

Damp & Mould procedure

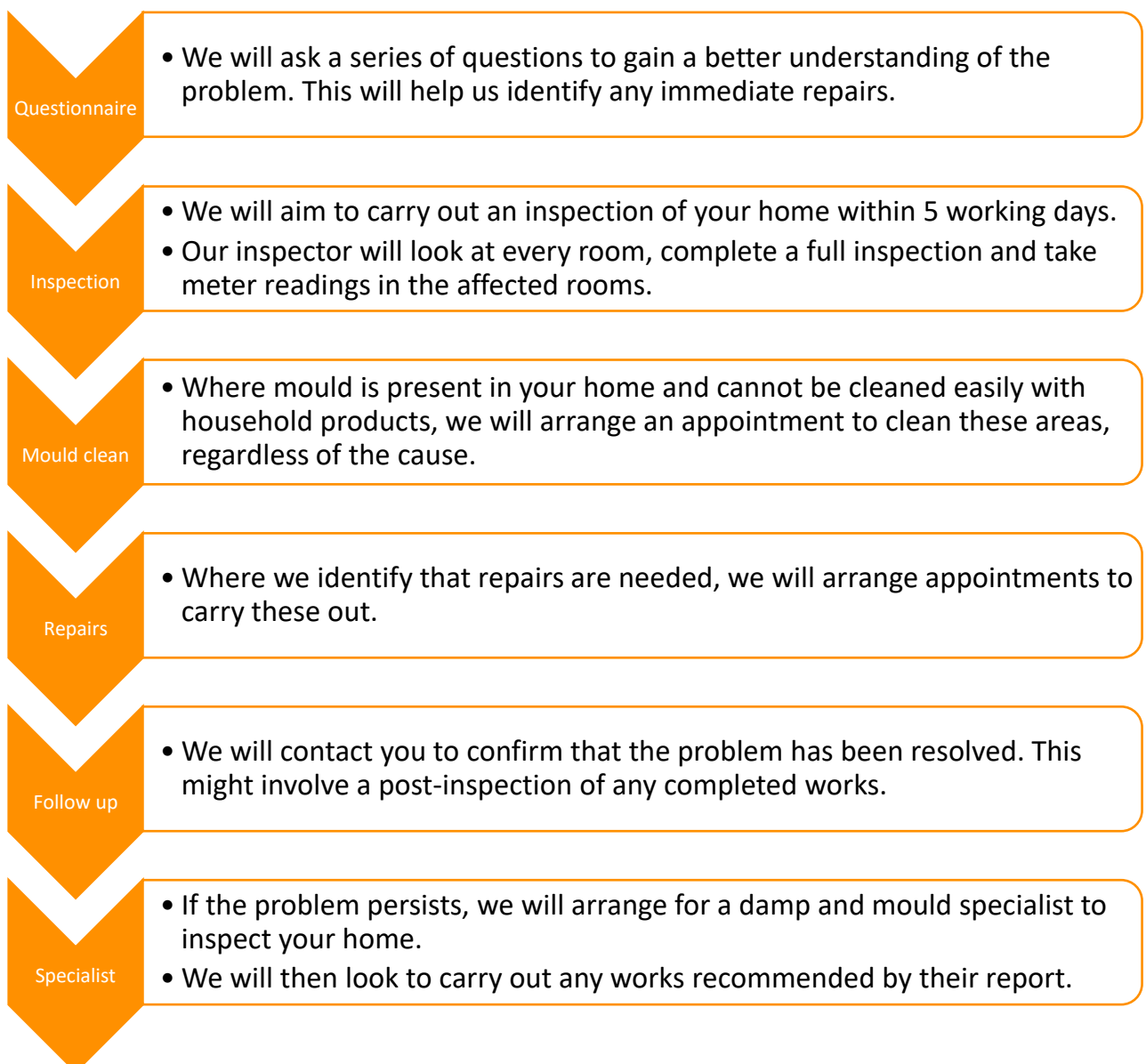
Who's this for?	All customers and colleagues
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Other related documents	Repairs policy Customer care and resolution policy Complaints procedure Discretionary compensation policy Vulnerable Customers Procedure

Background

We want everyone to live comfortably in their homes and we want to hear from you when you are experiencing problems with the condition of your property.

Condensation, damp and mould can be a common problem, especially in the winter months. We understand that facing issues like this can be an upsetting experience; at settle, we are committed to listening to your concerns, identifying the causes of damp and mould in your home and working with you to resolve the problem.

What happens when I report damp and mould in my home?

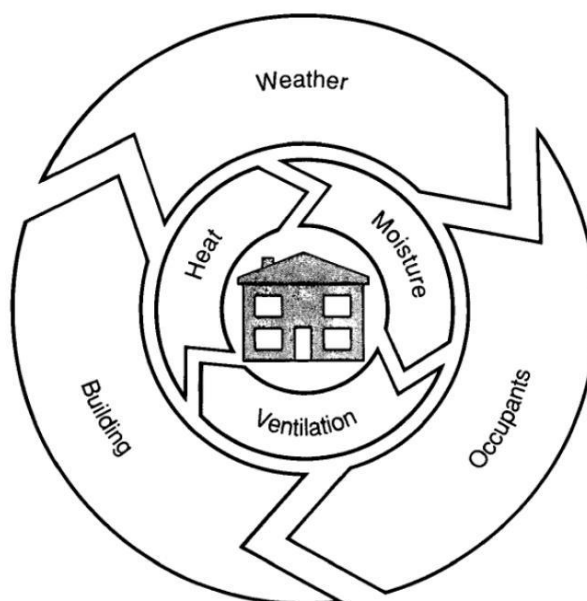


The steps we take

There are 3 steps within our procedure for dealing with condensation, damp and mould. We won't need to carry out all of the steps on every case reported. However, we want to make sure that you know what to expect at each stage. It is not always possible to get to the root of the issue immediately, but we are committed to working with you to resolve the problem.

When we investigate reports of damp and mould, we are looking to understand:

- if the building has any defects and requires repairs.
- if the problem is impacted by the weather, for example, it gets worse after rainfall.
- if your home is adequately heated.
- if your home has the right ventilation and insulation to keep moisture to a minimum.
- if there are any steps you can take in your day-to-day life to help reduce condensation which leads to damp and mould.



Step 1

When you contact us to report damp and mould, we will ask you a series of questions to get a better understanding of the problem. We will also look at our system to understand if this is a repeat issue. This information will be passed to our inspectors so that they have an idea of the problem before visiting you.

Our inspectors will also check the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for your home and if we do not have one, they will request that this is carried out. The results may indicate that we need to book a heating survey to see if the heating is adequate in your home.

Step 2

We will aim to carry out an inspection of your home within 5 working days of your report of damp and mould. While on site, our inspector will look at every room, complete a full inspection form and take meter readings in the affected rooms.

Where mould is present in your home and cannot be cleaned easily with household products, we will arrange an appointment to clean these areas. This will help reduce the impact the mould is having on your household while we investigate the issue:

Severity of mould	We aim to carry this out
High levels of mould evident throughout the property	within 2 working days
Moderate levels of mould restricted to a single room	within 3 working days
Low levels of mould, restricted to a localised area	within 7 working days

Where we identify that repairs are needed, we will arrange appointments to carry these out:

Type of repair	We aim to carry this out
Emergency repairs	within 24 hours
Routine repairs	within 28 working days
Structural repairs	within 90 working days

If there are no visible defects in your home, we may install data loggers to give us more information about the problem.

In some cases, there may be steps that you can take in your day-to-day life to help reduce and control condensation which leads to damp and mould. Our inspector will discuss these steps with you and more information can be found below. You can also contact your Neighbourhood Officer for more advice and support.

Following the completion of any mould washes and repairs, we will contact you to confirm that you are satisfied that the problem has been resolved. This may involve a post-inspection of the completed works.

Step 3

If we haven't managed to resolve the problem through our internal procedure, our final step is to appoint an external damp and mould specialist. They will carry out their own inspection and provide an extensive report which will help us determine any further actions we can take.

Did you know?

There are 4 causes of damp which can cause mould. These are:

1. Leaks - these can be internal or external
2. Penetrating damp - moisture entering your home (usually rainwater) caused by a building defect
3. Rising damp - moisture from the ground penetrating the building
4. Condensation – moisture generated by use of the building in occupation. This is more common in colder months and there are often steps we can take to prevent it.

What is condensation?

Condensation can often be seen on windows on a cold morning and occurs when warm moist air hits cold surfaces. This process causes the air to condense and form droplets of water, which can result in the formation of mould patches.

The mould does not always grow in the same room that the moisture comes from. Warm, moisture laden air from daily activities like washing and cooking can travel through a property and will settle on surfaces in cooler areas. If left untreated, a build-up of condensation may cause mould to appear. Therefore, good ventilation such as opening windows, keeping all vents open, closing doors in kitchens and bathrooms when cooking and showering and using extractor fans correctly are important.

These issues primarily occur between the months of October and April. It can happen when the weather is cold, even if it is dry.

What is damp?

Damp occurs in moist places that never fully dry out, usually where there is little air movement. It is most commonly caused by condensation. Sometimes, the damp is caused by a defect in the building. Rising damp comes up from the ground and is often caused by a breach or damage to a damp-proof course.

Penetrating damp is caused by water coming in from the outside and can be the result of a missing roof tile, leaking window frame or a blocked gutter.

What is mould?

Mould grows and multiplies in moist areas, usually as a result of condensation. Some mould will appear around window frames which can easily be cleaned off, but if left untreated, it can become a serious problem and potentially damaging to health.

Did you know?

The following steps can be taken to reduce and control condensation problems which lead to damp and mould:

- ✓ Cover boiling pans when cooking and use extractor fans if fitted
- ✓ Ensure that tumble dryers are properly vented to the outside
- ✓ Dry clothes outside or, where this is not possible, in the bathroom with the door closed and windows open or extractor fan on
- ✓ Do you have a tropical fish tank that regularly requires topping up with water? The water that has evaporated from the tank has added to the moisture level of the air within your home. You could consider fitting a lid.
- ✓ If you are running a bath, put the cold water in first to reduce the amount of steam
- ✓ Close kitchen and bathroom doors to stop water vapour movement to other parts of the house
- ✓ Report broken extractor fans and leaking pipes that can add to humidity levels, contributing to conditions that encourage mould to grow.