

Damp and mould policy

Who's this for?	All colleagues and customers
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Policy Owner	Assistant Director of Property & Estates
Other related documents	Damp and mould procedure Repairs Standards Customer care and resolution policy Compensation policy Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report on damp and mould

1. Policy statement

Our purpose is to help people live in their homes comfortably. Ensuring that all settle homes are dry, warm, and healthy is a fundamental part of achieving this.

Condensation, damp, and mould can be a common concern, especially in the winter months. We recognise that it is not always a straightforward repair issue, but often a multifaceted problem which can have a profound impact on the emotional and physical wellbeing of residents. Therefore, at settle, we take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould; we are committed to listening carefully, identifying the causes, and working with residents to resolve the problem at its root.

The practical steps we take to address damp and mould reports can be found in our [procedure](#).

2. Key principles

- We take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould, assuming responsibility for resolving the problem in conjunction with residents.
- We recognise the importance of assisting and communicating with residents about their role in managing condensation, and treatment of minor mould issues for which they are responsible for.
- We keep residents informed and involved throughout the process and ask that access is provided to inspect and carryout repairs.
- We use data proactively to identify and address damp and mould problems.
- To never dismiss damp and mould as a 'lifestyle issue' but work across teams and alongside residents to identify the causes, provide support, guidance and resolve the problem at its root.

3. Objectives

- To ensure that all settle customers live in dry, warm, and healthy homes.
- To make effective use of support services, such as the comfort fund, where appropriate to assist residents to create a damp, mould and condensation free environment.
- To use data to identify blocks or households that are most at risk of damp and mould problems, including those where energy-efficiency performance can be improved, so we can proactively take pre-emptive measures.
- To learn from others and through best practice; for example the use of Housing Ombudsman published case studies.
- By using modern technologies, including equipment, materials, and energy-efficient heating systems, our objective is to pre-empt and prevent damp and mould problems across all settle homes.

4. Policy actions

- To case manage complex or repeat damp and mould issues.
- Ensure all frontline colleagues have received sufficient training in spotting the early signs of damp and mould and understanding the diverse possible causes of the problem, such as overcrowding, fuel poverty or other vulnerabilities.
- Ensure clarity on which Asset team colleagues have responsibility for case managing complex or repeat concerns, including follow-up calls and aftercare.
- Ensure we have a consistent approach to property inspections, (including thorough examination of the home's ventilation performance), and a consistent approach to diagnosing problems and recording detailed notes on our core system.
- Where we can easily identify the root cause of the problem, settle is responsible for, we will resolve this through our responsive repairs service.
- Use of case management in QL for complex and repeat damp and mould cases, including a separate budget code.
- Build damp and mould dashboards to monitor overall number of cases and identify trends by location, property type, etc. Also use dashboards to monitor how many damp and mould-related inspections and repairs are in the WIP and how many we complete within damp and mould procedure SLAs.
- Regularly report on damp and mould cases to the Building Safety Panel.
- Report performance (repairs, complaints, other contacts) of properties and blocks earmarked for regeneration at landlord compliance/complex case panel to understand wider picture and take proactive interim measures to ensure residents are living comfortably for the duration of regeneration process.
- Consult residents on our approach to handling damp and mould, including associated literature, (e.g., condensation advice leaflet).
- To use periods when our homes are empty to identify and address any existing or potential damp and mould problems, e.g., by checking ventilation, such as airbricks and extractors.
- We will be clear with residents around their responsibilities to ensure their home is heated, well-ventilated and avoid the build-up of condensation e.g., by not drying clothes in doors.

5. Desired outcomes

- When residents raise damp and mould concerns with us, they trust us to work with them to resolve the problem and always know what the next step will be.
- We receive fewer repeat damp and mould issues.
- We understand and report on the financial cost of damp and mould problems.
- We have assurance that we're complying with all regulatory and legislative requirements, notably the Decent Homes Standard (2006), the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS, 2005) and the Homes Act (2019).

6. Performance indicators

- Trust score above 7.2 by March 2024
- Dissatisfaction that your landlord provides a home that is well maintained <20% by March 2024
- Effort score below 4.0 by March 2024
- 90% of inspections completed in 10 days

7. Key legislation

- Decent Homes (2006)
- HHSRS (2005)
- The Homes Act (Fitness for Human Habitation) (2019)
- Equalities Act 2010

8. Review

We are satisfied the aims of the original policy designed in July 2022 are the right aims for settle and it's residents. We do, however, want to ensure we are regularly reviewing our aims, goals and performance. As such, we intend to review the policy again in one year's time in line with any relevant legislation or regulatory changes, or when there is a business need.