

# Damp and Mould Policy



## Introduction

This policy tells you how Great Places, aims to deal with reports damp and mould in your home, it also explains how we will provide you with a high quality customer experience. We want customers to feel safe, listened to, and for them to live in good quality homes.

Our damp and mould policy forms a part of our overall repairs service. This wider offer is explained in our Repairs Policy which can be found on our website.

## Context

This Policy outlines our response to damp and mould in all Great Places owned or managed homes. The service is delivered using a combination of Great Places operatives and external contracts for:

- general needs homes.
- supported housing.
- care and extra care.
- shared ownership (see below).
- leaseholders (as written in the lease).
- emergency accommodation.

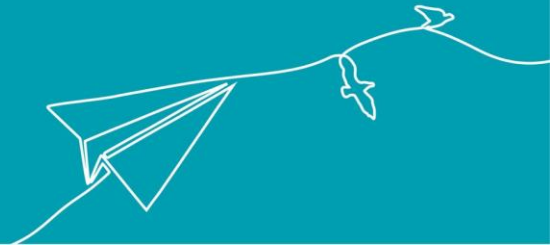
The Regulator of Social Housing issued specific reports in relation to damp and mould in social housing. These call for a strengthened approach to understanding and dealing with damp and mould across the sector. In response:

- We are taking damp and mould seriously.
- We will identify the cause of damp and mould quickly following contact from customers.
- We will remedy cases of damp and mould in customers' homes promptly.
- We will plan works in an informed way to improve the quality of homes.
- Our annual report will include information about how we are doing.

## Aims and objectives

- to manage damp and mould in an effective way
- to achieve high standards of customer service.

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- to ensure vulnerable customers get a service which is suitable for their needs.
- to make sure all Great Places homes are kept to a high standard and that our customers live in safety, comfort and warmth.
- to be open with customers, and listen to them through customer feedback and involvement.
- to meet the standards set out in our tenancy agreements.
- to give value for money.

## Damp definitions

Rising Damp is the movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building. Rising damp can be caused by missing or faulty damp proof course. .

Penetrating Damp occurs when water penetrates the external structure of the building causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure. The cause of penetrating damp is often linked to faulty guttering, defective brickwork or windows, or problems with roofing. Penetrating damp can also be caused by internal leaks.

Condensation Damp occurs when moisture in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. Factors increasing condensation can include; lack of ventilation, inadequate heating, poor insulation, high humidity and overcrowding.

## Our response to damp and mould

We understand that damp and mould could create a potential hazard for our customers and we treat these instances as a priority. We follow a damp and mould process to make sure we take the correct action for damp and mould in a timely manner, to protect the safety of our customers.

Our approach to damp and mould may include repairs to your home or major works. We may also provide detailed guidance, advice and support to help you keep damp and mould away. If we feel this would benefit customers, we can refer our customers to other organisations for support.

We aim to respond to reports of Damp and Mould within 10 working days.

## Reporting damp and mould

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There are many ways to report Damp and Mould:

- Using the website Live Chat (during working hours Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm).
- Online on the Tenant Portal
- Email
- [Facebook Messenger](#) (during working hours Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm).
- Phone
- Letter
- Telling us in person when we visit your home or neighbourhood

Upon receiving a request, we will arrange an appointment for as soon as possible, at a time that suits the customer. We offer full day, morning, or afternoon time slots and can take the school run into account. An appointment to assess the cause of the damp and mould may be needed before works can begin.

## What we will do

To ensure opportunities are not missed, all reports of damp and mould will be dealt with on an individual basis with no assumptions being made about the cause.

Following a report, we will investigate to determine the cause of damp and mould and carry out repairs in accordance with the tenancy agreement and repairs standard.

We will diagnose the cause of damp correctly and deliver effective solutions based on cause of the damp not just the symptom.

We will keep customers' informed about any investigation findings including being clear about the possible causes of damp, any recommended solutions, necessary remedial works, or actions and the estimated timescales to complete.

For planned works, we will take a risk based approach, using the knowledge we hold about properties of concern to inform our programme going forward. We will learn from customer feedback and complaints, to ensure we strengthen our approach when things go wrong.

We will promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to manage damp and mould.

If it is unsafe for the customer to remain in a property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made using our Decant Policy and procedure.

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## Access

We take health and wellbeing seriously and expect our customers to allow access to properties so that we can resolve issues that pose a risk to them. It is important that customers allow our operatives to access to properties in order to rectify damp and mould. If we are unable to access a home to carry out works, we will implement our No Access - Enforcement Policy which can be found on our website.

## Performance Measures and Customer Voice

Our response to damp and mould sits within our repairs service. We measure our response times for damp and mould requests and report this performance to Great Places executive team and our Board along with the following:

- overall customer satisfaction with the service.
- appointments made and kept.
- jobs completed, right first time.
- emergency and routine job completion times.

Customers are at the heart of our service. The quality of our services will be assessed through tenant satisfaction measures which include repairs, safety checks, and complaints information. The Regulator requires us to collect this information and make the results available to our customers.

We also monitor customer satisfaction through customer feedback, complaints, compliments, the customer scrutiny panel, customer satisfaction surveys and by sending all customers who have a repair a text inviting feedback. This feedback is used to improve our services.

## Decoration of the home

Customers are responsible for decorating inside the property and keeping it in good order. Some damp and mould repairs may affect the decoration of the home. If this happens the area will be made good following the repair. This does not apply to access panels, hatches, or ducting covered with wallpaper, tiles, carpet, wood, laminate or other finishes. In these circumstances customers will be advised before work is started.

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## Responsibility of this policy

The Director of Repairs is responsible for this policy. Our in house repairs service will deliver in line with this policy supported by a number of partners who will help us with specialist skills. These include, damp proof works, major structural issues and drainage work, and also to provide support in times of increased demand.

## Equality & Diversity

We are committed to making sure our services are open and clear to everyone and treat everyone with dignity respect and fairness. We will give appropriate consideration of the needs of specific customers' including any vulnerabilities and support they may need.

We can also help customers who are experiencing difficulties managing the cost of living, to find the right support for them.

## Conduct

Customer service is important to us. Our operatives will be skilled and trained to deliver work of an excellent quality in a friendly, helpful and professional way. We will make sure our operatives have the right tools and equipment to do the job. To give you the right service, we ask that our operatives are able to work safely, in line with our Service with Respect Policy which can be found on our website.

## Links to related policies, strategies, and procedures

- Repairs Strategy
- Repairs Policy
- Procurement Strategy
- Customer Voice Strategy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy
- Service with Respect Policy
- Access Policy Statement

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| <b>Policy approval date:</b>            | 27/07/23                              |
| <b>Equality impact assessment date:</b> | 05/05/2023                            |
| <b>Policy review date:</b>              | 27/07/26<br>Annual light touch review |

# Damp and Mould Policy



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| <b>Lead team:</b>   | Sustainable Assets – Repairs Team           |
| <b>Level of authorisation required:</b>                                 | Directors                                   |
| <b>Please record all authorisation meetings, with dates and details</b> | Initial draft circulated to HoS V1 27/04/23 |