

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy

December 2024

A Sovereign Network Homes policy

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23/08/2024	Service Quality Manager	1.2	Clause 5.7 amended as a result of a Housing Ombudsman Determination
02/12/2024	Service Quality Manager	1.3	Rebrand

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 We have designed a Policy and Procedure with customers, which enables us to diagnose, respond to and manage reports of damp, mould, and condensation within our properties.
- 1.2 There are many root causes that lead to damp, mould, and condensations within our homes (please see **Appendix 1** for further information). This has the potential to have an impact on the customer and their family’s physical and/or mental health and well-being. Both Network staff and customers should work together to prevent or resolve damp, mould, and condensation issues (please see **Section 4 and 5** for further guidance).
- 1.3 This Policy includes the requirement that appropriate budget levels are available and used effectively and efficiently to deal with issues of damp, mould, and condensation.
- 1.4 Repairs or remedial work carried out in response to cases of damp and mould complement our programmes of planned and cyclical maintenance. Our contractors are expected to maintain a good stock of anti-mould kits. This is to ensure that we meet the needs of our customers.

2. Aims and Objectives of this Policy

We aim to:

- 2.1 Undertake effective investigations and implement reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to manage damp, mould and condensation. Offer advice and assistance to customers living in our properties, including information on how to prevent damp, mould and condensation.
- 2.2 To Signpost customers who are experiencing difficulties managing their heating costs to our Charitable Fund or to other providers. Please see charitable section on our website: [Network Homes' Charitable Fund | Network Homes](#)
- 2.3 Ensure staff and contractors are trained on how to recognise, manage, and identify solutions to damp, mould and condensation within a rented property.
- 2.4 We aim to use our stock condition data and customer insight to inform proactive programmes of inspection and property improvements and enhancements to reduce the possibility of condensation, damp and mould. “

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- 2.5 To ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould.
- 2.6 To ensure that components we are installing as part of the responsive repairs and maintenance service are cost effective and meet sustainability and affordability criteria.
- 2.7 We will respond to all press enquires as per the Press information section on our website: [Press office information | Network Homes](#)
- 2.8 Manage enquiries, referrals and Notices (Improvement or Section 239) from Council Environmental Health and Housing Enforcement Teams as per our Damp and Mould Procedure.
- 2.9 Manage all Damp and Mould disrepair cases as per Section 6 of Repairs Policy
- 2.10 Work in partnership with tenants to ensure:
 - That customers who report damp and mould in their properties are treated with respect and empathy.
 - They have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice, information, and guidance on managing and controlling mould, damp and condensation.
 - The process of reporting an issue of damp and mould is straightforward and easily accessible for customers.
 - That we clearly and regularly update customers with advice or regarding any actions we can take/have taken to resolve reports of damp and mould.
 - Evaluate the use of the Decant Procedure to support customers in cases where structural interventions are not appropriate.

3. Causes of Damp Mould and Condensation

Please see **Appendix 1**

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4. Our Responsibilities

- 4.1 We will meet our landlord repairing responsibilities as detailed within our Tenant, Shared owner and Leasehold Agreements and in line with our Repairs Policy.
- 4.2 To maintain our homes so that they meet the Decent Home Standard.
- 4.3 We shall investigate and diagnose the cause of damp or mould and deliver effective remedial solutions.
- 4.4 To remain in regular and effective communication with a customer, following a report of damp and mould being made, providing progress updates from beginning to end – especially on the occasion where an investigation into a case may be complex.
- 4.5 Provide our customers with comprehensive and focused advice and guidance on how to manage damp, mould or condensation.
- 4.6 To manage all reports of damp, mould and condensation using our Damp, Mould and Condensation Procedure.
- 4.7 Where vulnerable or disabled customers have no one to help them and are unable to carry out mould washes themselves, we will consider how to support and assist them on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.8 In the situation of statutory overcrowding resulting in damp and mould, we will work with the customer and the Local Authority to review to explore the customer’s options. The Housing Act 1985 explains that all Living Rooms and Bedrooms are included in the calculation of statutory overcrowding.
- 4.9 In the situation of hoarding resulting in damp and mould, we will refer to our Hoarding Policy and Procedure for further guidance on how to best support the customer.
- 4.10 At the time of a void inspection, each room should be checked for damp, mould, and condensation. If identified, it will be managed and rectified as part of the void works.
- 4.11 As part of a Mutual Exchange, a property inspection is completed at which time, each room should be checked for damp, mould, and condensation. If identified, it will be managed and rectified before the Mutual Exchange completes.

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5. Customer’s Responsibilities

Damp and mould can be caused by condensation and may adversely affect your health and your home. Customers are responsible for making sure that they take appropriate steps to prevent significant amounts of condensation that results in damp or mould growth. These responsibilities include:

- 5.1 Following all advice and guidance issued by us, on managing and controlling damp, mould and condensation. This information can be found on our [website](#).
- 5.2 Regularly checking for and treating condensation and mould. If all reasonable efforts have been made to manage and control condensation and mould, and this has not been successful, report the issue to us - even if the issue is in its early stages.
- 5.3 Regularly checking for and reporting any leaks, or faulty heating, windows, or extractor fans.
- 5.4 Regularly checking for and reporting any evidence of penetrating, rising or bridging damp, even if the issue is in its early stages. (see **Appendix 1**).
- 5.5 Ensuring of the general upkeep of extractor fans and vents (i.e. that they are not blocked). Please see Appendix 1 for more guidance.
- 5.6 If the customer fails to take the advice and reasonable steps to reduce damp or mould, the customer may be recharged for any resulting repairs required which are considered to be result of this neglect.
- 5.7 The customer is responsible for arranging adequate household contents insurance in line with their tenant agreement, to protect their home from damage caused by damp, mould or condensation. We may refer you to our own insurance team to consider making a claim through our own Public Liability Insurance, (through Zurich) in the event any personal items are damaged.
- 5.8 **Redecoration:**
Where remedial works and mould wash treatments have been undertaken by us, the customer is responsible for redecoration. It is recommended that anti-fungal paint is used. For vulnerable or disabled customers, we will consider how to assist the redecoration process on a case-by-case basis.

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6 How to report Damp or Mould in your Home

6.1 Reporting Damp or Mould

Customers can report Damp or Mould by:

- Phoning the Customer Service Call Centre from Monday to Friday 8 am to 6 pm. Our contact number is 0300 373 3000
- Emailing us at customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk.
- Contacting our Customer Services Team on Twitter at [@asknetworkhomes](https://twitter.com/asknetworkhomes) or on Facebook at [@networkhomesuk](https://www.facebook.com/networkhomesuk) from Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm.

6.2 Further information on how we follow-up on a report of damp/mould is included in our Damp, Mould and Condensation Procedure.

7 Training

7.1 We will ensure the provision of training for all front-line and Customer Service Centre staff on the identification, treatment and the prevention of damp, mould and condensation.

The training will enable them to:

- Become familiar with and understand the correct response needed when a damp or mould issue is identified by them or reported to them, including what advice to give and when to raise remedial works.
- Identify the correct equipment required to assess damp in properties and find resolution to the problem, if it is our responsibility.
- Develop their knowledge on our stock and the archetypes of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould.

8 Compensation

Should we receive a request for Compensation and/or we consider compensation a suitable resolution (inside or outside of our Complaints process) we will manage this by way of our Compensation Policy. (Please see Compensation Policy [here](#) for more details).

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9 Complaints

9.1 Any customer or other stakeholder who is dissatisfied with how we have managed their repair(s) is able to submit a complaint using our Complaints process. Once our Complaints process has been exhausted, and if they remain dissatisfied, then they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service, who can consider if we have acted appropriately. (Please see Complaints Policy [here](#) for more details)

10 Performance Monitoring

10.1 The repairs contracts operate within a performance management framework. The framework uses a series of measures and performance indicators to demonstrate service quality in terms of achieving ‘purpose’ and value for money. Sovereign Network Homes’ Contract management deal with continuous improvement, performance and costs.

10.2 We monitor our repairs performance on a monthly basis and the figures are reviewed by ELT and shared with the local panel. They are also discussed with the contractors at their monthly performance review meetings.

11 Related Documents

Damp, Mould and Condensation Procedure
 Voids Procedure
 Assignment and Succession Procedure
 Repairs Policy
 Tenant, Shared owner and Leasehold Agreements
 Health and Safety Policy
 Recharging Repairs Policy
 Data Protection Policy
 Vulnerable Customer Policy
 Resident Engagement Strategy
 Resident Care Policy
 Complaints Policy
 Compensation Policy
 Charitable Fund Policy
 Charitable Fund Procedure
 Decent Home Standard
[Website](#)

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Damp, Mould and Condensation Leaflet
 Housing Ombudsman Service Spotlight on: Damp and Mould

12 Legislation and regulation

12.1 The legislation listed in this policy is not intended to cover all legislation applicable to this policy. To meet the required Homes Agency Regulatory Standards outcome on adherence to all relevant law, Network will take reasonable measures to ensure compliance with any and all applicable legislation by reviewing policies and procedures and amending them as appropriate. The legislation listed within this policy was considered at the time of the development of this policy, but subsequent primary and secondary legislation, case law and regulatory or other requirements will be considered, and the policy reviewed and adopted in accordance with the requirements set out therein, even should such subsequent legislation not be explicitly listed within this policy. Any queries relating to the applicable legislation should be directed to the policy author.

12.2 This policy is written in the context of the legal and regulatory requirements Sovereign Network Homes is required to work within. The main legislation is as follows:

- **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985:** This Act imposes on landlords an obligation to carry out basic repairs, covering the structure and exterior of the property and installations for the supply of water, gas and electricity, and for sanitation and space heating and heating water. There is also an implied covenant to maintain the property in good order.
- **Defective Premises Act 1972:** Section 4 of this Act places a duty on landlords to take reasonable care to ensure that anyone who might be expected to be affected by defects in a property is reasonably safe from injury or damage to their property.
- **Environmental Protection Act 1990:** This Act makes provision for the control of premises which are considered to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance. This legislation means Sovereign Network Homes may become liable for damages and compensation to customers and their families who suffer as a result of failure to maintain properties so as not to be prejudicial to health or a nuisance.

12.3 We will comply with provisions in other legislation, including:

- Localism Act 2011
- Equalities Act 2010
- Common hold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002

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- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Party Wall Act 1996
- Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993
- Housing Acts 1985,1988 and 2004
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Sections 2, 3 and 4
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

13 Equality and diversity

We will apply this policy consistently and fairly and will not discriminate against anyone based on any protected characteristics, including those set out in the Equality Act 2010.

14 Review

All policies should be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum, or sooner if there is a specific legislative, regulatory or service requirement or change in guidance, law or practice.

Appendix 1 Causes of Damp, Mould and Condensation

The causes of damp, mould and condensation contained in this section, are the most common.

It is important to be able to tell the difference between damp caused by condensation and damp caused by other factors, such as penetrating damp (caused by a leak) or rising damp.

Penetrating Dampness

Rain can get in through leaking roofs, blocked or damaged guttering, leaky walls and poorly fitting doors and windows. Penetrative damp can also be caused by leaks from plumbing faults, failed appliances and poorly sealed baths and showers.

Rising Dampness

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Rising damp is caused by the breakdown, deterioration or bridging of the damp proof course of the building at ground floor level. Ground water can rise up through the walls and floor if the damp proof course isn't working properly or is missing.

Bridging Damp

There are many cases of bridging damp from render systems going below the Damp Proof Course to ground level, concrete paving and ground levels being increased.

Where leaks occur, and in certain circumstances based on contractor feedback, a de-humidifier can be provided to help dry out the property.

Condensation

The effects of damp and mould can be a challenge particularly during the winter months and in most cases is one that needs to be managed by the Customer through the effective use of heating and ventilation.

Condensation can be managed by:

- Covering pans and not leaving kettles boiling.
- Avoiding using paraffin and portable bottled gas heaters as these heaters produce a lot of moisture in the air.
- Avoiding drying washing on your radiators, or if you do then dry it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open.
- Ensuring tumble dryers must be vented to the outside.
- Improving the ventilation in your home by keeping a small window ajar with someone is in the room
- Keeping trickle-vents open
- Avoiding blocking air-brick vents and ensuring they are not broken.
- Ventilating kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider, or better still, using a humidity-controlled electric fan if one is fitted.
- Closing the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use.
- Avoid putting too many things in cupboards and wardrobes.
- Placing furniture so its slightly away from the wall.
- Keeping the temperature of your home above 15 degrees Celsius.
- Avoiding running your shower for longer than needed.

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- Wiping down condensation or water each morning.
- When running a bath put the cold water in first before the hot this reduces the steam.

Fuel Poverty

Fuel poverty is recognised as a causal factor in damp, mould, and condensation issues, i.e. customers may be. unable to afford to heat their homes effectively or evenly which then creates the conditions for moulds to thrive.

If a customer is suffering from Fuel Poverty, we will see what support or advice we can offer. Occasionally, our Charitable Fund, providing the customer passes our Charitable Fund Test, may be able to provide the customer with a Fuel Voucher. Please see our Charitable Fund Policy and Procedure for further information.

Further Guidance

Networks Homes have published information documents and a [webpage](#), as useful guides on the effects of condensation and what can be done to prevent it. The guide is also issued upon sign up to a new home and when customers report damp issues to us.

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