

Damp and Mould Policy

Linked strategies	Live Safe 2022-2025
Version	1.0
Date approved by (State by whom and when)	Board - TBC
Policy level	1
Agreed by Union (If applicable)	Not applicable
Date effective (Subject to staff consultation)	15 May 2023
Date of next review	15 May 2025
Policy Owner	Head of Property Services and Compliance



1 Policy Statement

1.1 Greatwell Homes is committed to:

“Provide homes where people feel safe, neighbourhoods where people want to stay and services that are efficient and reliable so we can deliver more.”

This policy sets out our approach to dealing with damp and mould in our customers’ homes and communal areas and supports the delivery of the key objective in our Live Safe strategy to:

- Keeping customers safe and feeling safe in their homes.

2 Scope

2.1 This policy applies to customers living in all our properties including all communal areas managed by us where we have a duty to repair (hereby collectively referred to as ‘customers’). Tenancy types include:

- General Needs
- Independent Living
- Market Rent
- RentPlus
- Rent to Buy

2.2 It is the responsibility of all Greatwell Homes’ employees and customers to understand the obligations placed on the organisation and on customers, as outlined within their tenancy agreement, to maintain a safe environment within the homes we own and manage.

3 Legislation

3.1 In development, implementation and review of this policy, Greatwell Homes will have regard to the relevant legislative framework and best practise, including but not exhaustively, the following:

- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990



- Housing Act 2004 which introduced the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Home Standard, Regulator of Social Housing, 2015
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions Claims (England), 2021
- Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report on Damp and Mould 2021
- Housing Ombudsman One Year on Spotlight Report on Damp and Mould 2023
- Social Housing (Regulation) Bill

4 Definitions

4.1 **Mould** - Mould is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces or cold. It is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present.

Damp - Dampness is an excess of moisture that cannot escape from a structure, which over time can go on to cause considerable damage to the building and together with mould can cause or exacerbate health problems.

4.2 It is important to understand the difference between the main types of damp because they each need different solutions:

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 uncommon but is generally the result of a problem or fault with the home or external ground levels, which requires repair.

Penetrating damp appears because of 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 through porous materials that are at the end of life. 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.



Condensation is the most prevalent type of dampness and 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, loft spaces, bathrooms, the corners of rooms, on north facing walls and on or near windows – all places that either tend to have a lot of moisture in the air, or to be cold generally. 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. Certain conditions can increase the risk of condensation. These include but are not limited to:

- Lack of ventilation
- Inadequate heating
- Inadequate loft insulation
- High humidity
- Overcrowding

5 Policy Principles

5.1 Greatwell Homes is committed to proactively prevent, identify and resolve damp and mould issues. In doing so we will:

- Ensure that customers are treated in a fair, consistent way and being always shown empathy and respect.
- Comply with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements.
- Work closely with customers ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Communicate effectively in relation to the delivery of our repairs service.

5.2 To **prevent** damp and mould, we will:

- Gather, understand and analyse information on our properties and customers to identify potential high-risk properties for developing damp and mould.
- Carry out proactive property MOTs for those homes identified as high risk.
- Provide information on our website, social media and through other channels, to raise awareness about the causes of damp and mould. This will include details about how everyday activities in the home can generate condensation and what residents can do to help prevent damp through, for instance,



ventilation, controlling the build-up of moisture and adequate heating.

- Ensure that we build homes where the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould and condensation.
- Install preventative measures/equipment like insulation to decent homes standard, ventilation systems or air vents to reduce the likelihood of condensation, damp and mould occurring.
- Ensure adequate checks and improvements are carried out at void stage to prevent future issues occurring.

5.3 To **identify** damp and mould, we will:

- Ensure our staff have the skills and knowledge to look out for and identify early signs of damp and mould issues developing, as well as being able to discuss how to manage the problem.
- Provide simple ways for staff to highlight and report HHSRS hazards such as damp and mould.
- Make it easy for customers to report issues with damp and mould without experiencing prejudice for the reason of the issue.
- Review and analyse property, customer and repair data to identify homes already experiencing damp and mould issues.

5.4 To **resolve** damp and mould, we will:

- Act promptly and appropriately to limit the impact of damp and mould on the customer and their home, taking into account individual circumstances including medical information and vulnerabilities.
- Recognise that poverty can often contribute to damp and mould which can result in overcrowding or customers not being able to heat their homes. Where we find this to be the case we will work with our customers and assist them through tenancy support, money advice, make use of our customer assistance pot and signpost to partners who can provide help.
- Gather, interrogate and review information provided by customers and staff including photos to identify the best course of treatment.
- Provide advice and information as well as damp and mould cleaning kits to allow customers to resolve low-level issues themselves. For elderly or customers with disabilities, we will carry out the initial cleaning of affected areas. Low-level issues might also be resolved by installing/replacing ventilation systems or other appropriate equipment.



- Follow up on any low-level issues within 6-8 weeks of these being reported and a mould kit having been provided.
 - For more serious issues, complete a comprehensive damp and mould survey carried out by a competent surveyor to identify root causes and appropriate remedial actions.
 - Carry out remedial actions to resolve root cause issues, considering individual circumstances and, if needed e.g. it is not safe or works are very intrusive, moving customers into alternative accommodation while the works take place.
- 5.5 It is our customers' responsibility to immediately report any evidence of damp and mould including faulty damp and mould prevention equipment. Furthermore, customers must allow access for inspections and remedial works being carried out.

6 Implications for customers and staff

- 6.1 The Equality ACT of 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate, harass or victimise based on any protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity). Greatwell Homes supports its principles and is committed to the values of equality of opportunity and non-discrimination.
- 6.2 Implications for equality have been assessed through an Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) undertaken as part of the Privacy Impact Assessment carried out for Greatwell Homes' overarching Repairs and Maintenance Policy. As part of this, a full EIA was also carried out (available on request), highlighting that customers with medical conditions are likely to be more adversely affected by damp and mould. Therefore, adjustments have been made within the policy to ensure that these circumstances are taken into account. Furthermore, we have a reasonable adjustments policy which sets out how we will respond to individual needs and request in delivering our service.
- 6.3 The Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) is available upon request. None of the content of this policy will have an impact on our customers' privacy. Customer data is being processed in line with legal requirements with repairs and maintenance carried out in line with our legal obligations.



- 6.4 Where appropriate and especially if changes to the existing service are proposed, we will consult with customers through our involvement framework, enabling reviews of and improvement to our service with the customer voice being central to any decisions made.
- 6.5 As part of consultation on the overarching Repairs and Maintenance Policy customers were also consulted on our approach to damp and mould with feedback incorporated within this policy.
- 6.6 Remedial works relating to damp and mould are carried out in line with the service levels outlined in our repairs and maintenance policy with emergencies addressed within 24 hours and routine repairs within 28 days. Where a surveyor visit is required, we will aim to attend within 7-10 working days.

7 Performance Management

7.1 We will make use of the following performance indicators to monitor and report on the effectiveness of the service. These will be reported to our Board and Executive Management Team on a quarterly basis:

- Number of stage 1 and 2 complaints relating to damp and mould received
- Number of disrepair cases relating to damp and mould received
- Number of new damp and mould reports by HHSRS categorisation type
- Number of mould kit requests received
- % of follow-up repairs needed after mould kit was issued
- Number of damp and mould repairs closed
- Number of surveyor visits conducted
- Average length of time to resolve damp and mould issues
- % of repeat damp and mould repairs raised within the last 12 months
- Number of no access damp and mould jobs or cancelled by customers

8 Responsibility and Decision Making

8.1 The table below illustrates the structure for responsibility and decision making in relation to this policy.

Person Responsible	Scope
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Head of Property Services & Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall responsibility for ensuring that all activities are undertaken, and all performance measurements are met
Repairs and Maintenance Manager Customer Experience Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the implementation, day to day application and adherence to this policy.
All frontline staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification and reporting of damp and mould issues during property visits.
Greatwell Works Operatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery of remedial actions, as necessary.

9 Review

9.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or in line with changes in legislation, whichever is the sooner, updates or recommendations for changes will be presented to Board.

Associated Policies	Associated Procedures
Repairs and Maintenance policy	Damp and mould procedure
Reasonable Adjustments policy	
Customer Concerns and Complaints policy	
Compensation policy	Disrepair process
Health and Safety policy	All associated Health and Safety procedures

