



Damp and mould procedure

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1. Procedure statement

- 1.1. The introduction of Awaab's Law mandates social landlords to investigate and address reported health hazards within specific timeframes. The law was established after Awaab Ishak's poor health was exacerbated by the failure of the landlord to rectify mould within the property he lived in, resulting in his death. The law considers instances of damp and mould to be hazards, and we will refer to them in this way in line with the law.
- 1.2. We want to do everything we reasonably can to make sure our clients stay safe and healthy in their accommodation. Damp and mould are issues which can have a serious impact on the health and well-being of our clients and causes damage to our properties.
- 1.3. This procedure sets out our approach to dealing with damp and mould in our properties. It covers the services we provide to clients who rent their accommodation under a tenancy agreement and those who occupy under a licence.
- 1.4. Where we are supporting clients in community support services or housing first services where another landlord is responsible for all aspects of housing, we will support and advocate on behalf of clients to get damp and mould issues resolved.

2. Scope

- 2.1. Our commitment is that we will:
 - Provide dry, warm, healthy and safe homes for our clients which are free from any hazards.
 - Comply with legislative, regulatory and contractual (including tenancy and lease) obligations.
 - Ensure the fabric of our properties are protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp.
 - Treat clients reporting damp and mould with empathy and respect and will not prejudice 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.
 - Ensure staff have the relevant information to enable them to spot potential causes of damp, mould and condensation so they can advise clients, diagnose problems and provide solutions where practical.
 - When applying this procedure, make reasonable adjustments for people who have a disability and will consider the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.2. Our staff and contractors will work together with our clients to deliver this procedure.
 - The procedure supports the delivery of our strategic objectives related to our properties and helps us meet our legal and regulatory requirements.

3. Causes of damp and mould

- 3.1 Mould is a type of fungus. It spreads through spores, which are invisible to the naked eye but are in the air around us all of the time and can quickly grow on surfaces where dampness persists, or water has formed into a visible covering.
- 3.2 Dampness is an excess of moisture that can't escape from a structure, which can also go on to cause significant damage to the building such as collapsed ceilings and rotten timber elements such as windows and doors.
- 3.3 There are four main causes of dampness in homes in England. It is important to understand the difference between them because they each need different solutions:
 - **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 building, which requires repair.
 - **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 extremely uncommon but is generally the result of a problem or fault with the building, which requires repair.
 - **Penetrating damp** appears because of a defect in the structure of the building, 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 property, 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 moisture 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 hard up against external walls. It is likely that this will not be resolved through repair, but clients may need support to manage their environment for effectively to reduce condensation.

4. Preventative action

- 4.1 We will take action to identify properties that have, or may be at risk of developing, problems with damp and mould. We will use data on our properties to help us understand the risk profile in relation to damp and mould.
- 4.2 When a property or room becomes vacant, and 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 or room, ensuring extractor fans are working well, as well as applying mould treatments where necessary.
- 4.3 Our staff and contractors have the skills and knowledge to identify signs of damp and mould. Staff will be encouraged to look out for signs whenever they undertake health and safety checks of each property.
- 4.4 Clients and staff are required to report any occurrence as soon as possible after noticing a problem. When we receive a report, a contractor will attend the property to determine the cause and seek to resolve the immediate issue. In some cases, they may need to further diagnose the problem to determine whether it is due to a repair issue for which we will act. Sometimes finding out what's causing damp and mould isn't always straightforward and could be due to a combination of factors. Any repairs that are required to be carried out will be dealt with in accordance with our Repairs Policy and guidance from Awaab's law.
- 4.5 If a particularly severe or recurring damp or mould issue is identified the asset team will undertake an assessment which might result in a range of actions to support the client. These include providing a dehumidifier, mechanical or passive ventilation systems, dry lining walls or applying mould resistant coverings, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.6 For more complex cases where clients have known medical needs and especially where more intrusive building work is required and/or there is a serious health risk to our clients, we may require our clients to move out of the property either on a temporary or permanent basis.

5. Reporting Damp and Mould.

- 5.1 If you identify mould in a property, you should report it in the first instance to our assets team either by email to assets@twosaints.org.uk, by phone or by completing a pre-inspection report in Rubixx, if you have the correct permissions. You should include photos and a description of where the mould is.

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5.2 Our asset team will contact you to determine if the issue is an emergency hazard (serious health risk or risk to life) where works are required to be carried out within 24 hours. If that is not the case the report will be assessed as set out in section 5.3. The asset team will then take responsibility for instructing investigations, repairs and maintaining records of these events in Rubixx, including communications to other landlords to ensure we comply with the law and can evidence we have acted accordingly.

5.3 Cases will be assessed and categorised as follows:

The Asset team will categorise each report of damp and mould:

- **Category 1**
Source of dampness/mould is identified and required remedial action can be ordered and the situation monitored.
- **Category 2**
Source of dampness/mould is not identified on first inspection/assessment and either follow up is required and/or more detailed or invasive survey work is needed.
- **Category 3**
Problem is ongoing and either the source has not been identified following survey or the remedial action taken has not been successful.

5.4 Response times:

The law sets out that a potential emergency hazard must be attended to as soon as reasonably practicable. In emergency hazard cases the investigation and works must happen within 24 hours of first becoming aware of the hazard, this will be logged and monitored by the asset team.

In all other cases we must:

- investigate any reports within **10 working days**
- provide a summary of investigation findings to the tenant within **3 working days** of the conclusion of the investigation.
- undertake relevant safety work within **5 working days** of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant hazard; this is different from an emergency hazard
- begin any further remedial actions to prevent recurrence of the hazard **within 5 working days** of the investigation concluding. Where work cannot begin within 5 working days it must be done as soon as possible. If it is identified as a structural issue the law allows for planned work to be started within **12 weeks**.

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6. Procedure review

This procedure will be reviewed at least every three years by our asset manager or whenever circumstances or legislation changes,

7. Links to other policies

- [Property Standard](#)
- [Responsive maintenance policy](#)
- [Planned and cyclical maintenance policy](#)

8. Legal & Regulatory references:

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (including Awaab's law)
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Housing Act 2004
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Safety and Quality Standard, Regulator of Social Housing 2024