



DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

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Scope

It is a requirement of all Registered Providers to meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants of their homes. It is also a requirement under the Consumer Standards that Registered Providers shall provide tenants with accessible, relevant, and timely information about progress of any repairs work.

Derby Homes is committed to providing good quality homes and excellent services that meet the standards agreed with our customers. This policy sets out to make clear how we will respond to reports of damp and mould in the homes of our tenants, and the surrounding buildings we are responsible for.

We recognise that rising energy costs make it hard for households when trying to adequately heat their homes and this can lead to an increase in condensation and dampness. In homes where there is overcrowding, inadequate heating, poor ventilation, insufficient insulation and building defects there is likely to be a greater issue with damp and mould.

Aim of the Policy

The aim of our Damp and Mould policy is to:

- ensure we provide the facilities to maintain a safe, warm and dry healthy home for our tenants and any other occupants to thrive
- outline how we will respond to any issues of damp and mould
- ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from penetrating and rising damp and mould.

We will also ensure that tenants will:

- be provided with clear information about how to reduce condensation in their home, and how to manage instances of damp and mould
- be told the outcome of any damp and mould assessments
- will have their individual circumstances considered when we decide on any works that are required to their home
- will receive appropriate support if they need to move out of their home while work is undertaken

Key terms and definitions

This Policy is designed to cover reports of damp and mould reported by tenants, or someone acting on their behalf. It is set within the context of the Responsive Repairs service. Derby Homes will provide a range of options to address reports of damp and mould. These options may vary from home to home, depending on the property type, construction method, age and other factors.

What is damp?

Damp can be determined in three ways, penetrative where there is a leak from an outside source i.e., the roof or external structure, rising damp where there is a breakdown of the physical or chemical damp proof course or thirdly a leak from a service and or waste pipe.

All of which can easily occur and can cause serious damage if left untreated.

What is mould?

Mould is a type of fungi that are naturally occurring organisms playing a major role in the earth's ecosystem. Mould grows best in damp and poorly ventilated areas and reproduces by making spores. Moulds are present virtually everywhere, indoors, and outdoors and can grow in and on materials such as food, furniture, fabrics, carpets, walls, paper, timber, and plumbing.

The number one cause of damp and subsequent mould in homes in the UK today is a lack of ventilation and heating. It is normal to have some mould growth in winter, but you need to stay on top of it to prevent it getting more serious. In most cases black mould is caused by condensation.

What is condensation?

Condensation comes from the moisture in the air in your home from cooking, cleaning, bathing, and even breathing turning into water. Condensation will form on the coldest surfaces in the room first, like windows, the corners of the room, behind furniture where there is limited air circulation and on external walls. It is mostly a seasonal problem, occurring during the colder months, as we open our windows less to keep us warm. This can mean a build-up of water vapour in your home, which may cause condensation. Condensation is not necessarily a problem, if the surface has time to dry out.

Key responsibilities and duties

Landlord Responsibilities

- We will ensure that we maintain the structure of our properties as set out in our Asset Management Strategy
- Maintain the home in line with the Tenancy Agreement
- Provide tenants with the information they need to operate their heating and hot water systems efficiently, along with information on how to minimise condensation. This information will be provided in our tenant newsletter, on our website and social media platforms and face to face.
- Ensure our tenants know to report concerns of damp and mould as soon as they become aware of them

Tenant Responsibilities

- The tenant is responsible for reporting any concerns of damp, mould and condensation promptly
- The tenant is responsible for ensuring no damage occurs to their home as laid out in the Tenancy Agreement
- Internal Decoration: To keep the interior of the premises in good and clean condition and to decorate all internal parts of the premises as often as is necessary to keep in good decorative order.
- Tenants will be provided with information and guidance on minimising condensation in their home and this should be followed.

How we will help customers

A key area is to improve the knowledge of the causes of condensation, which is something we seek to improve amongst our tenants. Along with giving tenants information, we will look to:

- Refer tenants to our energy efficiency team to ensure that the tenant is on the best possible package for Gas and Electricity
- Refer tenants to money advice to ensure that the tenant is in receipt of all the benefits they are entitled to
- Ensure our staff are trained and can provide the best advice

Process Overview

What you can expect when you contact us regarding damp and mould:

- When a report of damp, mould or condensation is received, our staff will ask a few questions to try to identify possible causes. Sometimes it will be obvious, such as leaking gutters. In these cases repairs will be ordered in line with our repair timescales.
- Where the cause is not immediately obvious an inspection will be required. If we can offer an appointment when the tenant first reports the issue, we will, however, this is not always possible and where this is the case we aim to contact the tenant, make an appointment and visit within our target timescale. The tenant will need to provide access to their home for this inspection to take place.
- The purpose of the inspection is to identify whether the issue is damp related or condensation related. The tenant will be advised of our findings and any advice in writing and this will be recorded on our Open Housing system.
- Sometimes it may be necessary to send an independent surveyor, where this is necessary, we will share the outcome of any surveys or inspections with the tenant in a way that can be understood
- If the issue is identified as condensation-based Derby Homes will provide information and guidance to the tenant. This information will include detail on the possible causes of condensation and some solutions that may help. In many cases once such measures have been in place for a few weeks the issue is reduced or eliminated
- Where any work is identified in relation to damp or mould we will follow our repairs policy and carry out the remedial work within 25 working days.
- We will seek specialist advice, where needed, to ensure that all necessary improvements are completed.
- For cases where there are repeated reports of damp, mould and condensation and/or where there is no resolution, or where our inspection deems it to be necessary we may use specialist equipment to identify the cause of the problem

- Where the cause of the damp is outside the home or from a neighbouring property we will communicate with all appropriate parties to work towards resolving the issue.
- Where there are several reports of damp, mould or condensation in a particular geographical area, a survey may be needed from a sample of properties to proactively establish if the problems are arising from the property design
- To ensure that our work has been effective in removing damp from a home we will review each work order 3 months post completion. This will give us information on what works best and help shape the advice we provide our tenants.

Major Works

There may be extreme circumstances in which it might be necessary to require the household members to move to temporary accommodation (decant). These circumstances might include:

- When major structural repairs, refurbishments or improvements are required
- Where major works are required and the household remaining in the property poses a risk to their health, safety and wellbeing

If it is necessary to move out our decant policy will be followed.

Monitoring compliance and effectiveness

- Records of information from conversations, inspection and testing will be made and kept in our information management systems
- We will regularly review the information we provide relating to damp, mould and condensation
- Performance measures will be reported to the Board, Operational Board and Senior Management Team which will include total number of concerns reported, timeliness of response and level of outstanding work.