

POLICY ON DAMP AND MOULD MANAGEMENT

This policy outlines Slough Borough Council's approach to managing and resolving issues of damp and mould in its homes, focusing on compliance with Awaab's Law and the associated government guidance and the Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards.

1. Policy at a Glance

The Council is committed to providing excellent customer service and recognises that timely, high-quality repairs are a priority for all tenants. This document is based on the statutory requirements of Awaab's Law (Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025), the Housing Act 2004, and the Decent Homes Standard.

The policy explains the mandatory timeframes and procedures the Council must follow to manage the investigation and treatment of damp and mould in its homes and communal areas. The Council will review this policy every 3 years and will revise it as guidance and legislation evolve.

2. Policy Aims and Objectives

This policy formalises the Council's approach to damp and mould, setting out the service levels that tenants can expect to receive.

- **Tenant Safety and Quality:** The Council will ensure compliance with the RSH Safety and Quality Standard by maintaining properties to provide safe and high-quality homes and services to tenants, specifically by tackling damp and mould.
- **Transparency and Responsiveness :** The Council aims to meet the RSH Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TIA) Standard by fostering respect for and responsiveness to tenants' needs. This includes ensuring effective and timely communication, robust record keeping, and making the service accountable.
- The Council prioritises cases of damp and mould due to their serious potential impact on the health and safety of tenants, especially vulnerable groups.
- The Council will comply with the Housing Act 2004, ensuring all homes are free from dangerous Category 1 hazards.
- Awaab's Law mandates specific, strict timescales for social landlords to respond to and remedy reports of damp and mould. This policy ensures the Council's governance, oversight, and accountability structures are in place to apply these requirements consistently and effectively.
- The Council operates a 'zero tolerance' approach to damp and mould, actively seeking urgent resolution where it is found. In accordance with government guidance, the Council does not assume that damp and mould are the fault of the household.
- The Council will work together with tenants to prevent and remove damp and mould in their homes.

- The Council will effectively communicate with tenants reporting damp and mould.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the Council's tenants and covers all homes and communal areas where the Council delivers a repairs, maintenance, and investment service. People who are not Council tenants are outside the scope of this policy.

Leaseholders are not tenants and different rules apply, but where the Council is responsible for the building structure or shared areas (i.e. entrances, communal stairwells, corridors and landings) it will act to address damp and mould. Leaseholders can raise concerns through the Council's complaints process where appropriate.

Leaseholders

The Council acknowledges that leaseholders are not social housing tenants and due to this, statutory duties relating to damp and mould do not generally apply in the same way. Leaseholders are responsible for the interior of their homes, unless the issue is caused by structural or communal defects. The Council is responsible for the structure and communal areas. Once notified, the Council will comply with the relevant legal obligations and address issues arising from those elements. If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily, the Council's complaints process may be used by the leaseholder to make a formal complaint and then progressed to the Housing Ombudsman if required.

4. Awaab's Law: Mandatory Repair Timeframes

The Council must adhere to the following statutory timeframes for investigating and completing repairs for hazards, relating to damp and mould, that pose a risk to tenant's health or safety, running from the date the hazard was first reported:

Hazard Level due to damp and mould (Based on Initial Report)	Investigation Deadline (since becoming aware of the hazard)
Emergency Hazard (High Risk)	Investigation within 24 hours
Significant Hazards (lower risk)	Investigation within ten working days

Once the investigation has confirmed the presence of a statutory hazard due to damp and mould (Category 1 or Category 2 under Housing Health and Safety Rating System) or identified an urgent case, due to tenant vulnerability), the Council commits to completing the repair within the following deadlines, which run from the date the damp and mould was first reported:

Hazard Type due to damp and mould (Confirmed by Investigation)	Completion Deadline
Emergency Hazard	Works to begin within 24 hours
Significant Hazards	Begin preventative works within five working days from the conclusion of the investigation
Category 2 Hazard (Less Serious Risk)	Complete all necessary works within four calendar weeks (28 working days).

Exceptions: If the completion deadline cannot be met for a valid reason (e.g., waiting for specialist parts, lack of access), the Council will immediately inform the tenant, provide a revised, reasonable timeframe for completion, and record the reason and new deadline, physically starting the work within 12 weeks. Effective communication with the resident about any potential delay is mandatory.

5. Damp and Mould Commitments and Principles

All residents should live in a safe, warm, and secure home that is well maintained. The Council will tackle the underlying causes of damp and mould, such as structural issues or inadequate ventilation, proactively.

5.1 Health and Safety Priority

- The Council will immediately remove mould to address the health risk to tenants, utilising a rapid-response mould removal and treatment team.
- In cases where a Category 1 Hazard is so severe it is unsafe for the tenants to remain in their home; the Council will provide suitable alternative accommodation (decanting) until the risk has been resolved. Issues concerning tenant vulnerability will be central to this decision-making.
- Vulnerable tenants and household members will be prioritised for response and intervention.

5.2 Response and Diagnosis

- All reports of damp and mould will be managed by a dedicated and specialist team.
- A triage inspection of the home will be made within three working days of the report.
- A mould wash treatment will be carried out within five working days of the inspection for significant hazards and 24 hours for emergency hazards. A follow-up inspection will be undertaken within three months from the date of the mould wash to check for recurrence.

- For recurring cases of damp and mould, preventative measures will be discussed with the tenant and considered to address the underlying cause

5.3 Communication

- Tenants will be kept informed about the steps and timeframes for work in a timely and sympathetic way.
- Following the conclusion of an investigation, a written summary of findings will be issued within three working days. This written communication is key to meeting TIA requirements.
- A dedicated surveyor will be allocated to case-manage treatment where persistent damp occurs, acting as a single point of contact to ensure continuous and effective communication.
- The Council will ensure to inform and explain tenants of the nature of damp and mould treatments, which are being performed in their homes.
- The Council will work closely with tenants to ensure that access is gained to the property to investigate and treat damp and mould hazards within statutory timelines and is compliant with Awaab's law.
- In emergency hazards, the Council may take enforcement action to gain access to remedy damp and mould.
- The Council will provide information to the tenant, at the beginning of new tenancies, on how to actively reduce the risk of damp and mould within their properties.

6. Role Responsibilities

The head of Repairs, Maintenance and Investment will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy, the development of any procedures necessary to support this policy and ensuring that staff are constantly working to meet the required standards.

7. Staff Training

Relevant staff, as identified by the Head of Property, will attend mandatory training to ensure the Council delivers a professional, competent, and compassionate service in line with this policy and the RSH TIA Standard.

- Vulnerability and Communication: Training will include modules on understanding vulnerable people, identifying health risks, and effective, empathetic communication.
- Technical Aspects: Training will cover the technical aspects of damp and mould, including root cause diagnosis, the correct application of remedial treatments, and knowledge of the HHSRS.
- Assessment: The effectiveness of all training delivered will be formally assessed to ensure it translates into improved frontline service delivery.

8. Record Keeping (Knowledge and Information Management - KIM)

In line with the Housing Ombudsman's guidance on Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) and the RSH TIA Standard, the Council will maintain a single, comprehensive, and accurate record for every damp and mould case.

This record must include all reports, inspections, investigations, correspondence (including the written summary of findings), contractor visits, actions taken, decant arrangements, and reasons for any timeline extensions. This approach ensures information is easily accessible to all relevant staff, enabling effective case management, continuity of service, and clear accountability for compliance.

9. Equalities Undertaking

The Council is committed to meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

- Recording Characteristics: Staff will record whether a tenant or household member has a protected characteristic which may be impacted by damp and mould or which may affect their ability to access the service.
- Adjusting Service: The Council will ensure it makes reasonable adjustments to its service delivery, communication methods, and scheduling to meet the specific needs of individuals with protected characteristics, thereby guaranteeing fair access and outcomes.
- The Council will provide accessible versions of this policy on request.

10. Governance and Monitoring (TIA)

The Council is committed to ensuring robust governance, quality assurance, and transparency to maintain sustained compliance with Awaab's Law and the RSH TIA Standard.

- Performance Monitoring: Performance against the mandatory timeframes and service commitments will be rigorously monitored using Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- Accountability and Scrutiny: Performance against targets will be regularly reported to the Resident Board. Furthermore, key performance information relating to damp and mould cases and compliance with statutory timescales will be published openly to allow for tenant and public scrutiny, enhancing accountability as required by the TIA standard.
- Training and Review: An annual review will be undertaken to incorporate legislative requirements and best practice developments, using learning from previous cases and complaints to continuously improve service delivery.

11. Complaints

If the tenant believes the Council is not following this policy, the form of redress is the Council's complaint.

Tenants can raise a complaint via the [housing services form](#) online, phoning 01753 475111 and choosing option 3 or in person at one of the Council's Community Hubs.

The Council will adhere to Slough Borough Council's Tenant and Leaseholder Complaints Policy and follow the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code.

12. Definitions

Term	Definition
Damp	The presence of excess moisture in a building, typically resulting from either condensation, penetrating damp, or rising damp.
Mould	A growth appearing as fuzzy or slimy patches, requiring careful removal.
Landlord (or social landlord)	Slough Borough Council.
Tenants	A person who has signed a tenancy agreement to live in or rent social housing, owned by Slough Borough Council.
Vulnerable (or vulnerability)	A tenant with characteristics that mean they are less able to cope with a situation which may impact on their health, safety, or wellbeing.
Emergency Hazard	A hazard that poses an imminent and significant risk of harm or is having a material impact on a tenant's health.
Significant Hazard	A hazard that poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of a social home.
Awaab's Law	Statutory requirements mandating landlords comply with new, strict timeframes for addressing reported hazards, particularly damp and mould.
Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer	Mandatory standards set by the Regulator

Standards	of Social Housing, including the Safety and Quality Standard and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability (TIA) Standard.
Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)	A UK risk assessment tool used by local authorities to check potential health and safety hazards in residential properties, covering 29 categories like damp, cold, falls, fire and electrical issues.
Decent Homes Standard	The UK government's minimum quality benchmark for social housing, ensuring homes are safe, warm, well-maintained.