The Formentera Council's Office of Environment unveiled details of a campaign encouraging individuals and households around the island to remove asbestos fibre cement in their homes. “Our hope,” said environment secretary Daisee Aguilera, “is that islanders make the decision to rid their homes of materials containing asbestos, and that they do it safely. It is not only harmful to human health, but to the environment as well.”

Interested parties can sign up today through January 15 on the Virtual Citizen's Information Office website (conselldeformentera.cat) or in person at the environment office on carrer Mallorca in Sant Ferran.

The Council is subsidising removal of related materials, transport to specialised plants on the Spanish mainland and the special bags used in the process. Initial removal costs, which vary based on the kind and size of material involved, must be covered by home-owners, though bills will reflect a reduction in the final payment due.

Factoring in subsidies on payments, the cost per 100 kilograms of materials removed is as follows: €40 for asbestos plaques; €80 for small pieces; and €150 for reservoirs.

Secretary Aguilera pointed out that Spain's ban on the sale and production of fibre-cement containing asbestos dates back to 2002. Materials containing asbestos are considered extremely dangerous due to component chemicals that pose serious health risks.

The removal effort will be headed up by Ca Na Negreta. Specialist José Antonio Pérez announced work would begin January 15. Prior to rollout, agents of Formentera's Office of Environment will run a cost study based on surveys of potential participants. The asbestos-removal push was unanimously approved by Formentera's plenary assembly in August.