

# DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

## 1.0 Responsible Officer

Director of Property and New Business

## 2.0 Introduction

2.1 This policy sets out our approach to protecting our residents and homes from damp, mould, and condensation.

2.2 There are many causes of damp, mould, and condensation in our homes. It can be distressing and impact residents' physical and/or mental health and wellbeing. A damp home can pose a serious risk to health and safety and lead to longer term structural problems. Working with residents we take a proactive approach to prevent and address damp and mould in our homes.

2.3 We will take a property and people focused approach to dealing damp and mould. Dealing with damp and mould requires a balance of ventilation, insulation, and heating to prevent water vapour condensing on cold surfaces where mould can develop. We will inspect and carry out required works to improve ventilation and insulation, and work with residents to support them to maintain ventilation and heat their home appropriately.

2.4 We will use stock condition and other data to inform investment programmes to take proactive action to prevent damp and mould in our homes.

2.5 We will carry out effective investigations, repairs and improvements to eradicate damp and control mould and condensation, working with residents to ensure that they are treated in a fair and consistent manner and that their homes are safe.

2.6 This policy supports a damp and mould service that will:

- Respond promptly to reports of damp and mould with clear procedures and timescales for appropriate actions and resolution.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all required remedial repairs and improvements to eradicate damp. This will include controlling mould and condensation, installing insulation and promoting ventilation to provide a safe and healthy internal environment.
- Comply with statutory requirements and good practice.
- Treat residents in a fair and consistent way.
- Provide residents with access to appropriate advice and guidance to help them manage and control damp and condensation, including on ventilation and energy efficiency.
- Provide advice and support to residents to enable them to heat their homes e.g. supporting residents to obtain benefits or charitable grants.
- Provide rehousing where the damp and mould issue cannot be remedied if the household remain in the home e.g. in some cases of overcrowding.

- Focus on working in partnership with residents so that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided, monitored across seasons as appropriate, and seeking their agreement once the case is resolved so that it can be closed on our systems.
- Promote accurate recordkeeping to manage and resolve each case and inform future investment decisions to prevent damp and mould in future

### **3.0 Policy Scope**

3.1 This policy applies to all homes owned and managed by Phoenix Community Housing, where we have responsibility for repairs and maintenance.

3.2 Leaseholders and shared owners are responsible for their own property as per individual lease agreements. If the issue is in a communal area or is a structural building defect, PCH will act according to its responsibility in line with the corresponding lease.

### **4.0 Types of damp**

4.1 The types of damp covered by the policy includes Rising Damp, Penetrating Damp and Damp caused by Condensation.

### **5.0 Phoenix Responsibilities**

5.1 We will investigate all reports of damp, mould and condensation within residents' homes. We will carry out and complete remedial repairs and improvements to resolve the issues and act in accordance with our obligations as landlord.

5.2 We will work with residents to help them reduce condensation in their homes.

5.3 We will categorise the level of risk based upon HHSRS guidelines and categories used by the Regulator for Social Housing.

5.4 For those properties identified as Category 1 cases under the HHSRS guidelines or where a vulnerable resident's health may be affected, we will provide support and assistance, through an action plan that puts the resident at the centre of our response:

- An action plan will be prepared and agreed with the household and include advice, post repair support on home care and maintenance and monitoring to ensure the damp and mould has been eradicated.
- This approach may include referrals to Housing Services, Financial Well-being, and other stakeholders as appropriate.

Where the household is identified as being vulnerable or the damp issue is deemed a high risk, we will act quickly to move the household as appropriate, whilst the hazard is resolved.

- 5.5 If the damp issue cannot be resolved without rehousing the resident e.g. in cases of overcrowding we will work with the resident and the Local Authority to try to find alternative housing options.

Where hoarding is preventing sufficient air circulation, we will work with the resident to agree an action plan as appropriate as per the Hoarding Framework.

- 5.6 We have a duty to protect our residents and properties. We will take prompt legal action for inspections and repairs where residents refuse to provide access.
- 5.7 For voids and mutual exchanges, we will inspect all rooms for damp, mould, and condensation. If identified, it will be managed and rectified as part of the void works and prior to the mutual exchange taking place.
- 5.8 We will monitor the work we carry out in accordance with our procedures and obligations as a landlord to make sure that the action taken has resolved the issue.
- 5.9 We will make sure that each tenant or leaseholder has been contacted and has agreed to close the case once resolved.
- 5.10 We will take a proactive approach, using data to inform our decisions and strategies to tackle damp and mould, including using our stock condition programme to assess the presence of damp and mould.
- 5.11 We will keep accurate records for each case of damp and mould to support prompt resolution and provide quality data to inform future investment programmes.

## **6.0 Tenant's responsibilities**

- 6.1 Tenants will be encouraged to:

- Report condensation, damp rising and penetrating damp, and faulty equipment to us as soon as possible.
- Regularly check for signs of mould.
- Allow access for inspections and for the carrying out of remedial works. On occasions where the inspection and remedial repairs are prevented, we will seek legal action to remove the risk.
- Take the advice given and adopt reasonable steps to reduce moisture levels within the home.

## **7.0 Leaseholder's responsibilities**

- 7.1 Leaseholders will be encouraged to manage and maintain their properties including damp and condensation in accordance with their lease agreement. We will carry out damp and condensation remedial works to leasehold properties as stipulated by the lease.

## **8.0 Training**

8.1 We will ensure that all our staff and contractors have appropriate training to support the implementation of this policy. We will also offer awareness training for residents.

## **9.0 Communications**

9.1 We will work with our Resident Communications Group to ensure that materials and information regarding damp and mould are accessible and easy to understand for all residents.

## **10.0 Contents Insurance**

10.1 We encourage residents to take out household contents insurance to cover all personal belongings.

## **11.0 Monitoring and review**

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if there is a change to legislation, good practice, or other learning.

11.2 To ensure that Phoenix obtains ongoing value for money and is continually monitoring the service delivery, the completion of works will be monitored through KPIs which will be reported in our Performance Reports.

## **12.0 Legislation**

- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Health and Safety and related legislation
- Housing Act 1988, 1996, 1998, 2004
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Building Regulations

## **13.0 Associated Documents, Policies Procedures**

- Asset Management Strategy
- Decant and temporary transfer policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Void management Policy
- Hoarding Framework
- Recharges to Resident Policy
- Damp & Mould Process
- Void Management Policy and Process
- Phoenix Standards
- Tenancy Agreement
- Lease Agreement

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