

Damp and Mould Policy

Summary

This policy outlines our approach to the management of damp and mould to ensure all our properties are well maintained, including free of damp and mould that could risk the health and safety of residents living in our dwellings.

Ensuring we meet our statutory and legislative obligations.

Effective date

1 October 2024

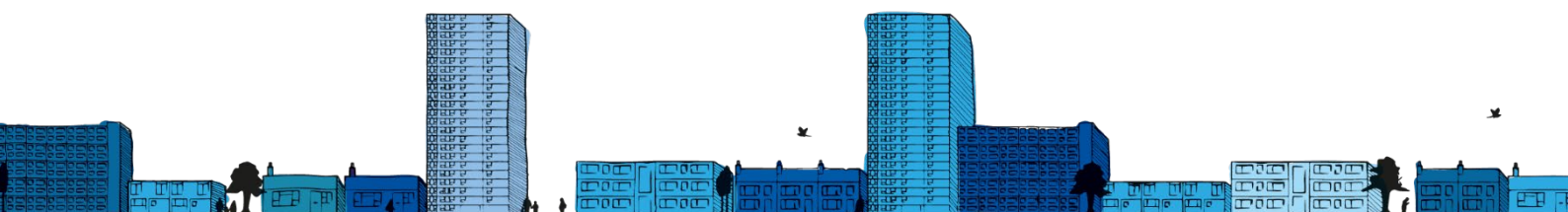
Review

Latest Review Date: 1 October 2025

We will review this Policy every 3 years or when there has been an update to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational changes.

Version

Version 1.3



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Scope

The policy covers:

- All Portsmouth Homes dwellings including communal areas, sheltered schemes, houses in multiple occupation, temporary and supported housing.

The policy excludes:

- Damage that is the result of breach of contract by the resident.
- Building defect or deficiency that is outside our repair responsibility

Any reference in this policy to 'we', 'our' or 'us' refers to Portsmouth Homes.

Any reference in this policy to 'tenant', 'customer' or 'resident' refers to a Portsmouth Homes secure tenant, leaseholder or shared owner.

Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Outline our approach to the management of damp and mould to ensure all our properties are well maintained, including free of damp and mould that could risk the health and safety of residents living in our dwellings.
- Ensuring we meet our statutory and legislative obligations.

Damp and Mould causes

'Mould' is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces. It is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present. There is strong research evidence to suggest that health conditions can be exacerbated by damp and mould in housing.

The general term 'damp' covers three possible problems with distinct causes.

Penetrating Damp

Penetrating damp is water that gets into the building from outside due to defects in the walls, roofs, windows or floors or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure.

Rising Damp

Rising damp is moisture from the ground that rises up through parts of the buildings in contact with the ground (walls and floors). The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.



Condensation

Condensation damp happens when moisture generated inside the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the buildings producing water droplets. The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:

- Lack of ventilation within the property.
- Inadequate heating.
- Inadequate insulation.
- High humidity.

Property Inspections

Surveyor inspection

We will undertake a property inspection by our surveyor when we are made aware of any suspected damp, mould and condensation within ten working days of the repair being reported or when we are made aware of the damp, mould and condensation.

We may be made aware of damp, mould or condensation directly from a resident or a third party or during a routine visit or other inspection.

We will investigate any potential emergency hazards as soon as reasonably practical within 24 hours of becoming aware of them. Examples of damp and mould emergency hazards may include significant leaks or prevalent damp and/or mould that is having a material impact on a resident's health, for example their ability to breathe.

Surveyor Assessment

At the property inspection we will investigate and diagnose the cause of damp and deliver effective solutions dealing with the cause of the damp and not just the symptoms.

We will undertake a survey to assess the extent of the damp and mould, the location of the damp/mould and how the room(s) it is present in are used, how long the damp and mould has been present, the ventilation in the property and the insulation of the property.

At the property inspection we will assess if there are any Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) category 1 hazards.

We will take reasonable steps to understand the circumstances of the resident, including any vulnerabilities of the household which could worsen the potential impact of the hazard such as age, health conditions or disability.

We will then categorise the hazard and assess whether the damp and mould are a significant or emergency hazard or a routine repair (outside the scope of Awaab's Law). We will then arrange for the works identified to address the damp and mould to be raised within the appropriate repair category for the hazard identified.

We will produce a written summary of the investigation findings and provide this to the named resident within 3 working days of the conclusion of the investigation.



The written summary will include whether or not the investigation identified a significant or emergency hazard or a routine repair and any action required and the timeframe or the reason why no action is required.

Resident advice to minimise condensation

We will also provide general advice and guidance on how to minimise damp and condensation, particularly when there are no apparent causes relating to design or construction of the property.

Advice provided will include directing residents to sources of information and support on energy savings, if they have difficulty in heating their home.

The advice will be available at all housing offices, at sign up of new tenancies, publicised on the website, social media and within House Talk magazine.

Resident support

Where internal conditions within a home such as overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongings, are contributing to the damp and mould conditions, influencing health and wellbeing of the occupants or are preventing inspections or repairs works being carried out, we will provide support and assistance to review the resident's options.

Repairs

If an emergency or significant hazard is identified, then an emergency or urgent repair will be raised as appropriate at the conclusion of the investigation.

If any other works are required or the damp or the mould is outside the scope of Awaab's law, then a routine or planned repair will be raised as appropriate.

Where appropriate we will undertake, reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation dampness

Damp and Mould follow up

We will follow up each completed damp and mould repair within six months of any damp and mould investigation, to assess if any work undertaken and/or advice provided, has been completed and/or effective. If works are incomplete, a further follow up will be arranged.

If the completed repairs have not resolved the damp and mould a new investigation will be arranged.

Proactive Approach

We will record all instances of damp and mould on the repairs and maintenance database using appropriate keywords and appointments.



The buildings service will periodically evaluate repairs and stock data to identify property archetypes that are more prone to damp and mould, to inform its asset management strategy. This proactive approach will either inform future planned programmes or identify properties to be targeted that require regular stock condition surveys.

Reviews of stock data will include properties that have a lower energy performance certificate (EPC) rating, blocks of flats where damp has been reported to multiple properties or where certain archetypes of properties are more prone to historical or repeated damp and mould issues or highlighting any properties that have not had a stock survey with 5 years.

We will also utilise all opportunities when inside residents' homes to identify damp and mould issues, such as repairs and stock condition inspections by surveyors, tenancy update visits by housing officers and contractor visits, ensuring damp and mould issues are reported as appropriate and investigated.

We will plan to proactively inspect properties and engage with residents where it has been identified that the properties are more prone to damp and mould issues.

As part of the asset management strategy, we will include developing planned programmes as appropriate that address any building construction causes of damp and mould.

Levels of remedial action

The actions below have been grouped into tiers to assist us with the correct diagnosis and specification of remedial actions. These have been ranked in order to assist us in the management of a proportionate response to the issue.

Tier 1 (Minor cases) - Surveyor responsibility (as appropriate)

Survey to diagnose cause of damp and mould including:

- Checking temperature and humidity
- Checking external building fabric and cavities
- Checking effectiveness of extractor fans, window trickle ventilation
- Checking radiator sizes
- Undertake calcium carbide test
- Arrange water pressure test
- Undertake to clean mould or arrange service provider if excessive.

Arrange for repairs as appropriate including:

- Clean mould and decoration with mould inhibitor
- Repairs to building fabric (clear cavities, roof repairs, water service repairs etc)
- Install trickle vents to UPVC windows.
- Install loft Insulation.



- Install new or upgraded extractor fan.
- Advice to resident to minimise condensation (using ventilation and heating)

Tier 2 (Major cases)- Surveyor responsibility (as appropriate)

Arrange for repairs as appropriate including:

- Positive Input Fan (PIV)
- Passive wall vent
- Radiator installation or relocation
- Thermal board external wall

Tier 3 (Complex cases) - Building Repairs Manager responsibility (as appropriate)

Escalate to repairs manager

- Arrange for installation of data loggers to monitor temperature and humidity
- Arrange for thermal imaging camera survey
- Arrange for housing management support

Tier 4 (Significant or Emergency cases) - Head of Building Repairs responsibility (as appropriate)

Escalate to Head of Service to investigate provision of suitable alternative accommodation for the household if relevant safety work cannot be completed within specified timeframes.

Inform Head of Building Projects, properties identified that would benefit from larger scale improvements as part of a planned maintenance scheme.

Training

All our surveyors are trained and competent in the diagnosis of damp, mould and condensation issues. They will have the skills and experience necessary to determine whether the home is affected by a significant or emergency hazard.

All our staff visiting residents in their homes (service provider operatives and housing officers) will be trained to be aware of how to identify damp and mould issues as well as reporting any hazards identified to our customer repairs team so that a surveyor can undertake an inspection, as well as provide residents with advice to minimise condensation, directing residents to sources of information and support on energy costs.



Damp and Mould Panel

The panel will be chaired by the Head of Building Repairs and include appropriate Heads of Service from Buildings and Housing together with appropriate representation from the Housing Need and Supply service and other directorates as appropriate. The panel will meet quarterly.

The panel will coordinate and communicate response to damp and mould across all Housing, Neighbourhood and Building teams to ensure risks are managed consistently and are appropriately resourced, complying with all legislation and providing appropriate information to residents, staff and contractors.

The panel will have oversight of the process, changes to the legislation and effectiveness of the damp and mould policy.

The panel will review the following key areas and implement changes required to processes, policies or communication to residents as appropriate:

- Our response to damp and mould, surveys undertaken and data about our stock to proactively manage damp and mould.
- Training provided to staff and information provided to residents
- Record all damp and mould complaints and disrepair claims to review any learning

Your responsibility

To immediately report any evidence of rising or penetrating damp or faulty equipment that will affect the management of humidity and moisture in the home (faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, heating system failure etc.)

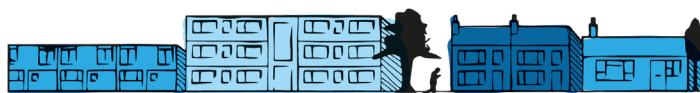
Residents should make us aware of any circumstances that might make their household more vulnerable to a specific damp, mould and condensation hazard, and information on how best to contact them and any reasonable adjustments we should make.

Residents may be required to provide photographs or videos to assist us to initially determine remotely whether there is a significant or emergency hazard.

Residents must actively engage with us to arrange a convenient appointment and allow access for inspections and for the carrying out all remedial works and servicing of appliances (gas boilers and ventilation systems).

Residents can help reduce the conditions that lead to condensation dampness by:

- Keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum e.g., covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outside (where possible), where it is safe to do so, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
- Adequately heating rooms (The World Health Organisation recommends 18°C.)
- Keeping the house well-ventilated e.g., opening windows during cooking / bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan or ventilation system installed in their home is regularly cleaned and working, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.



Your voice

We provide tenants a wide range of meaningful opportunities to engage, influence and scrutinise the Landlord Strategies, policies and services, including the Resident Consortium together with repairs and maintenance focus groups.

If you would like to be included in future resident engagement focus groups and would like to know how to get involved, please contact us for more information:

You can contact our team by:

- Email: housing.engagement@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
- Phone: 02392 834835
- Website: visit the [Resident engagement and community resources on our website](#)

What have we done to make sure this Policy is fair?

We completed an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) to consider the positive and negative impacts this Policy may have on people with protected characteristics under the [Equality Act 2010](#). This Policy should have direct and positive equality and diversity impacts.

Regulation and legislation

We recognise the variety of legislation, and we will continue to monitor relevant legal guidance. The list below reflects some of the existing legal framework and relevant publications:

- [Housing Act 2004](#)
- [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#)
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)
- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#)
- [Homes \(Fitness for Human habitation\) 2018](#)
- [Social Housing \(Prescribed Requirements\) \(England\) Regulations 2025 \(also known as Awaab's Law\)](#)
- [Decent Homes Standard](#)



Related documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- [Portsmouth Homes policies, strategies and reports](#)
- Tenancy Agreement / Leasehold Agreement
- Asset Management Strategy

How to feedback

If you have any questions around the policy or would like to know more about its application, please contact the relevant service in the first instance.

You can get this policy in large print, braille, audio or in another language by contacting your Housing Office. More information is available [translation, interpreting and audio information](#).

Compliments

To help us provide the best service we can. We would like to hear customer views on the services that they use. If the customer is pleased with a member of staff or service, please let us know.

- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Complaints

If a customer is unhappy, they can refer to our Landlord Complaints Policy.

- Online complaint form at [Make a housing complaint](#)
- Telephone: 02392 606383
- Email address: HNBLandlordComplaints@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

Housing Ombudsman Service

If a customer is unhappy, they can contact the Housing Ombudsman Service for advice and guidance at any time.

- Online complaint form on [the Housing Ombudsman Service website](#)
- Telephone: 0300 111 3000
- For more information, visit [Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code](#)

