

Our approach to managing Damp and Mould referrals

Tenant and Leaseholder Panel

Tuesday 22 October 2024

Mandy Dunstan - Interim Head of Repairs

Introduction

What is Damp & Mould & How we investigate cases





DAMP & MOULD


HINTS & TIPS

Damp can cause mould on walls, windows and furniture.

Damp and cold homes encourage the growth of mould which can increase the risk of respiratory illnesses.

- 

Condensation created by high levels of moisture in the air
- 

Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- 

Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing

Our Staffing Structure

- Damp & Mould Manager
- Surveyors x5
- Resident Liaison Officer
- Senior Administrator
- 2 x Admin Officers



Increasing Awareness

- Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Reports on Damp & Mould – Published October 2021 and January 2023: These reports requested self-assessment against recommendations
- Coroners Verdict linked to death of Awaab Ishak – Introduction of Awabb’s Law imminent
- ITV ‘homes fitness’ Campaign 2022 onwards– Daniel Hewitt
- Social Media Campaigns – notably Kwago Tweneboa
- Housing Regulator – Decent Homes, HHSRS & TSM’s (condition of home)

Housing
Ombudsman Service



Self Assessment against Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Recommendations

Responsibility	Action, we have taken
Develop a Policy for the management of Damp and Mould	Croydon Condensation, Damp and Mould Policy published on our website - Our revised policy incorporates changes following the recommendations contained within Awaab's Law, which we expect to come into operation early in 2025, and the wider Social Housing (Regulations) Act 2023.
Develop a process and procedure that meets the policy commitments	Service standard offers stage 1 within 6 working days and stage 2 surveys for complex cases - 3 - month and 6-month checks
Align work priorities to manage hazards identified under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS),	These works are actioned as emergencies within 24 hours
Develop a proactive holistic approach	Increased our resources , Damp and Mould team headed up by Damp and Mould Manager , 5 technical surveyors , Specialist contractors and administration support
Implement a data driven, risk-based approach with respect to damp and mould.	Weekly reports track reactive work demand , data is used to review planned programmes and block issues
Have trained staff that know damp and mould	Resourced a dedicated technical damp and mould team , all operational staff given damp and mould technical and awareness training
Have an effective approach to managing leaks	We are working with our contractors to develop robust leak management process and task team approach to complex leaks
Use voids to carry out preventative works	All voids are inspected for leaks and damp and mould and works delivered to rectify pre lets

Self Assessment Part 2 - support tenants

Responsibility	Action, we have taken
Decant approach to uninhabitable properties	Decant policy in place, decant service provided by Wates provides short term and long term temporary accommodation with disturbance offer
Make sure we treat residents reporting damp and mould with respect and empathy.	Dedicated resident liaison officer in the damp and mould team to provide support for families while works are being delivered
Share regular communication about preventing damp and mould to our tenants	Website update to reflect advice and support for tenants to manage the risks of damp and mould, articles published in Open House to raise awareness and offer access to support
Provide support for tenants where damp and mould are occurring from cost-of-living crisis or overcrowding.	Tenancy teams offer support and advice for families to access financial advice and housing needs assessments
Deliver a responsive complaints service that resolves concerns and issues and have a robust and effective approach to managing disrepair claims	Corporate complaints policy in place, dedicated complaints team and , dedicated disrepair team to manage resolution and works
Listen to lived experience and learn from the feedback	Focus groups held with tenants who have experienced damp and mould to gain insight and lessons learnt
Consider how to make homes fit for modern living	Stock condition survey in progress will inform asset management strategy and future investment programmes
Give a joined-up service approach and clear communication and updates on the progress of works and wider solutions	Dedicated damp and mould team as first point of contact for case queries and support

Case Work 2023/24 and 2024 to date

Cases reported April 2023 - March 2024	
Total cases	1,904
Stage 1 resolved	768
Stage 2 resolved	723
Spend in year	£4.3 million
Carry over cases	201

Case reported April 2024- Sept 2024 (6 months)	
Total cases	2,298
Stage 1	1,484
Stage 2	814
Spend to date	£ 2 million

- Reported cases continue to rise – possibly due to greater awareness through media
- Learning from 2023/24 - we expect 20% of stage 1 cases to become stage 2 cases
- Data from 23/24 has been used for resource planning for 2024/25; additional staff recruited – 2 x surveyors and 1 x admin resource. Our contractors (Mears and Wates) have also recruited additional staff and sub-contractors to undertake repairs.
- ‘Heat Map’ reports now available to identify blocks or properties where high instances of D&M cases reported – supports proactive response

Learning from Complaints

20 stage 1 complaints received April - September 2024

Lessons Learnt and emerging trends:

Complaint theme	Action taken to improve service
Delays in the completion of stage 2 inspections	Recruit 2 x surveyors; Increased capacity for 10 additional inspections per day.
No Access - Missed appointments	This is a key focus for the service. We have access to contractor systems so we can confirm appointments with contacting residents which reduces no access and aborted visits.
Poor Quality of Work	Physical post inspections undertaken and KPI monitored at operational core group meeting.

Case reported March 2024, works completed July 2024

Mitcham Road- before photos



Mitcham Road- after photos

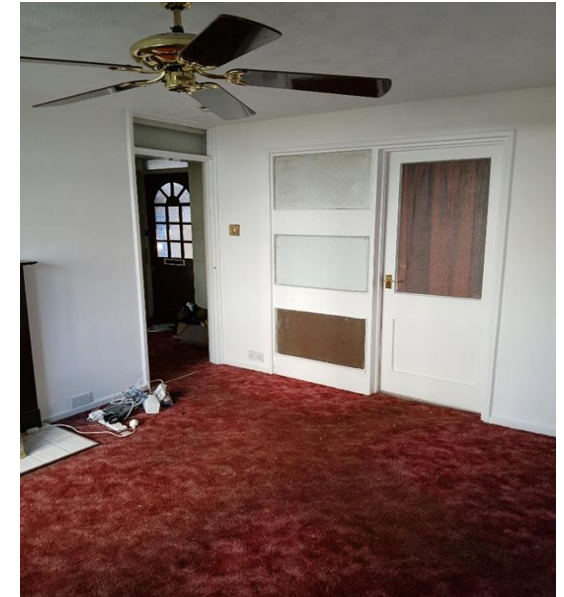


Case Reported July 2024 - Works Completed Oct 2024

Dering Road- before photos



Dering Road- after photos



Wider Initiatives 2024

- Switchee Pilot – installation of 300 Switchee smart thermostats in Qtr 4. Using ‘Heat Map’ data to target devices in existing homes. We will also install 30 devices in ‘new build’ homes
- What is a Switchee device?
 - Smart device (like a Hive device);
 - Monitors use of heating, hot water and humidity levels in the home
 - It helps identify issues like condensation, suspected damp and mould
 - The data received can help us proactively contact residents and reduce instances of D&M in the home; sign-post for energy advice and wider benefits.



Wider Initiatives 2024

- Damp & Mould Training – Specialist trainer undertaking D&M training with all staff who visit resident homes (technical 2 day course) and 1 day course for contact centre/admin staff to support accurate ‘triage’ of cases.
- Translation of key documents and arranging for translators to be available during site visits, if required.
- Focus Group – Following our Focus Groups in February/March 2024, we are arranging further Focus Group meetings in November 2024. Residents who have ‘lived experience’ of our service during 2024 will be invited to attend.
- Introduction of Cyclical service programmes including:
 - Roof and rainwater component replacements
 - Gutter clearance
 - Internal and external insulation works,
 - Boiler installation programme – boilers with A rating and 10 year warranty
 - Ventilation improvements

THANK YOU

Any Questions