

DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

REVIEW DATE: JUNE 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy aims to ensure that all homes are damp free and supports Encircle Housing (EH) approach to tackling matters relating to damp and mould. Our approach to adopting a zero-tolerance approach to ensuring we eradicate damp and mould from our homes.
- 1.2 This policy will help ensure that we provide a safe and healthy home environment for our tenants, care providers and their visitors by protecting the home and ensuring when notified we address these cases promptly.
- 1.3 This policy will aim to reassure our tenants that we will also robustly respond to all reports of dampness and/or mould within our homes.
- 1.4 By implementing this policy and subsequent procedure for damp and mould we will ensure that:
 - 1.4.1.1 Tenants live in a safe and dry home.
 - 1.4.1.2 Are provided with helpful advice and information on how to reduce the risk of condensation and mould growth forming on surfaces within our home.
 - 1.4.1.3 Ensure that our board are aware of damp and mould cases through the compliance reporting tool at each board meeting and more detail be available on request.
 - 1.4.1.4 EH meets its legal and moral obligations towards proactively managing damp and mould.
 - 1.4.1.5 Ensure that the condition of our properties are not decaying as a result of damp and mould being identified.
 - 1.4.1.6 Ensure that we report and record cases of damp and mould within our Housing management system, which will enable us to ensure that we have robust reporting records for damp and mould.
 - 1.4.1.7 Reduce the opportunity for a legal claim or disrepair claim for damp and mould.
 - 1.4.1.8 Provide EH with a robust standard to adhere to and to support our need to be a specialist supported housing provider.
 - 1.4.1.9 Ensure all our programmes of investment consider damp and mould.
 - 1.4.1.10 Comply with statutory and regulatory requirements while supporting best practise through positive actions.

1.5 EH will ensure:

- Ensure where required we adopt a proactive approach to dealing with damp and mould.
- Focus on property solutions to dampness and mould and will not use tenants “lifestyle” judgements as a reason for the causes of damp and mould. We will positively encourage the use of equipment that is in place to prevent damp and mould re-occurring through, leaflets and personal visits. We will appreciate modern standards and living conditions needed and to avoid using blaming language to look for solutions when visiting our homes. Where there are cases of on-going damp and mould we will look to install monitoring equipment for better analysis.
- We will inspect where cases can’t be diagnosed with the information provided. Upon inspection we will write to our tenants informing of the outcomes of this inspection and our actions to resolve.
- Where a damp and mould case that is identified as critical to life we will raise as an emergency and then follow this up with an inspection to determine if any further works are required.
- Encircle Housing will not solely rely on tenants/care providers reporting damp cases, we will ensure that through our Health and Safety check lists damp and mould is identified early and proactively dealt with.
- When homes become void, we will ensure that they are free from damp and mould and should this not be the case the works will form part of our relet standard.
- We invest in our properties to proactively maintain them at the appropriate standard and replacing ventilation where required either through our reactive budgets or through a planned programme if a number of issues have been identified.
- Whilst undertaking our stock condition survey we will also undertake a housing health and safety rating survey (HHSRS) to determine damp and mould and take a proactive approach to addressing.
- Providing staff with skills and testing equipment so that informed decisions are made to determine the root cause of the damp and mould eradicating from our home with the correct diagnosis. Ensure that key staff have a professional recognised standard in damp and mould.
- Ensure our contractors/partners have the necessary training to identify damp and mould cases and to work with EH to resolve them within the timeframe set.

2. Legal and Regulatory responsibilities

- 2.1 The policy will comply with a wide range of legislative and regulatory requirements including:
- 2.1.1.1 The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
 - 2.1.1.2 The equality Act 2010
 - 2.1.1.3 Disability Discrimination Act 2005
 - 2.1.1.4 The Environmental Health Protection Act 1990
 - 2.1.1.5 Right to Repair
 - 2.1.1.6 Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
 - 2.1.1.7 Homes (Fitness for human habitation) Act 2018
 - 2.1.1.8 Housing Act 2004
 - 2.1.1.9 HHSRS
 - 2.1.1.10 Regulatory standards
 - 2.1.1.11 Decent Homes standard
 - 2.1.1.12 Minimum level of energy efficiency standard
 - 2.1.1.13 The Social Housing Regulation (Act) 2023 - Awaabs Law

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Mould spores can pose a danger to health, particularly to children, older people and people with existing skin and respiratory conditions or a weaker immune system which can also have an impact on mental wellbeing. While condensation is linked to daily activities – such as bathing, cooking and drying clothes which produce moisture, tenants should be able to complete these activities without being blamed for damp and mould developing.

Types of dampness

- 3.2 **Rising Damp:** This is generally the build-up of moisture through the building from the ground rising through the building.
- 3.3 **Penetrating Damp:** (including internal escapes of water) This type of dampness occurs where water penetrates the external structure or unattended internal water escapes which can cause rot, dampness and damage to the fabric of the building.
- 3.4 **Condensation / Damp:** Condensation occurs when moisture generated and present in a warm location comes into contact with a cold surface which then condenses into droplets.

4. Responding to reports of damp and mould case

- Respond sensitively and assess the issue with urgency to identify the severity of the damp and mould and potential risks to tenants. Following our visit we will write to the tenant within 14 calendar days.
- Always tackle the underlying issue promptly, and act with urgency when concerns have been raised about tenant health.
- Ensure tenants are informed about the steps that will be taken to remove mould and address any underlying issues and the timeframes for the work.
- Prior to the removal of the mould, photograph and document the location of the mould, to help identify the source.
- Identify and tackle the underlying causes of damp and mould, including building deficiencies, inadequate ventilation and condensation.
- 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 pursued.
- Undertake a damp and mould triage to determine the risk associated with the damp and mould at the first point of contact. This triage will include a number of health related questions, along with the severity of the damp issues encountered. Any yes response will require a visit from the Surveyors. A sample survey and questionnaire is listed within appendix 1 of the damp and mould procedure.

5. Procedure

- 5.1 The process including timeframes for staff to deal with effectively with cases of damp and mould is set out within the occupying procedure “**damp and mould procedure**”.

6. Training

- 6.1 Training will be available for all staff but will be suitable for the role they undertake.

6.1.1.1 General awareness – For staff who occasionally encounter requests or their duties don't involve visiting homes.

6.1.1.2 Specific professional training for technical staff dealing with damp and mould cases.

7. Data management/reporting

- 7.1 All reported cases including information relating to damp and mould cases will be stored within our housing management systems and be available for all to view.

- 7.2 The Head of Asset Management will report to board the cases reported and those that are on going before the solution is found.

8. Equality requirements

- 8.1 EH are committed to meeting our obligations and will not in any way discriminate cases on grounds of sex, marital status, racial grounds, disability, age, sexual orientations, language, social origin or other personal requirements.
- 8.2 EH seek to embrace diversity and inclusion of all to eliminate discrimination.

9. Tenants requirements

We will ask that all tenants:

- 9.1.1 Immediately report any evidence of rising and penetrating damp (see definitions) and faulty equipment that will affect the management of humidity and moisture in the home (faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, heating system failure etc.)
- 9.1.2 Try to reduce the conditions that lead to condensation dampness by keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum e.g., covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outside (where possible) or alternatively in a well-ventilated room with the door closed, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
- 9.1.3 Adequately heating rooms if they can afford to – ideally at 18°C.
- 9.1.4 Keeping the house well-ventilated e.g., opening windows during cooking / bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan or ventilation system installed in their home is regularly cleaned and working, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- 9.1.5 Follow all advice and guidance issued by us on managing humidity and moisture in the home which can lead to condensation. We will refer the tenants to damp and mould leaflet.
- 9.1.6 Allow access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works.
- 9.1.7 If following an inspection the outcome shows that all reasonable measures are in place for the customer to adequately control condensation and mould, further advice and support will be given to the customer to provide advice on best use of heating system and best way to ventilate the property. Should this be required we can escalate to an independent surveyor for an independent view.
- 9.1.8 To sign to approve the works we have done and to conclude that the damp case is closed where a post inspection is undertaken by the surveyor.
- 9.1.9 Where a tenant is not satisfied with our response we ask that they raise this through our “**Complaints Procedure**”.

10. Review

- 10.1 As this policy is a new policy and changes may be due that would impact on this policy it is recommended that it is reviewed within 12 months and then 2 years thereafter.

Review process	
Policy review frequency:	Responsible for review:
This policy/procedure will be reviewed on a two-yearly basis after the first 12 months	This policy/procedure will be reviewed by: Head of Assets

Version control			
Version	Date approved	Next review date	Author/title
V1	June 2024	June 2025	Mark Felton Head of Asset Management

Summary of amendments			
Amendment	Date approved	Next review date	Author/title
Add surveyor to obtain sign off if post inspection undertaken	25.6.2024	Only if significant amendments are made	Mark Felton

11. Links to procedures and workflows

The policy is to be read in conjunction with the procedures below:

- 11.1 Damp and mould procedure.
- 11.2 Helping to keep your home free from damp and condensation leaflet.
- 11.3 Damp and mould workflow.
- 11.4 Damp and mould triage.