

MANAGEMENT OF DAMP, MOULD & CONDENSATION POLICY

This policy was approved by the Committee of Management on 15th February 2023.
It should be reviewed again no later than 31 January 2026.

The policy has been assessed through the organisational impact assessment process.

We can, if requested, produce this document in different formats such as larger print or audio-format. We can also translate the document into various languages, as appropriate.

SCOTTISH HOUSING REGULATOR STANDARDS

STANDARD 1:

The governing body leads and directs the RSL to achieve good outcomes for its tenants and other service users.

STANDARD 2:

The RSL is open about and accountable for what it does. It understands and takes account of the needs and priorities of its tenants, service users and stakeholders. Its primary focus is the sustainable achievement of these priorities.

STANDARD 4:

The governing body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.

STANDARD 5:

The RSL conducts its affairs with honesty and integrity.

STANDARD 6:

The governing body and senior officers have the skills and knowledge they need to be effective.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Estimates in the UK are that between 10-50% of homes are affected by damp. Social Housing and low-income communities where there is often overcrowding, a lack of appropriate heating, ventilation and insulation, can experience a substantially higher proportion of damp and mould than the national average.

West Granton Housing Co-operative Ltd want to ensure that our tenants have warm, safe and healthy homes to live in. We understand that some properties and the way in which people live can be more susceptible to condensation and possible damp related issues.

A more purposeful approach to the prevention, treatment and remediation of these issues will benefit both our tenants and our properties. We seek to inspect our properties to enable improved reporting and identification of mould, condensation and dampness. We seek to provide end-to-end tenant satisfaction and service with the provision of clear advice, guidance and support alongside a robust and proactive approach to attending to and eradicating mould and/or damp within our properties.

2.0 WHAT IS DAMP, MOULD & CONDENSATION?

Damp in properties is caused by a build-up of moisture. This can be caused by various issues with a building, such as leaking pipes, cracks which allow rain in, blocked guttering, or defects in the foundation. Moisture can also build up from condensation as a result of daily living activities, particularly in properties with inadequate ventilation.

Mould can develop in damp atmospheres, particularly when it is cold. Both damp and mould pose a danger to health, particularly to children, older people and people with existing skin and respiratory conditions or a weaker immune system. It can cause respiratory problems, trigger asthma attacks and allergies, and make it more likely that people will suffer from infections.

Damp and mould cannot be dismissed as a ‘lifestyle issue’. While condensation is created by daily activities such as bathing, cooking and drying clothes, tenants should be able to complete these activities without being blamed for damp and mould developing.

3.0 OUR APPROACH

3.1 In the management of dampness, mould & condensation

We commit to:

- Provide and maintain a comfortable, warm and healthy home, free from damp, mould or disrepair for our tenants.
- Recognise that having mould issues in a home can be distressing for our tenants and ensure we are supportive in our approach to remediation and/or eradication.

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- Work in partnership with tenants to resolve and understand how to reduce condensation, damp and mould issues.
- Make sure the fabric of our homes are protected from deterioration and damage resulting from, or contributing to, damp and mould.
- Ensure that responsive repairs to alleviate damp are carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible to protect the health & wellbeing of our tenants and minimise damage to the fabric, fixtures and fittings of the property.
- Plan resources to respond to higher demand. For example, during the winter months.
- Provide staff with the skills to identify and differentiate between signs of damp and condensation and understand the causes and remedies.
- To support our tenants in ways to reduce damp and condensation in their home and how to make positive changes.
- To take account of the issues of damp and condensation when designing investment programmes, for example heating and ventilation.
- To comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements and sector best practice.

4.0 POLICY BACKGROUND

4.1 Legislation and Statutory/Regulatory Requirements

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)
- Requirement on social landlords to ensure their tenants' homes:
 - are energy efficient, safe and secure
 - are not seriously damaged
 - have kitchens and bathrooms that are in good condition
- Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing (ESSH)

The Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH) aims to encourage landlords to improve the energy efficiency of social housing in Scotland. This supports the Scottish Government's vision of warm, high quality, affordable, low carbon homes and a housing sector that helps to establish a successful low carbon economy across Scotland.

The ESSH will contribute to the requirements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019, which sets targets to reduce Scotland's emissions of all greenhouse gases to net-zero by 2045 at the latest, with interim targets for reductions of at least 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030, and 90% by 2040.

5.0 PROCEDURE

Our procedures are set out within the accompanying procedure '**Managing Dampness, Mould & Condensation Procedure**' ([Appendix 1](#))

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6.0 MONITORING & COMPLIANCE

It shall be the responsibility of all operational staff and/or tenant visiting staff to be aware and have knowledge of both this policy and the accompanying procedure and to understand the need to ensure robust adherence to both in the aims of providing exemplary tenant satisfaction, promoting tenant health and wellbeing and to ensure the ongoing asset management of our property.

7.0 POLICY REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every three years and, as required by legislation, regulation or internal organisational change.

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MANAGEMENT OF DAMP, MOULD & CONDENSATION PROCEDURE

These procedures was approved by the CEO and COO in January 2023. They should be reviewed again no later than 31 January 2026. They may be reviewed earlier if necessary or required due to legislative or regulatory changes.

The procedure has been assessed through the organisational impact assessment process.

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1.0 STRATEGIC AIMS

1.1 Purpose

To provide a procedure that will create a consistent approach to addressing cases of mould and condensation or dampness through to rectification and/or eradication of cause.

WGHC has a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. This does not mean no instances of damp and mould occur, but that in each case the issue is resolved, and the root cause is tackled to prevent reoccurrence.

The aim of all responses to damp and mould issues must be to tackle the root cause of the problem – it is not enough to remove the issue if it simply reappears again a few months later.

1.2 Scope

The procedure applies to West Granton Housing Co-operative Ltd employees, contractors and relevant stakeholders

2.0 FACTORS OF DAMPNESS, MOULD & CONDENSATION

2.1 Fuel poverty

It is recognised that fuel poverty is a major factor in cases of condensation which can lead to mould problems where tenants are unable to afford to heat their home effectively.

2.2 Cold Bridging

Cold Bridging can be found in many areas including poorly installed cavity wall insulation for example. Where a gap occurs in the insulation this can cause areas to become colder, which would then be at risk of increased condensation.

2.3 Blocked or broken ventilation

This would include blocked air bricks and blocked or broken window trickle vents

2.4 Broken or no extractor fans

Where possible, all kitchens, bathrooms and utility rooms should have a functioning extractor fan that adequately vents, preferably, with a timed overrun.

2.5 Radiators

Heating systems performance is not always at the standard required to prevent condensation. Radiators should be periodically bled to ensure 'all over' output. Ideally, radiators should not be used to dry damp washing.

2.6 Missing/damaged render or pointing on brickwork

There could be various reasons for poor or broken pointing (i.e. the finish between bricks) on parts of a brick wall which may have created cold spots for condensation and penetrating damp. The same can also be true with damaged render systems (harling)

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2.7 Leaking guttering

Guttering can, over time, corrode, warp or sag causing leaking joints.

Lack of effective maintenance can result in blocked or choked gutters and downpipes that can, through time, cause damage to the fabric of the building, dampness to walls and/or dampness to fascia boards or soffits etc.

2.8 Leaking roofs

This could be caused by many things i.e. damaged or missing tiles, damaged flashing, roof vents or chimneys, blocked gutters or simply that the roof is approaching the end of its serviceable life.

2.9 Unvented and condensing tumble dryers

These can produce excessive amounts of water vapour in the property, encouraging condensation.

2.10 Tenant management of the home

Excessive humidity within the home and the lack of adequate ventilation is the primary cause of condensation. Drying clothes on radiators, cooking with lids off pans, and overcrowding all add to the moisture levels within a property.

2.11 Rising damp

Rising damp can occur where there is missing or ineffective damp proof course or where a high ground level breaches the damp proof course.

Alongside proactive work for staff to identify damp and mould issues, WGHC should encourage tenants to report any problems as soon as possible. They should share information with tenants explaining the risks of living in a home with damp and mould, how to report issues and what steps WGHC will take to resolve the issue. WGHC must have a simple way for tenants to report damp and mould problems and to complain if they are not satisfied with the response.

WGHC should ensure communications reach as many tenants as possible. To achieve this, it will be beneficial to combine a range of communication methods, such as: emails/ texts directly to residents; leaflets and resident newsletters; information at community events or drop-in sessions and the WGHC website. All 'tenant facing/visiting' WGHC staff should urgently review any records to identify where there are reports of either damp, mould or condensation and ascertain what action is being taken.

3.0 FOUR MAIN CATEGORIES OF DAMPNESS

Damp in properties is caused by a build-up of moisture. This can be caused by various issues with a building, such as leaking pipes, cracks which allow rain in, blocked guttering, or defects in the foundation. Moisture can also build up from condensation as a result of daily living activities, particularly in properties with inadequate ventilation.

Mould can develop in damp atmospheres, particularly when it is cold. Both damp and mould pose a danger to health, particularly to children, older people and people with existing skin and respiratory conditions or a weaker immune system. It can cause respiratory problems, trigger asthma attacks and allergies, and make it more likely that people will suffer from infections.

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Damp and mould cannot be dismissed as a 'lifestyle issue'. While condensation is created by daily activities such as bathing, cooking and drying clothes, tenants should be able to complete these activities without being blamed for damp and mould developing.

3.1 Penetrating dampness

This type of dampness will only be found on external walls or, in the case of roof leaks, on ceilings. It only appears because of a defect in the structure of the home, such as missing pointing to the brickwork, missing roof tiles, loose flashing or leaking gutters. These defects then allow water to pass from the outside to the inner surfaces.

Penetrating dampness is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall and will normally appear as a well-defined 'damp patch' which looks and feels damp to the touch. "Tide marks" will be left, even in periods of dry weather.

3.2 Defective plumbing

Leaks from water and waste pipes, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, are relatively common. They can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch and stays damp whatever the weather conditions outside.

An examination of the water and waste pipes in the kitchen and bathroom and the seals around the bath, shower and sinks will usually find the problem. In cases when leaks are not attended to, rot may become established in wooden joists and floor boards leading to a risk of collapse in severe cases. Mould may be seen with this type of dampness and even fungi are not uncommon if the defects are not addressed.

3.3 Rising dampness

This is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. The water gets through or around a defective damp proof course (DPC) or passes through the natural brickwork if the property was built without a DPC. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms. It will normally rise no more than 36 inches above ground level (900mm) and usually leaves a 'tide mark' low down on the wall. You may also notice white salts on the affected areas.

Rising damp will be present all year round but is more noticeable in winter. If left untreated it may cause wall plaster to crumble and paper to lift in the affected area. Mould will rarely be seen where there is rising damp (and then only in the early stages). This is because rising dampness carries with it salts that prevent the growth of mould.

3.4 Condensation and mould growth

This is by far the most common occurrence which often lead to a repair request.

Condensation is caused by water vapour or moisture in the air, inside the dwelling, coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window or wall. The drop in temperature causes water to form on the surface. This water may then soak into the wallpaper, paintwork or plasterwork. Mould spores are invisible to the naked eye but are in the air all around us all of the time and will quickly grow on surfaces where condensation has formed into a visible covering.

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Condensation can be more prevalent during the colder months and it would not be uncommon to see a spike in tenant demand during Autumn and Winter. A symptom of condensation is mould growth which is usually found in the corners of rooms, north facing walls and on or near windows. It is also found in areas of little air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are pushed up against external walls. It also forms in bathrooms and kitchens as they are high moisture areas or in properties which are overcrowded.

All homes are affected by condensation at some point however certain activities can increase the problem and good practices can eliminate this from becoming a bigger problem. Condensation and mould growth can sometimes be a consequence of customer habits and lifestyles, although this is not exclusively the case.

Cooking, washing and drying clothes indoors etc. all produce water vapour that can only be seen when tiny drops of water (condensation) appear on colder surfaces such as walls, windows, ceilings or mirrors and often unseen on clothing, shoes and furniture.

The amount of condensation in a home depends upon a number of things, most importantly-

- How much water vapour is produced by the actions of its residents
- How cold or warm the property is
- How much air circulation (ventilation)
- How well the property has been insulated.

Simply turning up the heating will not sort out the problem, this may only temporarily reduce condensation. All factors may need to be looked at to reduce the problem. The first sign of a problem is often water vapour condensing on windows and other cold surfaces, which then takes a long time to disappear. This allows the surfaces to become damp resulting in mould growing on these damp areas.

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4.0 PROCEDURE

In essence, our approach and procedures should be simple and robust:

- Urgently review records to identify where there are reports of damp and mould and ascertain what action is being taken.
- Seek urgent access to all properties where there are reports of damp and mould that have not been inspected in order to ascertain whether there is a hazard present and what works are required. If a tenant is not allowing access, WGHC will need to rely upon the terms of signed Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement in place and if that fail, thereafter, seek to force entry (as per gas safety checks / EICR inspections) to ensure the safety of the tenant and protect the property from further deterioration.
- Prepare a schedule of works and take steps to remedy the damp and mould without delay. The schedule should be provided to the tenant with a timescale for works.
- Use the i-auditor “damp, mould and condensation inspection report”. ([Appendix A](#))
- What can be done internally to improve performance? Are policies and procedures fit for purpose and, preferably, co-designed with residents? Are contractors performing well? Is there a need to refresh training to ensure that the response to damp and mould is robust in all parts of the organisation?

How to Manage a Report of Damp or Mould and Condensation

4.1 First contact

- Notification received via email, telephone call, reported in person to the Housing Management team or the Maintenance Team or noticed by staff following a tenancy visit.
- The Housing Ombudsman is clear that responding to damp and mould primarily or initially as a lifestyle problem is unacceptable; it is also not going to resolve the problem. **Taking this approach creates a negative impression with tenants who may feel blamed and stigmatised, and potentially less inclined to report further instances of the problem, creating more areas of ‘silence’ and long-term deterioration of the property.**
- A member of the housing team should arrange a meeting to try and ascertain the cause of the mould, dampness or condensation and give non-judgemental, practical advice to the tenant to try ascertain the cause of, and alleviate, condensation i.e. ensuring extractor fans are switched on and used, window trickle vents are open, rooms can ‘breathe’, furniture is not blocking ventilation and large quantities of washing are not being dried on radiators etc. Is the tenant able to heat their home? Is the house cold?
- Where and, if relevant or needed, consider the issuance of a top up voucher for customers struggling to heat homes if this is found or believed to be a contributory factor.
- Where there is no evidence of lifestyle related condensation, the housing team should request the assistance of a member of the maintenance team to undertake a survey of the property seeking to ascertain the source of any problems and identify actions to remedy and/or eradicate the problem, if damp and/or mould are present.

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- Any measures required to attend to dampness and mould should be implemented as soon as practically and reasonably possible, ensuring approved contractors are appointed to undertake any required works. (works could involve, include the removal of ceilings, plasterboard walls, tiling, kitchen or bathroom fitments etc. uplifting of floors searching for leaks and following proprietary treatment, re-instatement of all items to return the property to a clean, habitable, mould or damp free state.



Before treatment

Damp, mouldy ceiling and mouldy tiles.

After treatment

Tiles replaced with shower boards and ceiling removed, treated, replaced, plastered & painted

4.2 Repeat contact

- The tenant calls with follow up or repeat contact. Either the Housing Management Team and/or the Maintenance Team should check to see if this is a follow up to an ongoing open case or if the case had been closed. Open cases will be referred to the Maintenance Team for ongoing remedial actions to be taken as described within the previous section.
- The Maintenance Team will investigate and see if issues have worsened or if new areas affected and if technical inspection may be required. At this point of escalation a report should be created and files within the tenant folder, along with supporting photographs to record the assessment and identify actions to resolve.

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- The objective to minimise any dissatisfaction, should the tenant identify that they are still dissatisfied and look to pursue a complaint this will be recorded and progressed in line with the WGHC complaints policy.



Before treatment

Mouldy ceiling, mouldy tiles, unused extractor fan.



After treatment

New ceiling, new shower boards, new higher specification extractor fan.

4.3 How to Manage a Report of Defective plumbing

- Notification received via email, telephone call, reported in person to the Housing Management team or the Maintenance Team or noticed by staff following a tenancy visit.
- Repair will be categorised as either Emergency (response within 24 hours but typically within 4 hours) where the leak cannot be contained and will likely cause significant damage or as an Appointment (up to 10 days based on customer requirements but typically within 3 days) where the customer confirms for example that there is a minor drip which can be contained
- Most repairs of this type are a first time fix, however where a trades operative identifies additional works for example water staining on ceilings below a bathroom, water damage to kitchen fitments, a follow on technical inspection will be arranged to establish any further remedial works.

4.4 How to Manage a Report of Penetrating dampness & Rising dampness

- Notification received via email, telephone call, reported in person to the Housing Management team or the Maintenance Team or noticed by staff following a tenancy visit.
- Repair will be generally be categorised as planned maintenance and an appointment will be arranged for a technical inspector to visit the property to fully diagnose the issue
- Most repairs of this type are associated with either defective guttering/downpipes and/or missing or dislodged roof tiles Following the technical inspection remedial works will be completed within 30 days where possible (typically within 14 days). In some instances where the work is more complex or specialist in nature, repair works cannot always be carried out as part of the responsive repairs service as they generally require more planning, resources and non-standard materials.

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5.0 TURNING INSIGHT INTO ACTION

As well as addressing reports of dampness, mould and condensation effectively, taking a proactive approach will also be key to success.

WGHC will draw insight from as many sources as possible to identify instances of damp and mould. It is not sufficient to rely on stock condition or stock investment surveys as a sole mechanism for identifying issues not reported by tenants.

WGHC aim to undertake annual home visits, to check both for any issues in the property and on the wellbeing of tenants. Visits to any tenant should include checks for damp and mould in all rooms and is also a good opportunity to talk to tenants and ask about any specific concerns they may have.

WGHC have an important opportunity to assess the condition of our properties when they become void. Void assessments should include a focus on damp and mould in two main ways:

- Damp and mould issues should be treated and resolved before reletting the property
- The void assessment checklist should include steps like checking that extractor fans and check ventilation systems are working effectively as this will help to prevent the build-up of condensation in the property.

Other preventative measures should be built into planned maintenance work, such as gutter cleaning.

6.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

This Procedure will be reviewed every three years as standard. This procedure will be reviewed should legislation, regulations or internal organisational change and if any further amendments are required.

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Damp, Mould & Condensation Inspection Report

25 Dec 2023 / 26 Granton Mill Crescent,
Edinburgh, EH4 4UT

Complete

Score	35.64%	Flagged items	0	Actions	0
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Property Details

100%

WGHC Staff undertaking inspection:

David Mills

Date of visit

25.12.2023 13:00 GMT

Property Address

26 Granton Mill Crescent, Edinburgh, EH4 4UT

Inspection Details

100%

Nature of the concern that has been raised:

Mould and Condensation reported

How reported:

Following a report provided by
Tenant

Hallway

25%

Any signs of damp, mould or condensation found?

Yes



Photo 1

Location and severity of the dampness/mould found:

Visible dampness to wall above skirting board within hallway

Room Temperature:

8
From 0 to 35

Details of any external influences:

None obvious

1/5

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Details of any internal influences:

None immediately obvious

Details of any other contributing factors:

Lounge

33.33%

Any signs of damp or mould found?

Yes



Photo 2



Photo 3

Location and severity of the dampness/mould found:

Dampness around window. Condensation on window

Room Temperature:

11
From 0 to 35

Details of any external influences:

None obvious

Details of any internal influences:

Clothes being dried over radiators.
Windows and trickle vents all closed.

Details of any other contributing factors:

Kitchen

100%

Any signs of damp, mould or condensation found?

No

Bathroom

38.46%

Any signs of damp, mould or condensation found?

Yes



Photo 4

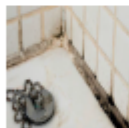


Photo 5



Photo 6

Location and severity of the dampness/mould found:

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Mould and dampness visible. Condensation on window.

Room Temperature: **11**
From 0 to 35

Is there extraction present? Yes

Is it powered at the time of the visit? Yes

Photo of the extraction power:



Photo 7

Is the extraction working correctly? Yes

Details of any external influences:

Details of any internal influences:

Details of any other contributing factors:

Bedroom 1 100%

Any signs of damp, mould or condensation found? No

Bedroom 2 36.11%

Any signs of damp, mould or condensation found? Yes

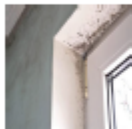


Photo 8



Photo 9

Location and severity of the dampness/mould found:

Damp and mould visible around windows

Room Temperature: **12**
From 0 to 35

Details of any external influences:

Clothes being dried on radiators. Window trickle vents closed. No ventilation.

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Details of any internal influences:

Details of any other contributing factors:

Bedroom 3

36.11%

Any signs of damp, mould or condensation found?

Yes



Photo 10



Photo 11

Location and severity of the dampness/mould found:

Condensation on windows. Trickle vents closed. No ventilation

Room Temperature:

12
From 0 to 35

Details of any external influences:

Details of any internal influences:

Details of any other contributing factors:

Bedroom 4

100%

Any signs of damp, mould or condensation found?

No

Summary of inspection findings:

The property has some dampness above skirting boards - further investigation required to ascertain cause and remediate or eradicate.
Inadequate heating present within the property. Radiators being used to try and dry damp washing. Many windows have condensation. All trickle vents were closed. Mould is starting to appear on certain walls, predominantly, around windows. Mould growth to tiling/grouting within bathroom and on silicone sealant around bath area.

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Appendix



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6

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Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11

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