

Radon – Your Questions Answered

What is radon?

Radon is a naturally occurring, colourless, odourless, radio-active gas which is formed in the ground. It seeps to the surface and can build up inside properties.

Health studies have linked prolonged exposure to radon gas with lung cancer.

How do I know if my property is affected?

The only way to be sure is to have a test. Most tests are carried out by Public Health England and involve having two small detectors in your home for three months. There is a small charge for the detectors. If you rent your property your landlord should pay this charge.

If you are a Council tenant the Council is responsible for testing at your property. We have a programme for carrying out tests in the properties we manage.

If testing shows that radon levels are above 200 Bequerels, action will be taken to reduce the levels.

What can be done to reduce radon levels?

There are a number of ways to reduce radon levels, such as the installation of a sump pump, introducing positive ventilation, which is similar to an extractor fan, or by installing ventilation under the floor of the property if it has a suspended floor.

An active radon sump, fitted with a fan, is the best way to reduce indoor radon levels. Sumps can be constructed from outside. A small hole, big enough for a 110mm pipe, is made in an exterior wall just below ground level and a bucketful of material is removed to create space for the sump. A pipe goes from this space through the wall and the up the outside of the house to roof level. The system is powered continuously by an electric fan.

Who will carry out the work?

The Council has appointed contractors to carry out the work on our behalf. If your property requires equipment to be installed we will write to you to advise you and provide you with the details of the contractor who will carry out the work. The contractor will arrange a time with you to visit your property and we ask that you co-operate with them to arrange this.

How long will the work take?

If your property has been tested and does require equipment to be installed you will receive a letter from the Council. Arrangements will need be made for our contractor to come to your property and carry out this work and they will advise you of what is involved and how long it will take.

How long will I need the sump for?

The sump will remain in place all the time once installed and should be left on at all times.

How will I know if it is reducing radon levels at my property?

The Council will carry out further testing to check radon levels at properties where equipment has been installed.

I don't want a pump – can I refuse to have one installed?

No. Testing has shown that your property has radon levels which require equipment to be installed and this is a legal requirement. It will cost very little to run.

Why aren't all the properties on my street having pumps fitted?

Radon affects all properties but to differing levels. Where levels are recorded below 200 Bequerels no action is needed.

I've recently redecorated. Will the work make a mess?

The work should not be disruptive. The contractor employed by the Council to install the equipment will discuss and agree with you the work to be carried out and what this will involve.

Where can I get more information?

There's more information about radon on Public Health England's website - <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/radon>