



DOVECOTES TMO

DAMP & MOULD POLICY

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Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation

Responsibility (Retained / Delegated)

Dovecotes						
Timescale		Delegated or Retained		Organisation Responsible		
		TMO		WCC / WH		
3. Priorities and Timescales						
The current target repair times are:	Out of Hours (OOH)	1	Hour	R		✓
	Emergency Repairs (FE)	24	Hours	D	✓	
	Routine Repairs (FC)	20	Days	D	✓	
	Planned (FP)	90	Days	D	✓	
Decant of Tenant(s)						
The decant of tenant(s) Emergency Repairs (Imminent Danger to Health) (City of Wolverhampton Council / Wolverhampton Homes)					R	✓

Dovecotes Tenant Management Organisation

Damp & Mould

Responsibility Chart



Damp & Mould Policy

General Statement

This policy sets out Dovecotes TMO's approach to damp, mould and condensation in our tenant's homes where we have a responsibility to ensure we comply with all legal, regulatory and statutory requirements. In line with this document, we will proactively manage potential risks and promptly diagnose and prevent issues, which may arise from damp, mould and condensation within our properties, meeting the needs of our tenants and providing homes which are safe, warm and dry. This document sets out how we will support our tenants to minimise the risk of damp, mould and condensation occurring and report it where there is evidence of its presence, ensuring Dovecotes TMO meets its legal, regulatory and statutory obligations.

Dovecotes TMO recognise and accepts its responsibilities as a managing agent in relations to damp, mould & condensation and is committed to comply with the key legislation relevant to this document:

Decent Homes Standard 2006
Home Standard 2012
Housing Act 2004
Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2018)
Environmental Protection Act 1990
Social Housing Act 2023 (Awaab's Law)

Purpose

This policy details Dovecotes TMO's 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 members and contractors as part of their daily duties.

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

- Prioritising repairs reported by our tenants identifying DMC in their homes
- Reactive repairs
- Planned preventative maintenance
- Provide information and guidance to our tenants in regards DMC

It is important we diagnose the causes of damp, mould and condensation to effectively remedy the problem for our tenants and provide relevant information through-out the process.

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

Dovecotes TMO understands that each tenant and home is different. Through our management of DMC our aim is a tailored response to ensure that the individual needs of tenants are taken into consideration whilst providing assurances 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 damp, mould and condensation.

Understanding damp and mould

Damp is the build-up of moisture in a property. It affects building materials (such as walls, floors, ceilings, foundations) and/or home furnishings and belongings (such as carpets, curtains, wallpaper, furniture and clothing). In addition to causing damage, damp can also lead to the growth of mould and other microorganisms. Damp can occur in homes for a variety of reasons. Irrespective of the type of damp, landlords are legally responsible for identifying and tackling damp and mould problems within your property.

Mould is a fungus that spreads through spores invisible to the naked eye but is in the air around us all of the time and can quickly grow on surfaces where dampness persists, or water has formed into a visible covering.

There are four main causes of damp:

1. **Water leaks** – these can be from defective supply and waste pipework (especially in bathrooms and kitchens) and can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch and stays damp regardless of the prevailing weather conditions and requires repair.
2. **Rising damp** – is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. Water gets through or around a defective damp proof course (DPC) or passes through the masonry that was built without a DPC. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms; it will be present all year round but can be more noticeable in winter. It is extremely uncommon but is generally the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires repair.
3. **Penetrating damp** – a defect in the structure of the home, such as damaged brickwork, missing roof tiles, loose flashing or leaking rainwater goods. These defects allow water to pass from the outside to the floors, walls or ceilings. Penetrating damp is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall and will normally appear as a well-defined 'damp-patch' which looks and feels damp to the touch. It is the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires a repair.
4. **Condensation** – the most prevalent type of damp is caused by moisture in the air (water vapour) inside the dwelling coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window

or wall. The drop in temperature causes liquid water to form on the surface and then soak in. It is usually found in kitchens, bathrooms, the corners of rooms and on or near windows. It is also found in areas of low air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are pushed up against external walls. Normal household activities release moisture into the air and good practice in the home minimises and alleviates condensation, and in many cases will prevent it causing damp and persistent mould.

People most at risk of health issues from damp and mould

While damp and mould pose a risk to anyone's health and should always be acted on quickly, it is particularly important that damp and mould is addressed with urgency for the groups below as they are more vulnerable to significant health impacts:

- people with a pre-existing health condition (for example allergies, asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, other lung diseases and cardiovascular disease) who are at risk of their condition worsening and have a higher risk of developing fungal infections and/or additional allergies
- people of all ages who have a weakened immune system, such as people who have cancer or are undergoing chemotherapy, people who have had a transplant, or other people who are taking medications that suppress their immune system
- people living with a mental health condition
- pregnant women, their unborn babies and women who have recently given birth, who may have weakened immune systems
- children and young people whose organs are still developing and are therefore more likely to suffer from physical conditions such as respiratory problems
- children and young people who are at risk of worsening mental health
- older people
- people who are bedbound, housebound or have mobility problems making it more difficult for them to get out of a home with damp and mould and into fresh air

People who fall into more than one of these categories are likely to be particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of damp and mould. Landlords should not delay action to await medical evidence or opinion - medical evidence is not a requirement for action.

Solutions to Managing Damp & Mould

Preventative action

We will provide our tenants with information on how to manage the moisture within their homes to mitigate any potential condensation. Where a repair is needed the works will be

completed within a realistic timescale and all health and safety works to void properties will be completed prior to re-let.

Dealing with damp and mould

Tenants are required to report any problems to us as soon as possible under the terms of their tenancy agreement. When we receive a report, we will inspect the property to undertake a more detailed investigation to determine the cause.

Dealing with condensation

We will work with our tenants to take appropriate measures to address any building defects/repairs to prevent the damp and mould occurring and advise how to control moisture levels or increase ventilation or heating so that moisture levels are kept low. The tenant has an obligation under the terms of their tenancy to look after their home. When a particularly severe or recurring damp or mould issue is identified we will undertake an inspection to determine the actions needed and work with the resident to resolve this with realistic timescales.

In the most complex cases that may involve intrusive building works or there is a serious health risk to the tenant resident or a member of their household (assessed at Category 1 under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System) it may be necessary to decant the tenant on a temporary or permanent basis which would be arranged in accordance with our Decant Policy.

Reports of damp and mould to leasehold properties where Dovecotes TMO has repair responsibilities for the external structure should be investigated to ensure there are no defects with the structure contributing to the occurrence of mould. Inspections should be arranged and where appropriate repairs to maintained elements of the building undertaken.

Categorising and Addressing Cases

We will prioritise cases as they are reported or as soon as we are made aware, undertake a triage exercise to determine the likely severity, location, and vulnerability of the resident into RED - High, AMBER - Medium or GREEN - Low.

RED (HIGH): Extensive Areas of Damp or Mould Growth in habitable and non-habitable rooms, non-wipeable surfaces such as plaster or decoration, vulnerable and non-vulnerable residents living in property in line with government guidance.

Response: order raised to contractor to undertake emergency repairs within 24 hours; inspection / investigation to take place **within 10 working days**.

AMBER (MEDIUM): Medium Areas of Damp or Mould Growth in habitable and non-habitable rooms, non-wipeable surfaces such as plaster or decoration, vulnerable and non-vulnerable residents living in property in line with government guidance

Response: to be inspected / investigated **within 10 working days**.

GREEN (LOW): Minor Areas and limited instances of Damp or Mould Growth in habitable and non- habitable rooms, wipeable surfaces such as plastic window frames, silicone seals around windows, wall tiles around bath & shower areas and sealants around baths.

Response: to be inspected / investigated **within 10 working days.**

Supporting & Communicating with our Residents

We ensure residents are communicated with and kept up to date. We will follow up after any repairs to check it has resolved the problem. Repairs Officers will keep customers informed. In cases of condensation, we will give residents advice on how to prevent damp and what they should do to remove mould where this is possible in relation to the specific circumstances and the individual customer's needs.

We will take all reasonable steps to contact customers. However, where it is not possible to contact the customer to discuss reports of damp and mould and arrange inspections, customers should be contacted on at least two occasions on two separate days over a five-day period and details of contact attempts logged on NEC Housing (NEC).

Where resident(s) are not contactable and do not return phone calls, resident(s) will be asked to re-report the issue to Dovecotes TMO and until this time no further action will take place.

Where a case has been triaged as High Risk and the resident refuses access, the Repairs Department will refer this to Housing Department to progress under the abandonment procedure.

Awaab's Law

Awaab's Law was introduced in July 2023 as part of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act following the tragic death of two-year old Awaab Ishak from prolonged exposure to damp and mould in his Rochdale home in December 2020.

The law is designed to ensure that no social tenant is left living in unsafe conditions, with strict timescales for addressing hazardous issues in their homes.

From October 2025, you will be legally required to:

- Investigate and resolve damp and mould hazards that pose a significant risk of harm to tenants with fixed timescales.
- Carry out all emergency, including, but not limited to, damp and mould issues within a maximum of 24 hours.

Awaab's Law is a clear statement that substandard social housing will no longer be tolerated.

Awaab's Law Requirements

If a social landlord becomes aware of a matter or circumstance in a social home that may be a hazard within scope, they must investigate within **10 working days** or ascertain if there is such a hazard.

Produce a written summary of the findings of the investigation (in most cases) and provide this to residents **within 3 working days** of the investigation concluding.

If the investigation finds that a hazard presents a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of a resident, the social landlord must, in most circumstances, **within 5 working days** of the investigation concluding, make the property safe (using temporary measures if necessary and begin any further required works. The social landlord must satisfactorily complete repair works within a reasonable timescale.

In an emergency situation, the social landlord must investigate and action any emergency repair as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event **within 24 hours**.

If the property cannot be made safe within the specified timescales for Awaab's Law, then the social landlord must offer to arrange for the residents to stay in suitable alternative accommodation, at the social landlord's expense, until the required repairs are completed.

How Dovecotes TMO will comply with Awaab's Law:

With these changes in the law in regards Damp Mould & Condensation (DMC) we aim to undertake the following:

Promptly investigate and remediation: Landlords must swiftly address reported damp and mould issues, identifying the root cause and implementing solutions.

Investigate potential hazards within 10 working days of being made aware (*From receipt of report – 10 working days to do inspection / investigations*)

Provide residents a written summary of investigation findings within 3 working days, detailing any hazards found and next steps (*Then 3 working days for report from inspection / investigations PLUS providing a written schedule of works*)

Begin repair works within 5 working days if hazards are found that pose a significant health or safety risk to the resident (*Must begin work within 5 working days of the report being issued*)

Complete repairs within a reasonable timeframe, considering resident needs.

Address emergency repairs that pose imminent danger with 24 hours (*Emergency Repairs – Must be done within 24 hours or the residents re-located include: prevalent damp and mould that is impacting a resident's ability to breathe) (If relocation is required Dovecotes TMO will follow the City of Wolverhampton Council's Decant Policy which states:*

All council decants, regardless of the managing agent which manages a tenant's home, are carried out by Wolverhampton Homes as a retained responsibility.

Risk Matrix

<u>Category</u>	<u>Severity</u>	<u>Actions</u>
<u>RED</u>	<p>Extensive Areas of Damp or Mould Growth in habitable and non-habitable rooms, non-wipeable surfaces such as plaster or decoration.</p> <p><u>High Risk</u></p> <p>Household Vulnerability: Age related (babies, children under 14, elderly 65+ with any of the following health related issues: asthma, allergies, COPD, weakened immune system (e.g.) due to chemotherapy) etc.</p> <p>No Vulnerabilities</p>	<p><u>Inspection / Investigation within 10 working days</u></p> <p><u>Emergency Repairs Target 24 Hours</u></p> <p>Eliminate any immediate DMC hazards or use temporary measures if necessary?</p> <p>Decent of Tenant</p> <p><u>Written Report Issued within 3 working days of Inspection / Investigation</u></p> <p><u>Start Works Within 5 working days of written report issued</u></p> <p>DMC Advise & Information Leaflets Issued to Tenant</p>
<u>AMBER</u>	<p>Medium Areas of Damp or Mould Growth in habitable and non- habitable rooms, non-wipeable surfaces such as plaster or decoration.</p> <p><u>Medium Risk</u></p> <p>Household Vulnerability: Age related (babies, children under 14, elderly 65+ with any of the following health related issues: asthma, allergies, COPD, weakened immune system (e.g.) due to chemotherapy) etc.</p> <p>No Vulnerabilities</p>	<p><u>Inspection / Investigation within 10 working days</u></p> <p><u>Written Report Issued within 3 working days of Inspection / Investigation</u></p> <p>Eliminate any immediate DMC hazards</p> <p><u>Start Works Within 5 working days of written report issued</u></p> <p>DMC Advise & Information Leaflets Issued to Tenant</p>
<u>GREEN</u>	<p>Minor Areas and limited instances of Damp or Mould Growth in habitable and non- habitable rooms, wipeable surfaces such as plastic window frames, silicone seals around windows, wall tiles around bath & shower areas and sealants around baths.</p> <p><u>Low Risk</u></p> <p>No Vulnerabilities</p>	<p><u>Inspection / Investigation within 10 working days</u></p> <p><u>Written Report Issued within 3 working days of Inspection / Investigation</u></p> <p><u>Start Works Within 5 working days of written report issued</u></p> <p>DMC Advise & Information Leaflets Issued to Tenant</p>

Risk Matrix

Extensive Areas of Damp or Mould Growth in habitable rooms			
Extensive Areas of Damp or Mould Growth in non-habitable rooms			
Medium Areas of Damp or Mould Growth in habitable rooms			
Medium Areas of Damp or Mould Growth in non-habitable rooms			
Minor Areas and limited instances of Damp or Mould Growth in both habitable and non-habitable rooms			
Extent of Mould	No Vulnerabilities	Residents with allergies / asthma or children under 14 and elderly over 65 with respiratory tract infection	Residents with allergies / asthma or children under 14 and elderly over 65 with respiratory tract infections / COPD / Weakened Immune System / Chemotherapy
	Vulnerabilities		

Our Responsibilities

We are responsible for:

- Conducting surveys, where appropriate
- Cleaning mould affected surfaces areas with fungicide wash
- Clearing blocked air vents where it is not possible for a tenant to do so safely
- Servicing ventilation systems
- Installing extractor fans where needed

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 to 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.

Process

A tenant, staff member or contractor can report DMC to the Repairs Team in person, via telephone on 01902 552780 or via email generalenquiries@dovecotestmo.com.

Each report will be inspected by the Senior Maintenance Officer who, following their assessment will plan the most appropriate course of action.

Upon assessment completion the Senior Maintenance Officer will provide a written **Summary of Investigation** which will include:

1. The hazard details
2. Next steps
3. Repair time scales

This will provide the tenant with information at all stage of the process of works within their property.

Where damp, mould & condensations risks (DMC) have been identified, repairs must start **within 5 working days** of the written summary being issued.

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.

When inspected damp, mould & condensation (DMC) 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.

Tenants Responsibilities

Tenants are responsible for:

- ✓ Keeping their home clean and in good condition – Regular cleaning inside your home including seals, wall tile grout, sealants, windows, air vents and fans to prevent mould from forming.
- ✓ Preventing damage through neglect or misuse
- ✓ Redecorating their home as often as required
- ✓ Reporting repairs promptly and allow access to carry out these works
- ✓ Follow damp and mould guidance to reduce condensation and mould with their homes
- ✓ Regularly wipe down surfaces where there is an excess build-up of moisture or water droplets (e.g. windows and cills)
- ✓ Use all sources of ventilation (trickle vents and electric extractors fans) that are provided within the dwelling to help reduce condensation

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 any signs of condensation and mould and report this to the office - 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.

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. For vulnerable or disabled residents, we will consider redecoration 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.

Information and Training

Dovecotes TMO will provide information and training for all employees to ensure that they are aware of the dangers and risk that can be associated with Damp, Mould and Condensation.

The following course are recommended:

(Courses)

Policy Review

This Damp, Mould & Condensation Management Policy will be reviewed annually or as legislation changes.

Review Date: June 2026

Chair (Dovecotes TMO)

Name _____ Signature _____

Chief Officer (Dovecotes TMO)

Name _____ Signature _____

Policy Review