

PA Housing DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

June 2025

Policy Owner	Peter Beggan, Interim Executive Director of Damp and Mould
Officer Drafting	Charles Ellis, Executive Director of Asset Management
Department	Asset Management
Approved by	EMT
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PA Housing is committed to equality and diversity. This policy has considered the Equality Act 2010 and its protected characteristics which are: race, gender, gender reassignment, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, marriage, civil marriage and partnership, and pregnancy and maternity explicitly.

We will make sure that all our communication is fully accessible and to achieve this if a policy or document needs to be available in other formats, we will provide them.

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 PA will adopt a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. We recognise the impact of living with this hazard can have on residents and the evident concerns about their health and well-being, especially mental health and the impact on any children. PA will ensure we treat our residents reporting damp and mould with respect and empathy.
- 1.2 We will take a proactive approach to managing and resolving damp and mould hazards and we take responsibility for these issues. We will not apportion blame.
- 1.3 We will be on the front foot identifying potential issues. We will use intelligent data, and complaints to inform this strategic approach.
- 1.4 When there is a problem, effective diagnosis is critical. We have established a clear approach to timescales, diagnosis, mitigations, communication and after care. Where appropriate we will use independent expertise.
- 1.5 This policy is for occupied homes and our aim is to achieve the following outcomes for our residents:
- Provide safe homes, that are free of damp, mould and condensation that could risk the health and safety of our residents.
 - Outline our approach for our residents in how we treat, manage and prevent damp, mould and condensation.
 - Early detection, notification and resolution of damp and mould issues.
 - Provide assurance to our residents and stakeholders that our approach to managing damp and mould is fit for purpose and reflects the best practice outlined in the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report.
 - Provides a clear process in how we will prioritise the most severe cases of Damp and Mould.
 - Ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory obligations, including Awaab's Law. Once residents make us aware of a hazard, or we are informed by our colleagues through surveys or investigations, is the point at which our legal obligations under Awaab's Law will begin.

2. Key Activities to tackling damp, mould and condensation in our occupied homes

- 2.1 We have a risk-based approach to the management of damp and mould which is set out in our operational procedure.

- 2.2 We will triage all reports of damp and mould at the point we are made aware, to assess the risk levels and next steps. The investigation will determine whether there is a hazard, the associated risk category of the hazard and the potential health impact to the resident/s. The initial assessment will determine whether the hazard is severe and will require completion as an Emergency job within 24 hours.
- 2.3 If the property is CAT 1 Severe, we will undertake emergency works to make the property safe within 24 hours. If this is cannot be achieved, PA will source our residents alternative temporary accommodation until the hazard has been removed and the property is considered safe to reoccupy by the surveyor.
- 2.4 We will categorise the risk in line with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as CAT 1 Severe or CAT 2 Moderate or slight.
- 2.5 Awaab's Law does not require PA to Physically inspect all properties where a potential hazard is reported to ascertain if there is a hazard, as photos and videos allows for information sharing that can facilitate remote investigations in some circumstances. PA's aim is to undertake a physical inspection of all homes where a hazard has been reported and where a resident requests a physical inspection. This will be carried out within 14 calendar days of the potential hazard initially being reported. This excludes emergency jobs that require completing within 24 hours.
- 2.6 Within **14 calendar days**, we will assess the category of risk. This will take account of the building occupancy levels, their age(s), vulnerabilities, health conditions and the levels of damp and mould present. We will assess the cause of the hazard and identify remedial actions to address the root cause to prevent future occurrences of damp and mould returning.
- 2.7 The assessment will identify the underlying cause of the damp and mould within the property and where appropriate provide the resident with guidance on managing mould within their property. Any remedial works identified will be recorded and raised to our internal or external contractors.
- 2.8 Within **48 hours** of the assessment, (and within 14 days of PA becoming first aware of the damp and mould), we will provide a written report to the resident setting out our findings, the cause, and the steps being taken to address the root cause of the damp and mould.
- 2.9 Within **7 calendar days** of our written assessment (within 21 days of PA first becoming aware of the damp and mould), we will commence works, including mould wash treatment and remediation works to prevent damp and mould returning.
- 2.10 We will collect and retain evidence of the completed work undertaken including photographic records of the property condition.

2.11 Where we have undertaken remediation work to fix the underlying hazard, we will contact residents periodically, for up to 12 months, after completing the remedial works to check the damp and mould has not returned.

2.12 We consider a range of interventions to tackle and, where possible, eliminate damp and mould. This could include:

- Where appropriate, carrying out mould treatments to remove the hazard.
- In cases where the hazard is slight to typical, we will provide guidance to residents to self-clean and apply the mould treatment if they tell us they can do this. We will provide the kits for residents to do this. For other categories of mould (Cat 1 and Cat 2), PA will complete the mould treatment and removal.
- Provide heating controls to improve heat management within their home.
- Install humidity and temperature sensors to enable us to remotely monitor internal temperature changes to help diagnose the cause of the hazard.
- Installation and/or upgrading of fans to improve ventilation.
- Undertake repairs in accordance with our Repairs Policy.
- On a case-by-case basis give advice that is tailored to each resident and their home.
- Where appropriate, regular monitoring of the situation with follow up calls and additional visits when needed.
- Provide clear, sensitive, practical advice and guidance to residents in how they can resolve damp and mould in their homes.

3. Resident Communications

3.1 Residents can make PA aware of a hazard by any traditional means, for example by email, phone call, letters or other means that is convenient for our residents to raise service requests.

3.2 We will take a proactive approach to managing and resolving damp and mould hazards and we take responsibility for these issues. We will not apportion blame or use language that leaves residents feeling blamed.

3.3 We will provide clear information and advice to our residents about the causes of damp and mould, and how best to reduce or eliminate it. We encourage residents to report damp and mould issues in a timely manner so we can act quickly and keep their homes free of damp and mould.

- 3.4 We recognise that communication and language can be a barrier to damp and mould reporting, and we will ensure that our services are delivered in such a way as to be fully accessible, this will include ensuring that advocacy, interpreting, and translation services are available when required.
- 3.5 For historic or complex cases, we will provide the customer with one point of contact.
- 3.6 We will provide support to our vulnerable residents where needed to assist with issues contributing to damp and mould.

4. Responsibilities

PA's responsibilities are as follows:

- 4.1 Promote and provide clear and simple advice and guidance to residents to reduce damp, mould and condensation.
- 4.2 Provide easy ways to report a hazard.
- 4.3 Diagnose the cause of the hazard and deliver effective solutions to address the root cause.
- 4.4 Keep residents regularly updated through each stage of their case. This will include our findings following the investigation, providing information about the necessary remedial works and timescales to complete the work.
- 4.5 Engage third party experts in complex situations and act on their findings.
- 4.6 Employ skilled contractors to work in support of our directly employed teams.
- 4.7 Provide clear and easy access to our complaints procedures that will be managed in line with our Complaints Policy. Remedies will be commensurate to the distress and inconvenience caused to the resident, whilst recognising that each case is individual and should be considered on its own merits.
- 4.8 For legal disrepair cases, we will use our complaints procedure when the pre-action protocol has commenced and until legal proceedings have been issued to maximise the opportunities to resolve disputes outside of court.
- 4.9 We will keep electronic, robust and accurate data records in our housing management system.

4.10 For any homes that have been reported with damp and mould that have been identified for future disposal or regeneration, we will continue to maintain and repair these homes whilst they are occupied.

4.11 Provide training to our staff on our management processes and technical elements.

Resident responsibilities include:

4.12 Reporting issues of damp and mould as soon as they become visible in their homes or communal areas.

4.13 Reporting faulty equipment that may hamper the management and control of damp, mould and condensation. For example, reporting a faulty extract fan, window repairs or issues with heating systems.

4.14 Keeping appointments and providing access into your homes to our staff and suppliers. Where access to undertake work is not provide by residents, this will be appropriately documented and where necessary we may use legal action to gain access.

4.15 Inadequate heating and/or ventilation are a significant cause of damp and mould. Residents are responsible for heating their homes and ensuring that they are ventilated, and that trickle vents are opened, and fuses are not removed from ventilation fans.

4.16 We recognise that financial hardship can impact on resident's ability to heat their home, and we will aim to provide support through our Tenancy Sustainment team.

4.17 Leaseholders and shared owners will manage and maintain their properties including issues with damp, mould and condensation in accordance with obligations in their lease agreements.

5. Preventative Maintenance

5.1 For our residents, we provide accessible information on our website to raise awareness about the causes of damp and mould and advice on how it can be avoided. This includes advice on how to remove moisture from homes, keeping homes properly ventilated, and how to stop rooms from getting too cold.

5.2 We will periodically triangulate repairs, complaints, Decent Homes Standard failures, outstanding repairs and improvements and property data to identify property archetypes that are more prone to damp, mould and condensation to take a proactive approach to tackling hazards before these are reported. We will use historical data to identify common themes to inform changes to our service offer.

5.3 Reviews of property data will include properties that have a lower energy performance certificate (EPC) rating, blocks of flats where damp has been reported to multiple

properties or where certain archetypes of properties are more prone to historical or repeated damp, mould or condensation issues.

- 5.4 We will check neighbouring properties, to ensure our response early on is to potential hazards is as effective as possible.
- 5.5 We will use all opportunities when we visit our residents' homes to identify damp, mould and condensation, such as repairs and stock condition inspections, tenancy update and contractor visits, ensuring damp, mould and condensation issues are reported and investigated.
- 5.6 We will inspect properties and engage with residents in homes that are more prone to damp, mould and condensation issues.
- 5.7 We're committed to ensuring that all our void homes and mutual exchanges, prior to being let, are free from all forms of dampness. We check all ground floor walls for rising dampness with an electronic moisture meter. If there's any condensation mould, this will be washed off and sterilised with an anti-fungicidal solution. We also check that our homes ventilation and heating are in good mechanical order and install loft insulation if this is required. We will complete works whilst the property is empty.
- 5.8 We will continue to undertake proactive stock condition surveys of our properties every five years. We will use property data including stock condition surveys and damp and mould sensors to identify homes at high risk from Damp and Mould.
- 5.9 Our aim is to ensure every home achieves a reasonable level of energy efficiency. Through our planned investment programmes we are on course to ensure all our homes meet EPC band C by 2029. We will do this by improving the fabric of our buildings by improving external wall, loft and floor insulation, replacing single glazed windows with double glazing or triple glazing where this is possible and installing energy efficient heating systems.

6. Monitoring and Assurance

- 6.1 We will measure our service resolution levels each month and feedback performance through the Resident Assembly, Customer Committee and to the Board.
- 6.2 To measure and monitor our effectiveness and to provide assurance, we will report against a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) including:
- Number of new hazards raised.
 - Emergency damp and mould hazards resolved in 24 hours
 - Survey assessments completed within 14 calendar days.
 - Written assessments completed and provided to residents within 48 hours.

- Commencement of works within 7 days of written assessment.
- Number of hazards treated and resolved.
- Number of completed remedial works.
- Number of missed appointments relating to addressing damp and mould hazards.
- Resident satisfaction on completion of remedial works.
- Number of cases closed and subsequently reopened within 12 months as further works are required.

7. Consultation

7.1 This customer facing policy will be consulted through involved residents.

8. Policy Review

8.1 The policy will be reviewed upon any change to legislation or major guidance documentation, and at least every 36 months (or earlier if deemed necessary through the Monitoring and Assurance Process).