

Damp and Mould Policy



Reference:	HS_POL_ASM_DAM_2.0	Author:	Assistant Director of Property Services
Scope:	Asset Management and Housing Services	Approved by:	Executive Team
Legislation:	The Defective Premises Act 1972 The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 Occupiers Liability Act Housing Act 1988 Housing Act 1985 Equality Act 2010 Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act Housing and Urban Development Act 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Protection from Eviction Act 1977 Human Rights Act 1988 Data Protection Act 2018 Care Act 2014 Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 Building Safety Act 2022	Date of approval:	June 2024
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Regulatory/ Governance:	Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards: Safety & Quality Home Standard Decent Homes Standard		
Related Policies:	Access Policy Repairs and Maintenance Policy Tenancy Policy Empty Homes Policy Safeguarding Policy Vulnerable Customers Policy Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Asset Management Strategy 2021/26 Allocation (Transfer) Policy Mutual Exchange Policy Alterations Policy Complaints and Compliments Policy Compensation Policy		

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Policy is aligned to our Corporate Strategy of creating Safe, Satisfied, and Sustainable homes for residents. Our strategy sets out clearly our determination to make sure residents are as safe as possible.
- 1.2 Housing Solutions has an Opposed Risk Appetite to risks associated with keeping residents safe and compliance with health and safety legislation, this policy sets out our approach to damp and mould aligned to this Risk Appetite.

2. Policy statement

- 2.1 Housing Solutions is committed to tackling damp and mould within our properties. We will:-
 - Comply with all relevant legislation and standards imposed by the Government and Regulator of Social Housing and with best practice relating to the provision of this service.
 - Ensure residents are treated in a fair and consistent way at all times.
 - Be proactive, working in partnership with residents ensuring that homes are kept safe, and a healthy environment is maintained.
 - Ensure residents have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation to fulfil the aims of our Corporate Strategy.
 - Complete regular investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp including managing and controlling condensation.
 - Proactively tackle/manage the causes of damp and mould through robust procedures, analysis and service delivery.
 - Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.
 - Ensure staff, DLO and contractors are knowledgeable in this service area including having regard to safeguarding.
 - Maximise the use of financial resources including access to external funding and grants.
 - Continue to review new and innovative technologies to help prevent and manage damp and mould.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy details how Housing Solutions will manage the identification and treatment of damp and mould within our properties and communal areas.
- 3.2 It is intended to cover services provided to all homes owned by Housing Solutions excluding freeholders and Shared Owners but inclusive of rented accommodation and leaseholder, including stock managed for third parties unless otherwise stated in the relevant management agreement.
- 3.3 This policy does not cover complaints or legal claims about disrepair as a consequence of damp and mould which are dealt with separately within the Disrepair Policy.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 A detailed table of roles and responsibilities can be found in Appendix 1

4.2 A summary of roles and responsibilities can be found in the table below:

<u>Role/Team</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
Board	Strategic overview of all Housing Solutions policies. Responsible for agreeing the Risk Appetite for the organisation
Chief Executive and Executive Team	Accurately report risk to the Board and ensuring the policy is complied with.
Director of Property and Development	Overall responsibility for ensuring the policy is fully implemented and keeping the Executive Team informed of progress
Assistant Director of Property Services	Delivery of the policy, ensuring colleague training and reviewing the policy.
Head of Repairs	To be accountable to the Assistant Director of Property Services for the effective control of the day to day management of damp and mould.
Repairs Surveyors	Carry out inspections of reported damp and mould.
Works Planners	Effectively manage DLO diary to ensure that works are delivered in line with this policy.
Asset Case Management Administrator	Co-ordinate the damp and mould inspection and remediation service.
Contact Centre Team	To ensure that all reports of damp and mould reported via phone, customer service email and web chat are logged.
DLO and Contractors	To undertake works raised to effectively address damp and mould within the property in accordance with the works order raised. To proactively report all cases of damp and mould, where identified or suspected, in the home.
Deep Clean Operatives	To undertake works raised to effectively address damp and mould within the property in accordance with the works order raised.
Residents	Responsible for complying with the terms of the tenancy agreement for residents and homeowners, including reporting of all instances of damp and mould within the property as well as providing access in line with both

	<p>the Tenancy Agreement and Access Policy for inspection and repair.</p> <p>Co-operating with steps taken to collate data about property usage or characteristics including any devices installed to record or monitor humidity such as sensors. The tenancy agreement recommends that the customer arranges adequate household contents insurance for the home that they occupy.</p>
Shared Owners and Leaseholders	<p>Responsible for managing the internal fabric of the building. Ensuring that leaks are repaired quickly and that the property remains well ventilated.</p> <p>Shared Owners and Leaseholders remain responsible for removing damp and mould caused by internal issues to the property.</p> <p>Repairs to the external fabric of the building will be carried out by Housing Solutions and recharged through Service Charges. Housing Solutions may carry out internal repairs to be recharged through our Rechargeable Repairs Policy</p>

5. Definitions

- 5.1 Damp – moisture diffused through the air or a solid substance or condensed on a surface, typically with detrimental health and other effects including damage to property and belongings. There are several causes such as: ingress of water, internal leaks, structural issues and, most commonly, condensation.
- 5.2 Condensation – is the process whereby water vapour becomes liquid. It is the reverse of evaporation. It happens in two ways; from either the air being cooled to its dew point or becoming so saturated with water vapour that it cannot hold any more water and water is released onto a surface.
- 5.3 Mould – is a type of fungi which can grow in many different areas where the right conditions are met, namely moisture within the home, together with temperature and oxygen. It is often recognised in shades of black or brown but can occur in other colours. Mould can be harmful to the health of occupants, particularly children and those with existing vulnerabilities.
- 5.4 Vulnerable residents: our approach to vulnerability is set out in detail in our Vulnerable Residents Policy, however, in general a vulnerable person is either a minor or someone who, for physical or mental health reasons is unable to look after themselves or their finances. Further defined as: those who may be in need of community care or support services or anyone who experiences difficulties with everyday living and/or needs additional support to meet their obligations under their tenancy/licence/lease.
- 5.5 DLO: Direct Labour Organisation directly employed operatives of Housing

Solutions to deliver repairs and maintenance to properties.

- 5.6 Contractors: Housing Solutions will appoint approved contractors to support our DLO and the organisation in delivering damp and mould works.
- 5.7 HHSRS: Housing Health and Safety Rating System guidance for landlords.

6. Legislation

- 6.1 Housing Solutions will ensure that we remain fully compliant with the legislation and guidance set out on Page 1 of this policy. We will also ensure that we remain up-to-date with any changes in legislation, guidance and best practice and where necessary review this policy earlier than the planned period of 3 years.
- 6.2 Housing Solutions is required to comply with its obligations under Section 11 Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 to ensure homes are maintained, repaired and renewed where required at the commencement and throughout the duration of a tenancy with Housing Solutions.
- 6.3 Housing Solutions is required to comply with its obligations under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, to ensure homes are fit for habitation at the commencement and for the duration of a tenancy with Housing Solutions.

7. Proactive approach to dealing with damp and mould

- 7.1 Stock Condition Surveys are carried out on a rolling programme to ensure that every property within Housing Solutions' stock is inspected at least once every 3 years. Findings from the survey will identify existing unreported cases as well as identify property types that may be at greater risk of damp and mould due to the nature of their construction, their design or other features within the building.
- 7.2 Tenancy audits are carried out by Housing Officers, covering 25% of our stock annually, with part of the audit asking residents whether they have any damp and mould issues within the property.
- 7.3 Damp and mould will be identified and reported by all visiting staff members to communal areas, including by Housing Officers as part of regular estate inspections, our Estates team through regular visits to carry out caretaking alongside a whole company approach on GTKY (Getting to Know You).
- 7.4 We will work with emerging technology to identify and record damp and mould such as AICO property sensors which monitor temperature and humidity, this will allow a proactive approach within our planned maintenance programme.
- 7.5 We will include, as part of our budget setting process, sufficient funds to deal both proactively and reactively with damp and mould across our stock, including, where available, accessing grants to maximise this.
- 7.6 Mutual exchanges require pre-inspection as part of the approval process to ensure that there are no outstanding issues relevant to the requirements of the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. This inspection will include issues relating to damp and mould requiring to be rectified before the mutual exchange can proceed. The inspection will also include any alterations or improvements (whether or not our permission has been given), by the current tenant to ensure they will not cause damp or mould in the future.

- 7.7 Pre-void Inspections should identify any visible signs of damp or mould in the property. Determination should be made as to the cause and what should be done at the point of the void to alleviate the recurrence when relet.
- 7.8 Pre-transfer inspections should also identify any signs of damp and mould with consideration given to the transfer not taking place until the issues are resolved.
- 7.9 Re-lets are informed by the pre-void inspection and previous repair history at the property. From that, consideration should be given within the void/relet works, to undertake measures to alleviate recurrence of damp to include but not exclusively the installation of extractor fans.
- 7.10 Requests for alterations that affect the structure, exterior and any installations within the property will be pre-inspected by a Surveyor. Part of that inspection will consider the impact that the improvement may have with regard to the occurrence of damp and mould. Where an improvement is likely to cause damp and mould in the future then permission should be denied.
- 7.11 Organisation-wide training will be carried out to ensure all staff can recognise cases of damp and mould in our homes, including the embedding and refreshing of this policy. Through this process of training, staff will be kept up to date with any new and emerging technology. Further in depth training will be carried out with repairs surveyors who predominantly assess Damp and Mould.

8. Reactive approach to deal with damp and mould

- 8.1 Every report of damp and mould received from either a resident or colleague of Housing Solutions, should be logged in accordance with the procedure at Appendix 1. Wherever possible, every referral should include photographs of the areas of damp and mould and a clear and detailed description of the size and extent of the affected area.

Damp and mould cases received through our stock condition surveys will be categorised into one of 3 ways as per the HHSRS guidance for landlords by a stock condition surveyor:

Severe (category 1 band A – C hazard): All severe cases will receive a mould wash-down (or appropriate remedial action) and a visit from a repairs surveyor within 7 working days to determine the work to be completed.

Moderate (category 2 band D – F): All moderate cases will be reviewed by the Asset Analyst (through the photos taken) with a mould wash-down ordered within 7 days if necessary, they will also receive a visit from a repairs surveyor within 14 working days to determine the work to be completed.

Slight (category 2 band G-J): All slight cases will be reviewed by the Asset Analyst (through the photos taken) with a mould wash-down ordered within 7 working days if necessary They will also receive a visit from a repairs surveyor within 21 working days to determine the work to be completed.

Where necessary, the surveyor will instruct a specialist contractor to undertake a

fungal wash which should be completed within 7 working days.

All works following the above visits will be completed within 21 days, with the exception of penetrating damp arising from a building defect. In these cases the immediate hazard will be removed but the works may be carried out as part of a planned programme.

Where a damp and mould case is reported through any other channel, such as online, through staff visits or the call centre a visit from a repairs surveyor will be made within 14 days to determine the work to be completed. Through the triage process, if it is determined that a mould wash-down is required, this will be completed within 7 days.

All inspections will be arranged to ensure at a time mutually convenient to the resident, timescales above are dependent on access being obtained.

- 8.2 At the inspection, the repairs surveyor will focus on identifying the cause of the damp and mould as part of a long-term resolution.
- 8.3 If the damp has been caused by way of an ingress of water or leak, then works will be identified to address the leak and/or ingress through the usual channels of repair by the DLO or a contractor as required.
- 8.4 If the damp has been caused through condensation, the surveyor will consider all possible operative factors and identify, where possible, remedial measures to resolve the issue as well as long term improvements to the property such as the installation of extraction fans. The surveyor will also discuss with the resident why condensation occurs and the support that can be offered to alleviate the issue.
- 8.5 Where installation or replacement of extractor fans are required, we will install (where possible) or replace with the latest technology that includes data loggers for reporting purposes.
- 8.6 Where works are required to address condensation, these will be raised with the DLO or contractor, where necessary.
- 8.7 Following the inspection by the repairs surveyor the resident will be advised of the outcome of the inspection; the works which have been authorised and their timescale and the collaboration required from the resident to help ensure damp and mould does not return, as per the procedure at Appendix 1.
- 8.8 The Asset Case Management Administrator will follow up with a phone call a minimum of 6 weeks of the completion of approved works to determine whether the repairs and agreed approach have fully resolved the damp and mould issue, and where deemed necessary a post-inspection will take place by a repairs surveyor. Please see appendix 1 for further details.

9. Access

- 9.1 To support the objectives and implementation of this policy, residents will be required to give Housing Solutions access as statutorily required for Assured and Assured Shorthold Tenancies under Section 16 Housing Act 1988 and for all tenancies under Section 9A(7) and (8) Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018. The requirement to give us access for inspection and necessary remedial works is also provided contractually within both our Tenancy Agreements, licenses and Leases.

- 9.2 Failure to give access will be dealt with in line with the Access Policy where direct reference (6.2.2) is made to gain access in respect of reports of damp and mould.

10. Resident Service Commitment

10.1 We will:

- Offer a high quality and efficient service;
- Keep you informed and involved, and make it easy for you to have your say;
- Provide value for money housing and services;
- Treat you with empathy and respect and offer a courteous and helpful service;
- Ensure our services are easily accessible and understandable;
- Communicate with you in the most appropriate way to meet your needs;
- Make every effort to give you advance warning and tell you the reason if we are unable to keep an appointment

10.2 When we visit your home we will:

- Always show our identification
- Book an appointment at a reasonable time of the day unless we have agreed a specific appointment with you
- Give you the opportunity to request to see another member of staff if you prefer
- Keep you informed if further works are required and book these with you from site.

10.3 When we get things wrong we will:

- Aim to put the situation right as soon as possible;
- Keep you informed at all times;
- Apologise;
- Through our Complaints Policy aim to learn from our mistakes, to improve the services we provide.

11. Vulnerable residents

11.1 Housing Solutions will provide a fair and equitable service to all residents in accordance with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. Our Vulnerable Customer Policy does however define those who may require additional support in accessing our services. We will make all reasonable adjustments for these individuals in the delivery of our service and endeavor to accommodate their specific needs and those of their support network throughout the process of completing any repairs.

11.2 Prior to an inspection, the surveyor or DLO will receive all relevant information in order to review any vulnerabilities held on the tenancy/property file automatically to their handheld device.

10.3 We will make a safeguarding referral in accordance with our Safeguarding Policy where we identify a child or adult at risk in dealing with damp and mould issue.

10.4 Housing Solutions recognises that damp and mould can cause health issues in particular amongst vulnerable residents and is therefore committed to ensuring that every effort is made to enable vulnerable residents to sustain their occupation of our general needs accommodation.

12. Equality and Diversity

11.1 Housing Solutions recognises the needs of a diverse population and always acts within the scope of its own Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, and the Equalities Act 2010. Housing Solutions works closely with its partners to ensure it has a clear understanding of its resident community with clear regularly updated service user profiles. Housing Solutions will record, analyse and monitor information on ethnicity, vulnerability and disability in line with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and ensure that this policy is applied equitably and fairly in addressing cases of damp and mould in residents' homes.

13. Confidentiality

13.1 Under the Data Protection Act 2018 and the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UKGDPR) 2021, all personal and sensitive organisational information, however received, is treated as confidential. This includes:

- Anything of a personal nature that is not a matter of public record about a resident, client, applicant, staff or board member
- Sensitive organisational information

13.2 Housing Solutions employees will ensure that they only involve other agencies and share information where there is a legal basis for processing the information and arrangements are followed for secure sharing of data.

14. Review

14.1 This policy will be reviewed on a 3 yearly basis or more frequently in response to changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, good practice or changes in other relevant Housing Solutions' policy.

14.2 The information collected through damp and mould surveys will be investigated and analysed to see if our approach to damp and mould could be done differently or more effectively.

14.3 Housing Solutions reports on a monthly basis to Senior Managers and the Executive Team with regard to serious cases of damp and mould. Performance is reported regularly to Board and made available to residents.

15. Appendices

Appendix 1: Detailed Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix 2: Damp and Mould Procedure

Appendix 1 – Detailed Roles and Responsibilities

<u>Role/Team</u>	<u>Responsibilities</u>
Board	Strategic overview of all Housing Solutions policies.

Chief Executive	<p>Assess & report on risk</p> <p>Report to the Chairman on areas of specific risk</p> <p>Ensure accurate reporting to the Housing Solutions Board</p> <p>Responsibly for ensuring the policy is complied with along with adequate resources are in place</p>
Executive Team	<p>To approve, support and ensure the application of this policy, including provision of appropriate training, knowledge and awareness across the organisation. To oversee operational compliance and manage strategic and operational risks arising from the management of damp and mould as part of the Board Assurance Framework.</p>
Director of Property and Development	<p>To be accountable for ensuring that we fulfil our legal and regulatory responsibilities in respect of asbestos safety. In doing so, they are expected to take appropriate measures to fulfil these responsibilities and keep the Chief Executive / Executive Team informed of any such issues as and when they arise.</p>
Assistant Director of Property Services	<p>To implement this policy, be accountable for colleague training, engage with resident forums and manage continuous improvement</p> <p>To review the policy every 3 years or earlier in line with changes to legislation or best practice.</p>
Surveying Services Manager	<p>To be accountable to the Assistant Director of Property Services for the effective control of the day to day management of damp and mould.</p>
Repairs Surveyors	<p>To undertake all reactive inspections of reported damp and mould, in addition to the strategic and proactive identification of actual or potential damp or mould across the organisation's wider stock. To use a handheld device, updated in real time to ensure observations from all visits are clearly recorded, along with work required.</p> <p>To communicate clearly with both residents and staff the action plan (and its implementation) for individual properties to full resolution of all cases.</p> <p>To receive in depth training for the assessment of damp and mould.</p>
Works Planners	<p>Effectively manage DLO diary to ensure that works are delivered in line with this policy.</p>
Asset Case Management Administrator	<p>To effectively co-ordinate all visits to properties where a report of damp or mould is received, along with proactively arranging preventative visits to properties at risk of damp and mould. Ensuring residents are communicated with effectively and raising post-inspections where required to confirm full resolution and prevent recurrence. Working alongside housing to access residents' homes where access may be difficult.</p>
Contact Centre Team	<p>To ensure that all reports of damp and mould reported via phone, customer service email and web chat</p>

	<p>are logged (together with relevant photographs and detailed descriptions).</p> <p>To ensure residents are effectively signposted to further information on our website.</p>
Housing Officers	<p>To assist the Asset Case Management Administrator in accessing residents' homes in accordance with the Access Policy.</p> <p>To ensure all incidents of damp and mould are reported following visits by Housing officers to residents' homes or communal areas.</p> <p>To ensure residents receive Housing Solutions' damp and booklet as part of the new tenant sign-up process, addressed any queries or concerns as necessary.</p>
Lettings Officers	<p>As part of the pre-transfer inspection (for both mutual exchanges or transfers) ensuring all reports of damp and mould are reported.</p> <p>To ensure residents receive Housing Solutions' damp and booklet as part of the new tenant sign-up process, address any queries or concerns as necessary.</p>
Business Analysts	<p>Responsible for reporting and providing assurance on data relating to new cases, inspections and resolved cases, reported through to Senior Managers, Executive Team and Board.</p>
DLO and Contractors	<p>To undertake works raised to effectively address damp and mould within the property in accordance with the works order raised.</p> <p>To proactively report all cases of damp and mould, where identified or suspected, in the home.</p>
Deep Clean Operatives	<p>To undertake works raised to effectively address damp and mould within the property in accordance with the works order raised.</p>
IT Department	<p>Ensure that systems are in place and developed to support the delivery of this policy.</p>
All other staff (not listed above)	<p>To ensure all cases of damp and mould are reported following visits to residents' homes or in communal areas using the staff portal.</p> <p>To ensure this policy is read and understood and carry out training for damp and mould to ensure you can both provide and educate residents.</p> <p>Work with contractors, planners and operatives to ensure that works are delivered in line with this policy.</p>
Residents	<p>Responsible for complying with the terms of the tenancy agreement for residents and homeowners, including reporting of all instances of damp and mould within the property as well as providing access in line with both the Tenancy Agreement and Access Policy for inspection</p>

	<p>and repair.</p> <p>Co-operating with steps taken to collate data about property usage or characteristics including any devices installed to record or monitor humidity such as sensors. The tenancy agreement recommends that the customer arranges adequate household contents insurance for the home that they occupy.</p>
<p>Shared Owners and Leaseholders</p>	<p>Responsible for managing the internal fabric of the building. Ensuring that leaks are repaired quickly and that the property remains well ventilated.</p> <p>Shared Owners and Leaseholders remain responsible for removing damp and mould caused by internal issues to the property.</p> <p>Repairs to the external fabric of the building will be carried out by Housing Solutions and recharged through Service Charges. Housing Solutions may carry out internal repairs to be recharged through our Rechargeable Repairs Policy</p>

Appendix 2 – Damp and Mould Procedure

