

*Front and back pages to be added and uploaded to SKDC website after Housing OSC and Cabinet approval.*

## **1. Scope of Policy**

This policy sets out the overall approach that South Kesteven District Council (the Council) will take in relation to managing damp, mould and condensation in housing properties it owns or manages.

This policy will cover the different types of damp including condensation, penetration, rising and traumatic and who is responsible for dealing with damp and mould in properties.

## **2. Policy Statement**

The Council is committed to delivering a range of maintenance services to best meet resident, legal and regulatory needs and to ensure that homes and communal facilities are safe and well maintained.

Through this policy we will establish appropriate processes, guidance and knowledge to ensure that all properties are well maintained and free from damp and mould that could risk the health and safety of our residents.

## **3. Legislation Requirements**

Social landlords must adhere to several regulations related to damp and mould and lack of compliance can place a landlord at risk of prosecution or financial penalties. The legislation and standards include:

- Housing Act 2004
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Decent Homes Standard
- Minimum Level of Energy Efficiency Standard
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act, including the proposed requirements set out in the Awaabs Law

## **4. Policy Principles**

*The Council will:*

- Comply with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements and good practice.

- Undertake property inspections to investigate and diagnose the cause of damp and mould.
- Inform the resident of the findings of the investigation including identifying the cause of the damp, recommending effective solutions and remedial works and the timeframes to complete works.
- Implement all reasonable repair solutions and improvements to eliminate damp, including managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that the fabric of properties are protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould and condensation.
- Respond to all reports of damp and condensation and complete works in line with our repairs policy timeframes, this will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem and complexity of the solution.
- Make all reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and carry out the works. All repairs must have three attempts to the contact the resident before following up with written communication to the resident asking them to contact us to organise new repair.
- We will follow up within 6 months of any damp and mould repair being completed.
- We will use competent staff and contractors.
- We will work in partnership with customers ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided, including providing advice and guidance literature to prevent mould and condensation in the home.
- Ensure that budgets are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp, mould and condensation problems.
- If it is unsafe for residents to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. It may be necessary in some cases to re-house on a permanent basis, either on medical grounds or property suitability, subject to relevant supporting evidence. The council will support the resident to find alternative accommodation.
- We will proactively manage our properties by reviewing our data and prioritising and targeting those at highest risk. This will include identifying properties which are hard to heat or with EPC below C to include in energy efficiency improvement programmes.
- We will assess and monitor our homes through our annual programme of stock condition surveys which will include a HHSRS survey to identify all category 1 and 2 hazards.
- We will provide all residents advice on how to prevent condensation and safely deal with low levels of mould in their homes.

*Timeframes for completing damp and mould surveys and repairs:*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Appointment offered</b>
Damp and mould survey	When a damp and mould case is reported a survey will be booked in within 14 calendar days.	Yes
Damp and mould report	Following a damp and mould survey a report will be written up and issued to the resident within 2 working days.	NA
Works following a damp and mould inspection	If works are required following a damp and mould survey these will be booked in to start within 7 calendar days.	Yes
Post inspections	On completion of all repairs associated with damp and mould, a post inspection will be carried out and a follow up inspection will be made in a further 6 months.	Yes

**5. The Council's Responsibilities:**

- All resident facing colleagues and operatives are responsible for spotting damp and mould, reporting and recording information they gather.
- The Repairs Contact Centre is responsible for logging all damp and mould cases reported.
- Technical colleagues are responsible for inspection, remediation, diagnosis and offering solutions.
- Our trades teams and appointed contractors are responsible for safely and effectively completing works in our homes.
- Managers for the above teams are responsible for ensuring the policy is understood and followed for existing and new colleagues.
- Managers are responsible for reviewing and reporting on the effectiveness of the policy and ensuring compliance.

**6. Resident Responsibilities:**

- All residents are responsible for reporting damp and mould to the Council and allowing access to their homes to complete work in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

- All residents should seek advice and permission before carrying out any changes within their homes to ensure that any alterations do not contribute to damp and mould or condensation.

## 7. Definitions

- Damp – the build-up of moisture in a property which can lead to the growth of mould and other microorganisms.
- Condensation – when moisture generated in the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the building (i.e. window frames, corners and low points on walls behind sofas or wardrobes). Normal occupant activities such as showering, drying laundry and cooking generate moisture. If this moisture is unable to escape from the property it can build up in the air and over time, can lead to mould growth.
- Penetrating damp – water that gets into the property from the outside due to defects in the walls, roof, windows or floors.
- Rising damp – moisture from the ground that rises through parts of the property in contact with the ground (i.e. walls and floors).
- Traumatic damp – can be caused by leaking water from waste and heating pipes, overflowing baths or sinks, burst pipes or defective water storage vessels inside the property. It can also originate from outside of the property, for example from another building or environmental flooding.

## 8. Further Information and Support

*The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:*

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

Damp and mould pose a risk to everyone's health; however, the following groups are more at risk:

- People with pre-existing conditions are at risk of their conditions worsening and have a higher risk of developing fungal infection or additional allergies.
- People of all ages who have a weakened immune system, such as people who have cancer or are undergoing chemotherapy.
- People who have transplant or other people who are taking medication that suppress their immune system.
- People living with mental health conditions.
- Pregnant women, their unborn babies and women who have recently given birth, who have weakened immune systems.

- Children and young people whose organs are still developing and are therefore more likely to suffer from physical conditions such as respiratory problems.
- Older people.
- People who are bedbound, housebound or have mobility problems making it more difficult to get out of a home with damp and mould and into fresh air.

## **9. Equality and Diversity**

The Council is committed to providing an equal opportunity to the service for all tenants and leaseholders. Any action taken under this policy will comply with current equalities legislation.

The Council's staff and contractors will operate in such a way to ensure that they meet the needs of individual residents and to ensure that they do not discriminate on the grounds of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex

## **10. Complaints**

We aim to meet the needs of our residents by providing an excellent service. However, it is acknowledged that occasionally things go wrong, and residents may wish to complain. Should the need arise to make a complaint, we will refer to our complaints policy and procedures.

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

Performance and resident satisfaction will be monitored using our suite of key performance indicators and reported through to respective committees, senior management teams and scrutiny panels to identify areas for review and improvement.

Members of the Council will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and recommend policy changes to improve service delivery and customer experience.

This policy is reviewed every 3 years or on the introduction of new legislation or best practice. This policy will remain valid for use until a new version is available.

## **12. Associated Documents**

List of documents – associated policies, procedures and publications:

- Asset Management Strategy
- Customer Feedback Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Recharge Policy
- Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Total Housing Compliance Policy

## **13. Where this Policy can be Found**

This policy will be made available on our website.