



DAMP, MOULD AND CONDENSATION POLICY

Policy Control

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Derby Homes are committed to providing safe, healthy, energy efficient and comfortable homes for its tenants and their households. We have designed a policy in consultation with our residents and by listening to feedback and complaints, to enable us to diagnose, respond to and effectively manage reports of damp, mould, and condensation within our properties.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all homes owned by Derby Homes Ltd and Derby City Council that are managed by Derby Homes. Derby Homes is an arm's length management organisation (ALMO) created by Derby City Council to manage, maintain, and improve its Council homes. It covers all staff, including contractors and sub-contractors too. Derby Homes has a responsibility to ensure our homes are safe, healthy, and free from hazards, including damp, condensation, and mould.
- 1.3 Derby Homes has a responsibility to manage repairs and complete any work required to prevent damp, condensation and mould occurring. It is also important that tenants report any issues, so we can work quickly to help resolve the problems. We recognise the impact that damp, condensation, and mould can have on tenants, including distress, inconvenience and concerns about health and wellbeing.
- 1.4 We will ensure that we take prompt action to remedy issues and support tenants, offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process to all tenants living in Council and Derby Homes properties.
- 1.5 The Regulator of social housing expects that as a minimum we:
 - Take all reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of tenants in their homes and associated communal areas.
 - Provide an effective, efficient, and timely repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service for the homes and communal areas for which we are responsible.
 - Collect and provide information to support effective scrutiny by tenants of their landlord's performance in delivering landlord service.
- 1.6 We will treat all reports of damp and mould seriously, ensuring we understand any health implications, including respiratory problems or other conditions that impact on the immune system, whilst recognising the potential impact on tenants' mental health if left untreated.
- 1.7 We recognise the importance of addressing the problems damp, mould and condensation can cause and the importance of ensuring we have preventative measures in place to tackle and reduce issues in our properties. This policy has been developed to specifically address the problems associated with damp, mould and condensation and ensures proactive interventions, set out the approach to diagnosis, the actions considered appropriate in different circumstances, effective communication, and aftercare.

2. AIMS

2.1 This policy aims to assist in the delivery of a damp and mould service that will be able to:

- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair, respectful, empathetic, and consistent way.
- Comply with legislative and regulatory requirements and good practice.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp, manage mould and control condensation.
- Ensure tenants have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on eradicating damp, managing mould, and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that the fabric of the property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould and condensation.
- Ensure the service provided is accessible to all so everyone can easily report damp, mould, and condensation issues.
- Provide effective assurance to tenants and stakeholders on the management of damp, mould, and condensation.
- Focus on working in partnership with the Council and tenants, ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.

.2. In terms of leaseholders, we will:

- Ensure leaseholders manage and maintain their properties, including addressing damp, condensation, and mould, as per their lease agreement.
- Clarify responsibilities for repairs: leaseholders for their flats, and the freeholder for the building's fabric.
- Address any neglect by leaseholders impacting Council properties in line with the lease.
- Provide guidance and information to leaseholders on managing condensation issues.

3. SCOPE OF POLICY

3.1 Derby Homes is an ALMO wholly owned by Derby City Council, managing the housing stock on their behalf. The scope of this policy covers how Derby Homes and council tenants can jointly control, manage, and eradicate damp, mould, and condensation this includes:

- **Identifying the types of damp:** rising, penetrating and condensation damp, including internal leaks.
- **Identifying Derby Homes responsibilities** for dealing with damp, mould, and condensation.

- **Identifying the tenants' responsibilities** for dealing with damp, mould and condensation.
- **Offering guidance, advice, and assistance** throughout the process to all tenants living in a council property.

4. LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

4.1 Derby Homes comply with relevant legislation and regulation, on behalf of Derby City Council:

- The Housing Act 1985
- The Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Landlord and Tenant Act Section 11 – Repairs and Maintenance
- The Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Defective premises Act 1972
- The Safety and Quality Standard
- The Decent Homes Standard

5. RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Decant Policy
- Customer Complaints Policy

6. CAUSES OF DAMP, MOULD, AND CONDENSATION

Rising Damp

6.1 The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the walls of a building.

Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)

6.2 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 or 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.
- Where 'bridging' occurs within the property, for example *Finlock Guttering*.

Condensation Damp

6.3 Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air meets 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 where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials (e.g. walls), which then condenses when it reaches colder conditions within the structure.

6.4 The conditions that can increase the risk of condensation are:

- Inadequate ventilation, such as not using natural opening windows and trickle or background vents and mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Inadequate heating such as undersized boilers and radiators.
- Inadequate thermal insulation, such as missing, dislodged, or defective wall and loft insulation.
- High humidity in cases of rising and penetrating damp.
- Poor building design and construction – specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.

6.5 Conditions that can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation – not opening windows, blocking up vents not turning on extractor fans, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Poor heating – not heating the house adequately, which can be a result of fuel poverty.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the house can contribute to this.
- Overcrowding.

6.6 Mould is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces. This is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Responsibilities

- 7.1 Following a report of damp, mould, or condensation from a tenant, we will offer immediate advice until a property inspection can be conducted and triage the call to assess if the tenant or anyone in their household is vulnerable or has any health priorities. Inspections will be conducted in a timely manner and at a mutually convenient time. We will:
- Undertake a property inspection when a repair is reported relating to suspected damp, mould, and condensation.
 - Diagnose the cause correctly and deliver effective solutions based on the ethos of dealing with the cause of the problem not just the symptom and wherever possible, fixing the problem first time.
 - Inform the tenant of the findings of the investigations following a property visit. This will include identifying the probable causes, recommending effective solutions and all necessary remedial works, actions, enhancements, and the estimated timescales to complete the works /measures; and keeping the tenant updated throughout the process from inception to completion. This information will be provided to the tenant in writing.
 - Carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with the tenancy agreement and our Responsive Repairs Policy, ensure only competent staff or contractors are employed to carry out any works and that the tenant's possessions are adequately protected during the works, completing any remedial works or measures within reasonable timescale in accordance with the processes and procedures, dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem and on the complexity of the solution of the remedial works/actions required.
 - Ensure the tenants home has a reasonable degree of thermal comfort in accordance with Decent Homes Standard to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.
 - Take responsibility for maintaining tenants' homes to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for conducting remedial action if these problems occur.
 - Undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation dampness. This may include but is not limited to upgraded ventilation system installation, improved indoor air movement and quality best practices.
 - We will set a timescale to follow up with tenants to check that the remedies suggested have been effective.
 - Install smart sensors where appropriate.
 - Make good internal surfaces following any repairs work conducted ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for decoration.

- Following major works, e.g. a damp proof course, Derby Homes will carry out any decorations required. This is in line with the tenancy agreement.
- Promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to minimise damp, mould, and condensation, particularly when there are no apparent causes relating to design or construction. All tenants reporting damp, mould or condensation will receive a copy of our latest guidance.
- We will offer advice regarding the management of mould in a property and under certain exceptional circumstances where the tenant is unable to conduct mould washes or redecoration Derby Homes will provide further advice, support, and assistance.
- Ensure that all employees have an awareness of the policy and relevant employees receive adequate and appropriate training to enable them to report issues of damp, mould, and condensation and to support our tenants.
- Ensure that technical staff are trained and competent in the diagnosis of damp, mould, and condensation issues.
- We will always first consider whether the source of the damp and mould is a design, construction, or maintenance issue which we can eliminate through work to the home. Where this is not the case additional support and advice will be provided to the tenant on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation damp. This support will be provided through the provision of advice and guidance literature.
- If it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property while the works are conducted, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. The tenant will be supported through this process to find suitable accommodation. We will consider moving tenants temporarily (decanting) if they or anyone in their household has a health problem that could be made worse by damp and mould.
- In some cases, it may be necessary to re-house a family on a permanent basis if for example a medical professional advises that re-housing is the most suitable option. Please refer to our Decant Policy for further information. [Decant Policy](#)
- Make reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and conduct the works and if required implement our no access procedure.
- We will not be able to control condensation damp where it is unreasonable or impractical to do so, or if any remedial action would be ineffective, for example, in non-habitable rooms such as out-buildings

or sheds that have been converted, including linking buildings between the house and outbuilding and other add-on structures.

- Where internal conditions within a home, for example, overcrowding or excessive hoarding of personal belongs, are impacting the health and wellbeing of the occupants, and are also preventing inspections or remedial works from being conducted, we will provide support and assistance to review the tenant's options. This may include moving to more appropriate alternative suitable accommodation.
- 7.2 If there are concerns raised that the damp, mould or condensation issue may relate to cost-of-living pressures, we will make the appropriate referrals to our Intensive Housing Management service, Money Advice Team, and/or include providing information on the Household Support Grant, or other local charities/grants funders who may be able to assist.
- 7.3 Guidance on how to use a heating system will be given verbally and made available in writing upon request.
- 7.4 We will conduct checks for damp, mould, and condensation when a property is empty (during the void process), as well as checking that heating systems and extractor fans are in working order.
- 7.5 Homes will be periodically checked for signs of damp, mould, and condensation, as well as for any related risk factors such as inadequate ventilation and condensation.

Tenant responsibilities

- 7.6 It is the tenant's responsibility to immediately report any evidence of damp mould or condensation along with any faulty equipment that will affect the management of humidity and moisture in the home (faulty extractor fan, unable to open windows, heating system failure, etc.).
- 7.7 Tenants must allow reasonable access for inspections and for the conducting of all remedial works. Where tenants are considering making any changes within their home, for example, converting rooms into one room, adding extensions, converting non-habitable buildings or spaces into habitable ones, they must seek advice and permission from us. This is in accordance with their tenancy agreement, to ensure that the proposed alteration would not contribute to the accumulation of damp, mould, or condensation, as well as ensuring any alterations comply with building control and planning guidelines.
- 7.8 Following minor works, for example a mould wash to remove mould caused by condensation, it is the tenant's responsibility to carry out any subsequent lease required. This is in line with the tenancy agreement.

Responsibilities in relation to leasehold properties

- 7.9 Leaseholders are responsible for managing and maintaining their own properties including damp, condensation, and mould, in accordance with their lease agreement.
- 7.10 Leaseholders are responsible for any repairs to their own flat which are due to their actions or inactions.
- 7.11 As the freeholder we are responsible for repairs to the fabric of the building, such as roof repairs and will carry out appropriate repairs to these.
- 7.12 We are only responsible for repairs to a leaseholder's property if we have not complied with this obligation.
- 7.13 Any neglect by the leaseholder to manage or carry out repairs for which they are responsible for, that has a direct impact on the condition of a Council owned property, will be dealt with in accordance with the lease.

8. GUIDANCE FOR TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS

- 8.1 Tenants can help 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), where it is safe to do so, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
 - Adequately heating rooms – The World Health Organisation recommends 18°C.
 - Not use paraffin or portable gas bottled heaters.
 - Ensuring tumble dryers are adequately ventilated.
 - Keeping the home well-ventilated, including:
 - opening windows during cooking or 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
 - not blocking air bricks
 - allowing air to circulate around furniture.
 - Wiping down condensation.
 - Consider the use of a dehumidifier.
 - Following all advice and guidance issued by us on managing humidity and moisture in the home, which can lead to condensation.

8.2 We recognise that fuel poverty is a factor in damp, mould and condensation issues, and will make appropriate referrals to help provide advice, support, and assistance where there is poverty, debt, or welfare concerns.

9. COMPLAINTS

9.1 Any tenant who is not satisfied with our approach in assessing and managing their damp, mould or condensation concerns can make a formal complaint. If the tenant is dissatisfied with actions and decisions made under this policy, it will be dealt with according to our Complaints and Remedy Policy.

10. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

10.1 Derby Homes is committed to welcoming and valuing diversity, promoting equity, and tackling unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. In delivering this Policy, will have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and ensure that no individual is discriminated against based on their sex, sexual orientation, marital status, pregnancy and maternity, gender reassignment, race, religion, belief, disability, or age.

10.2 This policy aligns to our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

11. PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING

11.1 We monitor the number of damp, mould, and condensation related reports we receive, and the remedies put in place to resolve the issues through our performance framework.

11.2 We will establish a system to collect data (for example, numbers of cases, response times, reoccurrence, tenant satisfaction and complaints) about damp, mould, and condensation.

11.3 We will monitor our damp, mould and condensation reports, repairs, risk, and planned maintenance reports and will provide updates to the Board.

11.4 This data will be used to review performance, improve practice, and learn how to better address damp, mould, and condensation, for example, changes to policies, procedures, or additional staff training.

11.5 We will proactively use data to identify other homes potentially at risk of damp, mould, and condensation.

11.6 We aim to learn from the data and continue to ensure a safe, healthy, and comfortable environment for our residents, as well as to protect the fabric of our buildings.

11.7 Repairs or remedial work conducted in response to cases of damp, mould and condensation, complement our programmes of planned maintenance.

12.0 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER THIS POLICY

- 12.1 All staff associated with housing management and repairs and maintenance services are responsible under this policy.
- 12.2 The Head of Housing Management and Head of Repairs are responsible for the overseeing the implementation of this policy.

13.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 13.1 The headline risks associated with this policy are:

Risk Description	Risk Impact
Failure to comply with statutory requirements and rules and guidance issued by the Government and their departments, and the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.	Regulatory intervention, legal action, adverse publicity, and potential financial impact on the organisation. Risk of complaints/challenges including to the Ombudsman, and risk to levels of satisfaction with services/Derby Homes
Failure to proactively manage and maintain our properties.	Increase in tenant dissatisfaction, complaints, and disrepair complaints. Damage to Derby Homes reputation.

14.0 DATA PROTECTION, RECORD STORAGE AND RETENTION

- 14.1 We understand that confidentiality is important to tenants and will treat all information relevant to each tenant in the strictest confidence.
- 14.2 We approach the protection of personal data in a comprehensive manner in line with the Data Protection Principles of the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA) (collectively referred to as the Data Protection Legislation).
- 14.3 Any personal information relating to tenants is stored on Derby Homes systems which are compliant with the principles of GDPR and our Document Retention Policy.

15.0 COMMUNICATION

- 15.1 This policy will be stored on our intranet and will be communicated to all staff involved in damp, mould, and condensation processes. The policy will also be made available on our website to provide easy access for tenants and our partners.
- 15.2 Customer friendly versions of this policy will also be published on our website and will be communicated to tenants in a range of accessible formats.

16.0 LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

- 16.1 We are committed to putting arrangements in place that ensure effective training of all staff.
- 16.2 This policy and the procedures that support it will be the subject of a mixed platform of training across relevant teams. This training will be bespoke to stakeholders and will include:
- Team Briefings, for those who need to be aware of it but not actively involved in the delivery.
 - On the job training, for those who need to adhere to this policy and use the accompanying procedures in their daily roles.

17.0 POLICY REVIEW

- 17.0 This policy will normally be reviewed every three years to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, unless an earlier review is required due to regulatory, statutory, or other requirements.