



CONDENSATION, DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

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1. Policy statement

- 1.1 This policy outlines the measures taken by Hornsey Housing Trust (HHT) to identify, assess, and manage issues relating to damp and mould in residential properties to minimise risks to the health and wellbeing of tenants and occupants, and sets out a framework for managing damp and mould to ensure a healthy living environment for all tenants.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all residential properties and associated residential communal areas under the ownership, control or management of HHT and complies with relevant legislation and best practice in property maintenance and public health.

2. Policy aims

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are to ensure that:
 - 2.1.1 Tenants live in a safe and healthy environment.
 - 2.1.2 Tenants have easy and accessible ways to report condensation, damp, and mould.
 - 2.1.3 Ensure a consistently excellent service when responding to all reports of condensation, damp, and mould.
 - 2.1.4 Ensure empathetic and timely communication with tenants and minimise distress caused by condensation, damp and mould.
 - 2.1.5 Maintain the fabric of homes and ensure that a data-driven preventative approach is applied to tackle the risk of condensation, damp and mould in the stock portfolio.
 - 2.1.6 Embed a working culture where all colleagues are trained to see safety as their responsibility and do not blame lifestyle for condensation, damp and mould.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy covers:
 - 3.1.1 The minimum legal and regulatory standards to which HHT must maintain properties.
 - 3.1.2 The definitions and causes of condensation, damp and mould that HHT uses to deal with damp and mould.
 - 3.1.3 HHT's approach to addressing the causes of condensation, damp and mould.
 - 3.1.4 HHT's responsibility to provide a prompt, excellent service in responding to condensation, damp and mould including diagnosis, remedial work, communication and monitoring cases.
 - 3.1.5 HHT's responsibility to manage condensation, damp and mould.
 - 3.1.6 HHT's responsibility to support those tenants who choose to manage condensation, damp and mould themselves.

4. Legislation

- 4.1 The current **Decent Homes Standard** provides a minimum expectation for the condition of homes. Under the Standard, landlords must ensure that properties:
 - 4.1.1 Meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing, including keeping properties free of serious hazards.
 - 4.1.2 Be in a reasonable state of repair.
 - 4.1.3 Have reasonably modern facilities and services.
 - 4.1.4 Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.
 - 4.1.5 Please see the Decent Homes Standard for definitions of the above. The Standard is currently under review by the government.

- 4.2 The **Social Housing Regulation Bill 2022** will require landlords to investigate and fix damp and mould in their properties within specified timeframes.
- 4.3 Under the **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985**, HHT is responsible for:
- 4.3.1 Maintaining the structure of the property and keeping it in good repair
- 4.3.2 Keeping installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation in good repair and proper working order.
- 4.4 The **Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018** amended the 1985 Act. It states that landlords must ensure that homes are 'fit for human habitation'. The Act does not define 'fit for human habitation', but landlords are considered responsible for repairs, freedom from damp, ventilation, water supply, drainage and sanitary conveniences, facilities for the preparation of and cooking of food, and the disposal of wastewater.
- 4.5 Other relevant pieces of legislation are:
- 4.5.1 Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- 4.5.2 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- 4.5.3 Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- 4.5.4 The Housing Act 2004 (including the Housing Health and Safety Ratings System [HHSRS])
- 4.5.5 Environmental Protection Act 1990
- 4.5.6 Regulatory Standards (Governance and Financial Viability and Home Standards)
- 4.5.7 Building Safety Act 2022
- 4.5.8 Awaabs Law 2025

5 Causes and definitions Damp

- 5.1 There are three main types of damp that affect our properties: condensation damp, rising damp and penetrative damp. Damp can be caused by a variety of factors and there can be more than one type of dampness present at any one time.
- 5.2 Condensation damp



- 5.2.1 Condensation occurs when warm moisture in the air comes into contact with cold surfaces, or when levels of humidity inside are too high. Condensation can take the form of:
- Surface condensation
 - Condensation inside a structure where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials such as walls, which then condenses when it cools.

5.2.2 Condensation can be caused by:

- Poor heating
- Poor ventilation
- Poor insulation
- High humidity
- Poor building design
- Overcrowding

5.3 Rising damp



5.3.1 Rising damp occurs when moisture moves up from the ground through the structure of the building through capillary action.

5.3.2 The presence of rising damp can create or exacerbate a condensation problem

5.4 Penetrative damp



5.4.1 Penetrative damp is caused by water penetrating the external or internal structure of the building. It can cause damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structures. This kind of damp includes water that enters the property through:

- Defective design and work on the structure of the property,
- Defective components including the roof, doors and windows,
- Defective water drainage systems,
- Leaking internal water pipes.

5.4.2 The presence of penetrative damp can create or exacerbate a condensation problem.

5.5 Mould



- 5.5.1 Mould develops in damp conditions and grows on damp surfaces. Mould can produce allergens, irritants and toxic substances that can cause health problems.

6 HHT Responsibilities

6.1 Prevention

- 6.1.1 HHT will actively encourage tenants to report condensation, damp and mould. HHT aims to prevent condensation, damp and mould issues by developing and acquiring housing that allows tenants to occupy their homes comfortably, without experiencing condensation and damp.
- 6.1.2 HHT will actively prevent damp in our housing stock and take action to address the range of causes of condensation, damp and mould. This includes addressing overcrowding, updating insulation and ventilation, and signposting tenants for assistance with their heating costs. We will also work towards introducing a programme for the service and testing of ventilation equipment in individual homes.
- 6.1.3 HHT will use stock condition surveys and customer information to ensure a data-driven, risk-based approach to condensation, damp and mould. We will use data to understand where there is a re-occurring problem, caused either by the property archetype, household composition, property defects or a combination of all three. HHT will target preventative remedial work where trends and causes are identified.
- 6.1.4 We will align our preventative approach with our overall asset management strategy. This sets out our planned approach to improving energy efficiency across our stock.
- 6.1.5 All staff will be provided with training to recognise condensation, damp and mould, related issues and causes. Staff have a responsibility to report all signs of condensation, damp and mould, follow record keeping procedures, and communicate with the necessary internal teams as detailed in the procedure. Contractors will report dampness if they find it in on a visit to a property for any reason, or if they find it as part of their repair work, for example in concealed areas.

6.2 Diagnosis

- 6.2.1 HHT will carry out investigations of all condensation, damp and mould reports in line with Awaabs Law and correctly diagnose the cause of damp. HHT will use an independent surveyor if the results of its internal investigations are unclear. This includes instructing contractors to complete work or writing to the tenant to explain what will be done.
- 6.2.3 HHT will use the Awaabs Law Procedure to determine the category of damp in each case and action will be based on severity.

6.3 Improvement works

- 6.3.1 HHT surveyors will write to the tenant following any visit about condensation, damp and mould. Where remedial works are necessary, the surveyor will provide details of what works will be required.
- 6.3.2 Remedial works include but are not limited to mould treatment works.
- 6.3.3 We will complete condensation, damp, and mould repairs within 20 working days and prioritise works based on risk. Please refer to the Repairs Policy for further guidance.
- 6.3.4 Improvement works will be carried out on a case-by-case basis to assist in the prevention, management and control of condensation including the installation of mechanical extractor fans, fresh air vents and insulation.
- 6.3.5 Where extensive works are required, HHT will consider these on a case-by-case basis. If it is appropriate, tenants will be offered temporary accommodation while work is undertaken, particularly if there is a vulnerable member of the household.
- 6.3.6 HHT will prioritise urgent cases based on risk and will monitor these through to completion.
- 6.3.7 Sometimes we identify homes that may be part of a regeneration or that would be sold. Where this happens, we will make sure that tenants do not receive a poorer standard of service or lower living conditions. We do this by treating these homes as we treat all homes. We will make sure all repairs reported or data analysis that pinpoints an issue will be investigated and dealt with including damp and mould.

6.4 Communication

- 6.4.1 HHT will respond to tenant enquiries about condensation, damp and mould within 10 working days. All staff will be empathetic, informative and solution-focussed when communicating with tenants about damp and mould.
- 6.4.2 Staff and contractors will attend arranged appointments. If an appointment is likely to be missed for unforeseen reasons, the tenant will be informed as soon as possible, and the appointment will be rearranged.
- 6.4.3 Where tenants choose to manage condensation in their own home, staff will provide clear advice or signpost to further support
- 6.4.4 HHT teams and departments will communicate effectively internally to ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling condensation, damp and mould. The Assets Surveyor will have overall responsibility for monitoring the outcomes of remedial intervention.
- 6.4.5 All staff will recognise when it is necessary to follow the Complaints Policy in dealing with condensation, damp and mould. We will make every effort to resolve the complaint directly with our tenants, whilst recognising and supporting their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage. All staff will follow record keeping procedures to ensure that complaints are handled effectively.
- 6.4.6 Claims for compensation as a consequence of failing to implement this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the Compensation Policy.

6.5 Relets and Mutual Exchanges

- 6.5.1 We will make reasonable checks and do any works required prior to relet /exchange. We will give advice at the start of a tenancy about preventing condensation and contacting us immediately if any concerns about mould developing. We will check previous records as part of the approval process and where there have been previous incidents we will ensure these have been resolved.

6.6 Monitoring cases of condensation, damp and mould

6.6.1 HHT will monitor open and closed condensation, damp and mould cases to ensure that problems do not persist and that interventions are concluded.

6.6.2 A tracker of damp and mould cases will be reported monthly to our Leadership Management Team and quarterly to Board.

7 Budget

7.1 HHT will ensure there is sufficient budget to treat damp and mould and carry out associated remedial repairs. Budget provision will also be made to ensure all staff receive training relevant to their role, some of which will be mandatory.

8 Equalities statement

8.1 This policy will be implemented in accordance with HHT's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy. An equalities impact assessment has been completed to ensure that the policy is inclusive and does not impact negatively on any tenant or group of tenants.

8.2 Tenants' individual needs are taken into account when delivering our repairs service, this includes any actions needed in relation to condensation damp and mould.

9 Policy review period

9.1 The policy will be reviewed every three years or as needed if there are legislative or regulatory changes.

10 Related documents

- 11.1 Repairs Policy
- 11.2 Compensation Policy
- 11.3 Contractors' Code of Conduct
- 11.4 Tenancy Agreement
- 11.5 Complaints Policy
- 11.6 Decant Policy