



A guide to... condensation, mould and damp

This booklet is a guide with some basic information about condensation, damp, and mould including how it can be addressed and how we can help you.



PA Housing



What is condensation?

Condensation is the process where water vapour held in the air as a gas appears as water droplets on a cold surface. The most common place for this water to form is on windows, especially single glazed ones, but the water can form on any cold surface. This often leads residents to believe that they have a roof leak or a leaking pipe when in fact they are experiencing condensation. Adequate ventilation is one of the best approaches to condensation and we will work with residents to ensure that items such as extractor fans, window openings, and vents etc. are all working correctly.

What is mould?

Mould is formed of very small plants which thrive in the conditions produced by condensation. The spores are very small and exist in the air. They will colonise a suitable habitat very quickly and produce more spores, so that if left untreated, it is common for entire rooms to be covered.

What can I do if I see mould?

Prevention is always best, so please follow the tips in this leaflet, but if you do get a patch of mould, where you are able, please wipe away and mop up any moisture appearing on walls, windows, windowsills, and other surfaces. Wring out the cloth into a sink rather than leaving it to drip dry. You can remove mould by washing the surfaces affected with an anti-fungicidal mould remover, which you can purchase from most supermarkets and DIY stores. Always remember to follow the manufacturer's instructions.

What is damp?





There are a number of different potential sources of damp. These include:











- Condensation damp – This type of damp is caused by having a significant amount of moisture in the air from a variety of sources such as cooking, bathing, drying clothes etc.
- Penetrating damp – Sometimes also called lateral penetration, this type of damp penetration can be from roofs, chimneys, parapet walls, and indeed any wall or building feature above ground. This can be caused by a rainwater defects, weather penetrating the fabric of the building etc.
- Plumbing leak damp – Dampness caused by pipework leaking internally such as broken pipes, failed stopcock etc. This may require intrusive investigation work as most household pipework is hidden or in floor or ceiling voids.
- Rising damp – Rising damp occurs when moisture travels upwards against the forces of gravity, typically up a wall or through a floor, from its source below the ground.

What will we do when you report a problem?

When you report a problem with condensation, mould, or damp, we'll arrange for one of our surveyors to attend your home and carry out an investigation. We aim to do this first inspection within 5 working days of you reporting your concern to us.

Here are some examples of the common reports we receive and the typical timescales they take to resolve depending on the source of the problem. Please note that these are indicative examples of timescales and will depend on the nature of the problem and the investigations required to source and resolve the problem.

Type of problem reported	Work to be investigated or carried out by us	Expected number of visits from us	Expected timescales for work to be completed
Mould of less than 1sqm affecting a wet area (bathroom, shower room, kitchen)	Where able, residents advised to wipe down affected area. Surveyor to inspect as the issue could be linked to penetrative damp and we need to also assess the ventilation and extraction system within the wet area.	 1 visits	 1 - 3 weeks
Mould of less than 1sqm affecting a non-wet area (living room, bedroom, hallway)	Where able, residents advised to wipe down affected area. Appointment to be made for a surveyor to attend to begin an investigation of the cause.	 1 - 2 visits	 4 weeks

Anything over 1sm in the property.	Order raised to contractor to address mould. Appointment made for surveyor to attend at the same time to begin a cause investigation.	 1 - 3 visits	 Four weeks
Dampness coming from the ground	Appointment arranged for a Surveyor to inspect. Order to be raised to contractor to check any defects in drainage system and leak on water service pipe.	 1 - 3 visits	 Four weeks
Leak/ Penetrative damp	Operative to attend to source cause of dampness and make safe, refer any follow on works.	 1 visit	 24 hours
Leak/ Penetrative damp	Operative has attended cannot source the cause of the leak (not due to access issue). Supervisor to attend and source cause of leak and make safe.	 1 visit	 24 hours
Leak/ Penetrative damp	Supervisor cannot source the leak(not due to access issue). Contractor to appoint leak detection specialist	 1 visit	 Five working days



Top tips to help reduce condensation

In your kitchen

- Please always use lids on saucepans and cooking pots, and do not leave items boiling for longer than needed.
- If there is an electric extractor fan, please use this when cooking or drying clothes and particularly whenever the windows show any sign of misting. Please leave the fan on until the misting has cleared.
- If you don't have an electrical extractor fan, please open kitchen windows, but keep doors closed as much as possible.
- If you use a tumble dryer, please ensure the exhaust pipe is placed so that any steam is outside your home. If it is not already a condensing type.


General tips and advice


- If drying clothes in your home, please open a window or do so in a room where you can use an electrical extractor fan.
- Please ensure that airbricks or window vents are clear and unblocked, especially in any room with gas appliances.
- Please ensure that you dry clothes in ventilated areas, not for example, in an unventilated airing cupboard.
- Please try to heat your home as this will reduce moisture in the air.
- It can take a building a long time to warm up, so it is better to have a small amount of heat for a long period of time rather than a lot of heat for a short period.
- Wardrobes and other large items of furniture should not be placed directly against external walls as pockets of trapped air can lead to surface condensation and mould growth on the walls and furniture. Please leave a space between the back of the furniture and the wall.

In your bathroom

- Please run cold water into the bath until the bottom is covered before adding the hot water.
- Please keep the bathroom door closed during and after bathing.
- Please open the window straight after bathing in order to get rid of moisture.
- If there is an electrical extractor fan, please use this when bathing or showering.
- Keep something at hand for wiping off excess moisture off walls and windows.



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