

Policy on:	Damp and Mould Policy
Compliant with Charter Outcomes and Standards:	Yes
Compliant with Equalities:	Yes.
Compliant with Business Plan:	Yes
Compliant with Risk:	Yes
Date for Approval:	May 2023 (Amended June 2024)
Date for Review:	May 2026
Responsible Officers:	Head of Housing

This policy is available, on request, in different languages and in other formats such as large print, audio format and braille as required.



1. Introduction

To fulfil our vision of Great Homes, Great People and Vibrant Communities, Shire Housing Association is committed to putting our customers at the heart of what we do and how we do it, with a Business Plan and a number of associated Strategies and Policies that support this Vision.

We have developed this policy to outline how we aim to proactively manage the potential risks arising from damp and mould in our properties including communal areas and to confirm our commitment to meeting the needs of our tenants 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 tenants living in homes or buildings owned or managed by Shire Housing Association.

This policy is to ensure we assist our tenants, supporting them to provide remedial work for damp and mould and improve the homes they live in, this will also ensure that Shire Housing Association meets its legal, contractual, regulatory, and statutory obligations.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to proactively manage the potential risks arising from damp and mould in our properties including communal areas and our commitment to meeting the needs of our tenants and providing homes that are safe, warm, and dry.

This policy explains how we will control, manage, and eliminate damp and covers:

- Identifying the types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation dampness, including internal leaks.
- Identifying the responsibilities for Shire Housing Association and our tenants in dealing with damp and condensation.
- Offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process to all tenants living in our properties.
- Data gathering and reporting, identifying proactive methods in mitigating risk of all dampness.

3. 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

4. Policy Principals

Shire Housing Association will:

- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way. Considering all circumstances, so where we provide advice, that advice is suitable and assists our tenants' needs.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Communicate effectively to our tenants in relation to the delivery of our responsive repairs service and enable them to communicate effectively with us.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable repair solutions and improvements to eliminate damp including, managing, and controlling condensation that meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS), and Tolerable Standard.
- Make use of new technology and innovation that supports any investigative plans, actions future decision making.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Comply with statutory, regulatory, and contractual requirements and good practice.
- 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 tenants.
- 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 Repairs and Maintenance 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.

We will follow up repair of any damp and mould repair work being carried out as per our Repairs and Maintenance Policy post inspections.

5. Legislative Guidelines

The policy should be considered as an essential document to fulfilment of our duties under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 and 2010 including provision of housing services in line with the Scottish Social Housing Charter and compliance with the standards set out in the Scottish Housing Regulator's Regulatory Framework, inclusive of:

- The Tolerable Standard,
- The Scottish Housing Quality Standard / EESSH (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing) and
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter.

In addition, the policy fulfils our legislative duties contained within:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- The Equality Act 2010
- Right to Repair

This policy takes account of legal, regulatory, and best practice requirements, including (but not limited to):

- The Equalities Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Section 5.3 of the Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management

6. Roles and Responsibilities

Our Responsibilities

- We shall investigate to determine the cause of damp and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with our *repairs policy*.
- *Consider/ prioritise persons most at risk to Damp & Mould, such as, but not exclusive too: babies, children, elderly, persons with skin problems, persons with respiratory problems, persons with weak immune systems.*
- 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.
- We will introduce a reporting framework to enhance our tenant and property information, which will potentially shape our future investment programmes.
- Promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to control damp and condensation.
- Ensure that all staff have training that focuses on raising awareness and understanding about our approach and service delivery.
- Inform the tenant 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 tenant updated throughout the process from inception to completion.
- *In order to protect tenant health and safety and the property asset, we shall instigate our Forced Access procedures on any property to complete essential works to alleviate damp and mould in the event of repeated failed attempts to access the property with the tenant*
- Ensure that only competent contractors will be employed to carry out any works and that the tenant's possessions are adequately protected during the works.
- We are responsible for insulating the tenants' home in accordance with Scottish Quality Housing Standard / Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.
- We are responsible for maintaining tenants' homes to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if these problems occur.
- We will 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.
- We will make good internal surfaces following any repairs work carried out, ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for the tenant to redecorate. Where there is a need to decorate, following remedial work carried out by Shire Housing Association, decoration vouchers will be provided to assist with the provision of paint and equipment in accordance with our Allowances and Compensation policies.

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 and we will support the tenant throughout this process.

Tenant Responsibilities

Tenants have a responsibility within the tenancy agreement to immediately report any repairs which includes where there is evidence of rising and penetrating damp (see definitions at part 4) 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.).



Once a repair has been reported, the tenant is responsible for:

- Allowing access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works.
- Following the advice and support offered should the outcome of an inspection show that all reasonable measures are in place for the tenant to adequately control condensation and mould.
- The tenancy agreement recommends that the tenant arranges adequate household contents insurance for the home that they occupy.
- Where tenants are considering making any changes within their home: for example, converting rooms into one room, adding extensions, converting non-habitable buildings/spaces into habitable, they must seek advice and permission from us in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

Tenants can help reduce the conditions that lead to condensation dampness by:

- Keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum e.g., drying laundry outside (where possible) and keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
- Adequately heating rooms.
- 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.
- Follow 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 Shire Housing Association website.

The tenant should continue to inform us if after all reasonable efforts have been made to manage and control the presence of condensation and mould, this has not been successful.

7. Assistance for Tenants

Where internal conditions within a home for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongs 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 tenant's 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 e.g. Financial Advice. 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 there is a need to decorate, following remedial work carried out by Shire Housing Association, decoration vouchers will be provided to assist with the provision of paint and equipment in accordance with our Allowances and Compensation policies. 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.

8. Equality and Diversity

This Policy complies fully with Shire Housing Association's Equality and Diversity Policy. Shire Housing Association will be proactive in valuing and promoting diversity, fairness, social justice and equality of opportunity by adopting and promoting fair policies and procedures.

We are committed to providing fair and equal treatment for all our stakeholders including tenants and will not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age; disability; gender reassignment; being married or in a civil partnership; being pregnant or on maternity leave; race; religion and belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

We carry out Equality Impact Assessments when we review our policies. We check policies and associated procedures regularly to ensure accessibility for all. We take appropriate action to address inequalities likely to result or resulting from the implementation of the policy and procedures.

9. Feedback and Complaints

Shire Housing Association strives to always provide an excellent tenant service and welcomes feedback and comments from our tenants. We will seek feedback via our website, e-mail, in writing and verbally to learn from service users' experiences, using them to shape and develop our service.

We operate a Complaints Policy that is open and transparent, should any tenant or service user feel the need to make a complaint against an individual or the organisation, the complaints policy and procedure will be implemented. All complaints will be recorded and dealt with under Complaints Policy and Procedures, which meet the requirements of the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

10. Performance Monitoring and Review

In addition to the annual submission of performance against the Annual Return on the Charter to the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Management Board will review and approve Key Performance Indicators and targets on an annual basis and outcomes will be monitored at quarterly meetings.



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This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if deemed necessary due to legislative, best practice or other changes.

