
Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation

Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy

Introduction

Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation has been successfully managing council housing stock on the estate since 2006 when 860 council owned properties were transferred under the Right to Manage Regulations. Governed by a board of tenants and owner-occupiers Dovecotes is a locally managed service led by local people.

The Housing Services provided by us include the letting of properties, sustainability of tenancies and taking appropriate action where a tenant has breached their tenancy conditions. Our Repairs Team manage the physical maintenance of the Council's housing stock but not capital improvements, this is delegated by the Council to Wolverhampton Homes.

We have a strong focus on service delivery and planning for future provision. This is to ensure that services achieve an appropriate balance between quality and cost. In addition, we aim to ensure that our services encourage integrated positive communities and sustainable areas where people want to live.

We know that there is a significant amount of maintenance work needed to keep the average home in good condition. Some occurs at short notice, and some can be planned. Whilst day to day repairs is delegated to us others such as gas and electrical repairs are a retained responsibility of the City Council that is delegated to Wolverhampton Homes.

Our responsibility for repairs and maintenance are:
Responsive Repairs (not including electrical or gas repairs)
Voids (Empty properties)
Emergency repairs during daytime hours (09:00-4:30)
Planned maintenance

Whilst the Council continues to plan estate wide capital improvement programmes to keep the Council's Housing Stock in a good condition Dovecotes commits surplus allowances each year to upgrade and improve tenants' homes based on condition, need, efficiency and value.

Purpose

This policy details Dovecotes Tenant Managements approach to how the risk of damp, mould and condensation is managed and how we will respond to reports of damp, mould and condensation within properties detailed in our Modular Management Agreement with the City of Wolverhampton Council.

Reports of damp, mould and condensation in tenant's homes can be reported by tenants, TMO staff and contractors as part of their daily duties. Such occurrences of damp and

condensation can lead to mould growth and subsequent detriment to tenants and properties.

We aim to manage the risk of damp, mould, and condensation (DMC) occurring in properties managed by us by:

- Prioritising repairs logged by tenants identifying DMC in their homes
- Reactive repairs
- Planned preventative maintenance
- Providing information and guidance to tenants

It is important we diagnose the causes of damp and condensation to effectively remedy the situation for our tenants and provide relevant information and signposting them where appropriate.

Through this policy we aim to provide clear lines of responsibility within Dovecotes TMO for the management of DMC related issues. We will also identify specific individual responsibilities in the management of DMC whilst clarifying our approach to damp and condensation.

We understand that each tenant and home is different. Through our management of DMC our aim is to tailor responses to ensure the individual needs of tenants are taken into consideration whilst providing assurance to the City of Wolverhampton Council and the Regulator of Social Housing that measures are in place to identify, manage and mitigate risks associated with DMC.

Background and Context

Condensation is the appearance of water on cold surfaces. This happens when moist air meets air or a surface which is at a lower temperature creating water. This is more noticeable on windows or tiles, but it can form on any surface.

Mould is a microscopic fungus that grows in damp places and can appear in many forms including fuzzy black, white, or green patches. Mould can have a musty smell and is more prevalent in the winter when the temperature in homes drops.

Mould spores are found everywhere and are released in their thousands into the atmosphere. People living in properties with mould are more likely to suffer from respiratory symptoms, infections, allergies, or asthma. Sneezing, a runny nose, red eyes, or a skin rash are allergic reactions as a result touching or inhaling mould spores. Mould can also trigger asthma attacks, coughing, wheezing, and breathlessness putting young children, the elderly and those with a compromised immune system at a greater risk.

We know that one of the main causes of mould is condensation, when moisture or water vapour encounters a cold surface creating damp. If left untreated the damp surface becomes the ideal condition for mould to grow.

Another reason for mould can be rising damp, this is a relatively rare issue but can be caused because of moisture traveling or being sucked up through capillary action (small tubes in

bricks) from the ground. Rising damp is caused by a defect in the property and most commonly occurs when the damp proof course is breached. The signs of rising damp can be water stains, damp patches starting from the bottom of the wall or flaky paint and will always require an inspection by a trained buildings inspector.

Process

A tenant, staff member or contractor can report DMC to the Repairs team. Each report will be investigated by the Senior Maintenance Officer who, following their assessment will plan the most appropriate course of action. Throughout our dealing with tenants, we will operate a 'no blame' culture proactively working with them to find resolutions that deal with the issue and mitigate any further occurrences.

DMC, when inspected will be categorised into 1 of 3 categories. Each will provide an appropriate course of action and a clearly defined time schedule of when the works should be completed.

Category	Severity	Action and Time Frame
Category 1 RED	Extensive areas of damp and/or mould growth in 1 or more rooms totalling more than 4 ^{m2} Or Household Vulnerability: Age related (babies, children <14, elderly 65+) with any of the following health related issues; asthma, allergies, COPD, weakened immune system (e.g., due to chemotherapy) etc'	Eliminate any immediate DMC hazard i.e. specialist treatment Treat, paint and decorate Decant where necessary Target: 10 Working Days
Category 2 AMBER	Medium or patchy areas of damp and/or mould growth in 1 or more rooms typically totalling more than 1 ^{m2}	Eliminate any immediate DMC hazard i.e. specialist treatment Treat, paint and decorate Target: 20 Working Days
Category 3 GREEN	Minor areas and limited instances of mould Examples such as window frames, silicone/tiles around baths and showers	Face to face visit with advice, education, and information leaflets Assess vulnerability possible referral to Household Support Officer Target 20 Working Days

Our Responsibilities

We will meet our responsibilities as detailed within our Modular Management Agreement and our Repairs Policy and continue to maintain homes so that they meet the Decent Home Standard.

We will investigate and diagnose the cause of damp or mould and deliver effective remedial solutions. Throughout these solutions we will keep the tenant informed providing progress updates from beginning to end.

We will use our website, social platforms, newsletters, and local office to provide our residents with comprehensive and focused advice and guidance on how to manage damp, mould and condensation.

Educating tenants and helping them to understand the cause of damp and mould is a good foundation to limiting the negative impact on tenants and their homes. Where a tenant may be vulnerable or disabled and have no one to help them carry out mould washes themselves, we will consider how to support and assist them on a case-by-case basis.

Where a tenant may be experiencing statutory overcrowding resulting in damp and mould, we will work with them and signpost them Wolverhampton Homes to explore their options.

Where it is deemed that a tenant is hoarding and the storage of excessive items in the homes has contributed to damp and mould, we will refer to Wolverhampton Homes' Hoarding Panel for further guidance and support to remedy the situation.

When a property is void, each room will be checked for damp, mould, and condensation. If identified, it will be managed and rectified as part of the void works.

As part of a Mutual Exchange, a property inspection is completed at which time, each room will be checked for damp, mould, and condensation. If identified, it will be managed and rectified before the Mutual Exchange completes.

Tenants Responsibilities

We expect tenant to follow all advice and guidance issued by us, on managing and controlling damp, mould, and condensation. Information can be found on our website and is available at our local office.

Tenants must regularly check for and treat condensation and mould. If all reasonable efforts have been made to manage and control condensation and mould, and this has not been successful the tenant is required to report the issue to us - even if the issue is in its early stages.

Tenants must regularly check and report any leaks, or faulty heating, windows, or extractor fans and report any evidence of penetrating, rising, or bridging damp, even if the issue is in its early stages.

Tenants must ensure that extractor fans and vents are not blocked or covered.

If the tenant fails to take the advice and reasonable steps to reduce damp or mould, they may be recharged for any resulting repairs required which are a result of this neglect.

We recommend that tenants arrange adequate household contents insurance, to protect their home from damage caused by damp, mould, or condensation. Where remedial works and mould wash treatments have been undertaken by us, the tenant is responsible for redecoration using the recommended anti-fungal paint. For vulnerable or disabled residents, we will consider redecoration through our OAP Redecoration Scheme on a case-by-case basis.

Monitoring and Ongoing Improvement

It is a moral and legal duty to ensure the properties we manage are in a safe condition and free from hazards. Damp and mould growth can be caused by condensation and, under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System it is recognised as one of the 29 hazards that can cause breathing difficulties, exacerbate existing conditions such as asthma or lead to the spread of fungal infections.

To monitor the prevalence of DMC in properties managed we will continue to log all repairs and remedial work on the Northgate NEC system. This will provide us with the opportunity to assess the data we hold and develop strategies within our own organisation.

Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy.

Service/Project/Policy	Department	Assessor	New/Existing	Date
Damp Mould and Condensation Policy	Repairs and Operations	TMO Board	New	
<p>1. Who is responsible for the service/project/policy?</p> <p>Amie Merry, Chief Officer and Warren Frays, Senior Maintenance Officer</p>				
<p>2. Describe the purpose of the service/project/policy? Who is it intended to benefit? What are the intended outcomes?</p> <p>To provide The City of Wolverhampton Council (CWC) who will report to The Regulator of Social Housing Dovecotes Tenant Managements approach to how the risk of damp and condensation is managed and how we will respond to reports of damp and condensation within properties detailed in our Modular Management Agreement.</p> <p>Through this policy we aim to provide clear lines of responsibility within Dovecotes TMO for the management of DMC related issues. We will also identify specific individual responsibilities in the management of DMC whilst clarifying our approach to damp, mould and condensation.</p> <p>The intended outcomes are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency on our approach and mitigating actions when dealing with reports - A clearer policy and guidance for staff to operate with 				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To reduce the risk of poor health or illness to tenants living in properties managed by the TMO - To mitigate the risk posed to the organisation for not adequately managing cases of DMC 		
<p>3. Are there any associated objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prioritising repairs logged by tenants identifying DMC in their homes - Reactive repairs - Planned preventative investment - Providing information and guidance to customers 		
<p>4. What factors contribute or detract from achieving the intended outcomes?</p> <p>The TMO may experience issues when applying this policy where the tenant refuses access to operates or inspectors to carry out remedial works. There may also be a delay in carrying our works if a tenant does not report the repair at the early stages.</p>		
<p>5. Does the service/project/policy have an impact in terms of race, disability, gender, gender reassignment, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and age?</p> <p>This policy has been applied with the intention that it ensures equality of treatment for all tenants without discrimination, or victimisation and is not intended to inadvertently affect any person covered under the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.</p>		
Board Decision	Approve	
Comments		

Approval and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Adopted	Reviewed	Officer
May 2023		Full Board