



POLICY: DAMP AND MOULD

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Copies of this Policy may be made available in alternative formats on request.

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POLICY: DAMP AND MOULD

All reference to 'we', 'our' or 'us' in this Policy should be read as meaning Sandbourne Housing Association. All reference to 'resident'(s) should be read as meaning a tenant of Sandbourne Housing Association where we have a repairing responsibility for the home.

1. Introduction and Objectives

This policy aims to assist in the delivery of a damp and condensation service that will be able to:

- Respond sensitively and assess the issue with urgency to identify the severity of the damp and mould and the potential risks to residents.
- Focus on working in partnership with our residents to ensure that they have a safe and healthy living environment.
- Undertake effective investigations to accurately determine the underlying cause of the problem and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions / improvements to eradicate damp including, managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that residents have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Comply with statutory / regulatory requirements and good practice.
- Maximise the available budgets and ensure that they are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp and condensation problems.
- Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.

2. Scope

This policy sets out how we and our residents can jointly control, manage and eradicate damp and mould. This includes:

- All our tenanted homes and internal communal areas
- Identifying the different types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation damp, including internal leaks.
- Identifying our responsibilities for dealing with damp and condensation.
- Identifying the residents' responsibilities for dealing with damp and condensation.
- Providing guidance, advice and assistance throughout the process to all residents living in our homes.
- Identify situations where we will not be able to undertake works to rectify condensation damp.

3. Causes of damp

There are several potential causes of damp covered by this policy:

3.1 Rising Damp

Occurs because of the movement of moisture from the ground rising up through the structure of the building via capillary action.

3.2 Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)

From water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure. The cause can be the result of, for example:

- Water ingress due to defective or poor original design / workmanship of the structure.
- Defective components for example roof coverings, external wall doors and windows.
- Defective or blocked rainwater gutters and pipes.
- Defective or leaking internal waste pipes, hot and cold water and heating systems.
- Flooding due to burst pipes.

3.3 Condensation Damp

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air meets a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. This can take two main forms:

- Surface condensation arising when the inner surface of the structure is cooler than the room air.
- Condensation inside the structure (interstitial) where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials (e.g. walls), which then condenses when it reaches colder conditions within the structure.

The conditions that can increase the risk of condensation are:

- Inadequate ventilation e.g. natural opening windows and trickle / background vents and mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Inadequate heating, undersized boilers and radiators, draught stripping.
- Inadequate thermal insulation. e.g. missing or defective wall and loft insulation.
- High humidity e.g. presence of rising and penetrating damp.
- Poor building design and construction creating specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.

Conditions that can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation – not opening windows, blocking up vents, not turning on extract fans, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Poor heating – not heating the house which can be a result of fuel poverty.
- Defective insulation – dislodged insulation in lofts.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the house can contribute to this.
- Overcrowding.

3.4 Mould

Is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces. This is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present.

4. Landlord responsibilities

As owner and landlord, we will:

- Respond to a report of damp and condensation and complete any remedial works/measures within a reasonable timescale in accordance with The Responsive Repairs Policy and Legislative/Regulatory requirements. This will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem and on the complexity of the solution or the remedial works/actions required.
- Do our best to diagnose the cause of damp correctly and deliver effective solutions based on the ethos of dealing with the cause of the damp not just the symptom and wherever possible “fixing first time”.
- Promote and provide general advice and guidance for residents on how to manage damp and condensation.
- Ensure that our staff have training and are aware of and understand the delivery of the service that will meet the aims of this policy.
- Make reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and carry out the works.
- Ensure that only competent contractors are employed to carry out any works and that the residents possessions are adequately protected during the works.
- Inform the resident of the findings of the investigations following an inspection visit. This will include identifying the possible causes of damp, recommending effective solutions and providing details of all necessary remedial works / actions together with the estimated timescales to complete these. Prior to the removal of the mould, we will photograph and document the location of the mould, to help identify the source.
- Provide regular updates for the resident through the process from inception to completion.
- Inspect the home at least 6 weeks after remedial work has been carried out, to ensure that the issue has been fixed and damp and mould have not reappeared. If damp and mould have reappeared, further investigation and intervention will be undertaken.
- When we are satisfied that in partnership with the tenant all reasonable efforts in managing condensation damp have been carried out and this has not been successful, we will visit the property again and investigate the matter further.

- Undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation damp, for example installation of mechanical extract fans, fresh air vents, repairing or replacing existing insulation, etc.
- Carry out remedial works only where it is reasonable and practical to do so, having regard to the constraints of the existing building design and structure and will take a pragmatic approach in finding appropriate solutions.
- Make good internal surfaces following any remedial work ensuring that affected surfaces are redecorated where appropriate, or that the resident is provided with redecoration vouchers.
- Carry out a mould wash where this is found to be persistent or extensive and cannot reasonably be controlled by the resident.
- Recognise that in some cases remedial work may not be necessary but require additional support and advice to be given to the resident on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation damp.
- Not be able to control condensation damp where it is unreasonable or impractical to do so or if any remedial action would be ineffective for example:
 - Cold bridging areas in the fabric of the building that cannot be eliminated.
 - In out –buildings or sheds that have been converted including linking buildings between the house and out- building and other add-on structures.
 - To unheated / uninsulated semi external storerooms.
- Where conditions within a home for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongs are affecting the health and wellbeing of the occupants or are preventing inspections / remedial works being carried out, we will provide support and assistance to review the resident's options that may include supporting them in moving to more appropriate alternative suitable accommodation. Effective remedial action will not be possible in these instances until the situation(s) has been resolved.
- If it is unsafe for the resident(s) to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary decant to an alternative property.

5. Resident responsibilities

- We ask that residents regularly check their homes for signs of damp and immediately report this, together with any faulty equipment that will hamper the management and control of damp and condensation (e.g. faulty extract fans,

windows that are jammed, or a heating breakdown etc.) in accordance with the tenancy agreement conditions.

- Similarly, we ask that residents regularly check for mould in their homes and clean signs of mould as soon as they are discovered. We also expect residents to manage condensation damp in accordance with our guidance. Residents can help reduce the conditions that lead to condensation damp by:
 - a) Keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum e.g. covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outside, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
 - b) Adequately heating rooms – ideally between 18 and 21C and keeping humidity between 40-60%.
 - c) Keeping homes well-ventilated e.g. opening windows when cooking / bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan is working if applicable, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- If all reasonable efforts have been made to manage and control condensation and mould, and this has not been successful we encourage residents to tell us so that we carry out an inspection to determine the cause before offering further advice or arranging remedial work as necessary.
- We will regularly remind residents of the importance and availability of home contents insurance, that should include cover against flood damage.

6. Leaseholder responsibilities

- Leaseholders are expected to maintain their properties including damp and condensation in accordance with their lease agreement. We do not carry out damp and condensation remedial works to leasehold properties.
- Any neglect by the leaseholder to manage or carry out repairs for which they are responsible that as a consequence has a direct impact on the condition of another property that we own will be dealt with in accordance with the lease.

7. Legislation and Regulation

Private and social landlords must adhere to a number of regulations related to damp and mould. A lack of compliance can place a landlord at risk of prosecution or financial penalties. The legislation and standards include:

- Housing Act 2004
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Decent Homes Standard
- Minimum Level of Energy Efficiency standard

- RSH – Safety and Quality Standard

8. Equality impact assessment/ Protected characteristics (as at 28 August 2024).

Neutral

9. Consultation arrangements

We will consult all residents and recognised residents' bodies on any substantive changes to this Policy and their views will be taken into account by the Board before adopting it. Our employees will also be consulted on any substantive changes to this Policy and any reasonable suggestions will be taken into account before the Policy is approved by the Board.