



Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy

Board Approved: 25 January 2023

Next Review: January 2026

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Providing tenants with a safe and healthy home to live in is a fundamental role of social landlords. This includes effectively and promptly resolving issues in homes which pose a danger to residents' health and wellbeing.
- 1.2 Damp and mould can pose a significant danger to residents' health if left untreated for long periods. It is imperative that the prevalence of any damp and mould is understood across HfL's stock and that steps are taken to resolve the root cause of the problem and prevent it occurring again.
- 1.3 Damp in a property arises from a build-up of moisture. This can be caused by various issues with a building, such as leaking pipes, cracks which allow rain in, blocked guttering, or defects in the foundation. Moisture can also build up from condensation as a result of daily living activities, particularly in properties with inadequate ventilation.
- 1.4 Mould can develop in damp atmospheres, particularly when it is cold. Both damp and mould can pose a danger to health, particularly to children, older people and people with existing skin and respiratory conditions or a weaker immune system. It can cause respiratory problems, trigger asthma attacks and allergies, and make it more likely that people will suffer from infections.
- 1.5 This policy aims to assist in the delivery of effective Maintenance and Property Services that treat and eradicate, condensation, damp and mould in HfL stock and tenants homes ensuring:
 - Compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements and good practice
 - That tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way and;
 - Partnership working with tenants to resolve and ensure a safe and healthy internal home environment.

2.0 Scope of Policy

- 2.1 The policy covers how HfL, and our tenants are able to jointly control, manage and eradicate condensation, damp and mould in HfL tenants homes. Taking a proactive, customer-focused approach to dealing with damp and mould.
- 2.2 **Key elements**
 - Proactive assessments of HfL stock condition, taking a data-informed, risk-based approach to prioritise focus on properties particularly susceptible to damp and mould.
 - Training of all staff to identify and respond to damp and mould, with every home visit seen as an opportunity to identify issues.
 - Encouraging tenants to report damp and mould and sharing communications on the risks of living with damp and mould and make sure our tenants have clear, simple methods of reporting any issues to us.

- Responding promptly to reports of damp and undertaking an assessment of the property to identify and resolve the root cause.
- Identifying HfL's responsibilities and tenants' responsibilities for dealing with damp and condensation.
- Giving tenants sensitive advice on how to minimise the build-up of condensation
- The provision of guidance, advice, and support and assistance throughout the process.

3.0 Policy and Practice

3.1 The first step in dealing with damp and mould is identifying where it has developed. HfL will take proactive steps to identify issues with damp and mould across our stock and encourage tenants to report any problems as early as possible. We will:

- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- 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.

4.0 Types of damp covered by this Policy

4.1 Rising Damp

The movement of moisture from the ground rising up through the structure of the building through capillary action.

4.2 Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)

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.

4.3 Condensation Damp

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with 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 – 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.

5.0 Our approach to managing damp, mould and condensation

HfL will adopt a proactive and responsive approach to eradicating, damp, condensation and mould in our tenants homes. We will do this by committing to:

Providing and maintaining comfortable, warm and healthy homes, free from damp, mould or disrepair for our tenants.
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Recognising that having mould issues in a home can be distressing for our tenants and ensure we are supportive in our approach.

Working in partnership with residents to resolve and understand how to reduce condensation, damp and mould issues.
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Making sure the fabric of our homes is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from, or contributing to, damp and mould.

Undertaking responsive repairs to alleviate damp are carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise damage to the fabric, fixtures and fittings of the property.

Knowing our stock and the archetype of properties and components that have a higher likelihood to suffer from damp and mould.

Planning resources to respond to higher demand, e.g., during the winter months.

Providing staff with the skills to identify and differentiate between signs of damp and condensation and understand the causes and remedies.

Supporting our tenants to reduce damp and condensation in their home and make positive changes.

Making best use of technology to help tenants to best manage their homes and use technological insight to better understand the causes and solutions.

Taking account of the issues of damp and condensation when designing investment programmes, for example heating and ventilation.

Complying with all statutory and regulatory requirements and sector best practice.

6.0 Legislation, Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

6.1 The Policy is governed and complies with the following legislation and regulatory requirements and guidance

- **Housing (Scotland) Act 2014**
- **Scottish Social Housing Charter** which sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing and property maintenance activities.
- **Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)** places a regulatory requirement on social landlords to ensure their tenants' homes are; energy efficient, safe and secure; not seriously damaged and have kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition.
- **Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing (EESH)** The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) aims to encourage landlords to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. This supports the Scottish Government's vision

of warm, high quality, affordable, low carbon homes and a housing sector that helps to establish a successful low carbon economy across Scotland.

7.0 Review

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed in 3 years or where there has been new legislation, or a change in regulatory requirements or policy guidance.

