

Damp and mould

Policy

1. Purpose and scope

This policy applies to all buildings that the Trust has the responsibility to maintain.

2. Policy statement

Papworth Trust is committed to working with our tenants to ensuring that it minimises the risk of damp and mould in its properties.

To do this we will follow these key principles:

- To ensure we provide well maintained homes that provide 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.

3. Principles

We plan to achieve this by:

- Training staff and operatives to spot signs of condensation, damp and mould and understand the causes and remedies of these.
- Informing our staff about health risks of living in damp and/or mouldy homes
- Understanding our stock and which ones are most at risk.
- Investing in both preventative and reactive maintenance 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.
- Complying with all legal, statutory and regulatory requirements including best practice (where possible) relating to damp and mould

As part of this we will work in partnership with tenants by:

- Providing advice on how to minimise the risk of damp, mould and condensation in their homes.
- Providing information about health risks of living in damp and/or mouldy homes

4. Common causes of damp and mould

There are many causes of damp and mould. Some of the more commonly found reasons are:

4.1 Rising damp – where moisture from the ground rises up through the structure of the building. It is the Trust's responsibility to tackle this type of damp problem.

An example of this may be where the damp proof membrane DPC has been breached.

4.2 Penetrating damp – where water penetrates the external structure of the building or where there are water leaks causing damage. It is the Trust's responsibility to tackle this type of damp problem.

Some examples of this include:

- Finlock (concrete) gutters - this type of guttering can lead to penetrating damp and cold bridging for condensation.
- Leaky guttering.
- Poor pointing on brickwork.

4.3 Condensing (condensation) Damp

Mould can be caused by condensation and may adversely affect tenants' health and the condition of the property. Resolving a condensation problem is more complex and is best approached as a partnership between the Trust and its tenants to identify the reasons for the problem and best solutions.

Condensation is the most prevalent type of 'damp' and common causes include:

Building related

- Poor design and construction leading to cold bridging which means cold spots in the home which attract moisture. Examples of this include:
 - insulation not fully going in the eaves of a roof,
 - raking eaves (meaning the edge of the roof overhangs the wall),
 - concrete mullions and lintels, Insufficient or defective insulation.
- Inadequate heating.
- Insufficient or defective insulation.
- Inadequate ventilation - particularly a lack of extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms.

Condition Related

- High humidity levels. Examples which may contribute to this are drying laundry indoors, cooking with lids off pans or an existing leak.
- Fuel Poverty. This is where a households' expenditure on heating the home exceeds a set government criterion meaning the tenant cannot afford to effectively heat their home.
- Overcrowding. This is where there are more people and/or animals living in the home than it was designed for.
- Blocked off, broken or closed vents.
- Insufficient use of heating.
- Inadequate use of extractor fans.
- Unvented and condensing tumble dryers- these produce water vapour in the space encouraging condensation.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 In a commercial building the responsibility lies solely with the Trust where it has responsibility for the maintenance of the building.

5.2 In domestic homes the responsibility often lies with both the Trust and it tenants.

5.3 The Trust is responsible for insulating your home in accordance with Decent Homes Standard and for ensuring that your home has adequate, heating and ventilation.

5.4 The Trust is responsible for maintaining your home to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if these do occur.

5.5 Where damp and mould is condensation related, we will seek to work with you as tenants to identify and tackle the causes.

6. Reducing the occurrences of damp and mould

We will do the following to reduce the likelihood of damp and mould occurring:

- Look out for damp and mould on any visit to your home and act on what we see. Highlight any areas of concern at the time of each stock condition survey.
- Respond to any concerns you raise to us about damp, mould or condensation.
- Carry out remedial works in line with your tenancy agreement.
- Provide information about how to reduce condensation and ensure that this is given regularly. (For further information see Appendix A)

- Work with you to tackle fuel poverty through a range of local and Government initiatives starting with those who are most vulnerable and in need.
- Contact you 3 months after any damp and mould works have been completed to see if the proposed solution has been effective.
- If the outcome shows that condensation is likely to be causing the problem, we will work together to improve the situation.
- If the damp in your home is so severe that it means it unsafe for you to remain there then we will make alternative arrangements with you following our Decant Policy.

7. Exceptions

The Trust cannot 'cure' condensation and the appearance of condensation mould. In certain circumstances it would be impractical to carry out remedial action because it would not work. Examples of this include:

- Non-habitable rooms which are being used as habitable rooms. For instance, lean-to's, unheated or insulated external storerooms, converted outbuildings.
- Where a condition (refer to S4.3) needs to be improved to enable a remedial action to be successful.

If these cases arise the Trust will work with you providing guidance, advice, and support on next steps.

8. Document control

Owner	Senior Business Manager
Consulted	Tenant Scrutiny Panel
Approver	Property Group
Date approved	January 2024 2024
Next review date	January 2027
Ratified by	Strategy and Change Committee

9. Version tracker

Version number	Date approved	Approved by	Comments/Reason for issue
1.0	January 2024	Property Group	New Policy document

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Appendix A

What is condensation?

Condensation is when water as a gas, forms as water as a liquid on a colder surface.

Water as a gas is all around us so there is no 'cure' for condensation, it is all about management of it.

Condensation can be managed by:

- Raising the air temperature
- Raising the surface temperature
- Replacing wet air with dry air - ventilating

Mould caused by condensation is usually black and typically grows in bathrooms, kitchens and bedrooms.

What can tenants do to reduce the likelihood of damp, mould and condensation?

- Let us know if you are experiencing this in your home.
- Allow us access to carry out any necessary work and inspections.
- Allow us to work with you on the best solutions to resolve the problem.
- Follow the guidance we provide in our literature and from our meetings with you.
- Adequately heat rooms in your home. The home should ideally be between 18-21C.
- Adequately ventilate the home. This means opening windows, especially when cooking and bathing, using the extractor fans, making sure window trickle vents remain open, allowing circulation of air around furniture.
- Wipe down surfaces where condensation has formed e.g. window glass, with a cloth or squeegee. This will prevent the water droplets from pooling and causing mould growth.
- Reduce humidity levels by covering pans, closing doors when cooking or bathing and drying clothes outside.

An information leaflet on damp, mould and condensation is available on the Papworth Trust website www.papworthtrust.org.uk

Tenants can request a visit to ask for further support in how best to prevent condensation in their home.