



## **DAMP & MOULD POLICY**

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# DAMP & MOULD POLICY

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# DAMP & MOULD POLICY

## 1.0 Statement

1.1 The key principles of the Damp and Mould policy are:

- To ensure we provide and maintain dry, warm, healthy homes for our tenants.
- To ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould.

## 2.0 Aims

2.1 Informing tenants to improve lifestyle conditions which reduce condensation within the home:

- Informing both tenants and staff about the health risks of living in damp and/or mouldy homes
- Publicising damp remediation work that we can do
- Training staff and operatives to spot signs of condensation, damp and mould and understand the causes and remedies of these.
- Knowing our stock and the archetypes of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould.
- Understanding the components in our properties which may cause damp.
- Investing in both preventative and reactive measures
- Planning resources i.e., to respond to higher demand in winter
- Making sure that appropriate budget levels are assigned to reducing the cause of damp and mould
- Providing our Officers with the correct equipment to assess damp in properties and find resolution to the problem if it is our responsibility
- Complying with all statutory and regulatory requirements and with best practice relating to the provision of this service
- Liaising with other Social Housing Landlords, Environmental Health and other Energy Advice agencies.

## 3.0 Damp and Mould

3.1 Damp and Mould Growth - Includes threats to physical and mental health from:

- House dust mites
- Mould or fungal growth
- Both are caused by dampness and/or high humidity.
- Causes of dust mite and mould and fungal growth are related directly to dampness which is caused by:
  - Reduced ventilation levels;
  - increased humidity, especially beyond 70% ; and
  - Warmer indoor temperatures in winter because of dwelling design in renovated houses.
- Potential preventive measures that could have a significant effect on
  - likelihood and harm outcomes relating to moisture production and ventilation:
- Damp proof courses, membranes and detailing around doors and window openings
- External fabric kept in good repair to avoid rain penetration

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- Frost protection for pipes and tanks
- Properly installed baths, sinks etc., with
- Properly installed drainage
- Properly installed and maintained rainwater goods
- Properly ventilated roof and under floor spaces to ensure timber remains air dry
- Adequate extraction of moisture laden air during peak times, like cooking and bathing and laundry
- Heating type
- Continuous low-level background ventilation where necessary
- Sufficient means of ventilation to cope with moisture from normal domestic activities without the need to open windows that could lead to heat loss, noise and security risks; and
- Appropriate ventilation for dwellings of high occupant density.

## 4.0 Damp and Mould Locations

4.1 The most common causes of damp and mould in our properties are:

- **Cold Bridging-** this can be in many areas including insulation not fully going in the eaves of a roof, raking leaves, concrete mullions and lintels, poorly installed cavity wall insulation and many other examples.
- **Blocked vents-** on many occasions' ventilation provided either mechanical or background ventilation being blocked off, broken or covered.
- **Type and location of radiators-** heating systems are not always to the performance standard required to prevent condensation and far too often radiators are located on the internal walls creating colder external walls and may be undersized for the room volume.
- **No extractor fans in kitchens, bathrooms and utility rooms**
- **Unvented and condensing tumble dryers-** these produce a serious amount of water vapour in the space encouraging condensation.
- **Bridging Damp-** there are many cases of bridging damp from render systems going below the DPC to ground level, concrete paving and ground levels being increased, entrance canopy roofs and wall tie snots not cleared.
- **Leaking of insufficient guttering-** there are many cases where guttering is overflowing, leaking joints, lack of maintenance for clearing gutters and in some cases particularly outbuildings where there is no guttering.
- **Lack of pointing on brickwork-** for various reasons there is poor or broken away pointing on parts of brick walls; this may have created cold spots for condensation and opportunity for penetrating damp.
- **Penetrating Damp from render systems-** this could be because they have exceeded their life span and also because the mix is too dense.
- **Tenant and resident lifestyle** – the way some tenants and residents conduct their everyday living can cause excessive humidity within a property, creating conditions where mould can thrive. Lack of adequate ventilation is the primary cause, but drying clothes on radiators, cooking with lids off pans and even tropical fish tanks all add to the moisture levels within a property.
- **Fuel Poverty** – it is now recognised that fuel poverty is becoming a major factor in the increase that has been seen in damp and mould problems. Tenants and residents are unable to afford to heat their homes effectively or evenly which then creates the conditions for moulds to thrive.

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## 5.0 Area of Responsibility

### 5.1 Tenant's responsibilities

- Mould can be caused by condensation and may adversely affect your health and our property. Tenants are responsible for making sure that the way they live their lives does not cause significant amounts of condensation that results in mould growth.

### 5.2 Condensation is caused by:

- Humidity of indoor air
- Low temperature
- Poor ventilation
- Mould caused by condensation is usually black and typically grows in bathrooms, kitchens, and bedrooms.
- Support available to help you:
- You can find advice about how to prevent or reduce condensation in our document "preventing damp in your home" available on the RHS website.
- Contact our Repairs Team on 01732 459144

### 5.3 RHS responsibilities

- We are responsible for insulating your home in accordance with Decent Homes Standards to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.
- We are responsible for maintaining your home to avoid penetrating and rising damp or for carrying out remedial action if these do occur. Penetrating and rising damp is typically misdiagnosed, but can sometimes be caused by:
  - Lateral Rain Penetration
  - Condensation or entrapped moisture
  - High Ground levels
  - Bridging of dampproof course
  - Defective rainwater goods
  - Water leaks from windows, roof, overflow pipes, gutters or drainpipes, internal plumbing
  - Defective or non-existent damp proof course
  - Inadequate cleaning and drying after major leaks and bursts or floods
  - Penetrating or rising damp usually leaves a tide mark

## 6.0 Preventative Work

### 6.1 To reduce the occurrence of condensation, damp and mould in our homes we will:

- Promote information about how to reduce condensation
- Identify a list of components most likely to cause damp.
- Liaise with our contractors to monitor these items and when officers carry out repairs visits and arrange to replace any components where the condition has deteriorated and may result in damp.
- Highlight any areas of concern at the time of each stock condition survey.

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- Carry out work to remedy any problems that are found
- Tackle fuel poverty through a range of initiatives set out in the Energy Strategy, starting with those who are most vulnerable and in need. These include, replacing inefficient heating with traditional or renewable heating, insulation programmes and whole property 'retrofit works' which address all areas which affect the warmth of your home.
- Investigate the possibility of providing secure drying areas in communal flat blocks to reduce the need to dry washing on radiators or inside flats.

## 7.0 Reactive Work

7.1 When you contact us in relation to a Damp and Mould issue we will:

- Complete a property assessment with you by telephone when you report a problem to ensure we have enough information and to update our records.
- If the outcome shows that condensation is likely to be causing the problem we will discuss ways in which you can make changes to improve the situation.

7.2 If the outcome shows that damp is likely to be present in your home, we will

- Fix the problem if it is our responsibility and to advise the tenants of how to resolve the issue if it is a lifestyle issue and not a problem with the building
- Carry out a full property inspection which will include reviewing your heating, drainage, rainwater goods, damp proof course and loft insulation, where the problem is not as easy to identify
- Do a full property survey, including an inspection of cavity wall insulation, thermal imaging, take damp and humidity measurements and carry out an underground survey via CCTV if appropriate. We will evaluate the results of the survey to establish the cause of the problem and advise you of the remedial action we will take, steps you should take and any further work that is required in the future, together with a timeframe for this.
- Offer a damp and mould leaflet prior to each visit arranged in connection with these issues.

## 8.0 Value for Money

- Fixing damp and mould once it has taken hold of a property can be extremely costly. By enhancing stock condition surveys to include a full property service as well monitoring any potential causes of damp and mould during day-to-day visits, the cost to the service should reduce.
- A full property service may also reduce reactive repairs unrelated to damp and mould issues.
- The cost to other public services such as the health service will reduce by improving living conditions.

## 9.0 Complaints & Compensation

9.1 If a tenant is dissatisfied with the service they have received in relation to a repair or where a repair has not been completed, they can make a complaint via [complaints@radcliffehs.org](mailto:complaints@radcliffehs.org). For more information see RHS Complaints Policy.

9.2 Tenants may be entitled to compensation if RHS has failed to complete repairs within our established guidelines. See RHS Compensation Policy.

## 10.0 Legislation & Regulation

- The Home Standard;
- Section 11 Landlord & Resident Act 1985;
- Housing Act 1985;
- Local Government & Housing Act 1989;
- Environmental Protection Act 1990; • Defective Premises Act 1972;
- Occupiers Liability Act;
- The Decent Homes Standard 2006;
- The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012;
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994;
- Commonhold & Leasehold Reform Act 2002;
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006;
- Equality Act 2010;
- HCA – The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from April 2012;
- Building Regulations Act 198
- Leasehold Property Repairs Act 1938
- Housing Repairs and Rents Act 1954 • Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 1988 • Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, s121
- Electrical Equipment (Safety) Regulations 1994
- Gas Safety (Installations and Use) Regulations 1998
- Housing Act 2004;
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018