



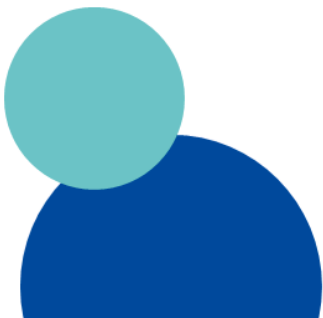
Waverley Borough Council

# Damp and Mould Policy

**Latest version number: V0.3**

**Latest publication date: June 2023**

**Lead Officer / Team: Property Services, Housing Operations**



## Document Information & Governance

### 1.1 Approval & Publication:

Approving Body	Approval route requirement	Publication Type	Publication requirement	Review frequency	Document owner	Next Review Date
<i>Executive Co Portfolio Holder for Housing Decision</i>	<i>CMB, LS EGW and EB</i>	<i>Internal/ external</i>	<i>Required by HOS and RSH</i>	<i>Annual</i>	Property Services Manager	September 2024

### 1.2 Version Control Information:

Version	Version Status (Draft, Approved /Published Internally or Externally)	Date	Version Comment	Version Author
V0.1	Working Draft	17/04/2023	Creation of the document	
V0.2	Approval Draft		Approved by JCC	
V0.3	Approval Draft	27/06/2023	Approved by Management Board	
V0.4	Final Approval Draft		Approved by the Executive	
V1	Final version / Published		1 <sup>st</sup> Publication	
V1.1	Working Draft		In year corrections	
V1.2	Final Approved & Re-Publication		In year correction approval by Management Board	
V2			Full Annual review	

### 1.3 Impact Assessments and Consideration:

Impact Assessment Type	Required / Not Required	Date Completed	Impact Assessments and Considerations Comment	Assessment Owner
Equality Impact Assessment	Not Required	14/04/2023	There are no direct equality, diversity or inclusion implications in this report. Equality impact assessments are carried out when necessary across the council to ensure service delivery meets the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010.	
Data Protection Impact Assessment				
Climate Change				

## Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to direct the management and delivery of a damp and mould service to all Waverley Borough Council homes enabling the Council to provide and maintain, warm and dry healthy homes for tenants.

This policy applies to all employees and contractors of Waverley Borough Council.

This policy does not cover or apply to:

- Private rented properties.
- Internal repairs, maintenance or compensation for damaged fixtures or fittings to Leasehold properties. Only the external fabric of the building falls under the Councils responsibility and therefore covered by this policy.

## Policy statement

Council officers must take damp and mould seriously and take responsibility as the landlord. The Council must meet its statutory and regulatory obligations. This applies to all occupied homes, including those identified for disposal or demolition.

Council officers must proactively manage damp and mould within council homes and will work in partnership with tenants as specified in the damp and mould procedure. Strong landlord-tenant relationships are crucial for maintaining safe and healthy internal environments and to prevent deterioration of the building fabric. The Council must ensure all tenants are treated fairly and in a consistent way - with respect and empathy in line with the procedure.

All staff and contractors visiting tenants' homes must report any concerns they find. This includes signs of damp and mould. All cases of damp and mould must be brought to the relevant officers' attention (Housing Maintenance Inspectors).

All tenants must look after their home in a reasonable and responsible way, reporting to the Housing Repairs Service, immediately any repairs that need carrying out (that the Council is responsible for as per the Tenancy Agreement)

All tenants are responsible for managing condensation levels inside the property by properly ventilating and heating it however the Council will provide ongoing support, education and advice on ways to reduce and manage condensation levels in the home.

All reports of damp and/or mould must be investigated by the Council, and involve at least an initial inspection as per the procedure. Accurate and complete records must be kept throughout the process. In addition, the damp and mould tracker must be used as the definitive case management tool, the primary source for recording, monitoring, and following up cases.

## Focus on fabric of homes

Thorough inspections using a holistic, whole-house approach must be undertaken, focussing on the fabric of the home. Any reasonable and cost-effective solutions (in line with the Tenancy Agreement see section 8) will be actioned to tackle damp, condensation and mould within timescales specified in the procedure document.

Causes of damp and mould will be considered throughout the Council's Net Zero Carbon decision making process to prevent potential unintended consequences.

### **Communication**

The Council's proactive Communication and Engagement Strategy promotes regular correspondence with tenants, while the damp and mould procedure outlines specific communications throughout the repairs process, from initial notification, to investigations and remedial works, through to the aftercare phase once works are complete.

### **Complaints**

Use of the corporate complaints handling procedure must continue to be promoted and lessons learned will be analysed routinely to help improve our services.

The Council will continue to use the complaints procedure regardless of whether the pre-action protocol has commenced and until legal proceedings have been issued. This is to maximise the opportunities to resolve disputes outside of court.

### **Redecoration**

Once the Council has carried out remedial works, mould treatments and made good any damage caused by water stains, the surfaces will be left ready for decoration. Tenants are responsible for redecorating. Use of anti-fungal paints are recommended to be used.

On a case-by-case basis, in certain circumstances the Council may carry out redecoration works and will consider how best to assist vulnerable or disabled tenants with redecoration.

Where there is damage due to disrepair, the obligation is on the landlord to both repair and make good including any redecoration.

### **Proactive, data-led approach**

The Council recognises the value of knowing its stock, its tenants, and their needs. The Council will continue to take a joined up, cross-service approach, sharing knowledge and expertise. The Stock Condition Survey programme running from April 2023 - April 2025, along with plans to explore the use of monitoring technology will all assist in achieving a proactive data-led approach. Data analysis and monitoring will help to identify types of properties that are prone to damp and mould. Once identified, this will enable the Council to better target and direct resources where they are most in need.

### **Implementation and monitoring**

The Executive Head of Housing has overall responsibility for the policy, ensuring that it is fully implemented.

The Housing Operations Manager is responsible for:

- The effective implementation and delivery of the policy.
- Monitoring the performance and delivery.
- Reviewing the policy.

The Contracts Manager is responsible for:

- Developing the processes and procedures that are in line with the policy.
- Ensure that the policy aims and terms are adhered to.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the policy on a quarterly basis.

## Review

The Policy will be reviewed annually by the Housing Operations Manager, in response to:

- Legislative changes.
- Council strategy or policy changes; or
- Ineffective policy terms.
- Policy adherence.

In addition, the Council will undertake regular lessons learned exercises using Waverley Complaints and disrepair claims, as well as wider learning from the Ombudsman cases / learnings.

## Related information

### Other Related Council Policies / Information

#### Tenancy Agreement (September 2022)

### Other Documents

- [Housing Act 1985\(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Homes \(Fitness for Human habitation\) Act 2018](#)
- [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Section 11 - Repairs and Maintenance](#)
- [Housing Act 2004 - Housing Health and Safety Rating](#)
- [Decent Homes standards](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act \(EPA\) \(1990\)](#)
- [Defective Premises Act \(DPA\) \(1972\)](#)
- [Regulator of Social Housing: Damp and Mould in Social Housing: initial findings \(2023\)](#)
- [Housing Ombudsman Report: Spotlight on Damp and mould – Its not lifestyle \(2021\)](#)
- [Housing Ombudsman Report: One Year on follow up \(2023\)](#)

## Annexe

### Types of Damp

Damp occurs when a fault in the building's basic structure lets in water from outside. There are three main categories of damp: -

- 1. Penetrating damp** - This occurs if water is coming into the home through the external fabric of the building e.g., walls or roof or from within the building from water leaks resulting from defective pipework.
- 2. Rising damp** – This occurs when the ‘Damp proof course’ (DPC) is missing or defective. Moisture rises from the ground, up the brickwork and into the building structure, transferring moisture from wet bricks to dry ones.

Rising damp usually leaves a horizontal tide mark across affected walls.

- 3. Condensation** - This occurs when the moisture in warm air hits cooler surfaces. Tiny water droplets appear on surfaces.

The risk of condensation is increased when there is:

- High humidity levels indoors e.g., too much moisture being produced.
- Low surface temperatures e.g., ineffective heating (undersized system or under use)
- Poor ventilation e.g., regular opening of windows, use of trickle vents and mechanical extraction fans. Air needs to be able to circulate.
- Poor thermal insulation e.g., insufficient loft and cavity insulation
- Poor construction / design / materials

Condensation usually happens during cold weather and appears on cold surfaces and places where there is little movement of air. For example, in corners of rooms, on or near windows, in or behind furniture. If the moisture is not removed through ventilation and if droplets on surfaces are not wiped away, mould will begin to grow.

## **Mould**

Mould requires damp conditions to grow. Mould will not grow on dry surfaces. It is a natural organic compound and is easily treated using the right method.