



Policy:	Dampness, Mould & Condensation Policy
Health & Safety	
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 Estimates in the UK are that between 10-50% of homes are affected by damp. Social housing and low-income communities where there is often overcrowding, a lack of appropriate heating, ventilation and insulation, can experience a substantially higher proportion of damp and mould than the national average.
- 1.2. We want to ensure that our customers have warm, safe and healthy homes to live in.
- 1.3. A purposeful approach to the prevention, treatment and remediation of these issues will benefit our tenants. Going forward our tools will include better data, improved reporting and identification of mould, condensation and dampness, end-to-end tenant service with better joined up advice, guidance and support, and preventative technology systems.

2. Introduction and policy statement

- 2.1 The Association is committed to maintaining its homes to a high standard, which adds value to the homes and surroundings. Maintaining high quality and secure homes can improve the lives of our tenants and achieve an elevated level of customer satisfaction.
- 2.2 This policy document ensures that wherever possible, tenants are not adversely affected, by the causes of condensation, damp or mould and drives forward, an agenda of initiative-taking action to tackle, manage and report on the causes of the above.
- 2.3 In our attempts to mitigate against the risk of damp and mould and the impact it can have on our tenants, the Association will:
 - Ensure adequate budget provision is in place to deal with damp, mould and condensation issues and technical resources are available to recognise times of higher demand e.g. winter.
 - Ensure we have a robust procedure in place to investigate and resolve issues that arise.
 - Ensure that our refurbishment programmes take due consideration of the impact of damp and mould and include measures to mitigate this.
 - Ensure that our tenants, customers and stakeholders have access to and/or provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on how to manage and control damp, mould and condensation.

- 2.4 This policy seeks to mitigate against the risk of potential insurance claims against the Association or reputational damage because of issues in relation to damp/mould and condensation.

3. 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 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. References

- 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. Scottish Housing Quality Standard

- 5.1 The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) requires that homes provided by social landlords:
- Meet the Tolerable Standard;
 - Are free from serious disrepair;
 - Are energy efficient;
 - Have modern facilities and services; and
 - Are healthy, safe and secure.

6. Identifying Dampness, Mould & Condensation

- 6.1 The Association will pro-actively identify issues by:
- Conducting 3 yearly Stock Condition Surveys, part of which will be to assess the level of mould/damp present in a sample of our homes
 - Identifying issues when visiting tenants for other issues such as reactive repair inspections, tenancy visits etc. We will actively ask tenants if they have any issues when we visit.
 - Recording and acting on any ad hoc dampness reports made by tenants or contractors
 - Understanding our stock and the archetype of properties and components that have a higher likelihood to suffer from damp and mould. The current stock base of 293 units comprises of;
 - Six contract phases built in 1930's and refurbished in 1990's (173 units)
 - One contract phase built in 2002 (45 units)
 - One contract phase built in 2011 (75 units)

7. Our Approach to Managing Dampness, Mould & Condensation

- 7.1 We will treat tenants in a fair and consistent manner and recognise that having a dampness or mould issues in a home can be distressing.
- 7.2 Our approach will be non-judgemental and we will empathise and provide the support required to resolve the situation. We will treat reports seriously and never classify as a lifestyle problem.
- 7.3 When responding to damp and mould cases, we will 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.
- 7.4 We will undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate, damp, mould including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- 7.5 The Association will work in partnership with tenants to resolve and understand how to reduce condensation, damp, and mould issues, through a range of innovative solutions.
- 7.6 Through our robust resolution to resolve, we seek to minimise the number and impact of complaints.

- 7.7 We will protect the fabric of our homes from deterioration and damage resulting from, or contributing to, damp and mould.
- 7.8 We will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements, sector best practice and tenants' health and safety compliance.

8. Responding to Dampness, Mould and Condensation

- 8.1 Where we identify dampness, mould or condensation, by any source, we will arrange access with the tenant for an initial inspection within 3 working days of the issue highlighted.
- 8.2 After inspection, we will develop a bespoke solution to alleviate damp, mould and condensation issues as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise damage to the fabric, fixtures, and fittings of the property.
- 8.3 Potential remedies may be included in the following list although this is not exhaustive:
- Minor structural repairs to alleviate water penetration such as window repointing
 - Major structural repairs such as roof renewal
 - Full operational check of heating and ventilation systems
 - Fungicidal wash and decoration to areas affected by mould
 - Technology such as linked environmental sensors that can be installed within reported problematic damp or mould homes and can be monitored online and to better understand cause and solution.
 - Increased ventilation or improved heating measures
 - Referral to money advice services if problem is because of not affording to use heating adequately
 - Work in partnership with specialist companies for the provision of specialist survey reports in complex cases
 - In cases of condensation, we will provide advice and support to our customers in ways to reduce damp and condensation in their home and how to make positive changes.
- 8.4 All remedial repairs required will conform to the timescales contained within our Maintenance Policy.
- 8.5 In all reports of dampness, mould, and condensation, we will arrange a return visit to the property after a period deemed as appropriate (at least 6 weeks) to enable the remedy/ advice to be undertaken.

- 8.6 We will take before and after photographs to evidence success of any works/ advice.
- 8.7 Following our initial inspection, we will write to the tenant within 5 working days outlining the proposed solution and relevant timescales.
- 8.8 We will consider the issues of damp condensation and mould when designing investment programmes for example heating, ventilation, and insulation.
- 8.9 Where damp or mould is identified in void properties, any issues will be treated before re letting the property. Void checklists will include checking extractor fans and ventilation systems to ensure they are working properly. Any defects will be repaired in line with the Association's maintenance policies.

9. Diagnosing the problem

- 9.1 We will provide colleagues with the skills and testing equipment to identify and differentiate between signs of damp, condensation, mould and understand the causes and remedial action. We will also provide a procedural document for reference.
- 9.2 Where appropriate we will also engage external specialist consultants to assist the rectification of damp, mould and condensation as well as the independence verification and validations of actions undertaken.

10. Information to tenants

Blochairn Housing Association will:

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 Encourage tenants to report concerns around damp and mould as soon as they notice a problem arising.
- 10.3 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.

- 10.4 Issue information to tenants on complaints procedures, for if they are not satisfied with the Associations response, and details for the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.
- 10.5 Ensure tenant information is 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.

11. Roles and responsibilities

- 11.1 The Management Committee will have responsibility for the approval of this policy. The Director holds overall responsibility for implementation of the policy.
- 11.2 The Operations Manager will be responsible for record keeping systems, reporting to the Committee and policy review
- 11.3 Technical colleagues will carry out inspections and prepare remedial plans.
- 11.4 All colleagues will register a report of dampness, mould or condensation.

12. Insurance

- 12.1 Blochairn Housing Association will ensure that all of its assets, properties and services are covered by insurance policies against all eventualities, including cover for Public Liability and Third Party cover.
- 12.2 In the event of a claim for compensation for damage or personal injury, in relation to damp and mould being received, all information relating to the matter will be collated and submitted to our Insurers.

13. Record Keeping & Reporting

- 13.1 We will maintain records of each instance of dampness, mould or condensation identified to enable us to analyse trends and also report to the Management Committee on a quarterly basis.

14. Equality and Diversity

- 14.1 Blochairn Housing Association is committed to providing fair and equal treatment and to comply with the Equality Act 2010. The Act established nine protected characteristics (the grounds on which discrimination is unlawful). These cover age, race, sex, religion/belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy/maternity, gender reassignment, disability and marriage/civil partnership.
- 14.2 We will offer tenants a range of options for communicating with us as contact in writing can be a deterrent, for example for people with poor literacy skills, visual impairment, or where first language is not English.

15. Training and Review

- 15.1 All colleagues will receive training on dampness and mould as required
- 15.2 This policy will be reviewed on a 3-year cycle or as a result in any changes in legislation.