



# Energy Efficient Homes

## The Retrofit Toolkit

### Sheet no 5: First Retrofit Priorities

#### Draughts

**No one likes to live in a draughty house. And apart from the discomfort, it's a waste of money to allow heat to escape through gaps in the fabric and be replaced by cold air from outside.**

The good news is that draught proofing is easy. A bit of DIY can go a long way to plug those gaps. You'll save money on your heating bills, and cut your carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions too.

The following website provides practical guidance:

[www.cse.org.uk/advice/advice-and-support/diy-draught-proofing](http://www.cse.org.uk/advice/advice-and-support/diy-draught-proofing)

For the relationship between draught exclusion and controlled ventilation, see:

<https://bristolenergynetwork.org/resource/draughtproofing-v-ventilation>

#### Drainage

**Check gutters, downpipes and drains.**

If these vital parts of the property's freshwater drainage system are blocked or broken water will not drain away properly and may damage the fabric and cause damp and mould.

This is especially important before renewing the insulation of your roof, attic or walls. If you are thinking of external wall insulation (see Information Sheet 7) the roof may need to be extended and the gutters and downpipes repositioned. See:

[www.beconstructiveltd.com/extending-waste-pipes-and-rainwater-for-external-wall-insulation](http://www.beconstructiveltd.com/extending-waste-pipes-and-rainwater-for-external-wall-insulation)

#### Condensation and Damp

**No one wants to live in a damp home. Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture and cause wooden window frames to rot. It's also unhealthy.**

Some damp is caused by condensation, which occurs when moist air comes into contact with a colder surface like a wall, window, mirror etc.

See the following websites on damp and condensation:

[www.cse.org.uk/advice/condensation-damp-and-mould](http://www.cse.org.uk/advice/condensation-damp-and-mould)

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/fixing-damp-and-condensation>



[www.idealhome.co.uk/diy-and-decorating/how-to-get-rid-of-damp-185033](http://www.idealhome.co.uk/diy-and-decorating/how-to-get-rid-of-damp-185033)

**NB: When improving the insulation of roofs and walls it is very important to avoid creating new condensation problems: see Information Sheets 6 and 7.**

## Asbestos

**Asbestos may be discovered in the course of retrofit, and requires specialist treatment.**

- The general rule is to always leave asbestos alone if it is in good condition - it is usually safe unless it is damaged or disturbed. If you have damaged asbestos materials in your home you should seek advice on appropriate action to take.
- Asbestos materials that are badly damaged or deteriorating can release asbestos fibres and should be removed. Asbestos-containing materials (sprayed asbestos, lagging or insulating boards) must always be removed by contractors who are specially licensed to do this work.
- If you are planning home improvements or maintenance and have asbestos in your home, you must always inform builders, maintenance workers or contractors before they start work.
- Never sand, drill or saw asbestos materials.
- Always seek advice before thinking of removing asbestos and follow the basic rules if carrying out asbestos cement removal work.

For more information see the Asbestos Removal Contractors Association (ARCA: [www.arca.org.uk](http://www.arca.org.uk))

See also Stretton Climate Care's Information Sheet 38, Asbestos in Homes:

<https://strettonclimatecare.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/No.-38-Asbestos-in-the-home-Oct-2022.pdf>

## Other sheets available in this series

1. Fabric First: Planning changes to your home?
2. Preparing for Retrofit: Resources on your doorstep
3. The Energy Hierarchy: The Principle behind the Whole Building Plan
4. Opportunities to Begin the Journey
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6. Insulation: Roof & Attic
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