

Enfield Council Housing

# Damp and Mould Policy

2025



[www.enfield.gov.uk](http://www.enfield.gov.uk)

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Approved	Portfolio decision
Author	Service Improvement – Policy team
Policy Owner	Head of M&E and Compliance
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Consultation with the Enfield 500	MS Teams meeting 17th February 2025

# Introduction

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**We are committed, as a Council and landlord, to providing our tenants with homes maintained to a high standard. Good quality, safe and secure homes contribute to tenants' wellbeing and ability to live happy and healthy lives in their surroundings.**

This policy sets out our approach to preventing, wherever possible, the adverse effects of damp and mould on tenants' lives and our proactive action plan to tackle and manage the causes.

Damp and mould can arise as a fault in the building or as a result of the way in which it is occupied. The policy outlines how we will work with tenants to resolve damp and mould issues by taking action where necessary and providing support and guidance to help them make changes to manage condensation and reduce the possibility of damp and mould occurring in their homes.

## Scope

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The policy applies to dwellings and communal areas, owned and/or managed by the Council. This does not include damp and mould in leaseholder flats, unless there is a repair required which is the landlord's responsibility.

Our Damp and Mould Policy forms part of our wider repairs and maintenance service. Further information on our wider repairs offer can be found in our Repairs and Maintenance Policy.



# Aims of the policy

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The policy aims to ensure we provide and maintain safe, healthy homes for our tenants, and resolve damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants.

## We will:

- Take reports of damp and mould seriously, making sure we meet all our responsibilities as a landlord to provide accommodation that is fit for our tenants and their families to live in.
- Use an approach that is proportionate and twofold:
  - to remove the mould i.e., eliminate the immediate hazard.
  - to investigate the underlying cause of damp and mould and take steps to prevent a reoccurrence.
- Make sure our risk assessments are dynamic and specific to the residents, their home, and the hazards.
- Utilise specialist external advice where needed.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that the needs of the household are considered in our investigations and decision making.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonably practicable repair solutions to manage damp, mould, and condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with advice and guidance on managing and controlling condensation and mould.
- Signpost residents who are experiencing difficulties managing their heating costs to charities and other support agencies for assistance.
- Ensure that the fabric of the Council's property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation by carrying out preventative maintenance.
- Ensure staff are trained and skilled to be able to identify cases of damp and mould as well as the causes.
- Communicate clearly and openly with our tenants throughout the management of a case.

# Legislation and Associated Policy

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## The scope of this policy is covered by legislation including the following:

- Housing Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human habitation) Act 2018
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Section 11 – Repairs and Maintenance
- Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- Regulator of Social Housing Safety and Quality Standard
- Decent Homes standards

## The following Policies may impact and inform the delivery service set out in this Policy:

- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Tenancy Audit Policy and Procedure
- Compensation Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Fairer Enfield

# Understanding damp and mould

Damp is the accumulation of moisture within a property, affecting building materials like walls, floors, ceilings, and foundations, as well as home furnishings such as carpets, curtains, wallpaper, furniture, and clothing<sup>1</sup>. As well as causing damage, damp can also lead to the growth of mould. A range of factors can lead to damp in homes.



## Condensation damp

Condensation damp occurs when moisture within the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the buildings (for example window frames, corners, and low points on walls behind sofas or wardrobes). This is the most common form of damp.

Condensation can result from several living conditions, including:

- **Poor ventilation:** Not opening windows, blocking vents, not using extractor fans, and restricting air circulation around furniture.
- **Insufficient heating:** Not heating the home, often due to fuel poverty.
- **High humidity:** Activities like cooking without covering pans and drying laundry indoors.
- **Cluttered spaces:** Lack of space around possessions and storage, hindering air flow through the property.



## Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp is water that gets into the building from outside due to defects in the walls, roofs, windows, or floors.



## Rising damp

Rising damp occurs when moisture from the ground travels upwards through building components in contact with the ground, such as walls and floors. This issue is commonly found in older properties.



## Traumatic damp

Traumatic damp can be caused by leaking water from waste and heating pipes, overflowing baths or sinks, burst pipes or defective water storage vessels inside the building. Traumatic damp can also originate from outside the property, for example from another building or from environmental flooding.



## Mould

Mould is a type of fungus which grows in moist environments. Mould can cause adverse health effects as well as damage to buildings.

It is important to recognise that not all damp and mould presents the same level of risk to our tenants. The most immediate risk relates to severe mould growth of certain types of mould which may cause airborne toxicity and is therefore especially dangerous to some of our vulnerable tenants.<sup>2</sup>

We will not generally undertake any tests to identify specific mould types but deal with all mould types and remove the hazard.

<sup>1</sup> [Damp and mould FAQs | Housing Ombudsman](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home – GOV.UK](#)

# The Council's Housing Stock

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The age and construction type of the Council's property stock are contributing factors in the occurrence of damp and mould, alongside poor thermal performance, which can create difficulties for tenants to provide sufficient heating and ventilation, creating ideal conditions for condensation and mould growth.

Building 'defects' can also be a problem e.g., leaking pipes or roofs, blocked gutters, or down pipes, defective damp courses, etc and this type of repair is designated as responsive repairs and generally carried out by the repairs service.

The Council has a council housing portfolio of just over 10,000 homes. Through our Asset Management Strategy, we are committed to maintaining our properties to the Decent Homes standard and providing homes that are 'fit for human habitation' both at the start and during any tenancy.

As part of this, addressing damp and mould issues is a priority for the Council and we have been fundamentally reviewing our response so that there is a stronger relationship between what we know is required to address damp and mould on a day-to-day basis alongside identifying where this has a structural or capital investment led requirement to prevent damp and mould occurring long term. The Business plan has set aside significant investment over the next 25 years for improvement works with Investment requirements reviewed on an annual basis. This includes work to bring properties with an EPC band of E, F or G up to a minimum EPC level C.

Additionally, we use the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) to assess the condition of our stock and identify existing hazards that need addressing.

## The Impact of Damp and Mould

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Exposure to mould spores can cause a wide range of symptoms including rashes, itchy eyes, sneezing, coughs, dizziness, and nausea.

The long-term effects of mould exposure can be more severe for vulnerable people, people with respiratory conditions and those with a weakened immune system.

The elderly, children and those with existing allergies are all considered to be more susceptible to mould exposure and it is acknowledged that living in poor environmental conditions can impact on an individual's sense of well-being and mental health.

# Responsibilities

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The Council will work with residents where damp and/or mould is present and identify solutions and actions to resolve the problem, some of these will need to be undertaken by the Council and some will be for residents to implement.

## Landlord Responsibilities

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The Council is responsible for the maintenance, repair and replacement of the structure and common parts of its properties, as set out section 11 Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and outlined in the Tenancy Agreement and Tenants' Handbook, including the following:

- Investigation and completion of remedial works to treat leaks, damp, mould, and/or condensation, including fitting mechanical extraction where necessary in void properties before these properties are rented to new tenants.
- Investigation and completion of remedial works to treat leaks, damp, mould, and/or condensation, including fitting mechanical extraction where necessary, in properties inspected as part of mutual exchange processes.
- Accurate diagnosis of the cause of damp and implementation of effective solutions that address the root cause, not just the symptoms.
- Employment of competent and skilled contractors to carry out any required works.
- Clear communication with the tenant to include detail and timeline of works to be carried out.
- Reasonable adjustments where household includes vulnerable members.
- The Council will restore internal surfaces after completing any remedial work, ensuring they are repaired and made good.
- If it is unsafe for occupants to live in the property during the works, alternative accommodation will be arranged.



# Tenant Responsibilities

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Damp and mould caused by condensation can often be controlled by simple measures which can be adopted by the tenant.

These responsibilities include:

- Following conditions in the Tenancy Agreement and all advice and guidance issued by us, on managing and controlling damp, mould, and condensation, for example, putting lids on cooking pans, drying laundry outside if possible, closing bathroom doors while showering.
- Regularly checking for and reporting any leaks, or faulty heating, windows, or extractor fans.
- Regularly checking for signs of mould and clean them if they occur.
- Heating rooms adequately and keep humidity between 40-60%. The average recommended temperatures should be maintained at around 20°C, bedrooms around 16-19°C, corridors around 15-18°C.
- Keeping the home well ventilated, for example opening windows when cooking/ showering, keeping trickle vents open.
- Ensuring that the general upkeep and cleaning of extractor fans and vents is undertaken (i.e., that they are not blocked).
- Allowing access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works.
- Not allowing the property to become overcrowded or using the property as a business or for a purpose it was not originally intended.
- Arranging contents insurance.

We understand that some households may face challenges with some of these responsibilities. We will work with tenants, provide guidance, and signpost them to available support, for example financial assistance, to help them maintain their home and prevent damp and mould.



# Tenants with Vulnerabilities

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We will utilise the data we hold regarding the diverse needs of our tenants to make sure our services meet their needs.

Where we identify a vulnerable tenant, we may make suitable adjustments such as louder knocking, extend wait times for door answering, or coordination through a third party such as a support worker.

If we determine the tenant may need assistance in maintaining the property or during the repairs process, we will signpost to available support or make referrals to relevant services, including any financial assistance available for households in fuel poverty.

# Personal Possession Claims

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The Council is not responsible for claims of damaged belongings but may in some cases make a goodwill payment in line with our Compensation Policy.

Where a tenant believes that they have incurred or lost belongings through the Council's negligence they must make a formal claim on the Council's insurance scheme.

Details of the scheme will be provided on the website and in complaint or related correspondence.



# Repairs Process

The Council has established a damp and mould task force, whose purpose is to ensure that reports of damp and mould are responded to quickly.

There are two triggers for a repair:

- **Trigger 1** – A report is received from the tenant, a housing officer, or the repairs team.
- **Trigger 2** – A hazard is identified through a HHSRS survey.

When we become aware of an issue with Damp and Mould, we will initially arrange an inspection. Time scales will depend on the urgency of the repair as set out by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS):

Type	Examples	Action	Time frame
<b>Category 1 hazard (deemed to pose the most severe risk to the health and safety of tenants)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damp and mould growth</li> <li>• Mould spores</li> <li>• Severe dampness</li> <li>• Dust mites</li> </ul>	Arrange an inspection and an urgent mould clean if required	24 hours
<b>Category 2 hazard (less severe but cans still have a negative effect on the health and safety of tenants)</b>	Less severe damp and mould present	Arrange an inspection and follow up action	5 days

We will also:

- Check a tenant's circumstances and wellbeing.
- Provide the tenant with a copy of our inspection report within 7 days.
- Ensure that follow on repairs and any further inspections are raised within a maximum of 2 working days of the visit with a completion of no longer than 7 working days.
- Ensure the tenant is aware of the next steps and is kept informed during repair process.
- Provide the tenant with details for reporting any issues following the completion of repair work.
- Ensure any further required visits are carried out by a trained surveyor or external specialist contractor.
- Check the EPC rating of the property and assess eligibility for our capital programmes targeting improved energy efficiency.
- Liaise with colleagues/ external agencies where tenants require additional support.
- Take enforcement action in the event that we cannot access the property or other property which may be impacting the issue, to inspect or make repairs.

# Case Management

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Where there are significant issues or complexities in managing resolutions, for example, complex repairs which may take some time to resolve, vulnerable households, fuel poverty or cases of overcrowding, a case will be registered as a complex case and monitored by a panel of Officers to ensure that the issues are managed through to resolution.

A complex case panel operates weekly or as and when required to record cases, actions required and decision making to support successful outcomes. The panel is comprised of the Repairs team, the Compliance team, and the Housing Management Team.

Case management decisions include the following:

- Initiating a temporary decant property
- Approval for funding to support
- Agreement to apply management discretion for a direct let
- Seeking support from other agencies

Each case is discussed on its own merit and may involve referral or case conference with other external agencies and internal partner departments.

# Monitoring the Policy

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Damp and mould cases will be monitored on an ongoing basis through a real time dashboard. We will monitor our performance through key performance indicators on the total numbers of damp and mould cases, status and how long they have been open, these are recorded and reported to the Enfield Repairs Direct (ERD) board monthly.

Additionally, we will monitor, reflect, and learn from regular case reviews and report on the findings of these reviews at the (ERD) board.

# Record Keeping

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Records of every inspection, complete with photographs will be kept on our files for a minimum period of six years.

We will keep accurate and up to date records of all our agreed actions, repair work and communication on our case management system.

# Review

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The policy will be reviewed every three years unless there are any changes or recommendations from the Regulator of Social Housing or Housing Ombudsman in which case it will be reviewed in line with these recommendations.

