

Introduction

This policy aims to assist in the delivery of a damp and mould service that will be able to:

- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Comply with statutory requirements and good practice.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp including managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Maximise the available budgets and ensure that they are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp and condensation problems.
- Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to proactively manage the potential risks and promptly diagnose and prevent issues which may arise from damp and mould in our properties, including communal areas; committing to meeting the needs of our tenants, residents and service users (TRSs) and providing homes that are safe, warm, and dry.

Through this policy, we will establish appropriate processes, guidance, and knowledge to ensure all our properties are well maintained and free of damp and mould that could risk the health and safety of TRSs living in homes or buildings owned or managed by Adullam Homes.

This policy also sets out how we will support our tenants, residents, and service users to minimise the risk of damp and mould occurring and report it where there is evidence of its presence, this will also ensure that Adullam Homes meets its legal, contractual, regulatory, and statutory obligations.

Scope

This policy explains how we will control, manage, and eliminate damp, including but not limited to:

Who the policy applies to:

- Individuals who rent their home under a tenancy agreement or under a licence.
- All property communal areas.

- Emergency or temporary accommodation.

What this policy will cover:

- Identifying the types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation dampness, including internal leaks.
- Identifying the responsibilities for Adullam, our TRSs and third-party landlords in dealing with damp and condensation.
- Offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process to all TRSs living in our properties.
- Data gathering and reporting, identifying proactive methods in mitigating risk of all dampness. The Policy should be read in conjunction with Adullam's Asset Management Strategy and Repairs Policy.

Principles

Adullam will:

- Comply with statutory, regulatory, and contractual requirements and good practice.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable repair solutions and improvements to eliminate damp including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould, and condensation
- Respond to all reports of damp and condensation and complete any repair works/measures in line with their Responsive Repairs policy complying with all legislation. This will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem, the complexity of the solution and the repair works/actions required.
- We will make reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and carry out the works. **All logged repairs must have evidence of at least three attempts to contact the TRS. Written communication must then be provided to the TRS asking them to contact us to organise a new repair and record each attempt on our housing management system (Pyramid).**
- We will follow up each completed repair within six months of any damp and mould repair work being carried out.
- Ensure that tenants, residents, and service users are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants, residents and service users ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Always communicate effectively in relation to the delivery of our responsive repairs service and provide a range of options for tenants, residents, and service users to report repairs.
- Ensure that tenants, residents, and service users have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.

- Ensure budgets are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp, mould, and condensation problems.
- Implement new data quality and insight measures to assist with informing us of the possible risks to our properties so that we can undertake proactive measures to eliminate damp, mould, and condensation before it becomes a problem for our TRSs.

Definitions

Rising Damp

The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.

Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)

Water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure.

Condensation Damp

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:

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

The cause can also be the result of, for example:

- Water ingress due to defective or poor original design / workmanship of the structure.
- Defective components, for example roof coverings, external wall doors and windows.
- Defective or blocked rainwater gutters and pipes.
- Defective or leaking internal waste pipes, hot and cold water and heating systems.
- Flooding due to burst pipes.

Condensation Damp

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. This can take two main forms:

- Surface condensation arising when the inner surface of the structure is cooler than the room air.

- Condensation inside the structure (interstitial) where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials (e.g., walls), which then condenses when it reaches colder conditions within the structure.

The conditions that can increase the risk of condensation are:

- Inadequate ventilation e.g., natural opening windows and trickle / background vents and mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Inadequate heating e.g. undersized boilers and radiators, draught stripping.
- Inadequate thermal insulation. e.g., Missing, or defective wall and loft insulation.
- High humidity e.g., presence of rising and penetrating damp.
- Poor building design and construction – specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.

Conditions that can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation – not opening windows, blocking vents not turning on extract fans, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Poor heating – not heating the house which can be a result of fuel poverty.
- Defective insulation –dislodged insulation in lofts.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the house can contribute to this.
- Overcrowding.

Mould is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces. This is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present.

Adullam Homes Housing Association's Roles & Responsibilities

- Investigate in order to determine the cause of damp and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with our repairs policy.
- Undertake a property inspection when a repair is reported relating to suspected Damp, Mould & Condensation.
- Diagnose the cause of damp correctly and deliver effective solutions based on the ethos of dealing with the cause of the damp not just the symptom and wherever possible fixing first time.
- Inform the tenant, resident, or service user of the findings of the investigations following a property visit. This will include identifying the possible causes of damp, recommending effective solutions and all necessary remedial works / actions / enhancements and the estimated timescales to complete the works /measures; keeping the tenants, residents, and service users updated throughout the process from inception to completion.

- Ensure that only competent contractors will be employed to carry out any works and that the tenants, residents, and service users' possessions are adequately protected during the works.
- Insulate the home in accordance with Decent Homes Standard / Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.
- Take responsibility for maintaining people's homes to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if these problems occur.
- Undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation dampness. This may include but is not limited to:
 - upgraded ventilation system installation.
 - improved indoor air movement; and
 - quality best practices.
- Make good internal surfaces following any repairs work carried out ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for redecoration.
- Promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to minimise damp and condensation, particularly when there are no apparent causes relating to design or construction.
- Ensure that all employees have an awareness of the policy and receive adequate training to enable them to report issues of damp mould & condensation and to support our tenants, residents, and service users.
- Ensure that technical staff are trained and competent in the diagnosis of damp, condensation, and mould issues.,
- We will always first consider whether the source of the damp and mould is a design, construction, or maintenance issue which we can eliminate through work to the home. Where this is not the case additional support and advice will be provided to the TRS on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation damp. This support will be provided through the provision of advice and guidance literature and by working with our TRS's through our co-production group and tenancy management teams. If it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary decant to an alternative property. The tenant will be supported through this process to find suitable accommodation. In some cases, it may be necessary to re-house a tenant on a permanent basis if a medical professional advises that re-housing is the most suitable option. This will be considered in accordance with Adullam's Lettings Policy.

Tenants, Residents and Service Users (TRS) Responsibilities

- It is the tenant's responsibility to immediately report any evidence of rising and penetrating damp (see definitions) and 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.)

- Tenants must allow access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works.

Guidance to Tenants, Residents and Service Users (TRS)

Tenants 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.
- Following all advice and guidance issued by us on managing humidity and moisture in the home which can lead to condensation. This information can be found on the Adullam website.
- If all reasonable efforts have been made to manage and control the presence of condensation and mould, and there is still an issue then the TRS should contact Adullam immediately to report the problem.
- The tenancy agreement and licenses recommends that the TRS arranges adequate household contents insurance for the home that they occupy.

Assisting our Tenants, Residents and Service Users

Where internal conditions within a home for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongings are 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 tenants' options that may include moving to more appropriate or alternative suitable accommodation.

We also recognise that some of our tenants may need help when it comes to meeting their repair responsibilities. We may, entirely at our discretion, provide a service in addition to the statutory and contractual responsibilities, to assist our tenants who may need support to meet the conditions of their tenancy. We will make this assessment with the tenant based on their individual needs, including whether there is anyone else who might reasonably assist them, and whether there are any immediate risks to their health or safety. This may include an extension to the scope of repairs which we carry out. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Where decoration is required after works associated with damp and mould, decoration vouchers will be provided to assist with the provision of paint and equipment. Further consideration will be given to tenants and their specific individual or family circumstances, with a view to providing assistance which may include painting of finished surfaces. The nature of the decoration will solely be at our discretion.

Third party Landlords

Although Adullam may not have the ability to enforce this policy on landlords we engage with, we recognise the duty of care to our tenants, residents, and service users. Therefore, we will complete the following actions to address any current or potential damp, mould, or condensation issues:

- Pre-inspect all properties to ensure they meet current regulations.
- Carry out regular property inspections to ensure standards are maintained.
- Tenants, residents, and service users who occupy non-Adullam properties will be afforded the same rights under this policy.
- Where issues arise, Adullam will represent all tenants, residents, and service users in any claims against third party landlords.
- We will contact all third-party landlords (in writing) on an annual basis to ensure they have suitable and sufficient measures in-place to address damp, mould or condensation.

Appeals

Any TRS who is not satisfied with our approach in assessing and managing their damp and mould concerns can make a formal complaint.

If the TRS is dissatisfied with actions and decisions made under this policy, it will be dealt with under our TRS Complaints Policy.

Implementation/Access/Training

This policy will be published on Policy Hub.

Review, Monitoring and Compliance

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored by the reviewing Committee or Lead Director.

This policy may be reviewed at any time at the request of either staff or management but will automatically be reviewed after the first twelve months and thereafter on a 3 yearly basis from the date of original approval unless an earlier review is required due to regulatory, statutory, or other requirements or as and when statutory changes are required.

References

Adullam Homes Housing Association complies with relevant legislation and regulation, including:

- Housing Act 1985
- Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018

- Landlord and Tenant Act Section 11 – Repairs and Maintenance
- Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating
- Defective Premises Act 1973
- Decent Homes Standard
- Related Policies and Procedures
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Adullam’s Co-production Group
- Adullam’s Co-production Strategy
- Adullam’s Asset Management Strategy