

# REPORTS OF DAMP AND MOULD PROCEDURE



## APPENDIX 2

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## 1.0 Aims and Objectives

This procedure outlines the actions that will be taken when a report of damp and mould is made.

## 2.0 Roles and Responsibilities

**Repairs Inspectors** are responsible for undertaking inspections following a report of damp or mould, taking initial tests to confirm if damp is present, recording findings and liaising with external contractors if further tests or work is required.

**Multi-Skilled and Single Trade Operatives** are responsible for completing work requested by Repairs Inspectors to address damp and mould issues.

**Housing Repairs and Compliance Manager** is responsible for monitoring the work of the Repairs Inspectors and checking that inspections and follow up work are completed.

**Housing Repairs Manager** is responsible for reviewing all information gathered after a second visit.

**Repairs Customer Services Manager** is responsible for responding to formal complaints regarding damp and mould.

**Tenancy Services Manager** and **Independent Living Manager** are responsible for ensuring that their teams report issues regarding damp and mould if identified during a home visit and for liaising with tenants if a decant is required.

**Lettings Manager** is responsible for ensuring that reports of damp and mould made on housing applications are referred to the Repairs team for investigation and for identifying potential decant properties if required.

**All housing employees** are responsible for reporting damp and mould issues if identified during home visits

**Head of Housing** has overall responsibility for ensuring the procedure is followed and appropriate action is being taken in regards to reports of damp and mould.

## 3.0 Procedure

### 3.1 Reports of damp and mould – initiating procedure

A report of damp and mould in a property can be made in a number of ways. This can be directly from a tenant through the report of a repair, by telephone, e-mail or online. Issues of damp could be noted on stock condition surveys. Reports of damp and mould are also received as complaints, and from members and MP enquiries. In some instances, reports of damp and mould are made on housing applications. Employees may also see damp or mould when completing home visits.

All reports, irrespective of how they are made, will initiate this procedure.

## 3.2 Inspection

Following a report of damp and mould an inspection by a Repairs Inspector will be arranged. The Council will aim to complete the inspection within 3 working days. If the household contains someone with respiratory conditions, or another need which means that they are more vulnerable then these situations will be treated with priority in accordance with our Customers with Additional Support Needs Policy.

The Repairs Inspector will record their findings on the damp and mould checklist on their tablet and will take moisture meter readings and photographs of all affected areas. This will include areas where mould is not currently present but the tenant reports that issues have occurred. If necessary, a carbide test and hygrometer salt analysis will be undertaken.

If the Repairs Inspector identifies any contributing factors, these will be noted to inform the Council's approach to the matter and the advice given to tenants. This could include overcrowding of the property, hoarding, extractor fans that have been switched off, or washing that is drying on radiators. The Repairs Inspector will provide advice on any ways that the tenant could look to improve the issue. Tenants will be shown how mould can be cleaned, and provided with an advice leaflet.

The Repairs Inspector will also note if the tenant indicates that the heating in the property is not being used adequately due to financial reasons. The Repairs Inspector will offer a referral to the Council's Financial Inclusion service.

If the tenant raises concerns regarding the impact on their health, the Repairs Inspector will advise the tenant to consult a healthcare professional. Action will not be delayed to await medical advice and opinion; it is not a requirement for action to be taken.

When contributing factors are identified the Repairs Inspector will consider these alongside other potential causes, such as the results of moisture meter readings and visual inspections.

If during the inspection the tenant raises that they wish to make a complaint or that they are seeking compensation, then it is the Repairs Inspector's responsibility to ensure that a formal stage one complaint is raised. This will then be investigated by the Repair Customer Services Manager.

## 3.3 Follow-up works

If required, the Repairs Inspector will arrange the following follow-up works:

- Clean and treat the mould area with anti-fungal paint - *The Repairs Inspector will ensure that tenant is aware that this can only be completed in white or magnolia, so may not match existing decoration. To be completed within 1 week of the inspection.*
- Extractor fans to be fitted, changed or repaired - *To be completed within 2 weeks of the inspection.*

- Referral to Tenancy Sustainment or Financial Inclusion Services to provide support to the household, particularly if hoarding is identified or fuel poverty is a contributing factor – *This will be made within 3 working days of the inspection.*
- If damp is suspected, immediate report to external contractor to investigate.

### **3.4 Second report of damp and mould**

If the initial inspection and follow-up works do not resolve the issue, and a second report is made, then the Repairs Inspector will visit again. Prior to the visit they will review the photographs and readings from the first inspection.

The Repairs Inspector will take moisture meter readings and photographs again. These will be compared with the information from the first visit. If a carbide test and hygrometer salt analysis was not completed at the first visit, it will be arranged.

An 'EasyLog' device will be left in the property for two weeks to measure the temperature and humidity in the property.

If contributing factors are identified, further advice will be provided.

The Repairs Inspector can arrange any of the same follow-up actions as outlined in section 3.3.

Referral for external specialist advice will be undertaken for all properties where a second report has been received.

### **3.5 Review of information**

If, after a full suite of tests are completed, including external specialist advice, the Repairs Inspector concludes that there are no property or structural contributing factors then they must refer the case to the Housing Repairs Manager.

The Housing Repairs Manager will review all of the evidence, including photographs and test results. If they agree with the conclusion then they will write to the tenant to inform them that there is no further action that can be taken, repeat any advice given, and confirm that a follow-up visit will be completed in six months.

### **3.6 Review after six months**

All properties that reach stage 3.4 of the procedure will have a follow-up visit after six months to see if the problem is resolved or reoccurring. Actions outlined in 3.3 may be completed again depending on the findings of the visit.

### **3.7 Consideration of a decant**

If work is required by an external contractor to rectify the cause of the damp and mould it may require the tenant to move to an alternative property for a short period of time. Usually less than one month. If this is required, the Decant Policy will be followed.

## **4.0 Monitoring and Performance**

The Housing Repairs and Compliance Manager will monitor that inspections and follow up work is being completed.