



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust

The Trust

Damp & Mould
Policy

Version number: 1

Effective Date: 10th March
2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. SCOPE 1

2. INTRODUCTION..... 1

3. AIM..... 2

4. PREVENTION 3

5. ACTION 3

6. SUPPORT..... 4

7. RESPONSIBILITIES..... 4

8. MONITORING & EVALUATION 5

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS..... 5

10. DATA PROTECTION..... 6

11. FUTURE REVIEWS 6

12. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS..... 6

13. POLICY INFORMATION 1

1. SCOPE

1.1 This Policy outlines how Peaks and Plains (the Trust) will manage reports, communication and associated works associated with damp, mould, and condensation, ensuring that customers are dealt with fairly and consistently.

1.2 Policy statement

1.3 *“We do everything we reasonably can to make sure our residents stay safe, healthy, and well in their homes. Damp and mould are issues which can have a serious impact on the health and well-being of our residents, and cause damage to homes”.*

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. The Trust aims to provide safe and warm homes to all our customers. However, we acknowledge that sometimes things can go wrong, and damp, mould and condensation issues may occur for various reasons. This policy outlines what we will do to put things right.

2.2 Legal and Regulatory Obligations

The Damp and Mould Policy will enable the Trust to meet its legal and regulatory requirements which include;

- **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 – section 11**
- **Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018**
- **Decent Homes Standard 2006**
- **Regulator of Social Housing’s “Home Standard”**

2.3 Types of damp

The types of damp covered by the policy.

a) Rising Damp

The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.

b) 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. The cause can be the result of, for example:

- Water ingress due to defective or poor original design/workmanship of the structure.
- Defective components for example roof coverings, external wall doors and windows.
- Defective or blocked rainwater gutters and pipes.
- Defective or leaking internal waste pipes, hot and cold water and heating systems
- Flooding due to burst pipes.

c) Condensation Damp

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air meets a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. This can take two main forms:

- Surface condensation arising when the inner surface of the structure is cooler than the room air.
- Condensation inside the structure (interstitial) where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials (e.g. walls), which then condenses when it reaches colder conditions within the structure.

The conditions that can increase the risk of condensation are:

- Inadequate ventilation e.g., natural opening windows and trickle/background vents and mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Inadequate heating e.g., undersized boilers and radiators, draught stripping
- Inadequate thermal insulation. e.g., Missing or defective wall and loft insulation
- High humidity e.g., presence of rising and penetrating damp.
- Poor building design and construction – specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.

Conditions that can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation – not opening windows, blocking up vents, not turning on extract fans, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Poor heating – not heating the house which can be a result of fuel poverty
- Defective insulation –dislodged insulation in lofts.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the house can contribute to this.
- Overcrowding.

Mould is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces. This is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present.

3. AIM

3.1 The policy aims to assist in the delivery of a damp, mould and condensation service that will be able to:

- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp including, managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Comply with statutory requirements and good practice.
- Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.

4. PREVENTION

- 4.1 The Trust will take action to identify homes that have, or may be at risk of developing, problems with damp and mould. The Trust will use data on our customers and homes to help us understand the risk profile in relation to damp and mould.
- 4.2 The Trust will seek to mitigate any increased risks of damp and mould arising as a result of our work to decarbonise our homes.
- 4.3 When a property becomes vacant, and prior to re-letting, the Trust will seek to identify and remedy any issues which may cause damp. This may include ensuring doors and windows are serviceable and can effectively ventilate the property, ensuring extractor fans are working well, as well as applying mould treatments where necessary.
- 4.4 The Trust will provide information on our website, to raise awareness about the causes of damp and mould. This will include details about how everyday activities in the home can generate condensation and what customers can do to help prevent damp through, for instance, ventilation, controlling the build-up of moisture and adequate heating. Where there is mould growth, we will provide advice on how this should be treated.
- 4.5 The Trust staff and contractors will have the skills and knowledge to identify signs of damp and mould and provide guidance to customers on how to manage the problem. Staff will be encouraged to look out for signs whenever they visit a customer's home.

5. ACTION

- 5.1 Customers are required to report any problems to the Trust as soon as possible after noticing a problem. When the Trust receive a report, a representative will attend the property to determine the cause and seek a resolution. In some cases, they may need to further diagnose the problem to determine whether it is due to a repair issue for which we are responsible. Sometimes finding out what's causing damp and mould isn't always straightforward and could be due to a combination of factors. Any repairs that are required to be carried out will be dealt with in accordance with our Repairs Policy and repairs service standard.
- 5.2 Where damp is because of condensation, the Trust will work with our residents to take appropriate measures to prevent the damp and mould occurring. This might include guidance about how to control moisture levels or increase ventilation or heating, so that damp levels are kept low. Where the Trust provide such guidance, it is important that customers adhere to it and do not take actions that could accentuate any problems e.g. by turning off ventilation systems or sealing over air vents. This guidance will be noted on our records for future reference.
- 5.3 When a particularly severe or recurring damp or mould issue is identified the Trust will undertake a comprehensive risk assessment which might result in a range of actions to support the customer/s depending on their circumstances, including providing and in some cases funding dehumidifiers, the installation of positive pressure, mechanical or

passive ventilation systems, dry lining walls or applying mould resistant coverings, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.

- 5.4 The Trust will keep customers informed of any property inspections, diagnosis of issues and the timetabling of works, where these are required. This includes explaining to them why work might be needed and what work might be done. If any changes to the programme of works are needed, the Trust will keep them informed. Where work is not required, residents will be informed, and the Trust will explain the reason why no further work is needed and the steps they should take.
- 5.5 For more complex cases, and especially where more intrusive building work is required and/or there is a serious health risk to the customer or a member of their household, the Trust may require them to move out of their home either on a temporary or permanent basis. The Trust will consider the individual circumstances of the customer. The Trust will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out at the property to ensure it is suitable for the customer to return to.
- 5.6 Our tenancy (and leasehold) agreements require customers to allow the Trust (including appointed contractors) access to their home to carry out works at the agreed appointment time. If the Trust are unable to gain access and the integrity of the property, its fabric and/or the safety of the customer or those in the vicinity of the property is compromised, the Trust will take appropriate action. For example, this may include but is not limited to obtaining an injunction for access.

6. SUPPORT

- 6.1 The Trust will give customers advice on how to prevent damp and what they should do to remove mould. However, the Trust recognise that not every resident will be able to resolve damp and mould themselves. We will provide appropriate support in such cases in relation to the specific circumstances and the individual customer's needs.
- 6.2 The Trust know that some customers cannot afford to heat their homes adequately due to their income levels. The Trust will work with customers to ensure that they are receiving the income to which they are entitled.
- 6.3 Where homes are overcrowded humidity will tend to be higher and this increases the likelihood of condensation. The Trust will work with the customer and explore solutions which may include the customer moving to a more suitable home if this is available and appropriate.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 7.1 The Board and Executive team have overall responsibility for ensuring that the Trust has the relevant policies in place and ensuring that they are adhered to.
- 7.2 The Head of Assets & Compliance has overall responsibility for the policy, ensuring that it is fully implemented.

- 7.3 The Head of Repairs is responsible for:
- The effective implementation and delivery of the policy
 - Monitoring the performance and delivery
 - Reviewing the policy.
- 7.4 The Maintenance Manager (Repairs) & Asset Manager are responsible for:
- Developing the processes and procedures that are in line with the policy.
 - Ensure that the policy aims are adhered to.
- 7.5 The Tenants are responsible for:
- Regularly checking for damp and immediately reporting it to the Trust, evidence of rising and penetrating damp and any faulty equipment that will hamper the management and control of damp and condensation (faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, lack of heating etc.) in accordance with the tenancy agreement conditions.
 - Regularly checking for mould and to clean signs of mould as soon as they are discovered. Manage condensation damp following the Trust's guidance.
- 7.6 The Leaseholder is responsible for:
- Understanding and assessing any form of damp and/or mould present within the property.
 - Managing and maintaining their property including damp and condensation in accordance with their lease agreement.
 - Commissioning surveys and reports to identify and confirm cause of damp.
 - If the damp issue is related to the structure or fabric of the building, then this will be the responsibility of the Trust.
- 7.7 All PPHT staff have a responsibility when visiting any property to look for, and report any signs of damp and mould.

8. MONITORING & EVALUATION

- 8.1 Damp, mould & condensation performance will be closely monitored and shared with respective areas and the Trusts Leadership team monthly. A bi-annual summary review of the Trusts position will be presented to the Executive Team and resident led Challenge Group. An annual report on performance will be presented to the Trust's Board.

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Trust recognise and value the diversity of our communities. The Trust aim to reduce barriers to ensure that everyone has equal access to our services and are committed to treating everyone fairly, complying with all relevant legislation under the Equality Act 2010.
- 9.2 The Trust will offer practical support for customers who may otherwise find it difficult to access our services or adhere to customer responsibilities.

9.3 An EIA has been undertaken and any issues have been addressed as part of this documentation.

10. DATA PROTECTION

10.1 The Trust recognizes that confidentiality is important to customers and will ensure all performance reporting information is anonymized and is compliant with GDPR good practice.

11. FUTURE REVIEWS

11.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner in response to a change in regulation/legislation, feedback from audit recommendations or emerging best practice.

12. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents.

- Asset Management Strategy
- Repairs Policy
- Repairs Service Standard
- Leaseholder Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Decant Policy

POLICY INFORMATION

Policy Statement Name:	Damp & Mould Policy
Status:	FINAL
Approved by:	EMT
Drafted By:	Simon Williams, Head of Repairs
Date approved:	10 th March 2023
Next Review Date:	10 th March 2026