

CONDENSATION, DAMP AND MOULD POLICY 2023

Table of Contents

1. Policy statement	2
2. Policy aims	3
3. Scope	3
4. Legislation	3
5. Causes and definitions	4
Damp	4
Condensation damp.....	5
Rising damp	5
Penetrative damp	6
Mould.....	6
6. TCH Responsibilities	6
Prevention	7
Diagnosis.....	7
Improvement works.....	7
Communication.....	8
Relets and Mutual Exchanges.....	8
Monitoring cases of condensation, damp and mould	9
7. Budget	9
8. Equalities statement	9
9. Resident Influence	9
10. Policy review period	9
11. Related documents	9

1. Policy statement

Town and Country Housing (TCH) recognises that condensation, damp and mould cases can cause high levels of distress for residents. Cases can be complex and difficult to

diagnose. This policy is intended to provide a clear and consistent approach to effectively deal with condensation, damp and mould and its causes.

TCH is committed to delivering a proactive approach to tackling condensation, damp and mould. We will work with residents to ensure that properties are dry and warm. This policy ensures that TCH delivers a high standard of service to address and prevent cases of condensation, damp, and mould.

2. Policy aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that residents live in a safe and healthy environment and have easy and accessible ways to report cases of condensation, damp, and mould.
- Ensure a consistent and excellent service in response to all reports of condensation, damp, and mould.
- Ensure empathetic and timely communication with residents and minimise any distress caused by condensation, damp and mould.
- Maintain the fabric of homes and ensure that a data-driven preventative approach is applied to tackle the risk of condensation, damp and mould in the stock portfolio.
- Embed a working culture where all colleagues are trained to see safety as their responsibility and do not blame lifestyle for condensation, damp and mould.

3. Scope

This policy covers:

- The minimum legal and regulatory standards to which TCH must maintain properties.
- The definitions and causes of condensation, damp and mould that TCH uses to deal with damp and mould.
- TCH's approach to addressing the causes of condensation, damp and mould.
- TCH's responsibility to provide a prompt, excellent service in responding to condensation, damp and mould including diagnosis, remedial work, communication and monitoring cases.
- TCH's responsibility to manage condensation, damp and mould.
- TCH's responsibility to support those residents who choose to manage condensation, damp and mould themselves.

4. Legislation

The current **Decent Homes Standard** provides a minimum expectation for the condition of homes. Under the Standard, landlords must ensure that properties:

- Meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing, including keeping properties free of serious hazards.

- Be in a reasonable state of repair.
- Have reasonably modern facilities and services.
- Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort.

Please see the Decent Homes Standard for definitions of the above. The Standard is currently under review by the government.

The **Social Housing Regulation Bill 2022** will require landlords to investigate and fix damp and mould in their properties within specified timeframes.

Under the **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985**, TCH is responsible for:

- Maintaining the structure of the property and keeping it in good repair
- Keeping installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation in good repair and proper working order.

The **Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018** amended the 1985 Act. It states that landlords must ensure that homes are 'fit for human habitation'. The Act does not define 'fit for human habitation', but landlords are considered responsible for repairs, freedom from damp, ventilation, water supply, drainage and sanitary conveniences, facilities for the preparation of and cooking of food, and the disposal of wastewater.

Other relevant pieces of legislation are:

- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- The Housing Act 2004 (including the Housing Health and Safety Ratings System [HHSRS])
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Regulatory Standards (Governance and Financial Viability and Home Standards)
- Building Safety Act 2022

5. Causes and definitions

Damp

There are three main types of damp that affect our properties: condensation damp, rising damp and penetrative damp. Damp can be caused by a variety of factors and there can be more than one type of dampness present at any one time.

Condensation damp

Condensation occurs when warm moisture in the air comes into contact with cold surfaces, or when levels of humidity inside are too high. Condensation can take the form of:

- Surface condensation
- Condensation inside a structure where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials such as walls, which then condenses when it cools down.

Condensation can be caused by:

- Poor heating,
- Poor ventilation,
- Poor insulation,
- High humidity,
- Poor building design,
- Overcrowding.



Rising damp

Rising damp occurs when moisture moves up from the ground through the structure of the building through capillary action.

The presence of rising damp can create or exacerbate a condensation problem.



Penetrative damp

Penetrative damp is caused by water penetrating the external or internal structure of the building. It can cause damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structures. This kind of damp includes water that enters the property through:

- Defective design and work on the structure of the property,
- Defective components including the roof, doors and windows,
- Defective water drainage systems,
- Leaking internal water pipes.

The presence of penetrative damp can create or exacerbate a condensation problem.



Mould

Mould develops in damp conditions and grows on damp surfaces. Mould can produce allergens, irritants and toxic substances that can cause health problems.



6. TCH Responsibilities

Prevention

TCH will actively encourage residents to report condensation, damp and mould. [Your Home - Town & Country Housing \(tch.org.uk\)](http://Your Home - Town & Country Housing (tch.org.uk))

TCH aims to prevent condensation, damp and mould issues by developing and acquiring housing that allows residents to occupy their homes comfortably, without experiencing condensation and damp.

TCH will actively prevent damp in our housing stock and take action to address the range of causes of condensation, damp and mould. This includes addressing overcrowding, updating insulation and ventilation, and signposting residents for assistance with their heating costs. We will also work towards introducing a programme for the service and testing of ventilation equipment in individual homes.

TCH will use stock condition surveys and customer information to ensure a data-driven, risk-based approach to condensation, damp and mould. We will use data to understand where there is a recurring problem, caused either by the property archetype, household composition, property defects or a combination of all three. TCH will target preventative remedial work where trends and causes are identified.

We will align our preventative approach with our overall asset management strategy. This sets out our planned approach to improving energy efficiency across our stock, including bringing all properties up to EPC Band C by 2030.

All staff will be provided with training to recognise condensation, damp and mould, related issues and causes. Staff have a responsibility to report all signs of condensation, damp and mould, follow record keeping procedures, and communicate with the necessary internal teams as detailed in the procedure. Contractors will report dampness if they find it in on a visit to a property for any reason, or if they find it as part of their repair work, for example in concealed areas.

Diagnosis

TCH will carry out investigations of all condensation, damp and mould reports and correctly diagnose the cause of damp. TCH will use an independent surveyor if the results of its internal investigations are unclear, and it will take initial action on any recommendations within 10 working days. This includes instructing contractors to complete work or writing to the resident to explain what will be done.

TCH will use the Damp and Mould Procedure to determine the category of damp in each case and action will be based on severity.

Improvement works

TCH surveyors will write to the resident following any visit about condensation, damp and mould. Where remedial works are necessary, the surveyor will provide details of what works will be required.

Remedial works include but are not limited to mould treatment works.

We will complete condensation, damp, and mould repairs within 20 working days and prioritise works based on risk. Please refer to the Repairs Policy for further guidance.

Improvement works will be carried out on a case-by-case basis to assist in the prevention, management and control of condensation including the installation of mechanical extractor fans, fresh air vents and insulation.

Leaseholders and Shared Owners are responsible for their own property as per individual lease agreements. If the issue is in a communal area or is a structural building defect, we are responsible for the repairs in line with the corresponding lease. We will provide advice to Leaseholders and Shared Owners where requested.

Where extensive works are required, TCH will consider these on a case-by-case basis. If it is appropriate, residents will be offered temporary accommodation while work is undertaken, particularly if there is a vulnerable member of the household.

TCH will prioritise urgent cases based on risk and will monitor these through to completion.

Sometimes we identify homes that may be part of a regeneration or that would be sold. Where this happens, we will make sure that residents do not receive a poorer standard of service or lower living conditions. We do this by treating these homes as we treat all homes. We will make sure all repairs reported or data analysis that pinpoints an issue will be investigated and dealt with including damp and mould.

Communication

TCH will respond to resident enquiries about condensation, damp and mould within 10 working days. All staff will be empathetic, informative and solution-focussed when communicating with residents about damp and mould.

Staff and contractors will attend arranged appointments. If an appointment is likely to be missed for unforeseen reasons, the resident will be informed as soon as possible, and the appointment will be rearranged.

Where residents choose to manage condensation in their own home, staff will provide clear advice or signpost to further support which can be found on our website here: [Reducing damp, mould and condensation in your home - Town & Country Housing \(tch.org.uk\)](https://tch.org.uk). This may include a referral to support teams, including the Money Support Team and Tenancy Sustainment Team Your Home <https://tch.org.uk/your-home/#support-and-advice-section>

TCH teams and departments will communicate effectively internally to ensure a comprehensive approach to tackling condensation, damp and mould. The Head of Contracts & Compliance will have overall responsibility for monitoring the outcomes of remedial intervention.

All staff will recognise when it is necessary to follow the Complaints Policy in dealing with condensation, damp and mould. We will make every effort to resolve the complaint directly with our residents, whilst recognising and supporting their right to contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage. All staff will follow record keeping procedures to ensure that complaints are handled effectively.

Claims for compensation as a consequence of failing to implement this policy will be considered on a case-by-case basis, in accordance with the Compensation Policy.

Relets and Mutual Exchanges

We will make reasonable checks and do any works required prior to relet /exchange. We will give advice at the start of a tenancy about preventing condensation and contacting us immediately if any concerns about mould developing. We will check previous records as part of the approval process and where there have been previous incidents we will ensure these have been resolved.

Monitoring cases of condensation, damp and mould

TCH will monitor open and closed condensation, damp and mould cases to ensure that problems do not persist and that interventions are concluded.

Volumes of damp and mould cases will be reported weekly to our Executive Management Team.

7. Budget

TCH will ensure there is sufficient budget to treat damp and mould and carry out associated remedial repairs. Budget provision will also be made to ensure all staff receive training relevant to their role, some of which will be mandatory.

8. Equalities statement

This policy will be implemented in accordance with TCH's equality and diversity policy. An equalities impact assessment has been completed to ensure that the policy is inclusive and does not impact negatively on any resident or group of residents. Residents' individual needs are taken into account when delivering our repairs service, this includes any actions needed in relation to condensation damp and mould.

9. Resident Influence

The policy will be consulted on with residents. The consultation will also be used to identify any gaps in the policy.

10. Policy review period

The policy will be reviewed every two years or as needed if there are legislative or regulatory changes.

11. Related documents

- Repairs Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Damp and Mould Procedure
- Contractors' Code of Conduct
- Tenancy Agreement
- Complaints Policy
- Decant Policy