

Damp & Mould Policy & Procedure

POLICY TITLE: Damp & Mould Policy & Procedure		POLICY AREA: Property Services	
POLICY REFERENCE: DM001	VERSION: 3	AUTHORISATION: Executive Team	
LEAD/ROLE MANAGER: Property Admin & Compliance Manager		OTHERS INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTING: /Property Admin & Compliance Manager/Landlord Compliance Team/Customer Services Manager, Housing Officers	
POLICY AIMS:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compliance with all Statutory, Regulatory and contractual requirements including ensuring all properties meet the Decent Homes Standard, are safe, warm and dry and free from hazards. • Proactively manage potential risks, promptly diagnose and prevent issues which may arise from damp and mould. • Support customers to minimise the occurrence of damp and mould and ensuring where required repair works are completed • Providing advice, support and guidance on managing and controlling mould and condensation 			
ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS: This policy must be read in conjunction with the following documents			
DOCUMENT:		DOCUMENT LOCATION:	
Repairs Procedure		Intranet Property Services	
Voids Procedure		Intranet Property Services	
Decant Procedure		Intranet Property Services	
Complaints Policy & Procedure		Intranet Policies & Procedures	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out Hastoe’s approach to damp and mould in our homes and communal areas where we have a responsibility to ensure we comply with all statutory, contractual and regulatory requirements. In line with this document we will proactively manage potential risks and promptly diagnose and prevent issues, which may arise from damp and mould in our properties, including communal areas, meeting the needs of our customers and providing homes which are safe, warm and dry.
- 1.2 This document outlines how we will support our customers to minimise the risk of damp and mould occurring and report it where there is evidence of its presence ensuring Hastoe meet its legal, contractual, regulatory and statutory obligations.
- 1.3 The key legislation and/or regulations relevant to this document are:
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| Decent Homes Standard 2006 |
| Homes Standard 2012 |
| Housing Act 2004 |
| Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 |
| Environmental Protection Act 1990 |
- 1.4 We aim to put our customers at the heart of services and encourage customer involvement and consultation. We have consulted customers in the review of this policy.

2 Types of Mould;

- 2.1 Mould is a fungus that spreads through spores invisible to the naked eye but in the air around us all of the time and can quickly grow on surfaces where dampness persists, or water has formed into a visible covering. There are four main causes of dampness, It is important to understand the difference between as the solutions also differ.
- 2.2 **Water leaks** – these can be from defective supply and waste pipework (especially in bathrooms and kitchens) can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch and stays damp regardless of the prevailing weather conditions and requires repair.
- 2.3 **Rising damp** - is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. Water gets through or around a defective damp proof course (DPC) or passes through the masonry that was built without a DPC. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms it will be present all year round but can be more noticeable in winter. It is extremely uncommon but is generally the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires repair.
- 2.4 **Penetrating damp** - a defect in the structure of the home, such as damaged brickwork, missing roof tiles, loose flashing or leaking rainwater goods. These defects allow water to pass from the outside to the floors, walls or ceilings. Penetrating damp is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall and will normally appear as a well-defined 'damp-patch' which looks and feels damp to the touch. It is the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires a repair.
- 2.5 **Condensation** - the most prevalent type of dampness and is caused by moisture in the air (water vapour) inside the dwelling coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window or wall. The drop in temperature causes liquid water to form on the surface and then soak in. It is usually found in kitchens, bathrooms, the corners of rooms and on or near windows. It is also found in areas of low air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are pushed up against external walls. Normal household activities release moisture into the air and good practice in the home minimises and alleviates condensation, and in many cases will prevent it causing dampness and persistent mould.

3 Solutions to Managing Damp & Mould

- 3.1 **Preventative action** – We will provide our customers with information on how to manage the moisture within their homes to mitigate any potential condensation. Where a repair is needed to works will be completed within a realistic timescale and all health and safety works to void properties will be completed prior to re-let. As part of our stock condition surveys damp and mould will be assessed and our staff and contractors will have the skills and knowledge to identify signs of damp and mould, so we take the right course of action. Where multiple reports of damp and mould have been made across a scheme or block the Property Services Team will proactively contact all customers to identify additional cases. Where present these cases are to be managed as above
- 3.2 **Dealing with damp and mould** - Residents are required to report any problems to us as soon as possible under the terms of their tenancy agreement. When we receive a report, we will either raise a repair order there and then or inspect the property to undertake a more detailed investigation to determine the cause. In some cases, this may be complex and take longer to resolve. We may also send the customer data loggers to record the level of moisture and temperature in the home.
- 3.3 **Where damp is because of condensation** - we will work with our residents to take appropriate measures to address any building defects/repairs to prevent the damp and mould occurring and advise how to control moisture levels or increase ventilation or heating so that moisture levels are kept low. The tenant has an obligation under the terms of their tenancy to look after the home. When

a particularly severe or recurring damp or mould issue is identified we will undertake an inspection to determine the actions needed and work with the resident to resolve this with estimated timescales.

- 3.4 In the most complex cases that may involve intrusive building works and and/or there is a serious health risk to the resident or a member of their household (assessed at Category 1 under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System) it may be necessary to decant the tenant on a temporary or permanent basis which would be arranged in accordance with our Lettings Policy & Management Move Procedure. We will consider the individual circumstances of the resident. We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out at the property to ensure it is suitable for the resident to return to.
- 3.5 Reports of damp and mould to leasehold properties where Hastoe has repair responsibilities for the external structure should be investigated to ensure there are no defects with the structure contributing to the occurrence of mould. Inspections should be arranged and where appropriate repairs to maintained elements of the building managed as would be the case for any maintained address.

4 Categorising and Addressing Cases

- 4.1 We will prioritise cases and complete a triage exercise will be undertaken to determine the likely severity, location, and vulnerability of the residents. Cases will be categorised into; High (possible Category 1 hazard), Medium (possible category 2 Hazard) or low. Cases will be triaged in line with statutory requirements and once all appropriate information has been received and reviewed including; photos of damp/mould, repair history, details of customer vulnerabilities and medical conditions, stock survey results and inspection records. Photos are to be provided by customers for review before a damp and mould case is created, only in exceptional circumstances for example where the customer does not have access to a computer or mobile phone, and an Estate Officer is not able to assist, will we assess the report without these.

Where the triage process identifies that all reasonable steps have been taken by Hastoe to address damp and mould within a property, all repairs required have been completed, survey details confirm there are no defects with the building itself and guidance has been given to the customer on how to mitigate the occurrence of damp and mould the case will not be taken forward. In this circumstance a letter is to be sent to the customer explaining the reason for this and next steps should they wish to escalate this decision. Routes to escalation include contacting the Local Authority Environmental Health Department and raising a complaint in line with Hastoe’s Complaints Policy and Procedure.

Case Priorities

High	<p>Penetrating dampness including rising damp, water leak, extensive mould growth in habitable rooms, vulnerable residents living in property as detailed in clause 4.3 below</p> <p>Response;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • order raised to contractor to remediate leak within 24 hours • inspection to take place within 10 working days (following triage)
Medium	<p>Multiple areas of extensive condensation and/or mould growth in habitable rooms</p> <p>Response;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to be inspected within 14 working days (following triage)

Low	<p>Areas of mould growth limited in coverage and location i.e. in cupboards, corners of rooms and around windows.</p> <p>Response;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to be inspected within 14 working days (following triage)
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- 4.2 Where customers have confirmed they have identified vulnerabilities which may be affected by the presence of damp and mould details are to be provided by the customer. This information will be used to correctly triage and prioritise cases.
- 4.3 In line with Government guidance health conditions impacted by the presence of damp and mould include;
- People with pre-existing health conditions such as allergies, asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, other lung and cardiovascular diseases.
 - People of all ages with weakened immune systems, people who have had a transplant or others who are taking medication that suppress the immune system.
 - People living with a mental health condition.
 - Pregnant women, their unborn babies and women who have recently given birth who may have a weakened immune system
 - Children and young people
 - Older people
 - People who are bedbound, housebound or have mobility problems.
- 4.4 All damp and mould cases are to be inspected and details of inspections entered into ActiveH. The Repairs Officer/Surveyors must always first consider whether the source of damp and mould is design, construction or maintenance issue which could be eliminated through work to the property. Where this is not the case additional support and advice will be provided to the customer on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation.
- 4.5 All damp and mould inspections are to identify the presence of Category 1 Hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). ActiveH is to be updated with details of hazards present.
- 4.6 Customers are to be kept up to date with the progress of damp and mould works and the outcome of inspections. Following an inspection the Repairs Officer is to contact the customer to confirm the necessary action to be taken and how long this will take. The Repairs Officer must also raise a works order within 2 working days of the inspection. All works identified are to be completed in line with Hastoe's Responsive Repairs Policy and will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem, the complexity of the solution and the repair works/actions required. The Property Services Team are to keep the customer updated throughout until all necessary works are completed.
- ActiveH is to be kept up to date with all reasonable steps taken to address damp and mould within a property.
- 4.7 Lessons learnt from damp and mould cases are to be recorded within ActiveH and discussed at monthly team meetings.

5 Supporting & Communicating with our Residents

- 5.1 We ensure residents are communicated with and kept up to date. We will follow-up after any repairs to check it has resolved the problem. Repairs Officers will keep customers informed. In cases of condensation, we will give residents advice on how to prevent damp and what they should do to remove mould where this is possible in relation to the specific circumstances and the individual customer's needs. Customers will be asked to sign using Scrive to confirm they have received guidance information.
- 5.2 Data loggers are to be posted to the customers where there is evidence of surface condensation and mould not caused by a building related defect.. Data loggers will monitor internal humidity and temperature to allow Hastoe to provide further guidance on how to mitigate the occurrence of condensation and mould. In addition to data loggers customers are to be provided with hygrometers/thermometers to keep and use within rooms where condensation and mould are prevalent. Landlord Compliance Officers are to contact the customer to discuss data logger results including providing further advice on how to prevent re-occurrence where required. Results are to be recorded within the damp and mould case in ActiveH.
- 5.3 In addition to providing advice and support to eradicate damp and mould where customers are struggling to pay energy bills, with the customers approval, details are to be passed to Hastoe's Welfare & Benefits Advisors who will contact the customer.
- 5.4 We will take all reasonable steps to contact customers however where it is not possible to contact the customer to discuss reports of damp on mould and arrange inspections. Customers should be contacted on at least two occasions on two separate days over a 5 day period and details of contact attempts logged on ActiveH. Where the customer is not contactable and does not return phone calls customers will be asked to re-report the issue to Hastoe and until this time no further action will take place. Where a case has been triaged as high risk and the resident refuses access the Landlord Compliance Team are to refer this to Housing to progress under the no access procedure up to and including an injunction.

6 Damp & Mould Case Management;

All reports of damp and mould are to be managed by the Landlord Compliance Team within the case processing module of ActiveH and ensure the system is kept up to date. All staff are to forward details of damp and mould reports or observations following inspections to the Landlord Compliance Team for review.

- 6.1 Where the triage process confirms a damp and mould case is to be created the Repairs Officer is to undertake an inspection in line with the timelines set out in this policy. Details of inspections are to be recorded within the repairs module of ActiveH and a works order raised as required. Inspection details are to follow the set template for property inspections including checking mechanical ventilation and MVHR systems are fully operational.
- 6.2 Where a case is not taken forward a letter is to be sent to the customer explaining why this is the case, roots to escalate this decision and how to contact Hastoe should the customer wish to discuss this decision.

6.3 The Landlord Compliance Team are to attempt to contact customers a minimum of twice on two different days to confirm all works are completed and that damp and mould is no longer present. If after 2 attempts the customer cannot be contacted and the contractor has submitted completion details for works undertaken it is to be assumed that all works are complete and the reported issues resolved. Where a case has been triaged as high risk and the resident refuses access the Landlord Compliance Team are to refer this to Housing to progress under the no access procedure up to and including an injunction

7 Root Cause Analysis;

7.1 Repairs Officers and Contractors are to use the following checklist to confirm possible causes of damp and mould within a property. Details of the analysis are to be recorded within ActiveH.

Potential Repair Issue/Building Defect	No	Action to be taken
Does property have adequate heating and is this fully functioning and controllable.		Order to be raised to address heating breakdown in line with repairs policy
Is the property free from leaks and/or water penetration i.e. roof/drainage/guttering etc.		Raise repair order to remediate leak including the supply of low energy usage dehumidifiers for a min. period of 2 weeks
Does the property have adequate humidistat controlled ventilation to the kitchen and bathroom(s)		Raise repair order for system to be overhauled/cleaned/repaired or replaced as required. Consider need for PIV system.
Do windows have trickle ventilation?		Identify whether it is possible for these to be retrofitted, if this is not possible and windows are due for replacement in coming years discuss consider the need for background ventilation (i.e. Vent Axia fresh vents) and partially opening windows for fresh air intake.
Data Logger Results; Do results show property has an average temp of 18-22 with relative humidity no higher than 60%. Consider whether any of the above could be contributing to this.		Discuss results with customer, where any of the above defects/repairs are required consider the need to re-send data loggers on completion to ensure they have addressed the issue. Provide customer with help and advice on ways to reduce humidity and need to keep property at an ambient temperature. Information available on Hastoe website.

8 Roles & Responsibilities

Person Responsible	Defined Responsibilities
Property Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall responsibility for ensuring this document is implemented and adhered to.
Property Admin & Compliance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting and overseeing damp and mould cases including providing an assurance statement each quarter to Property Director confirming cases are being reviewed and managed .
Landlord Compliance Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring open cases to ensure they are being updated with communication, details of data loggers and inspections arranged Monitoring and reporting on completed cases to ensure adequate evidence is saved and the system updated. Ensure case triaging is in accordance with this document and that adequate information is recorded on the system to progress cases. Ensuring that cases are assigned to the Landlord Compliance Team and tasks sent to Repairs Officers for Inspections
Landlord Compliance Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triaging cases following thorough review of all relevant supporting information. Ensuring cases are managed in line with ActiveH workflow, system updated and customer kept up to date with progress. Contacting customers on completion of works to ensure all works complete and issue resolved. Tasking Repairs Officer to post inspect works.
Property Maintenance Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly reporting of damp and mould cases to ensure inspections are taking place, repair works are being managed and patterns are identified to proactively identify cases of damp and mould. Provide assurance statement each quarter to Property Director confirming this is taking place. Monthly review of high repair properties. Monthly reporting of customer satisfaction relating to damp and mould repair orders.
Repairs Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspecting properties and updating ActiveH with survey details. Raising repair orders for works required and overseeing these to completion keeping the customer up to date. Assessing hazards under HHSRS and updating ActiveH with details. Analyzing results of data loggers and communicating these to customers. Communicating with customers until all works are complete.

Housing Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of no access reports following no access procedure, progressing cases up to and including injunctions • Manage property damage/neglect under the terms of the tenancy agreement.
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9 Proactive Approach

- 9.1 Where multiple reports of damp and mould have been made across a scheme or block the Property Services Team are to proactively contact all customers to identify additional cases. Where present these cases are to be managed as above.

10 Damp and Mould Complaints

- 10.1 All complaints are to be managed in line with Hastoe's Complaints Policy & Procedure..
- 10.2 Repeated complaints relating to damp and mould are to be escalated to the Regional Property Maintenance Manager.

11 Management & Governance

- 11.1 Damp & Mould cases will form part of our overall compliance reporting to the Executive Team and Board and will show the number of cases and length of time to resolve. Key Performance Indicators are as follows;
- Total number of cases & total number of high and medium cases
 - % of inspections carried out within procedure timeframe
 - Total number of properties with issues resolved in quarter
 - Repeat reports of damp and mould
- 11.2 Operationally the Landlord Compliance Manager will review cases monthly and Property Maintenance Managers will review high repair properties monthly. Assurance statements are to be provided to the Property Director confirming this has happened each quarter
- 11.3 Landlord Compliance Officers will be responsible for managing the case to resolution, keeping the customer informed.
- 11.4 Internal compliance checks will be undertaken and internal audits on a periodic basis.