



**Halton**  
Housing

# Policy

<b>Title:</b>	Damp and Mould Policy
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Within our corporate plan 2022-2025 we set out our priority to make sure that our customers' homes meet their current and future needs and that we will invest in our homes to make them safe, warm, affordable and secure along with maintaining, repairing our homes, being clear about what we will do and when we will do it.

## 2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 The purpose of the policy is to ensure that we clearly define our role and responsibility for dealing with mould and damp in our properties, and the approach that we will take where mould and damp is identified.
- 2.2 The policy covers the identification of the types of damp (rising, penetrating and condensation dampness), including internal leaks, and describes how we will offer guidance, advice and assistance throughout the process to customers. The policy also sets out how we will go about gathering data and reporting, identifying proactive methods to mitigate the risk of dampness.
- 2.3 The policy considers and incorporates the recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman Service (Spotlight on Damp and Mould Report - October 2021) and confirms that we will take a zero-tolerance approach when damp and mould is identified.
- 2.4 This policy applies to:
- Customers who rent their home under a tenancy agreement and customers under a licence
  - Customers who own their home through shared ownership where HH has a repairing obligation under the terms of the lease
  - All residential communal areas
  - Emergency or temporary accommodation
- 2.5 Our principles for dealing with damp and mould:
- Provide homes that are safe, dry, warm and healthy meeting the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
  - Comply with legislation and regulatory standards
  - Ensure that customers can easily report concerns of damp and mould and are treated with respect and empathy
  - Ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould and condensation

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- Have transparent and robust reporting measures within our governance processes (akin to those in place for the Big 6 areas of compliance)
  - Aim to resolve customers' concerns as effectively as possible, taking responsibility for diagnosing, carrying out all necessary works and keeping them informed (including any current/ongoing legal disrepair cases)
  - Ensure that our employees (and contractors) are trained to identify issues relating to damp and mould, and are clear on our processes and procedures to support customers to resolve the issue
  - Ensure that employees are empowered to make decisions and escalate concerns in a timely manner, ensuring effective collaboration between teams to achieve the best outcome for the customer
  - Take ownership to undertake comprehensive analysis and investigation where it has not been possible to determine the root cause of damp
  - Upon completion of remedial works, continue to monitor the situation to ensure the issue has been resolved, which may include the installation of sensors in the home. We will follow up with the customer on each completed repair within six months of damp and mould repair work being carried out
  - Work with customers to provide clear, practicable and accessible support and advice on matters such as the actions they can take within their home, being clear and communicating what action HH and the customer will take
  - Ensure that we take the opportunity to assess homes for damp and mould during visits such as annual tenancy checks, gas servicing, repairs, stock condition surveys and record the findings and escalate where appropriate
  - Improve our information on damp, mould and property condition, and transition to more pre-emptive ways of working that have less reliance on the reporting of issues by customers
  - Build into our energy efficiency, planned, investment and void works programmes the use of products that are proven to reduce damp and mould, this may include (in the life of this policy) the development of a specific ventilation strategy.
  - Ensure that a process is in place to identify themes, trends and learning opportunities and action
  - Ensure that the provision of new build homes, through the design and specification, minimise the possibility of damp and mould.
  - Ensure that any new build homes, still within the Defects Liability Period which do have damp or mould identified, are monitored through the same HH processes and look to escalate matters, if the contractor is deemed to be taking an excessive period to address the matter.
  - If it is determined that the prevalence of damp and mould is creating an immediate danger to health or if the works required are disruptive, then alternative accommodation will be offered to the customer. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary move to an alternative property. The customer will be supported throughout this process.

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## 3. Definitions

- 3.1 **Rising Damp** - The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.
- 3.2 **Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)** - Water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure.
- 3.3 **Condensation Damp** - Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets.
- 3.4 The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:
- Lack of ventilation within the property
  - Inadequate heating of the Internal rooms
  - Inadequate energy efficiency (e.g., Insulation)
  - High humidity
  - Overcrowding

## 4. Responsibilities

### 4.1 Our Responsibilities

- We will investigate to determine the cause of damp, mould and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with our repairs policy.
- We will seek to deal with the cause of the damp, mould and condensation not just the symptoms and wherever possible fix first time.
- We will use information to shape our programmes of work.
- We will promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to control damp, mould and condensation.
- We will ensure that employees are trained and are aware of and understand the aims of this policy.
- We will inspect the property when damp, mould and/or condensation is reported
- We will inform the customer of the findings of the inspection. This will include identifying the probable causes of damp, mould and condensation, recommending effective solutions including any remedial works, and the estimated timescales to complete any such works. The customer will be kept updated throughout the process.
- We will ensure that competent and skilled resources are employed to carry out any works and that the customer's possessions are adequately protected during the works.

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- We will be responsible for insulating customers' homes in accordance with the Decent Homes Standard and achieving a minimum EPC C by 2030 where this is economically viable.
  - We will be responsible for maintaining customers' homes to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if these problems occur.
  - We will undertake reasonable improvement works 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 make good internal surfaces following any repairs work ensuring that surfaces are repaired to a condition ready for the customer to decorate. Where there is need to decorate following remedial work, we will provide a decoration voucher to cover the cost of the materials.

4.2 In some cases, remedial work may not be necessary, rather we will provide support and advice to the customer on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation.

#### 4.3 **Customer Responsibilities**

- We ask that our customers report any evidence of rising and penetrating damp (see definitions) and faulty equipment that will affect the management of humidity and moisture in the home (faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, heating system failure etc.) in a timely manner.
- We will work with our customers and look to identify practical ways to 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
  - Aim to adequately heat rooms.
  - Keeping the property well ventilated e.g., opening windows during cooking/bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan or ventilation system installed in the property is regularly cleaned and working, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.
  - Follow all advice and guidance issued by us on managing humidity and moisture in the home which can lead to condensation. This information can be found on our website or we will discuss this individually with you.
  - If all reasonable efforts have been made to manage and control the presence of condensation and mould, and this has not been successful, contact us immediately
- Customers should allow access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works. If following an assessment, the outcome shows that all

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reasonable measures are in place for the customer to adequately control condensation and mould, we will consider how we can tailor further advice and support to the customer

- It is recommended that customers should arrange adequate household contents insurance for the home that they occupy
- Where customers are considering making any changes within their home. e.g., converting rooms into one room, adding extensions, converting non-habitable buildings/spaces into habitable; they must seek advice and permission from us in accordance with their tenancy agreement and our repairs policy.

### **Assistance For Customers**

4.4 Where internal conditions within a home, e.g., overcrowding, and excessive hoarding of personal belongs are influencing the health and wellbeing of the occupants or are preventing inspections or repair works being carried out, we will provide support and assistance (including signposting to other agencies ) to review the customer's options that may include moving to more appropriate accommodation.

4.5 We also recognise that some of our customers may need help when it comes to meeting their repair responsibilities. We may, at our discretion, provide a service in addition to the statutory and contractual responsibilities, to assist our customers who may need support to meet the conditions of their tenancy. We will make this assessment with the customer based on their individual needs, including whether there is anyone else who might reasonably assist them, and whether there are any immediate risks to their health or safety. This may include an extension to the scope of repairs which we carry out. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.6 Where decoration is required after works associated with damp and mould, decoration vouchers will be provided to assist with the provision of paint and equipment. Further consideration will be given to customers and their specific circumstances, with a view to providing assistance which may include painting of finished surfaces. The nature of the decoration will be at our discretion.

## **5. Regulatory/ legal compliance**

- The Homes (fitness for human habitation) Act 2018
- The Regulator of social housing consumer standards 2015
- The Decent homes standard 2006
- Defective premises Act 1972
- Environmental protection Act 1990
- The Housing Act 2004
- The landlord and tenant Act 1985



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- Equality Act 2010

## 6. Diversity Considerations

- 6.1 An initial screening checklist has been completed on this policy which confirms that the policy would benefit from a more in-depth assessment [this will be scheduled to be completed in collaboration with the Customer Forum during Q4 22/23)

## 7. Links to strategies, policies and associated documents

- Asset Management Strategy
- Customer Voice Strategy
- Customer Contact strategy
- Repairs Policy
- Voids Policy
- Talk to us Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Diversity and inclusion Policy
- Asset Management and planned investment Policy
- Health and safety Policy





Translations available on request by phoning 0303 333 0101 or  
via email at [info@haltonhousing.org](mailto:info@haltonhousing.org)

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