



GROUP REPORT

Round 84

ASBESTOS IN MATERIALS SCHEME (AIMS)

March 2025



This report is available to view on our website: <https://www.hsl.gov.uk/proficiency-testing-schemes/group-reports>

ROUND 84 SAMPLE DETAILS

381 labs were assigned to Round 84 with 372 labs submitting complete results. All samples were prepared for circulation following our normal internal screening process and were scanned using stereozoom microscopy to assess homogeneity and suitability. Approximately 10% of all samples prepared were validated by 17 independent laboratories using either PLM or SEM analytical techniques.

The round consisted of four manufactured or commercial samples of materials that may contain asbestos and would typically be submitted for analysis at an asbestos testing laboratory:

Sample 1 was a manufactured mixed debris sample containing 0.2% crocidolite asbestos and included wood flour and paper fibres.

Sample 2 was a manufactured, painted cement board sample containing 0.2% amosite asbestos within the black paint layer.

Sample 3 was a commercial asbestos cement soffit sample containing chrysotile asbestos.

Sample 4 was a manufactured non-asbestos black grout sample containing wood flour and viscose fibres.

The majority of errors in Round 84 occurred on Sample 2 where a number of labs failed to identify the amosite present. The amosite in this sample was finely spread throughout the black paint layer. Please note it's best practice that any layered samples are analysed layer by layer.

With sample 2 an initial look at the stereozoom stage of analysis may have identified the outline of asbestos fibres within the paint or visible at the sample edges. A careful scraping of the paint layer with tweezers should also have exposed the amosite fibres present. Once fibres from the paint layer had been extracted and identified then the remaining layers of the sample could be analysed.

Sample	Validation Number	Product Type	Target Component	Asbestos Present (%)	Other Added Fibres Present
1	357	Mixed Debris (Manufactured)	Crocidolite	0.2%	Wood flour and paper
2	358	Board (Manufactured)	Amosite	0.2% (within black paint layer)	None
3	359	Cement (Commercial)	Chrysotile	Unknown	None
4	360	Grout (Manufactured)	No Asbestos	N/A	Wood flour and viscose





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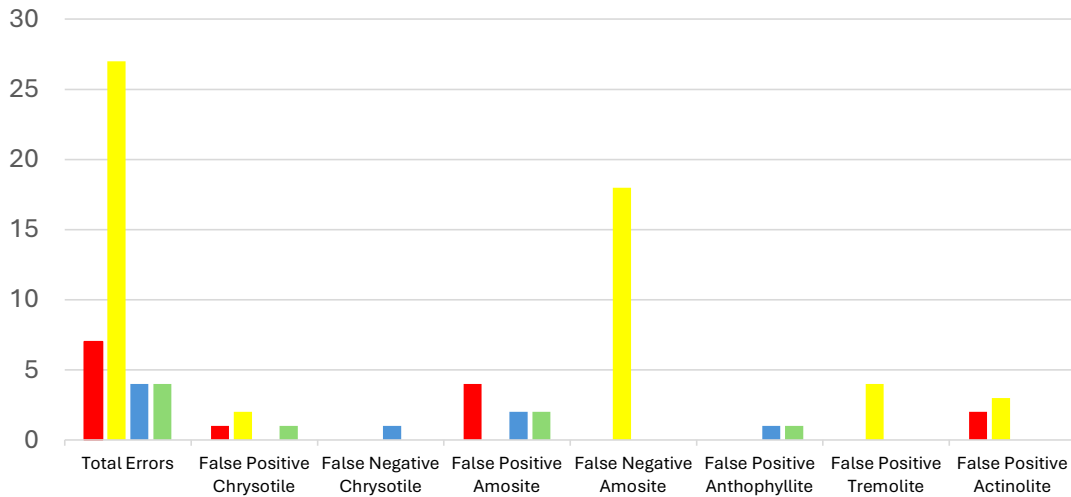


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1. Type Of Errors Obtained

Chart 1 - AIMS Round 84 Errors

■ Sample 1 ■ Sample 2 ■ Sample 3 ■ Sample 4



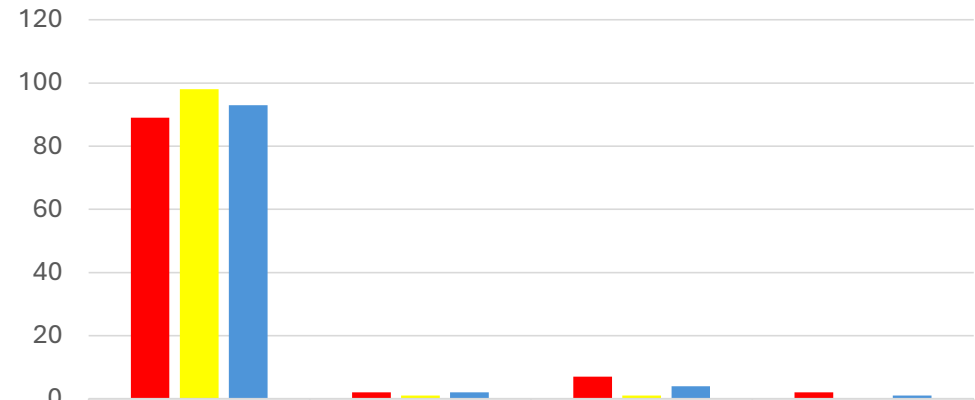
False Negative = Component has been missed. False Positive = Component has been incorrectly identified as present.

2. Round Scores

Chart 2 illustrates the distribution of scores for all participating laboratories. 347 (93%) laboratories obtained a score of zero in this round, indicating that these laboratories had not made any errors. The distribution of scores obtained by UK (United Kingdom) and Non-UK laboratories is also compared; 151 (98%) UK laboratories and 196 (89%) Non-UK laboratories obtained a score of zero for the round.

Chart 2 - Distribution & Comparison of Errors AIMS Round 84

■ Non UK % ■ UK % ■ Total %



	0 (No Errors)	7 (1 Minor Error)	8 - 32	> 32
Non UK %	89	2	7	2
UK %	98	1	1	0
Total %	93	2	4	1





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Chart 3 shows the percentage distribution of cumulative three round scores for all UK and Non-UK laboratories. 13 laboratories (3%) in total had not yet completed 3 rounds and therefore did not accumulate a score. Following this round :

- 288 laboratories (76%) obtained a good cumulative score (0 – 7 penalty points cumulatively).
- 61 laboratories (16%) obtained an acceptable cumulative score (8 – 32 penalty points cumulatively)
- 19 laboratories (5%) obtained an unsatisfactory cumulative score (33 or more penalty points cumulatively)

Chart 3 - Distribution & Comparison of Cumulative Scores Following AIMS Round 84

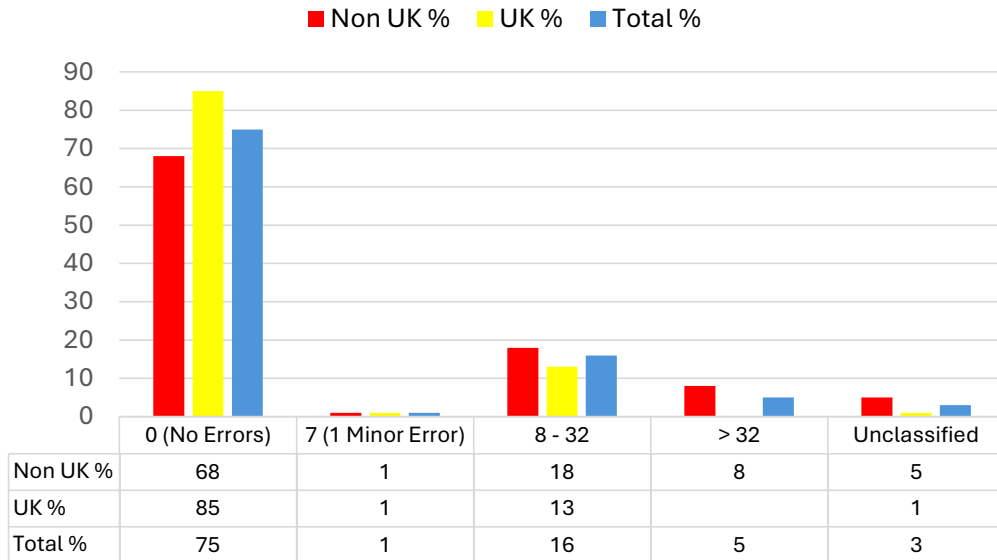
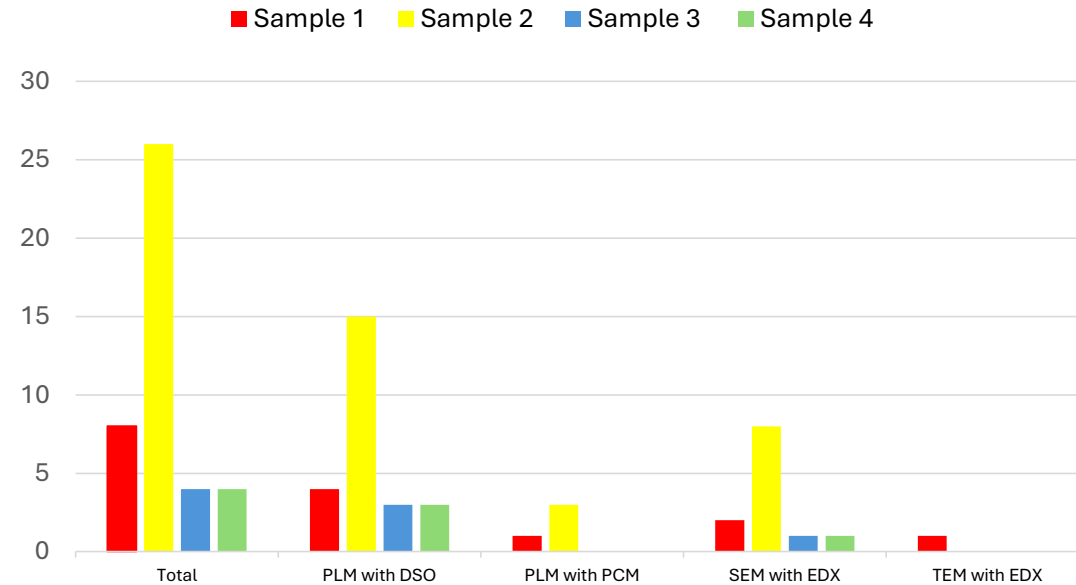


Chart 4 shows the number of errors made on each sample for all UK and Non-UK laboratories. PLM - polarised light microscopy. DSO - dispersion staining objective. PCM - phase contrast microscopy, SEM - scanning electron microscopy. EDX - energy dispersive X-ray. TEM - transmission electron microscopy. XRD - X-Ray diffraction.

Chart 4 - AIMS Round 84 Errors by Method

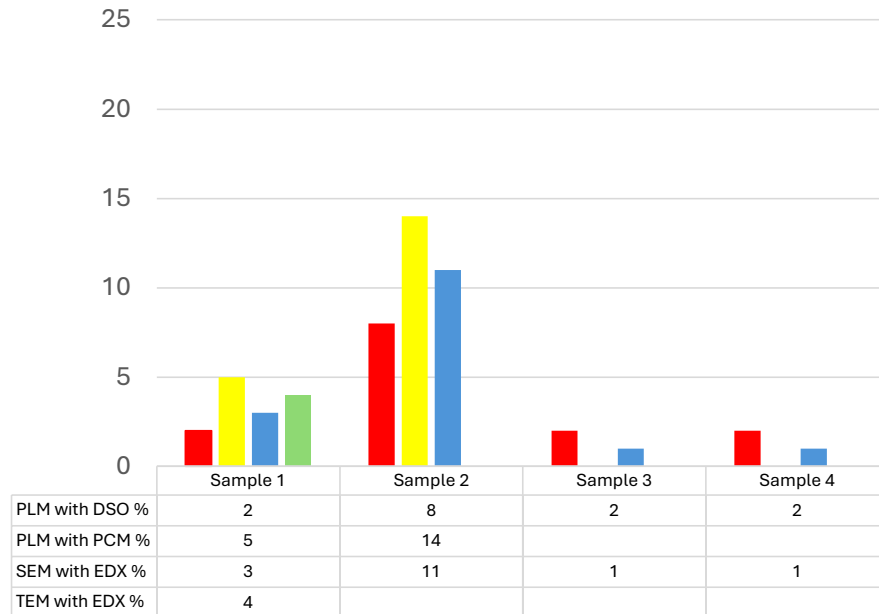




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Chart 5 shows the percentage of sample errors by method. Of the 372 participating labs in R84 the method used in terms of the number of labs was as follows : FTIR, 3 labs; PLM with DSO, 197 labs; PLM with PCM, 22 labs; SEM with EDX, 73 labs; TEM with EDX, 26 labs; PLM with DSO & TEM with EDX 26 labs; PLM with PCM & SEM with EDX, 11 labs; PLM with PCM & TEM with EDX, 11 labs, XRD; 1 labs and Other, 2 labs.

Chart 5- Percentage of Errors by Sample Round 84



■ PLM with DSO % ■ PLM with PCM % ■ SEM with EDX % ■ TEM with EDX %

3. For Your Information - AIMS NEWS !!

Following R83 there were no sample investigations. If you require a sample to be investigated by HSE please contact the team within 10 working days of the report being issued. Further details regarding sample investigations can be found in our Information Book for Participants, available in the Useful Links Section of our website page: [HSE Proficiency Testing Schemes](https://www.hsl.gov.uk/proficiency-testing-schemes)

Scheme subscriptions for 2025/ 26 are available to purchase on the PT Online System – if you haven’t subscribed yet, please ensure you do so at your earliest convenience. A discounted price will be available for payments made by Worldpay (credit/ debit card). If you have any questions, please contact the PT Team by email – proficiency.testing@hse.gov.uk

You can check your recent orders/ subscriptions by logging on to the PT Online System and clicking on ‘Order History’.

Please note, samples will not be despatched until full payment has been received, and deadlines will not be extended for a delay in payment.

AIMS R85 will be despatched by 14th April 2025 - please ensure we have the correct delivery information for your laboratory. You can check your contact information by logging on to the PT Online System and clicking on ‘Laboratory Details’. If you need to make any changes, please email the PT Team.

We have a wide range of quality control samples available to purchase, including:

- additional rounds (PT038A) to help gain accreditation sooner
- replacement rounds (PT038R) to replace the latest round of AIMS
- past AIMS samples (PT040) for internal QC/ training
- water absorption samples (PT046)
- asbestos aggregate samples (PT047/8)

Further information is available on our website: [PT Quality Control Samples](https://www.hsl.gov.uk/proficiency-testing-schemes)

For enquiries, please contact the PT Team by email, quoting your HSE PT Lab Number.



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