
Derbyshire SK13 1QH
T: 01615 094424 **W:** www.totalasbestoscontrol.co.uk

The following companies are no longer members of the Association:

SME Occupational Health Ltd - ***Associate Member***

Thompsons Asbestos Services Ltd - ***Full Member***

South-East Members

AA Woods Asbestos Abatement
Woods House, River Way, Harlow, Essex CM20 2DP
T: 01279 444630 **W:** www.aawoods.com

Abastra Environmental Ltd
Unit 42 Hornsby Square, Southfields Business Park,
Basildon,Essex SS15 6SD
T: 01268 411355 **W:** www.abastra.co.uk

Active Environmental Management Ltd
Unit 3, Thames Industrial Estate, High Street South,
Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 3HL
T: 01582 667000 **W:** www.activeenviro.com

Allan Dyson Asbestos Services Ltd
Cagex House, Leyden Road, Stevenage,
Hertfordshire SG1 2BP
T: 01438 360656 **W:** www.allandyson-asbestos.co.uk

Alltask Ltd
Alltask House, Commissioners Road, Rochester ME2 4EJ
T: 01634 298000 **W:** www.alltask.co.uk

Allweather Roofing & Construction Ltd
The Estates Office, Little Champions Farm
Maplehurst Road, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 6RN
T: 01273 388088 **W:** www.theallweathergroup.co.uk

Amiante STR Ltd
Eversley Haulage Park, Brickhouse Hill,
Eversley, Hook, Hampshire RG27 0PZ
T: 02392 230700 **W:** www.amiantestr.co.uk

Amstech Asbestos Removals Ltd
Unit F, Rich Industrial Estate, Avis Way,
Newhaven,East Sussex BN9 0DU
T: 01273 510011 **W:** www.amstech.co.uk

Arco Environmental Ltd
Unit 8 Ashton Gate, Ashton Road,
Harold Hill, Romford, Essex RM3 8UF
T: 01708 347063 **W:** www.arcoenvironmental.com

ARCS Environmental Ltd
Alton, Harrow Road, North Benfleet,
Wickford, Essex SS12 9JW
T: 01268 725477 **W:** www.arcsenvironmental.co.uk

ARG Europe Ltd
Unit 2, New Ford Road, Waltham Cross,
Hertfordshire EN8 7PG
T: 02088 048008 **W:** www.arggroup.org

Asbestech Ltd
Unit 3, The IO Centre,
Hearle Way, Hatfield,
Hertfordshire AL10 9EW
T: 08456 800055
W: www.asbestech.com

Asbestos Essentials Ltd
Unit 1 Crossinglands Business Park, Salford Road,
Aspley Guise, Buckinghamshire MK17 8HZ
T: 0330 223 4024 **W:** www.asbestosessentials.co.uk

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Asgen Ltd
Building 7B, The Mousery, Beeches Road,
Wickford, Essex SS11 8TJ
T: 01702 230457 **W:** www.asgen.co.uk

Ashbee Solutions Ltd
Newbridge Farm, Fox Street, Ardleigh,
Colchester, Essex CO7 7PN
T: 01206 233360 **W:** www.solutions.ashbee.org

Aspect Contracts Ltd
Aspect House, Honywood Road,
Basildon, Essex SS14 3DS
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T: 01322 277731 **W:** www.brownandmason.com

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Decontaminate (UK) Ltd
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T: 01268 330104 **W:** www.decontaminateuk.com

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W: www.piercontractorslimited.com

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