

# DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

January 2026

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# 1 Introduction

This policy sets out how Haringey Council will address issues of damp, mould and condensation within the Council's housing stock. It reflects current best practice and is aligned to key national policy and the Council's strategic objectives.

The policy covers our responsibilities to tenants and leaseholders living in council homes and to residents living in temporary accommodation within our own stock and leased accommodation. The Council's responsibilities to private sector residents in Haringey is outside the scope of this policy.

When we use the terms 'we', 'our', and 'us' we mean Haringey Council in this policy.

## 2 Aims and Objectives

The overall aim of this policy is to provide a clear and transparent framework for Haringey Council's approach to tackling damp and mould in accordance with our statutory obligations. This includes ensuring that our residents are, and feel, listened to, and responded to effectively when experiencing issues of damp and mould.

The key objectives of the policy are to:

- provide and maintain dry, warm, healthy homes for our tenants and leaseholders.
- ensure that the fabric of our homes is protected from deteriorating and damage resulting from damp and condensation.
- ensure that tenants are never blamed, and never feel blamed, and always treated with dignity and respect.
- Make every visit count so all staff visiting a tenant's home can identify the early signs of damp and mould.
- Implement a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould.
- Plan resources to respond to periods of higher demand i.e., during the winter months
- Ensure there is a clear and auditable process for recording instances of damp and mould.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants and leaseholders ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.

This policy identifies and addresses the following three key stages to tackling damp and mould:

1. Proactively preventing damp and mould from occurring
2. Rapidly identifying cases of damp and mould
3. Treating known damp and mould cases and preventing them from reoccurring

## 3 Background

### 3.1 National Context

In October 2021, the Housing Ombudsman published its' [Spotlight on Damp and Mould - It's not lifestyle](#) report. This report heavily criticised the way a number of social housing landlords have failed to listen to and effectively act upon reports from their tenants and leaseholders about incidents of damp and mould in their homes.

The Ombudsman's report made it clear that social housing providers must adopt a zero-tolerance approach to tackling damp and mould and not to dismiss reports of dampness from their residents as down to 'lifestyle.' This includes taking a more proactive approach when dealing with tenants' complaints about damp.

This reflects the wider principles set out in the Social Housing Regulation Act which seeks to ensure all social housing residents are given a greater voice in how their homes are managed and that their complaints are listened to and dealt with effectively.

In November 2022, following the inquest into the death of Awaab Ishak, the coroner's report was published, which found that he died from a respiratory condition caused by long term exposure to mould in his social housing home in Rochdale. Following this, social landlords were requested to self-assess against the 26 recommendations made in the 'Spotlight' report, which includes having a dedicated damp and mould policy in place.

This policy incorporates the lessons learnt and addresses the 10 key landlord tests in the subsequent Ombudsman [follow up report](#) published in February 2023.

We have reviewed all our processes and procedures relating to damp and mould to ensure they address all the concerns raised by the coroner and also how our service measures against the 26 recommendations from the Ombudsman's report. This policy sets out both our response to government, and our guarantee to our residents.

The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025' also known as Awaab's Law came into force on 27 October 2025. Since then, social landlords must address **all emergency hazards** and all **damp and mould** hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants within fixed timeframes. Section 10 of this policy outlines these timeframes in detail.

### 3.2 Haringey Context

We know that residents living in homes with damp and mould are more likely to suffer from respiratory problems, allergies, asthma, and other conditions that impact their immune system. We also know that living with damp and mould impacts on the mental health, education and career prospects of our residents. These issues are likely to be exacerbated as a result of the cost-of-living crisis and the impact of fuel poverty leading to an increasing number of residents not being able to heat or ventilate their homes adequately.

We are embarking on an ambitious plan for retrofitting its housing stock which will help mitigate some of the issues highlighted, by reducing heating demand and improving health benefits. Works will include insulation and replacement heating systems. The target is to bring all council housing stock from an average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of a low Band C to Band B by 2035. This includes having a complementary ventilation strategy in place, to avoid the unintended consequences of retrofitting which, because of the increase in air tightness, can lead to an increase in damp and mould.

The Government is currently consulting on an updated Decent Homes Standard and Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for social housing. The proposal for the new Decent Homes Standard is that it will apply from 2035 and will include a new standard for homes to be free of damp and mould. The proposal for MEES is that all homes should achieve SAP C from 2030. The MEES standard will also be incorporated into the Decent Homes Standard.

Addressing issues of damp and mould, as well as reducing the number of associated resident complaints and disrepair claims, also links to other key Haringey Repairs Service (HRS) policies, including our responsive repairs policy which covers our approach to leaks, our feedback policy and those relating to voids and post inspection which are currently being prepared

The Damp and Mould policy also forms a subset of our overarching policy for hazard management of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) Category 1 and 2 failures. We are currently developing a case management system to support residents in reporting their active hazards and cases through to resolution.

We have developed and implemented a new case management system to support residents in reporting their active hazards and cases through to resolution. This can be accessed [via our website](#) and has the functionality to allow for photographs and information to be uploaded by the resident directly to allow for more proactive assessments to be made. It has also been distributed to multiple Stakeholder teams within Haringey to ensure a comprehensive and joined up approach.

## 4 Causes of Damp and Condensation

There are a number of causes of damp and mould which can generally be grouped as follows:

### a) Structural Defects

This can be as a result of a design defects when the property was constructed or refurbished. This can include:

- Insufficient or non-existent damp proof course.
- A defective damp proof course, or one which has been bridged, results in rising damp, which is the movement of moisture from the ground rising up through the structure of the building.

- Cold bridging – this is an area in a building where a gap occurs in the insulation (for example: the roof/wall junction and the wall/floor junction). As these areas will be colder than the main areas there is a greater risk of condensation and damp forming.

## **b) Penetrating Damp**

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 the following examples (non-exhaustive list):

- Water ingress due to defective or poor original design/workmanship of the structure.
- Defective components, e.g., roof coverings, external wall including defective brickwork, pointing or rendering, 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 comes into contact with 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 where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials (e.g., walls), which then condenses when it reaches colder conditions within the structure.

Conditions that can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation – not opening windows, blocking up vents, not turning on extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Poor heating – not heating the house which can be a result of fuel poverty.
- Defective or inadequate thermal insulation –missing or defective wall and loft insulation.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and not using an extractor fan and drying laundry inside the house without ventilating can contribute to this.
- Overcrowding.

If the above are left untreated, then mould will develop.

## 5 Our Responsibilities

As the landlord, we will ensure that we carry out damp and mould services in accordance with best practice and statutory requirements as follows:

**Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.** The Act amends the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and sets out the rights of tenants including "freedom from damp" and the responsibilities for landlords who are accountable for making sure their properties are fit to live in for tenants, which includes addressing inadequate ventilation, damp and mould issues. This is also covered by the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, Section 11 – Repairs and Maintenance.

**Defective Premises Act (DPA) 1972.** Under section 4(1) of the DPA, a duty of care is imposed on landlords to ensure that users of their property are reasonably safe from damage or personal injury attributable to a relevant defect. A tenant may be able to claim compensation if their home has been damaged or they have suffered adverse health effects due to the condition of the premises e.g., damp and mould.

**The Housing Health and Safety rating system (HHSRS)** for rented homes was introduced under the Housing Act 2004 as a risk based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in residential dwellings. This assessment method focuses on the hazards that are present in housing and means a higher burden can be placed upon landlords generally to minimise or avoid potential hazards and to review conditions regularly including to rectify damp and mould in properties. The HHSRS guidance requires a landlord to assess 29 potential housing hazards. Each hazard has a weighting which will determine whether the property is rated as having category 1 (serious) or category 2 (other).

**Decent Homes Standard (2006).** One of the four aspects of the standard includes the requirement that dwellings must be free from category 1 HHSRS hazards, which includes damp and mould and excessive cold.

**The Environmental Protection Act (1990)** considers condensation damp or mould growth as examples of defects that are prejudicial to health, and we are therefore adopting the same rigorous approach as to eradicating other causes of damp and mould.

**The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025** also known as Awaab's Law came into force for the social rented sector from 27 October 2025. Since then, social landlords have needed to address all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants to fixed timeframes.

In 2026 the regulations will be extended to include the following hazards where they present a significant risk of harm:

- excess cold and excess heat

- falls associated with baths etc., on level surfaces, on stairs and between levels
- structural collapse, and explosions
- fire, and electrical hazards
- domestic and personal hygiene and food safety

In 2027, the regulations will be extended to all remaining HHSRS hazards (apart from overcrowding) where they present a significant risk of harm.

## **6 Prevention**

The most significant ways we can reduce incidents of damp, mould and condensation is to minimise the risk of them developing in the first place.

We will take a number of approaches to ensure the best chance of preventing damp and mould, both through work to the fabric of our buildings and through work to support our tenants and provide them with resources to prevent damp and mould from developing.

### **6.1 Preventative works and repairs**

The following preventative measures are likely to have a significant effect on reducing damp and mould from occurring. These measures form part of our commitments to ensuring our homes meet the decent homes standard and our approach to repairs.

- External fabric being kept in good repair to avoid rain penetration
- Correctly installed and maintained rainwater goods and drainage
- Damp proof courses, membranes and detailing around doors and window openings
- Frost protection for pipes and tanks
- Air vents kept free from blockages
- Timely and appropriate response to tackling leaks
- Effective insulation
- Efficient heating systems covering the full home

In addition to the above, we will also ensure that all homes have appropriate ventilation, which includes roof and underfloor spaces. Measures include trickle vents in windows, extractor fans/humidistats in kitchens and bathrooms, and dehumidifiers. We will also explore the use of other ventilation options, including Positive Input Ventilation Systems (PIVs) and Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery Systems (MVHRS), where appropriate, as part of a whole house retrofit assessment.

We will improve the energy efficiency of homes and tackle fuel poverty through a range of initiatives set out in the Housing Energy Action Plan (2023), starting with those who are most vulnerable and in need. These include replacing inefficient heating, insulation and whole property 'retrofit works' which address all areas affecting the warmth of homes. Residents living in homes with EPCs of Band C or below, will be prioritised, as



these homes are more likely to be susceptible to damp and mould, which is made worse by the impact of fuel poverty.

We will prioritise a good responsive repairs service and ensure that responsive repairs to alleviate damp are carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will reduce the number of visits by operatives and contractors and increase the number/percentage of damp related jobs completed in one visit ('Right First Time'). And we will increase our monitoring of the works undertaken by HRS and repairs contractors to make sure the service is performing well.

## **6.2 Advice and support to residents**

We will work in partnership with residents to ensure they have access to appropriate advice and guidance on tackling damp and in particular condensation which they have more control over. This includes seeking feedback to gauge their views as to the effectiveness of the information and wider support we provide.

Tips for reducing damp and mould in homes can be found in a video on this webpage: [Help with damp and mould in your home.](#)

We will ensure that tenants and leaseholders have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation and are signposted to support with fuel poverty. We will use every opportunity to promote advice on tackling damp, mould and condensation which is available on the Council's website and in leaflets included in the information packs for new tenancies.

We will proactively promote advice more widely through social media prior to the beginning of winter; via the Resident Repairs Continuous Improvement Group (CIG), Resident Associations and resident events, within the rent statements sent to tenants and features via the full range of communications channels with our tenants.

We recognise that not all residents will be able to act upon all the advice made available to them, for instance around the placement of furniture, or arrangements for drying washing. We will never seek to shift responsibility for tackling damp and mould onto our tenants. We also recognise that not all residents will be equally able to access or respond to this information or advice. This is why it is critical that all staff visiting council homes are able to pick up signs of damp and mould and assist residents in reporting cases and accessing advice.

## **6.3 Vulnerable tenants and leaseholders**

We ensure that all housing staff, contractors, and agents regularly receive high quality training, supervision, and guidance on identifying, assessing, and supporting vulnerable tenants and leaseholders. To support this, we provide regular briefings and resources appropriate to staff roles.

We actively encourage contractors and officers from services across the Council to raise safeguarding or vulnerable concerns using Concern Cards. Repairs and other staff using hand-held electronic devices linked to the repairs system are prompted to

consider whether a Concern Card is necessary after each visit. Reports through Concern Cards are actioned and recorded by relevant housing management staff. This approach is outlined in further detail in our safeguarding tenants and leaseholders policy and vulnerable tenants and leaseholders policy.

As set out in [Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home – GOV.UK](#) it is particularly important that the groups below are prioritised when dealing with damp and mould as they are at higher risk due to a vulnerability and/or health-condition:

- People with a pre-existing health condition (for example allergies, asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis, other lung diseases and cardiovascular disease) who are at risk of their condition worsening and have a higher risk of developing fungal infections and/or additional allergies
- People of all ages who have a weakened immune system, such as people who have cancer or are undergoing chemotherapy, people who have had a transplant, or other people who are taking medications that suppress their immune system
- People living with a mental health condition
- Pregnant women, their unborn babies and women who have recently given birth, who may have weakened immune systems
- Children and young people whose organs are still developing and are therefore more likely to suffer from physical conditions such as respiratory problems
- Children and young people who are at risk of worsening mental health
- Older people
- People who are bedbound, housebound or have mobility problems making it more difficult for them to get out of a home with damp and mould and into fresh air

We have a record of the vulnerability for some of our tenants. However, we understand that tenants' need's change over time, therefore we encourage tenants to tell us about any circumstances such as a hearing impairment or mobility restriction when reporting damp and mould so that we can take into account the health conditions and vulnerabilities of residents in the household. We can record this information for any future repairs only if we are specifically asked to, by the tenant in line with our data protection policy.

We recognise that vulnerable tenants and leaseholders may face unique challenges with fuel poverty. As part of our Affordable Energy Strategy, Haringey has collaborated with various organizations such as SHINE London to offer tailored support and advice, helping these tenants and leaseholders manage energy bills and reduce utility debt.

## **6.4 Responding to complaints and learning lessons**

We are committed to providing excellent services to our residents and understand that sometimes things can go wrong, and we welcome feedback to rectify mistakes, learn from them and improve our services.

Where residents are not happy with the response they receive in cases related to damp and mould, they can raise this as outlined in our feedback policy. This includes details on how to make a complaint and is aligned to the Ombudsman Complaints Handling Code.

Our Feedback Policy is published on the Council's website and includes information on the right to refer a case to the Housing Ombudsman.

Lessons learned from positive feedback, complaints and Housing Ombudsman cases will be integrated into service improvements and training to help deliver positive change.

## **7 Identification**

Making sure that we quickly identify homes that are suffering from damp and mould or are at risk of this means that we can act quickly to remove the damp and mould, address its root causes and prevent it from reoccurring.

We identify homes in three main ways by:

- Analysing data on our housing stock
- Equipping all officers to identify damp and mould with clear reporting channels
- Supporting residents to identify damp and mould, providing them with clear channels to report this, and ensuring that they are confident that the problem will be dealt with swiftly.

### **7.1 Data Management, Systems and use of Technologies**

Knowing our stock and the type of properties and components that are likely to suffer from damp and mould will ensure that we can proactively identify cases. We have a wide range of data sets which we use to analyse the extent of damp and mould issues affecting our properties. Between May 2021 and July 2024, a RICS registered practice undertook stock condition surveys of our properties. At the end of their commission approximately 75% of our housing stock had been surveyed. The surveys included identifying any HHSRS hazards, including damp and mould.

From 2025 onwards, we will be carrying out stock condition surveys on an annual rolling basis with a target of 20% of the stock to be surveyed each year. This will ensure that our stock condition data is never more than 5 years old. This is in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's Safety and Quality Consumer Standard.

As part of our new overall end to end process for addressing damp and mould, all damp and mould hazards identified by stock condition surveys are being referred to HRS, with category 1 marked for urgent action.

The overall stock condition survey data feeds into our Asset Management database which is used for investment planning. This includes identifying and targeting homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. Rectifying issues of damp and mould in homes is captured within the scope of works alongside energy efficiency and building safety.

We are also considering the use of technology and equipment which can be used to help with detection and reduce the impact of damp and mould while we are resolving the root cause of the problem. Technology such as smart thermostats can help with identifying properties at risk of condensation, damp and mould. They can also help to evaluate the effectiveness of other retrofit interventions.

## **7.2 Staff training, equipment and raising awareness**

We will ensure that HRS staff are sufficiently trained and have the appropriate skills and equipment to carry out their work effectively. Training has already been undertaken within the repairs team, and additional training is planned.

We will raise awareness to all staff including contact centre staff and staff who visit tenants' homes about the latest regulations to identify the early signs of damp and mould and respond quickly. This includes Estates Services, Tenancy Management, Adult and Children's services and other teams across the Council. This will be designed to ensure they are aware of how serious an issue this is for residents and how all staff can contribute to alleviating the problems associated with damp and mould.

We will deliver awareness through methods such as:

- Leaflets and guidance documents
- Targeted email communications
- Sharing relevant training materials and resources

## **7.3 Resident reporting**

If tenants have a persistent damp problem, we ask them to contact us so that we can come out and look at their home. We can also advise them on heating their home as efficiently as possible.

They can:

- email us at [dampandmould@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:dampandmould@haringey.gov.uk) with their full address including the postcode, their full name and a contact phone number. We also ask them to provide photos of the affected areas if possible
- phone us on 020 8489 5611

If they have already reported a problem and we are dealing with it (for instance, we have said that we will visit the property to undertake a 'mould-wash'), they do not need to report it again unless it has got worse since we last visited their home.

### **Haringey Council leaseholders**

Leaseholders are responsible for dealing with damp and mould in their property, unless it is caused by a building defect, or a neighbouring property. If that is the case they can contact us via the [leasehold repairs page](#).

## 8 Policy Implementation

We will have appropriate procedures and housing systems in place to comply with regulatory standards.

This is supported by a clear and auditable process for tracking instances of damp and mould through all stages from initial diagnosis, the steps we will take to address the issue, with timescales, aftercare and what communication and action residents can expect from us.

## 9 Performance Monitoring/Quality Assurance

The Repairs Board will include monitoring of performance against measures set by Awaab's Law as follows.

- Investigation of any potential emergency hazards and, if the investigation confirms emergency hazards, undertaking relevant safety work **within 24 hours**.
- Investigation of any potential significant hazards **within 10 working days** of becoming aware of them.
- Production and provision of a written summary of investigation findings to the named tenant **within 3 working days** of the conclusion of the investigation.
- The undertaking of relevant safety work **within 5 working days** of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant hazard.
- The beginning, or the taking of steps to begin, any further required works **within 5 working days** of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant or emergency hazard.
- Work being physically started **within 12 weeks** (if steps cannot be taken to begin work in 5 working days).
- The provision of suitable alternative accommodation for the household if relevant safety work cannot be completed within specified timeframes.

We will keep tenants updated throughout the process and provide information to them on how to keep safe.

In addition, key performance indicators are reported and scrutinised by Housing Services Management Team, the Council's Housing Board, the Council's Housing Improvement Board chaired by the Chief Executive, Housing, Planning and Development Scrutiny Panel and the Residents Voice Board.

## 10 Value for Money

One of the key aims of this policy is to ensure that we use our repairs and maintenance budgets effectively. Treating damp and mould once it has taken hold of a property can be extremely costly.

By enhancing preventative works, identifying and monitoring potential causes of damp, linking the most severe cases into planned investment programmes; thereby reducing reactive repairs and cases of disrepair, should reduce the overall cost to the service. Looking at the bigger picture, the cost to other public services such as the health service will also reduce by improving living conditions.

## **11 Resident co-production and engagement**

### **When did you discuss development of this policy with residents?**

At meetings of the Council's Resident Repairs Continuous Improvement Group on 15 October 2025 and Resident Voice Board on 20 November 2025.

### **What did they tell you?**

Need to clarify the causes of damp and condensation particularly on cold bridging.

The importance of staff training to ensure they are aware of the latest regulations and able to signpost residents to the correct officers.

Welcomed the plans to retrofit the Council's housing stock.

### **How has what residents told us informed development of this policy?**

The policy now confirms all staff including contact centre staff and staff who visit tenants' homes will be made aware of the latest regulations regarding damp and mould. There is also a definition of cold bridging included in section 4.

## **12 Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out as part of the development of this policy. The EQIA found that the policy should have a positive impact on Haringey residents with the protected characteristics of age, disability, pregnancy and maternity, religion and it will have a neutral impact on those with other protected characteristics.

## **13 Links to other policies and documents**

[Affordable Energy Strategy](#)

[Feedback Policy](#)

[Repairs Handbook](#)

[Responsive Repairs Policy](#)

[Safeguarding Council Tenants and Leaseholders Policy](#)

[Tenancy Management Policy](#)

[Translation and Interpretation Policy](#)

[Vulnerable council tenants and leaseholders policy](#)

## **14 Review**

We will review this policy every three years with the next review due in 2029 unless earlier events or legislation require an earlier update to this policy.