



# Damp and Mould Policy

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## 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy sets out Westlon's responsibilities involved in the control of condensation, damp, and mould within Westlon's housing stock. Westlon aim to provide an effective, high-quality repairs and maintenance service to ensure that our properties are habitable, well-maintained and safe.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that wherever possible residents are not adversely affected by the causes of damp and mould and outlines how Westlon will be proactive in taking the necessary action to address/manage the causes of damp and mould.
- 1.3 This policy takes into account the recommendations made in the Housing Ombudsman Service Report – Spotlight on: Damp and Mould – October 2021.

## 2. Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This policy applies to all of Westlon's rented properties.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all communal areas.
- 2.3 This policy also applies to all of Westlon's staff, contractors, and sub-contractors involved in the repair and maintenance of our properties.

## 3. Key points of Policy

- 3.1 The key points of this policy are:
  - To ensure that we provide dry, warm, and healthy homes for our residents.
  - To undertake effective investigations regarding damp and mould and to implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp and mould including managing condensation.
  - To proactively address/manage the causes of damp and mould through robust procedures.
  - To comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements.
  - To ensure that residents are treated in a fair and consistent manner with empathy and respect.
  - To ensure that our properties are well maintained to protect them from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould.



- Improve the living conditions of our residents.
- Ensure that our residents are provided with advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Ensure that our retrofit programmes take into consideration the impact of damp and mould.
- Reduce the risk of disrepair claims.
- Reduce the risk of reputational damage.

#### **4. Legislation and Guidance**

4.1 The key areas of legislation and guidance that apply to this policy are:

- The Building Safety Act 2022
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Home Standard (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)
- Housing Act 2004
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 1988 or 1996
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Electrical Safety Regulations 1994
- Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002
- Provisions and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998
- Health and Social Care Act 2008
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Equality Act 2010

#### **5. Policy Context**

5.1 What is Condensation, Damp, and Mould?

- Condensation is when moisture generated in the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the building, such as window frames, corners, and behind furniture. Normal activities such as showering, drying clothes, and cooking will generate moisture.
- Damp is the build up of moisture in a property that can lead to the growth of mould.
- Mould is a type of fungus which grows in moist environments. Mould can often form black, green or white patches in a property.



## 5.2 What generally causes damp and mould?

There are four main causes of damp in a property:

- Condensation Damp when the moisture that builds up in a property cannot escape from the property and builds up over time leading to the growth of damp and mould.
- Rising Damp when moisture from the ground rises up through parts of the property that are in contact with the ground such as walls and floors.
- Penetrating Damp is when moisture from the outside gets into the inside of the property such as through defective roofs, walls, windows or flooring.
- Traumatic Damp is caused by a leaking water from things such as a burst pipe, overflowing baths or sinks or defective water tanks within a property.

## 5.3 Conditions that may increase the cause of condensation

- Lack of ventilation in a property.
- Inadequate heating in a property.
- High Humidity in a property.
- Lack of insulation in a property.

## 6. Responsibilities

### 6.1 Weston's responsibilities:

- To carry out remedial repairs in accordance with our Repairs Policy.
- To identify and address any underlying causes of damp and mould.
- To undertake a property inspection when any issues of damp and mould are reported.
- To deliver effective solutions to deal with the cause of damp.
- To inform the resident of the findings of the damp and mould investigation.
- To undertake reasonable improvement works to assist in the management of damp and mould, this may include things such as upgraded ventilation systems and improvement air movement inside of the property.
- To ensure homes are well maintained to avoid penetrating, rising or traumatic damp and to carry out remedial action if these problems do occur.
- Promote and provide advice and guidance to residents on how to minimise condensation, damp, and mould within their homes.

### 6.2 Tenant responsibilities

- To immediately report any evidence of damp or mould.
- To immediately report any repair issues such as a leak, burst pipe, faulty heating or a broken extractor fan.
- To allow us to the property for inspections, repairs, and planned works.
- To follow the guidance and advice provided in relation to managing condensation, damp, and mould.



- To keep the property adequately heated at a minimum of 16 Celsius.
- To keep the property adequately ventilated.

## **7. Resident Advice and Guidance**

7.1 Residents can help reduce the risk of excess moisture in their home by:

- Leaving a gap between furniture and the wall for air to move between furniture and external walls.
- Use and regularly clean extractor fans in kitchen and bathrooms.
- Keep internal doors closed when cooking or bathing/showering.
- Cover pans when cooking.
- Dry laundry outdoors wherever possible.
- Open windows and trickle vents if you have them on the top part of your window.
- Ensure that the home is adequately heated. The World Health Organisation suggests that 18 degrees Celsius is the ideal home temperature. A room temperature of 20 degrees Celsius may be more suitable for the young, elderly or unwell.

## **8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

8.1 Weston is committed to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion and strive to fairly treat our residents of all races, ages, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and disability.

8.2 This policy aligns with our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy.

8.3 All residents can have access to this policy.

8.4 This policy and any accompanying information can be translated or provided in an alternative format upon request.

## **9. Appeals and Complaints**

9.1 We aim to meet all of our obligations when addressing/managing any damp and mould issues. If we do not and you are not happy with the service we have provided, you can contact us and inform us of this. Any dissatisfaction will be addressed in line with our Complaints policy.

## **10. Monitoring and Review**

10.1 Routine customer satisfaction surveys will be conducted to review resident satisfaction regarding repairs and to seek continuous service improvement.

10.2 Weston will review this policy every three years unless legislation, business or sector changes require changes to be made sooner to ensure that we meet all of our obligations as a social housing landlord.