

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) - Frequently Asked Questions – Updated 3 August 2023

- What is Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)?

RAAC is a lightweight form of concrete used mainly in roof, floor and wall construction in the UK from the mid-1950s to the mid-1990s. It has been found in a range of buildings, both public and private sector.

- Why are we worried about RAAC now?

RAAC has proven to be not as durable as other concrete building materials. There is a risk it can fail, particularly if it has been damaged by water or not formed correctly when originally fabricated.

- Is there RAAC present in NHS Grampian buildings?

Given how popular it was in construction, it is highly likely we have buildings including RAAC, but we need to carry out surveys to be certain. Of our total estate, we have identified 53 buildings, or parts of buildings, which may contain RAAC. These buildings have been identified solely because of when they were built, design and construction type; their age means it is more likely that RAAC was used in their construction. This process is taking place in all health boards in Scotland.

- Which buildings have been identified? Updated – 1/8/23

A full list of the buildings which may contain RAAC was shared along with the Daily Brief on Tuesday 25 July. We want to stress this list has been compiled, predominantly, based on when the buildings – or parts of buildings – were built. Their age and construction style means it is possible RAAC was used, but it is not definite. We will only know for sure once they are surveyed. **On Thursday 27 July an updated list was issued with the Daily Brief. We now have 54 buildings/areas requiring further surveys.**

- What happens next?

NHS Scotland Assure (part of NHS National Services Scotland) are co-ordinating surveys of the relevant buildings. When we have more details about the timeline for these surveys, we will share them.

- Is this a Grampian only issue? Updated - 1/8/23

No. A total of 254 buildings across NHS Scotland will be surveyed to see if RAAC is present. **With the addition of another building locally, this total is now 255.**

- Are there plans to close any of the buildings on the list?

Not at present. Once the detailed surveys have been carried out with a comprehensive risk assessment and recommendations, we will be in a better position to make any decisions on any future actions and requirements.

- What should I do if I am based in one of the buildings on the list?

Please continue to go about your work duties as usual, reporting any estates or maintenance issues as you normally would.

- Does RAAC pose a health risk?

No, the concerns about RAAC are solely linked to its durability. There is no evidence to suggest it poses a health risk.

- Do we need to vacate our building/area during the specialist survey? **New – 1/8/23 Updated 3/8/23**

No. We have been given some more information about the survey process and the initial checks will require small hatches cut into the ceiling, to allow the surveyors to carry out visual inspections. We expect any disruption will be minimal. **It may be the case that, before the specialist surveys begin, our local teams will carry out preliminary checks and an asbestos inspection, if required. Areas will be informed directly what work is required.**

- What form will the surveys take? **New – 1/8/23 Updated 3/8/23**

As noted above, the initial survey shouldn't present you with any major issues. If the surveyors confirm RAAC is **not** present, then there will be no further action for you. If they find RAAC is present, they will make a second visit. These may be more disruptive, but we do not expect they will require you to vacate buildings. The second survey will establish whether the RAAC is in good condition, and therefore no action required, if it requires regular inspections but can be left in place, or if significant work is required. We hope the number of buildings/areas in the last category will be minimal, or even zero, but until the surveys start, we cannot be certain.

The areas to be surveyed have been prioritised from 1-4. 1 represents overnight inpatient accommodation, 2 represents areas where patients are seen, but do not stay overnight, 3 represents staff-only areas, and 4 represents ancillary buildings, such as substations or boilerhouses.

- What contingency plans do we need to make? **New – 1/8/23**

All teams/services should have Business Continuity Plans, which cover what you would do in the event of significant disruption. We would encourage everyone – but especially teams based in the areas to be inspected – to review their Business Continuity Plans. You should think about what your options are **if** significant work is required, and you have to vacate your area. We must stress, we hope this will **not** be the case for most of

you, but it is better to be prepared. The Civil Contingencies team are offering their support with this process: gram.cct@nhs.scot

- We know RAAC is present in the Link Building/Labs at Foresterhill. Will that area have to be resurveyed in this process? **New – 1/8/23**

No. Specialist teams have already checked this area and recommended a plan of action. While other inspections may take place, this area does not require a check in this wider survey.

- Some primary care premises are listed for survey; what about buildings not directly owned or leased by NHS Grampian? **New – 1/8/23**

The GP premises listed for inspection at present are only those owned or leased by NHS Grampian. We intend to do a desktop survey of the other GP premises – using age and construction type – and will feed the results back to the GP sub-committee. Any further action will be a matter for those building owners. We are happy to answer any further questions from other primary care contractors.

- What are the likely financial implications? **New – 1/8/23**

At this stage, we do not know and will not know until the surveys are complete. This is a national survey programme; we await further guidance nationally.

- Do we know when the survey programme will commence? **New – 1/8/23**

No. As soon as we get more information, we will share this with you.

- We have been asked to clarify some specific locations of areas to be surveyed, as follows: **New – 3/8/23**

Fraserburgh Hospital, area N310c – this is the area where maternity and physio are based. It is **not** the Saltoun Surgery.

Dr Gray's Hospital – Ward 7, what was the former GAU and Physio departments. This is in a two storey building with a flat roof.

Argyll House/Aberdeen Dental School – we have requested surveys of the area which was part of the original Children's Hospital – the top floor will be the area under inspection

- What will the focus area of the surveys be? **New – 3/8/23**

The surveys will focus on the roof of any building, as this was the part of a building where RAAC was most used. If RAAC is not found in the roof, it is highly unlikely it is present anywhere else in the building and there will be no further action taken.

- When did this problem first come to light? [New – 3/8/23](#)

The first issues reported with RAAC were in a school in England in 2018.

- The building/area I work in is not on the list for RAAC surveys; do I need to do anything further? [New – 3/8/23](#)

As regards RAAC, no you do not. However, we would encourage everyone to monitor the buildings they are working in and [report any issues via the Estates Helpdesk](#), without delay. Early resolution of any building problems will keep you and your working environment as safe as possible.