



DAMP & MOULD POLICY

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DAMP & MOULD POLICY

1.0 Statement

1.1 The key principles of this Damp and Mould policy are to ensure:

- We provide and maintain dry, warm and healthy homes for our residents
- That the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould
- We comply with current legislation under all relevant legislation, including the new provisions of “Awaabs Law”

2.0 Objectives

- 2.1 We know that experiencing damp and mould can be distressing. We will treat our tenants with empathy and kindness.
- 2.2 We will maintain our homes and aim to ensure they are free of damp and mould, which could risk the health and safety of everyone living in them.
- 2.3 This Policy has taken into consideration the impact and lessons learnt following the death of Awaab Ishak.
- 2.4 This Policy details our approach to reports of condensation, damp and mould. It outlines how our residents can report issues, and what we will do in response.
- 2.5 The key objective of this Policy is to ensure that RHS, our residents and our contractors have clear guidance on our legal and regulatory response to reports of damp and mould. Our Policy is designed to mitigate the risks to residents’ health.

3.0 Aims

- 3.1 This Policy aims to ensure we provide and maintain safe, healthy homes for our residents, and resolve damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to residents.

We will:

- Take reports of damp and mould seriously, making sure we meet all our responsibilities as a landlord to provide accommodation that is fit for our tenants and their families to live in
- Inform both residents and staff about the health risks of living in damp or mouldy conditions
- Publicise damp remediation work that we can do
- Make sure our risk assessments are thorough and specific to the residents, their home, and the hazards
- Train our staff and operatives to spot signs of condensation, damp and mould and understand the causes and remedies of these
- Communicate clearly and openly with our tenants throughout the management of a case
- Further understand our stock and the archetypes of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould
- Understand the components in our properties which may cause damp and invest in both preventative and reactive measures
- Signpost residents who are experiencing difficulties managing their heating costs to charities and other support agencies for assistance

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- Comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements and with best practice relating to the provision of this service
- Liaise with other Social Housing Landlords, Environmental Health and other Energy Advice agencies

4.0 Damp & Mould

- 4.1 Damp is the accumulation of moisture within a property, that affects the walls, floors, ceilings and foundations of buildings. It also affects home furnishings such as carpets, curtains, wallpaper, furniture, and clothing. As well as causing damage, damp can also lead to the growth of mould. A range of factors can lead to damp in homes.
- 4.2 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 mites and mould and fungal growth are related directly to dampness which is caused by:
 - Reduced ventilation levels
 - Increased humidity, especially beyond 70%
 - Warmer indoor temperatures in winter because of dwelling design in renovated houses
- 4.3 We recognise exposure to mould spores can cause a wide range of symptoms including rashes, itchy eyes, sneezing, coughs, dizziness, and nausea. The long-term effects of mould exposure can be more severe for vulnerable people, people with respiratory conditions and those with a weakened immune system. The elderly, children and those with existing allergies are all considered to be more susceptible to mould exposure, and it is acknowledged that living in poor environmental conditions can impact on an individual's sense of well-being and mental health.
- 4.4 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
 - Frost protection for pipes and tanks
 - Properly installed baths, sinks etc. with;
 - Properly installed drainage 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, bathing and laundry
 - Heating type
 - Continuous low-level background ventilation where necessary
- 4.5 There should be a 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.

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

Issue	Possible Cause
Cold Bridging	Damp can be also caused by cold bridging. This results from materials or components in a building's structure that have higher thermal conductivity than the surrounding insulation. This leads to localised areas of increased heat transfer, resulting in cold spots and potential condensation issues.
Blocked Extraction and / or Vents	Mechanical ventilation provided or background ventilation is being restricted, broken or covered.
Type & Location of Radiators	Heating systems may not perform to the 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.
Penetrating Damp	Damp can also be caused by leaking or defective plumbing, commonly occurring in bathrooms and kitchens. Black mould can occur with defective plumbing due to prolonged moisture content.
Unvented Tumble Dryers	This equipment produces a serious amount of water vapour in the space encouraging condensation.
Defective plumbing and leaks	Damp can also be caused by leaking or defective plumbing, commonly occurring in bathrooms and kitchens. Black mould can occur with defective plumbing due to prolonged moisture content.
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.
Condensation	Condensation is a natural process that occurs when moisture from within the air comes into contact with a cold surface and turns into surface water. It is important to provide sufficient ventilation to allow moisture generated by daily living to escape. Of all the causes of damp and mould, condensation is the most likely to cause black mould.
Fuel Poverty	Some residents are unable to afford to heat their homes effectively or evenly, which then creates the conditions for mould to thrive.
Building Defects	Building 'defects' can also be a problem e.g., leaking pipes or roofs, blocked gutters, or down pipes, defective damp courses.,

4.7 There are multiple ways condensation can be caused including:

- Humidity of indoor air
- Low temperature
- Poor ventilation
- Mould caused by condensation is usually black and typically grows in bathrooms, kitchens, and bedrooms

5.0 Resident Responsibilities

5.1 Residents are responsible for making sure that the way they live their lives does not cause significant amounts of condensation, that results in mould growth. Damp and mould caused by condensation can often be controlled by simple measures, which can be adopted by the resident.

- Regularly checking for and reporting any leaks, or faulty heating, windows or extractor fans

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- Regularly checking for signs of mould and clean them if they occur
- Heating rooms adequately and keep humidity between 40-60%. The average recommended temperatures should be maintained at around 20°C, bedrooms around 16-19°C, corridors around 15-18°C
- Ensuring that the general upkeep and cleaning of extractor fans and vents is undertaken (i.e., that they are not blocked)
- Allowing access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works

5.2 All our residents are encouraged to arrange their own contents insurance.

5.3 Support is available to help all our residents. If you are ever in doubt about possible damp and mould within the home, we encourage our residents to contact our Repairs Team on 01732 459144 (option 1) or by email: repairs@radcliffehs.org.

5.4 You can find advice about how to prevent or reduce condensation in our document “preventing damp in your home” which is available on our website. We will work with residents, provide guidance, and signpost them to available support, for example financial assistance, to help them maintain their home and prevent damp and mould.

6.0 Our Responsibilities

6.1 We are responsible for the maintenance, repair of the structure and exterior of our properties, as set out in section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, and your tenancy terms and conditions.

6.2 If we identify a hazard or when you contact us in relation to a damp and mould issue we will arrange an initial inspection of your home. The timescale for this inspection will depend on the urgency of your case, as determined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS):

(HHSRS Cat 1) Emergency – if the issue is diagnosed an immediate risk to a person’s health and safety, then this would be deemed an emergency, and will be attended within 24 hours.

(HHSRS Cat 2) Urgent or Routine – depending on the seriousness of each case, the response will either be categorised as:

- Urgent, in which case it will be attended to within 6 working days
- Routine, whereby repairs will be attended within 10 working days

6.3 If the outcome shows that damp or high levels of condensation are likely to be present in your home, we will:

- Fix the problem if it is our responsibility and advise the tenants of how to resolve the issue if there are factors outside of our control and not a specific problem with the building
- We have limited use of drone thermal imaging surveys and CCTV, dependant on severity of the issue
- Complete a full property survey, including an inspection of cavity wall insulation, thermal imaging, secure damp and humidity measurements and carry out an underground survey via digital hardware, 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.
- Provide supportive communication around preventing damp and mould, prior to each visit arranged in connection with these issues.
- Provide temporary alternative accommodation if an emergency hazard is identified

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Type	Action	Timeframe	Inspection Report	Remedial Work
HHSRS Category 1 – Emergency Hazard				
Hazard is deemed to pose the most severe risk to the health and safety of tenants 24 hours. Example: • Damp and mould growth • Mould spores • Severe dampness • Dust mites	Arrange an inspection and undertake emergency repairs, and an urgent mould clean and treatment if required	24 Hours	3 Working Days	24 Hours
HHSRS Category 2 – Significant Hazard				
Hazard is less severe damp and mould present but can still have a negative effect on the health and safety of tenants	Arrange an inspection and follow up action	10 Working Days	3 Working Days	5 Working Days

7.0 Access

- 7.1 We are required to seek access to the property to investigate and/or complete relevant safety works as quickly as possible. However, we accept residents may refuse access to their property for a variety of reasons, posing a significant challenge for us. Without access, we cannot assess hazards or carry out necessary repairs.
- 7.2 We will take all reasonable steps to gain access to mitigate emergency hazards. This can include:
- **Flexible appointments:** Work with you to arrange a suitable time to visit the property. This may include offering multiple appointment options and taking into account your individual circumstances - such as working hours, childcare responsibilities and other personal commitments
 - **Clear communication:** Engage with you by explaining the purpose of the visit, the nature of the hazard, what you can expect during the inspection and the potential consequences of delayed access.
 - **Different forms of communication:** Where appropriate, we will contact residents through different channels of communication such as phone calls, emails or letters and at different times of the day to improve reach and responsiveness.
 - **Identify barriers:** Work with residents to understand and overcome any obstacles that may prevent access.
 - **Follow up:** If access is not granted on an agreed date, we will leave a written notice informing the resident of the attempted visit, requesting that they reschedule
- 7.3 If access is not obtained to remedy a hazard, we will take legal steps to obtain access, to complete works to mitigate any further risks

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8.0 Complaints & Compensation

- 8.1 If you are dissatisfied with the service you have received in relation to a repair or where a repair has not been completed, you can make a complaint via complaints@radcliffehs.org. For more information see our Complaints Policy.
- 8.2 Residents may be entitled to compensation if we have failed to complete repairs within our established guidelines. See our Compensation Policy.

9.0 Legislation & Regulation

- Section 11 Landlord & Resident Act 1985
- Housing Act 1985
- 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