

## Mould and Damp Policy

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this Policy is to establish DPHA's Policy and set out our position In addressing reports of damp and mould reported in our properties by our tenants, and to ensure that appropriate mitigations for these conditions are carried out.
<b>Guidance:</b>	Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 Housing (Scotland) Act 2006 The Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 Putting Safety First: a briefing note on damp and mould for social housing practitioners ACS Model Policy
<b>Regulatory Standards:</b>	Standard 1: The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.  Standard 2: The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. And its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.  Standard 4: The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.  Standard 6: The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.
<b>Other Connected DPHA Policies</b>	Maintenance and Repair Policy Health and Safety Policy Landlords Safety Manual Privacy Policy Complaints Policy Equality & HR Policy
<b>Policy Review Date:</b>	This is a new policy
<b>Last Reviewed by Board or PRWG:</b>	This is a new policy
<b>Date reviewed by Policy Review Working Group (PRWG):</b>	31 October 2023
<b>Date approved by Board (or PRWG if delegated):</b>	28 November 2023
<b>Publish on the Website:</b>	Yes

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) issued a letter to all social landlords on 1 December 2022 to provide advice on tenant safety, damp and mould. This letter was issued following the findings in the coroner’s report on the tragic death of a child who died of a respiratory condition caused by mould in his home.
- 1.2 This case shone a light on issues related to damp and mould in the housing sector and displayed a clear link between mould and damp in houses and serious health conditions. The letter from the SHR asked landlords to consider what systems they have in place to manage and prevent mould and dampness in tenants’ homes. The SHR stated that landlords should have “appropriate, proactive systems to identify and deal with any reported cases of mould and damp timeously and effectively.”.
- 1.3 Following on from this letter, a document was produced jointly by the SHR, the Chartered Institute of Housing, the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations and the Association of Local Authority Chief Housing Officers, titled “Putting Safety First: a briefing note on damp and mould for social housing practitioners”.
- 1.4 The briefing note provides lots of practical and useful guidance on how to prevent and treat damp and mould in properties to ensure that landlords are proactive, understanding of tenants’ experiences, and effective in resolving any underlying issues that are causing damp and mould. The guidance set out in the briefing note has formed the basis of this new damp and mould policy, with additional elements of best practice being incorporated to ensure that individual organisations can develop robust and effective damp and mould management procedures to accompany the new policy.

The policy has encompassed the main requirements set out in the briefing note such as:

- implementing preventative measures;
- early intervention;
- tackling the root cause of damp and mould;
- ensuring complaints are dealt with appropriately and timeously;
- ensuring ongoing monitoring of treated damp and mould to prevent a reoccurrence;
- supporting tenants dealing with damp and mould; and
- ensuring robust data management and record keeping arrangements are in place.

## **2.0 AIM OF THE POLICY.**

- 2.1 The aim of this policy is to ensure appropriate control measures are in place to adequately manage damp and mould within properties.

2.2 The procedures detailed within this section have been written to ensure that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that problems with damp and mould are identified and dealt with promptly.

### 3.0 **DEFINITIONS.**

3.1 “Penetrating damp” is damp which results from issues with the building which leads to water ingress such as leaking pipes, cracks and blocked guttering. “Rising damp” is caused by defects in the foundation of the building. Both of these are already covered by the Tolerable Standard.

3.2 “Condensation damp” is caused by an excess of moisture in the air and poor ventilation. This causes water droplets to form on cold surfaces such as windows and walls. The risk of condensation forming is increased through daily living activities such as bathing, cooking and drying clothes. This type of damp can cause mould to form on the affected surfaces.

### 4.0 **LEGAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.**

4.1 The Policy complies with the following legislation and regulatory requirements.

- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- The Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004
- Putting Safety First: a briefing note on damp and mould for social housing practitioners

### 5.0 **RESPONSIBILITIES.**

5.1 The organisation will develop robust internal procedures on dealing with issues of damp and mould. These procedures will cover handling of reports from tenants or members of staff of damp and mould, escalation procedures and monitoring of reports of damp and mould to ensure the issues are dealt with promptly. Procedures should outline where members of staff from different departments are required to ensure that any damp and mould is dealt with effectively.

5.2 It is important when dealing with issues of damp and mould to have a thorough understanding of the condition of all housing stock to identify and manage issues at an early stage. As such, stock condition data will be gathered to identify where properties have a greater risk of developing issues with damp and mould.

5.3 This information can be gathered by including damp and mould checks as part of any annual property inspection programmes, through stock conditions surveys, at the void stage of properties and checking neighbouring properties for damp and mould when problems have developed in a nearby home with similar characteristics.

- 5.4 Where damp or mould is identified in void properties, any issues should be treated before reletting the property.
- 5.5 Void checklists will include checking extractor fans and ventilation systems to ensure they are working properly. Any defects will be noted and repaired in line with the organisation's repair and maintenance policies.
- 5.6 Other preventative measures, such as gutter cleaning, will be included in planned maintenance programmes.
- 6.0 **TREATING MOULD AND DAMP AND ONGOING MANAGEMENT.**
- 6.1 Procedures should be aimed at tackling the root cause of damp and mould in addition to treating the effects of it.
- 6.2 To be sure efforts to treat damp and mould have been effective, initial treatments must be supplemented by a follow up visit to check whether the problem has truly been resolved. This should take place at least six weeks after the initial treatment, although any issues reported by tenants in the meantime should be responded to promptly.
- 6.3 Ongoing monitoring procedures will be developed to prevent mould and damp reoccurring. As such, the installation of indoor air quality monitoring units or smart sensors to track humidity and CO2 levels where damp and mould have been reported to be an ongoing issue may be considered
- 7.0 **PERFORMANCE MONITORING.**
- 7.1 Reports of damp and mould should be taken seriously and not treated as a lifestyle problem caused by the tenant. When responding to damp and mould cases, staff should consider the personal characteristics of tenants and whether anybody would have an increased risk to their health from living with damp and mould. Young children, older and disabled people, and people with lung conditions, compromised immune systems and certain other health problems are at increased risk of illnesses resulting from damp and mould.
- 7.2 Complaints processes must be easy for tenants to understand, access and use. Tenants should be aware of how they can make a complaint and what steps they can take if they are not happy with the result of a complaint.
- 7.3 The organisation will implement a procedure to review complaints, assess what went wrong, and as a result make changes where needed to policies, procedures, and staff behaviour in order to ensure they continually improve their performance.
- 8.0 **TRAINING.**
- 8.1 All customer service staff should be provided with training on how to effectively deal with complaints of damp and mould to ensure the issue is properly dealt with in a timeous manner.

8.2 All customer service staff, particularly those who may enter tenants' homes or respond to repair requests, should be trained to identify damp and mould and understand the organisation's policies and processes for responding to it.

8.3 Staff who are likely to respond to reports of damp and mould must be trained and appropriately equipped to assess the issue (including safe use of PPE), identify the root cause, and respond appropriately.

## 9.0 **TENANT COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION.**

9.1 The organisation will provide tenants with information about everyday activities such as: cooking, leaving clothes to dry in rooms and on radiators and taking hot showers that can cause condensation which can lead to dampness and the growth of mould.

9.2 The organisation will encourage tenants to report concerns around damp and mould as soon as they notice a problem arising.

9.3 The organisation will provide tenants with information on the risks of living with mould and damp, how to identify and report these issues, what steps the landlord will take to address the problem and expected timescales for completion of remedial works.

9.4 Tenants will also be provided with information on complaints procedures, if they are not satisfied with the organisation's response, and details for the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

9.5 Tenant information should be clear, easy to understand and accessible for all tenants. This may require a range of communication methods such as email, text, leaflets and tenant newsletters.

## 10.0 **EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS.**

10.1 We are committed to promoting an environment of respect, understanding, encouraging fairness, diversity and eliminating discrimination by providing equality of opportunity for all. This is reflected in our Equality and Human Rights Policy.

## 11.0 **COMPLAINTS.**

11.1 Although we are committed to providing high levels of service, we accept that there may be occasions where you may not be satisfied with the service you have received from us. We value all complaints and use this information to help us improve our services. Our Complaints Policy describes our complaints procedure and how to make a complaint.

## 12.0 **DATA PROTECTION.**

12.1 We will treat personal data in line with our obligations under the current data protection regulations and our Privacy Policy. Information regarding how data will be used and the basis for processing data is provided in our Customer Fair Processing Notice.

## **13.0 REVIEW**

13.1 This policy will be reviewed by the Board every 3 years or earlier if required.