DRAFT PROCEDURE

MANAGING DAMPNESS, MOULD & CONDENSATION

Wellhouse - The Place to Be

Policy Created:	January 2023
Date of Review	May 2024
Date of Next Review	May 2027

The procedure is available on the Association's website. Customers will be provided with a copy of this policy as part of their Tenant's Handbook. We will provide this policy in specific formats as requested, i.e., tape, Braille or another language.

Linked Policies/Procedures

1.	Openness and Confidentiality
2.	Customer Engagement and Participation policy
3.	Complaints Policy
4.	Equality and Diversity & Human Rights Policy
5	Void Policy
6.	Repairs and Maintenance
7.	Asset Management Strategy
8.	Managing Dampness, Mould and Condensation Policy

1. Purpose

1.1 To provide a procedure that will create a consistent approach to addressing cases of mould and condensation or dampness through to resolution and rectification of cause.

2. Scope

2.1 The procedure applies Wellhouse HA employees, contractors and stakeholders

3. Contributory Factors of Dampness, Mould & Condensation

3.1 Fuel poverty

It is recognised that fuel poverty is a major factor in cases of condensation which can lead to mould problems when customers are unable to afford to heat their home effectively.

3.2 Cold Bridging

Cold Bridging can be found in many areas including poorly installed cavity wall insulation for example. Where a gap occurs in the insulation this can cause areas to become colder, which would then be at risk of increased condensation.

3.3 Blocked or broken ventilation

This would include blocked solum or air bricks and broken window trickle vents

3.4 Broken or no extractor fans

Where possible, all kitchens, bathrooms and utility rooms should have a functioning extractor fan.

3.5 Radiators

Heating systems performance is not always at the standard required to prevent condensation. Radiators may be undersized for the room volume and can be located on internal walls creating colder external walls.

3.6 Missing/damaged render or pointing on brickwork

There could be various reasons for poor or broken pointing (i.e., the finish between bricks) on parts of a brick wall which may have created cold spots for condensation and penetrating damp. The same can also be true with damaged render systems

3.7 Leaking guttering

Guttering can, over time, corrode, warp or sag causing leaking joints. Lack of effective maintenance can result in blocked or chocked gutters and downpipes that can, through time, cause damage to the fabric of the building.

3.8 Leaking roofs

This could be caused by many things i.e., damaged or missing tiles, damaged flashing, roof vents or chimneys, blocked gutters or simply that the roof has is approach the end of its serviceable life.

3.9 Unvented and condensing tumble dryers

These can produce excessive amounts of water vapour in the property, encouraging condensation.

3.10 Customer management of the home

Excessive humidity within the home and the lack of adequate ventilation is the primary cause of condensation. Drying clothes on space heaters, cooking with lids off pans, and over-crowding all add to the moisture levels within a property.

3.11 Rising damp

Rising damp can occur where there is missing or ineffective damp proof course or where a high ground level breaches the damp proof course.

4. Four Main Categories of Dampness

4.1 Penetrating dampness

This type of dampness will only be found on external walls or, in the case of roof leaks, on ceilings. It only appears because of a defect in the structure of the home, such as missing pointing to the brickwork, missing roof tiles, loose flashing or leaking gutters. These defects then allow water to pass from the outside to the inner surfaces. Penetrating dampness 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. “Tide marks” will be left, even in periods of dry weather.

4.2 Defective plumbing

Leaks from water and waste pipes, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, are relatively common. They can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch and stays damp whatever the weather conditions outside. An examination of the water and waste pipes in the kitchen and bathroom and the seals around the bath, shower and sinks will usually find the problem. In cases when leaks are not attended to, rot may become established in wooden joists and floorboards leading to a risk of collapse in severe cases.

Mould may be seen with this type of dampness and even fungi are not uncommon if the defects are not addressed.

4.3 Rising dampness

This is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. The water gets through or around a defective damp proof course (DPC) or passes through the natural brickwork if the property was built without a DPC. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms. It will normally rise no more than 36

inches above ground level (900mm) and usually leaves a ‘tide mark’ low down on the wall. You may also notice white salts on the affected areas.

Rising damp will be present all year round but is more noticeable in winter. If left untreated it may cause wall plaster to crumble and paper to lift in the affected area. Mould will rarely be seen where there is rising damp (and then only in the early stages). This is because rising dampness carries with it salts that prevent the growth of mould.

4.4 Condensation and mould growth

This is by far the most common enquiry we receive from customers which often leads to a repair request.

Condensation is caused by water vapour or moisture in the air, inside the dwelling, coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window or wall. The drop in temperature causes water to form on the surface. This water may then soak into the wallpaper, paintwork or plasterwork. Mould spores are invisible to the naked eye but are in the air all around us all of the time and will quickly grow on surfaces where condensation has formed into a visible covering.

Condensation can be more prevalent during the colder months, and we often experience a spike in customer demand during Autumn and Winter. A symptom of condensation is mould growth which is usually found in the corners of rooms, north facing walls and on or near windows. It is also found in areas of little air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are pushed up against external walls. It also forms in bathrooms and kitchens as they are high moisture areas or in properties which are overcrowded.

All homes are affected by condensation at some point however certain activities can increase the problem and good practices can eliminate this from becoming a bigger problem. Condensation and mould growth can often be a consequence of customer habits and lifestyles. Cooking, washing and drying clothes indoors etc. all produce water vapour that can only be seen when tiny drops of water (condensation) appear on colder surfaces such as walls, windows, ceilings or mirrors and often unseen on clothing, shoes and furniture.

The amount of condensation in a home depends upon a number of things, most importantly-

• How much water vapour is produced by the actions of its residents

• How cold or warm the property is

• How much air circulation (ventilation)

• How well the property has been insulated.

Simply turning up the heating will not sort out the problem, this may only temporarily reduce condensation. All factors may need to be looked at to reduce the problem. The first sign of a problem is often water vapour condensing on windows and other cold surfaces, which then takes a long time to disappear.

This allows the surfaces to become damp resulting in mould growing on these damp areas.

5. Procedure / Process

How to Manage a Report of Damp or Mould and Condensation

5.1 First contact

• Call received by Maintenance Team

- Inspection arranged
- Repairs Team to give tailored advice to alleviate condensation and provide information leaflets.

- Where there is no evidence of lifestyle related condensation or visible building defects following a property inspection.

- Where required raise a line for an antifungal Treatment

- Housing Officer to be informed following visit.

- A request for a condensation/dampness survey should be raised to a specialist contractor who will arrange to leave monitoring equipment and will provide a report and recommendations.

• A request will be sent to Income Advice Officer following an inspection by the Repairs Team for a referral to Home Energy Scotland consideration also for top up voucher for customers struggling to heat homes. (depending on what funding streams are available)

- Customer to be contacted after 28-day period to assess effectiveness of advice etc, where issue remains a specialist condensation/dampness survey should be arranged.
- All contact should be recorded in the communication log on Homemaster.
- Any remedial works recommended by the Specialist Survey will be discussed with the tenant prior to works commencing.

5.2 Repeat contact

- If there is repeated contact after the advice/remedial works are carried out a follow up visit or a joint visit with a Housing Officer may be more appropriate. Identifying if issues have worsened or if new areas are affected and if a technical inspection may be required. (original Specialist Surveyor should be contacted if it appears that the problem has not been resolved)

- The objective is to minimize any dissatisfaction, should the customer identify that they are still dissatisfied and look to pursue a complaint this will be recorded and progressed in line with complaints policy.

5.3 How to Manage a Report of Defective plumbing

- Call received by Housing Assistant

- Housing Assistant will assess the repair type following discussion with the customer

- Repair will be categorised as either Emergency (response within 24 hours but typically within 4 hours) where the leak cannot be contained and will likely cause significant damage or as an Appointment (up to 15 days based on customer requirements but typically within 3 days) where the customer confirms for example that there is a minor drip which can be contained

- Most repairs of this type are first time fix, however where a trades operative identifies additional works for example water staining on ceilings below a bathroom, water damage to kitchen fitments, a follow-on technical inspection will be arranged to establish any further remedial works.

5.4 How to Manage a Report of Penetrating dampness & Rising dampness

- Call received by Housing Assistant

- Housing Assistant will assess the repair type following discussion with the customer and Maintenance Officer

- Repair will be categorised as Programmed and an appointment will be arranged for a Maintenance Officer to visit the property to fully diagnose the issue

- Most repairs of this type are associated with either defective guttering/downpipes and/or missing or dislodged roof tiles

Following the technical inspection remedial works will be completed within 30 days where possible (typically within 14 days). In some instances where the work is more complex or specialist in nature, repair works cannot always be carried out as part of the responsive repairs service as they generally require more planning, resources and non-standard materials. For reasons of efficiency, major repairs and specialist works may be grouped together in a programme of works

6. Turning insight into action

As well as addressing reports of dampness, mould, and condensation effectively, taking a proactive approach will also be key to success. Such an approach is made increasingly possible through the insight that can be gained from the extensive repairs and investment history we have for our properties and from the data that can be collected on the environment in homes using sensor technology. Where applicable we will deploy analysis and sensor technology to build understanding and to inform action including campaigns, staff resource deployment and property investment.

7. Monitoring and Review

This Procedure will be reviewed every in 1 year and every 3 years thereafter and will be reviewed should legislation, Regulations or internal organisational change and amendments as required

Appendix 1 **Dampness/ Condensation information**

Some helpful advice which may assist you in preventing condensation;

Why Condensation Occurs;

Condensation occurs when warm moist air meets a cold surface. The risk of condensation depends on how moist the air is and how cold the surfaces of the rooms are.

When Condensation Occurs;

Condensation usually occurs in the winter months because the building structure is cold and because windows are opened less and moist air cannot escape.

Where Condensation Occurs;

Condensation which you can see occurs often in short periods in bathrooms and kitchens because of the steamy atmosphere and quite frequently for prolonged periods in unheated bedrooms; also, sometimes in cupboards or behind furniture where ventilation and movement of air are restricted.

What is important?

- To prevent very moist air spreading to other rooms from kitchen and bathrooms or from where clothes may be put to dry.

- To provide some ventilation to all rooms so that moist air can escape.

- To use the heating reasonably.

How to prevent Serious Condensation in your home;

Reduce moisture content of room air.

Good ventilation of kitchens when washing or drying clothes or cooking is essential. Use any extractor fans when cooking, washing of clothes or bathing.

If there is no extractor fans open kitchen windows but keep the door closed as much as possible. After bathing keep the extractor on until any mirrors are clear and close the door long enough to dry off the room.

In other rooms provide some ventilation by opening a window just slightly. Too much ventilation in cold weather is uncomfortable and wastes heat. All that is needed is a very slightly opened window or ventilator. Where there is a choice open the top part, such as a top-hung window by about 10mm this is usually sufficient.

Avoid using portable heaters such as paraffin or flue less gas heaters. Each litre of fuel consumed produces the equivalent of 1 litre of water vapour.

Do not use unventilated airing cupboards for clothes drying.

If washing is put to dry, for example in a bathroom or kitchen, open a window or turn on the extractor fan. Do not leave the door open or moist air will spread to other rooms where it may cause trouble.

Provide reasonable heating;

Try to make sure that all rooms are at least partially heated, Condensation mostly occurs in unheated bedrooms.

To prevent condensation the heat has to keep room surfaces reasonably warm. It takes a long time for a cold building structure to warm up, so it is better to have a small amount of heat over a prolonged than a lot of heat over a short time.

Houses and flats that are left unoccupied and unheated during the day get very cold. Whenever possible, it is best to keep heating on, even at a low level.

Some rooms are especially cold because they have a lot of outside walls. Such rooms are most likely to have condensation and some heating is therefore necessary.

REMOVING MOULD

· Eradicate mould when it occurs. It is hard to remove when it has been there a while;

· Do not dry brush the area. This could release spores into the air which can spread the mould further

as well as cause an allergic reaction in some people; and

· There are several treatments for mould:

o Tea Tree Oil is effective. A 3% solution or 2 teaspoons in a spray bottle with 2 cups of water will

suffice. Shake well before each use;

o Kill mould from surfaces with an 80% white **fermented** vinegar solution

(available from supermarkets). After applying the mixture, leave for at

least 20 minutes and then lightly sponge with clean water;

o Remove the mould physically. Killing, but not removing the mould may

allow it to grow back; and

o Don’t use bleach. Bleach has a high pH which makes it ineffective to

kill mould. It simply bleaches it, so it looks like it has disappeared.

Remember to follow the instructions of the cleaning product you use.