# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **TITLE**  | **Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) across NHS Wales** |
| **DATE**  | **13 September 2023** |
| **BY** | **Eluned Morgan, Minister for Health and Social Services** |

Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) planks were used in the UK construction industry generally between the 1960s and 1980s. They were used to form products such as floor planks, roof planks and wall panels. In May 2019, an alert from the independent UK body the Standing Committee on Structural Safety highlighted significant concerns around the structural safety of properties with these components.

Since the 2019 alert was issued, my officials and advisers at NHS Wales Shared Services Partnership (NWSSP) - which has the responsibility to maximise resources through commissioning and procuring work for the NHS on a once-for-Wales basis - have been engaging with NHS Wales about the management of and the risks associated with RAAC.

Several Specialist Estate Services Notifications have been issued as part of this work, between November 2019 and January 2022, tasking NHS organisations with undertaking investigations into the presence (or not) of RAAC. This covered all NHS licenced premises.

In 2022, NWSSP appointed a specialist structural engineer on behalf of the Welsh Government to review the reports received by organisations and those locations where RAAC had been identified. The specialist reviews were completed in November 2022, with all site survey reports produced as part of this commission being shared with the relevant organisations.

Health boards and NHS trusts were further requested in February 2023 to complete a further iteration of investigation to take into account the findings of the specialist engineers reports. These enhanced assurance reports are currently ongoing. Those which have been completed are being collected and reviewed.

Based on the findings to date, RAAC has been identified as being present in two acute hospital sites across Wales – Withybush Hospital, in Haverfordwest and Nevill Hall Hospital, in Abergavenny.

The two health boards where RAAC has been located are currently undertaking further investigations and are taking necessary mitigation measures to ensure the safety of patients, staff and visitors.

At Withybush Hospital, where six ward areas are currently closed for mitigation works, 32 patients have been moved to beds commissioned in South Pembrokeshire Hospital. These are non-acute beds and accessed by patients who no longer have acute healthcare needs.

The wards subject to works at Withybush Hospital are planned to be recommissioned on a phased basis with an aim to complete works by the end of March 2024.

The Welsh Government has made £12.8m available to support the remediation work at Withybush Hospital.

At Nevill Hall Hospital no patients have been impacted by the small number of non-clinical areas which have been closed on site.

Smaller areas of RAAC have also been found in a remote plant room at Bronglais Hospital, in Aberystwyth, where access is restricted to trained staff only and not open to the public and a canteen at Bryn y Neuadd hospital, Llanfairfechan, which was decommissioned in January 2022.

The outputs from the more detailed survey works will be known later in the autumn, which will inform the next steps to be taken around any further remediation works and management of sites. I do not anticipate that the survey work undertaken to date will be changed, subject to the Institute of Structural Engineers’ guidance remaining the same.

I have asked my Officials to commission the NHS to identify the presence of RAAC across the NHS Estates Portfolio which includes any building from which NHS care is delivered.