

# Airtech Encourages Households to Protect their Lungs by Taking Action During UK Radon Awareness Week

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Airtech (<https://www.airtechsolutions.co.uk/>), the condensation, mould and radon specialists, is supporting UK Radon Awareness Week (2-8 November 2020) which is run by the UK Radon Association, by encouraging households to protect their lungs by being Radon Aware and taking action. This year radon awareness is more important than ever due the pandemic, firstly because households are spending longer periods of time at home and so have extended periods of exposure to radon in radon-affected properties. Secondly good lung health is paramount in helping protect against COVID-19. With radon the second leading cause of lung cancer in the UK after smoking it poses a significant risk to lung health with an estimated 1100 deaths each year estimated to be caused by exposure to the gas.

A naturally occurring colourless, odourless radioactive gas, radon disperses harmlessly into the air outdoors. However, once it finds its way indoors, through gaps and cracks in floors and walls, it may build up to potentially harmful levels. Every building has radon and in most areas the levels are low, however, some buildings in "Radon Affected Areas" have higher levels. Buildings in these areas need to be tested for radon. If a property has a basement it is considered to be a 'higher risk' of containing elevated radon levels wherever in the country it is located. The reason for this is a basement will have several surface areas in contact with the soil through which the radon gas can permeate, in contrast to the single footprint surface area that a property without a basement has. High levels of radon in the home can be reduced with simple measures.

"We are pleased to support Radon Awareness Week, especially since this year it has never been more important to protect the health of our lungs. With radon the second leading cause of lung cancer in the UK after smoking, it is vital we make more people aware of the risks of this naturally occurring colourless, odourless radioactive gas", explains James Kane at Airtech. "We hope by helping raise awareness of the risk of radon that more households and social housing landlords will take action to help protect lung health. At Airtech we can help households and landlords by providing testing to ensure radon levels are not above 200Bq/m<sup>3</sup> which is the radon level that the PHE advises to take action."

Households and social housing providers are being encouraged by Airtech to act by having their properties tested to ensure they are not above the 200Bq/m<sup>3</sup> action level set by the UK Government. The radon testing is undertaken by using detectors which are small unobtrusive pods placed in a property to detect radon. At Airtech the company offers social housing providers peace of mind that it can effectively test housing stock for radon through an efficiently organised programme to ensure all required properties are tested within necessary time scales. To ensure accurate testing Airtech leaves test pods in properties for a three-month period to help ensure correct radon readings are collected.

If a home has a radon level above 200Bq/m<sup>3</sup>, it is recommended by PHE to take action to reduce the level. If remediation is needed Airtech will recommend an appropriate solution to fit the levels of radon present, this could be installing positive input ventilation (PIV), which forces contaminated air out of a home by introducing fresh air into the property. Alternatively, in properties with very high levels of radon they may need to have an active radon sump, fitted with a fan. Sumps work effectively under solid floors, and under suspended floors if the ground is covered with concrete or a membrane.

For social housing providers the risks of radon are an important issue. The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 makes landlords more accountable for conditions in their homes. Properties are assessed on a robust criterion, and they will be deemed unfit for habitation if there are serious defects in one or more of the core areas listed in the Act. Included within this list is ventilation and the Hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System which specifically includes radon gas. It is therefore vital for landlords to ensure that properties do not breach the Homes Act. If a home does not meet the standard and the property owner does not carry out the necessary repairs or maintenance, residents have the right to take them to court where a judge can issue an injunction forcing the work to be carried out.

Airtech offers social housing providers a complete solution to help protect residents from the risks caused by radon gas in the home. Airtech has 30 years of experience in radon prevention and can offer a full range of products and services, from radon testing to full remediation of housing stock.

The amount of radon gas released varies greatly depending on where you live and is more likely to be found in areas where the geology features concentrations of granite and limestone. Airtech has been a key player in radon preventative measures for many years in Devon, Cornwall, the North Wales, the North East, the North West and Scotland, all in areas where Radon levels are naturally very high and has worked to help reduce the radon levels in properties around the UK. Social housing providers can be assured that Airtech can offer a complete solution to radon prevention.

This year the UK Radon Association is focusing it's the campaign on online learning and bringing Radon information to people's fingertips by running a selection of free webinars (<http://www.radonassociation.co.uk/blog/>).

For more information and to find out how Airtech can help finding the right ventilation solution call 01823 690 292 email [info@airtechsolutions.co.uk](mailto:info@airtechsolutions.co.uk) or visit [www.airtechsolutions.co.uk](http://www.airtechsolutions.co.uk).

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#### Notes for Editors

Airtech are not just another ventilation company, they are the leading mould and condensation control company in the UK. With over 30 years in the industry, Airtech boasts an enviable reputation for knowledge and experience of condensation, damp and mould control amongst Local Authorities and Housing Associations. Airtech uses diagnostics, analysis and treatment techniques to control condensation and mould through a combination of humidity control and ventilation. The company prides itself on the development and provision of innovative ventilation solutions that will reduce energy consumption and in doing so impact the nation's carbon footprint.

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#### Five Facts about Radon

1. Radioactive gas: A naturally occurring colourless, odourless radioactive gas, radon disperses harmlessly into the air outdoors. However, once it finds its way indoors, through gaps and cracks in floors and walls, it may build up to potentially harmful levels.
2. Lung cancer: Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the UK after smoking with over 1100 deaths each year estimated to be caused by exposure to the gas.
3. Radon Levels: If a home has a radon level above 200Bq/m<sup>3</sup>, it is recommended by Public Health England to take action to reduce the level.
4. Location: The amount of radon gas released varies greatly depending on where you live and is more likely to be found in areas where the geology features concentrations of granite and limestone.
5. Basements: If a property has a basement it is considered to be 'higher risk' of containing elevated levels of radon wherever in the country it is located. The reason for this is that a basement will have a few surface areas in contact with the soil through which the gas can permeate, in contrast to the single footprint surface area that a property without a basement has.

#### Taking Action

Airtech is encouraging households to carry out a radon test to protect their health and their family. Radon detectors can be used to test for radon which are small unobtrusive pods placed in a property. To ensure accurate testing test pods should be left in properties for a three-month period to help ensure correct radon readings are collected. If remediation is needed there are a number of solutions to fit the levels of radon present, this could be installing positive input ventilation (PIV), which forces contaminated air out of a home by introducing fresh air into the property. Alternatively, in properties with very high levels of radon they may require an active radon sump, fitted with a fan.