



# Damp and Mould Policy

Approved by: RHP Board

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Applies to: RHP (Association)

## Definition and Causes of Damp & Mould

Mould is a type of fungus that spreads through tiny spores. These spores are always present in the air around us, even though we can't see them. When they land on damp surfaces—especially where moisture has built up—they can grow quickly and become visible.

Dampness occurs when excess moisture gets trapped inside a building and can't escape. Over time, this can cause serious damage to your home, including collapsed ceilings and rotting wood in windows, doors, and other structural elements.

There are **five main types of damp** commonly found in homes across England. It's important to understand the differences between them, as each type requires a different solution:

- ▶ Water leaks from defective supply and waste pipework (especially in bathrooms and kitchens) 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. It is the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires repair. Who is responsible for the repairs depends on where and why the leak happens.
- ▶ 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 and during wet weather. It is extremely uncommon but is generally the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires repair. This will usually be RHP's responsibility.
- ▶ 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. 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. Who is responsible for the repairs depends on what the fault is and where it happens.
- ▶ Condensation is the most prevalent type of dampness and is caused by moisture in the air (water vapor) inside the home meeting 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, 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.
- ▶ All homes can be affected by condensation because our climate is often cool and wet. Normal household activities also constantly release moisture into the air. Good practice in the home can minimise and alleviate condensation, and in many cases can prevent dampness and persistent mould. However, on occasion the root cause can be a problem that requires a RHP repair or an improvement to the home. In others, a different solution may be needed (for example, in cases of severe overcrowding).

## Statement of intent

RHP is committed to doing everything possible to ensure our customers remain safe, healthy, and well in their homes. Damp and mould are serious issues that can negatively impact both the health and well-being of our customers, as well as the condition of their homes.

This policy outlines our approach to managing damp and mould in both individual homes and communal areas. It applies to customers who rent their homes under a tenancy agreement, as well as those who occupy under a license. For leaseholders we will fulfil the responsibilities outlined in the terms of their lease agreement.

## Guiding Principles

RHP will:

- ▶ Comply with legislative, regulatory and contractual (including tenancy and lease) obligations.
- ▶ Ensure the fabric of our homes is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp.
- ▶ Treat customers reporting damp and mould with empathy and respect and will not prejudge the reason for any issue.
- ▶ Take responsibility for diagnosing and resolving damp and mould in a timely and effective way where they result from issues that require repair.
- ▶ Support customers in resolving damp and mould where they result from the use of the home, and provide our customers with appropriate, clear, sensitive, practical and accessible advice.
- ▶ Communicate with our customers clearly and regularly regarding any actions we plan to take and any actions our customers are advised to take.
- ▶ Ensure employees are trained to enable them to spot potential causes of damp, mould and condensation so they can advise customers, diagnose problems and provide solutions.
- ▶ When applying this policy, make reasonable adjustments for people who have a disability and will take into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

## Awaab's Law

Awaab's Law 2025 is a landmark regulation designed to protect customers within social housing from serious health hazards—starting with damp and mould. The law places a legal duty on social landlords to act swiftly and effectively when such hazards are reported.

Under Awaab's Law, social landlords must:

- ▶ Emergency Hazard- Investigate emergency hazards (including severe damp and mould) within 24 hours.
- ▶ Significant Hazard - Investigate significant hazards within 10 working days and ensure repairs are carried out within 5 working days of investigation conclusion
- ▶ Provide a written summary of findings for the customer within 3 working days of the investigation
- ▶ Begin remedial work within 5 working days (or within 12 weeks if delays are unavoidable).
- ▶ Where damp and mould is extreme and/or if customers are highly vulnerable alternative accommodation can be arranged if repairs cannot be completed within the required timeframe if the work.
- ▶ Keep customers informed throughout the process and provide safety advice.

This law ensures that customers can hold landlords accountable through legal action if these standards are not met. It marks a shift toward proactive enforcement, aiming to improve housing conditions and protect customers health across England.

While Awaab's Law sets out minimum legal response times for the most severe cases, our policy goes further. We recognise that all instances of damp and mould—regardless of severity—can impact resident wellbeing, comfort, and trust. Therefore:

- ▶ We treat every report of damp and mould seriously and with urgency appropriate to the risk.
- ▶ We commit to clear communication, timely inspections, and effective treatment in all cases.
- ▶ We prioritise the needs of vulnerable residents at every stage of the process.
- ▶ We aim to prevent recurrence through root cause analysis and long-term solutions, not just surface-level treatment.

This approach reflects our organisational values and our commitment to delivering safe, healthy, and dignified living conditions for all residents.

## Dealing with damp & mould

Customers are required to report any problems to us as soon as possible; however, we will consider all other reporting/diagnosis routes, including requests for service, complaints, repairs or reports from RHP colleagues stock condition surveys, and inspections.

When we receive a report, a Damp and Mould case will be logged onto our Connect system and an initial severity rating will be applied based on the information provided to us. For the purposes of the severity rating we have simplified the process into broad categories which reflect a risk-based approach aligned with regulatory expectations, particularly under:

- ▶ The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS): Damp and mould are considered Category 1 hazards when they pose serious health risks. The categorisation (Extreme, Significant, Moderate, Mild) ensures appropriate prioritisation based on severity and resident vulnerability.
- ▶ Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) standards: These require providers to maintain homes that are safe, decent, and well-managed. The structured response times (e.g., 24 hours for extreme cases) demonstrate proactive compliance.
- ▶ Awaab's Law (effective from October 2025): This legislation mandates that social landlords investigate and remedy damp, mould, and other emergency hazards within strict timeframes. Emergency hazards must be addressed within 24 hours, and significant damp and mould issues must be investigated and acted upon within defined periods.

The HOS expects landlords to:

- ▶ Respond promptly and proportionately to issues raised by tenants.
- ▶ Consider vulnerability and risk when prioritising repairs.

These categories show clear alignment with HOS expectations by:

- ▶ Prioritising vulnerable residents (e.g., elderly, very young, chronically ill).
- ▶ Offering emergency responses and temporary accommodation where needed.
- ▶ Ensuring routine treatment timelines are defined and trackable.

The descriptors outlined below are intended to support the initial triage process and facilitate agreement with the resident regarding the appropriate next steps. They provide a structured framework for assessing the severity of damp and mould issues and determining the corresponding response times.

In circumstances where, during a property visit, the condition observed differs materially from the initial triage assessment, the operative or surveyor must reassess the situation in line with the severity descriptors. The revised assessment should be communicated to the resident, and the response adjusted accordingly to reflect the updated categorisation.

This approach ensures that our actions remain proportionate, risk-informed, and compliant with our regulatory, legislative, and Housing Ombudsman obligations. It also reinforces our commitment to safeguarding resident wellbeing, particularly where vulnerabilities are identified.

Severity	Description
<p>Extreme – Emergency</p> <p>In scope of Awaab’s Law</p> <p>Emergency mould clean to be attended and make safe completed within 24hrs</p> <p>Additional remedial works to be raised within 5 days of make safe and completed within 12 weeks</p>	<p>Multiple rooms and extensive mould</p> <p>HHSRS Cat 1 - Extensive mould in areas larger than 3m<sup>2</sup> or in multiple rooms.</p> <p>Mould covering entire walls or ceilings or belongings. 100% of one surface.</p>
<p>Significant</p> <p>In scope of Awaab’s Law</p> <p>Survey to be completed within 10 working days, complete Safety Works within 5 working days post survey.</p>	<p>Living areas (Kitchen, Livingroom) or bedrooms on 1 or 2 walls and ceilings and on belongings.</p> <p>Mould in areas larger than 0.5m<sup>2</sup> (Larger than a average size TV) in multiple rooms.</p> <p>Mould covering entire walls or ceilings or belongings 3m<sup>2</sup> or more or 100% of one surface.</p>
<p>Moderate</p> <p>Out of scope of Awaab’s Law</p> <p>14 working day priority appointment.</p>	<p>Living areas or bedrooms in patches.</p> <p>Mould in patches larger than hand sized, up to 0.5m<sup>2</sup> (or around the size of a TV), in one or more rooms.</p> <p>Total mould area between 1m<sup>2</sup> and 3m<sup>2</sup></p>
<p>Minor</p> <p>Out of scope of Awaab’s Law</p> <p>28 working day priority appointment.</p>	<p>Kitchen and bathroom only, but more extensive on 1 or 2 walls or ceilings.</p> <p>Hand sized patches or smaller in one or more rooms, mould area up to 1m<sup>2</sup> in total (Toaster size or smaller).</p> <p>Typically, in areas of poor airflow, corners of rooms, behind furniture, on window reveals.</p> <p>Raise repair for mould clean on a 28 working day routine priority appointment.</p>

We will tackle immediate risks quickly, including by treating mould growth and carrying out repairs if required. Any repairs will be dealt with in accordance with our Responsive Repairs policy.

Where damp is as a result of condensation, we will work with our customers to take appropriate measures to prevent the damp and mould occurring. This might include advice about how to control moisture levels or increase ventilation or heating, so that damp levels are kept low. Where we provide such advice, it is important that customers adhere to it and do not take actions that could accentuate any problems e.g. by turning off ventilation systems or sealing over air vents.

Where a property inspection is undertaken, we will identify and resolve root causes such as sources of dampness, inadequate insulation, heating and ventilation. Any recommended upgrade or installation work will be considered as part of our planned investment programs.

We will keep customers informed of any property inspections, diagnosis of issues, and the timetable of works where these are required. This includes clearly explaining why work may be necessary and what it will involve. If changes to the programme of works are needed, we will ensure customers are kept updated. Where work is not required, we will communicate this clearly and explain the reasons, along with any recommended next steps.

For more complex cases, and especially where more intrusive building work is required and/or there is a serious health risk to the customers or a member of their household, we may require them to move out of their home either on a temporary or permanent basis. We will consider the individual circumstances of the customer. We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out at the property to ensure it is suitable for the customer to return to.

Where appropriate, we will instruct independent, suitably qualified surveyors to carry out inspections. We will share the findings and recommendations with residents in plain language, ensuring transparency and supporting their understanding of the issues and proposed actions.

Our tenancy (and leasehold) agreements require customers to allow us (including appointed contractors) access to their home to carry out work at the agreed appointment time. If we are unable to gain access and the integrity of the property, its fabric and/or the safety of the customer or those in the vicinity of the property is compromised, we will take appropriate action. For example, this may include but is not limited to obtaining an injunction for access.

In line with our Compensation Policy, we will award compensation where we have failed to deliver the service standards we have committed to. Each case will be assessed individually, taking into account the specific circumstances of the customer and their household.

We are committed to ensuring residents are aware of their rights and available remedies. As part of this commitment, we will actively promote our complaints process and clearly signpost residents to the Housing Ombudsman as an independent route to resolution.

## Preventative action

We will take proactive steps to identify homes that have, or may be at risk of developing, issues related to damp and mould. By leveraging data on our households and housing stock, we aim to build a clear understanding of the risk profile across our portfolio.

We will also use trend analysis, including factors such as property type, tenure, and known case clustering, to identify potential damp and mould hotspots. These insights will be regularly reviewed to support targeted interventions and enable early prevention strategies. We will seek to mitigate any increased risks of damp and mould arising and as a result of our work to decarbonise our homes.

When a property becomes vacant or a mutual exchange is arranged, prior to re-letting, we will seek to identify and remedy any issues which may cause damp. This may include ensuring doors and windows are serviceable and can effectively ventilate the property, ensuring extractor fans are working well, as well as applying mould treatments where necessary, ensuring the home is safe and free from hazards before reoccupation.

We will provide information on our website, 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 excess moisture and condensation and what customers can do to help prevent damp through, for instance, ventilation, controlling the build-up of moisture and adequate heating. Where there is mould growth, we will provide advice and support on how this could be treated.

Employees and contractors will have the skills and knowledge to identify signs of damp, mould and condensation and know the processes for reporting the issue to the responsible RHP team and signposting the customer to the relevant help & advice. Employees & contractors will be encouraged to look out for signs whenever they visit a customer's home.

## Supporting our customers

We're here to help our customers keep their homes safe and healthy. We'll offer clear advice on how to prevent damp and what steps to take to remove mould. However, we understand that not everyone will be able to resolve these issues on their own. Where needed, we'll provide tailored support based on each customer's individual circumstances.

We also recognise that some customers may struggle to heat their homes due to financial pressures. In these cases, we'll work with them to ensure they're receiving all the income and benefits they're entitled to.

In homes where overcrowding leads to higher humidity and increased condensation, we'll explore practical solutions with the customer. This may include the option of moving to a more suitable home, if available and appropriate.

If a customer's internal decorations are damaged as a result of mould treatment, we'll support them with redecoration of the affected areas—using anti-mould paint where needed.

## Legislation & Regulation

This policy is aligned to the following legislation & regulation:

- ▶ Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, as amended by Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- ▶ Housing Act 2004 (including the Housing Health and Safety Rating System – HHSRS)
- ▶ Decent Homes Standard
- ▶ Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standard: Home Standard
- ▶ Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- ▶ Awaab's Law 2025
- ▶ Environmental Protection Act 1990
- ▶ Building Regulations 2010 (relevant to ventilation, insulation, and structural repairs)
- ▶ Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES)
- ▶ Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Equality Duty – considering impact on vulnerable groups)
- ▶ Housing Ombudsman's Guidance on Damp and Mould (2021)
- ▶ Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (for safe working practices during inspections and treatments)

## Reporting

Our reporting framework ensures clear oversight, accountability, and continuous improvement in managing damp and mould cases. Through structured reporting to the Executive Committee, RHP Board, and Customer Experience Committee, we provide updates on case performance, compliance with Awaab's Law, and the overall customer experience. By analysing complaints, disrepair data, and missed appointments, we identify themes, share learning, and take corrective actions to strengthen service delivery and minimise disruption for our customers.

## Roles & Responsibilities

Effective management of damp and mould requires clear accountability across all levels of service delivery. The following roles and responsibilities are defined to ensure timely, consistent, and compliant responses:

Frontline Staff (e.g., Repairs Operatives, Contractors, Supervisors)

- ▶ Conduct initial assessments using the severity descriptors.
- ▶ Escalate cases where vulnerability or risk is identified.
- ▶ Communicate clearly with residents regarding next steps and expected timeframes.
- ▶ Reassess conditions during visits and update categorisation if necessary.
- ▶ Record findings accurately in the housing management system.

Surveyors and Technical Officers

- ▶ Undertake detailed inspections where required.
- ▶ Confirm or revise initial triage assessments.
- ▶ Specify appropriate remedial actions and oversee contractor works.
- ▶ Reassess conditions during visits and update categorisation if necessary.
- ▶ Ensure compliance with Awaab's Law and other statutory timeframes.
- ▶ Provide technical advice to frontline staff and case managers

Case Managers / Damp and Mould Coordinators

- ▶ Monitor progress of cases from triage to resolution.
- ▶ Liaise with residents to ensure their needs and vulnerabilities are considered.
- ▶ Coordinate with internal teams and external contractors.
- ▶ Ensure documentation and audit trails are maintained for regulatory compliance.
- ▶ Ensure compliance with Awaab's Law and other statutory timeframes.

Customer service

- ▶ Log initial reports of damp and mould.
- ▶ Provide residents with information on the process and expected timelines.
- ▶ Direct urgent cases to appropriate teams for immediate action.

Senior Management

- ▶ Ensure adequate resources and training are in place.
- ▶ Monitor performance against statutory obligations, including Awaab's Law.
- ▶ Review policy effectiveness and ensure continuous improvement.

## Employee training

We will ensure that our surveyors responsible for carrying out damp and mould inspections are fully trained and equipped with the skills needed to accurately identify and diagnose issues related to damp, mould, and condensation.

We also recognise the importance of early detection. That's why we'll make sure our frontline teams, including RHP Home, the Customer Service Centre (CSC), Housing Services, and Retirement Services have a basic awareness of how to spot potential signs of damp and mould. They'll also be trained on how to report concerns promptly, so our Repairs Team can take the right action quickly.