

**Damp and Mould Member Briefing  
Notes  
09/08/2023**

**Attendance**

**Cllrs:** Mattie Ross, Lucas Schoemaker, Lindsey Green, Katrina Davies, Nick Hurst, Steve Robinson, Natalie Bennett, Jenny Miles, Nigel Prenter

**Tenant Reps:** Mike Ritcher, Ian Allen

**SDC:** Kathy O'Leary, Keith Gerrard, Jen O'Grady, Ang Carr, Amanda Merritt, Andy Kefford

**Apologies:** Tara Skidmore

**An Introduction to damp and mould and the Council's response**

Housing staff introduced the different types of damp and the impact that this can have on individuals with health vulnerabilities. The team discussed the legislative and regulatory frameworks that underpin the Council's responsibilities and then outlined the work the Council has been doing to ensure our response to damp keeps residents safe.

A copy of the slides has been added to the Hub and are attached here:



d and m members  
briefing 09.08.2023.ppt

**A new Damp and Mould Policy (group workshop sessions)**

We separated into two groups to invite Cllrs and tenant reps involvement and ideas in our approach to damp and mould and to support the development of a new Damp and Mould Policy. Each session was facilitated by a member of the housing team and included a tenant representative.

The ideas and feedback from this session was rich in valuable information and has been put into the following table:

You said	We did
Use every visit to check the condition of the property i.e. do more at annual inspections	We have included in our action plan to review the tenancy visit checklist for housing officers. This will include visible checks for early signs of damp and mould at every visit and to ask residents during the visit if they are aware of any issues that can be reported.  We have included an action to ensure all housing staff that visit tenants in their home have the appropriate training to be able to identify damp and mould so that this can be reported following the visit.  We are upskilling our heating, electrical and operative teams to check properties for damp and mould and to communicate with tenants about preventative measures.
More routine inspections so that we are proactive in identifying issues, not just damp and mould. Particular focus at the start of a new tenancy	We have included in the void process to check and remedy issues prior to a new tenant moving into a property. A new 'lettings satisfaction survey' to be sent to new tenants will include a question about damp and mould.

<p>to ensure tenants know their responsibilities and to consider additional support for vulnerable tenants</p>	<p>New tenants will receive a mould prevention guidance leaflet at sign-up. We carry out introductory tenant visits within 4-6 weeks of the tenancy start, and this will include checking for signs of damp.</p> <p>We will carry out tenancy audits when required.</p>
<p>Tenants may be afraid of reporting issues, for example, if they are in the first year of their tenancy and don't want to be evicted or if they cannot afford to adequately heat their home</p>	<p>We are working on a data led project that aims to target properties that may have damp and mould so that we can proactively support residents that may not feel comfortable reporting issues themselves. The data led project will also carry out a 'gap analysis' to identify properties that have not had recent repair work.</p> <p>We are committed to exploring the introduction of a tenant welfare fund to support those in fuel poverty.</p> <p>We are reviewing all of our communications, including the website, to ensure tenants feel confident and able to report concerns.</p>
<p>Follow up with tenants where we have delivered retrofit works, including checking adequate ventilation</p>	<p>We will update our guidance notes on how to use new systems such as heat pumps and continue to provide training and guidance as part of the sign-up process.</p> <p>The wave 1 and wave 2 retrofit works are being undertaken under PAS2035 protocols. As part of this the Retrofit Coordinator will analyse any unintended consequences of retrofit, including visiting each property to conduct tenant feedback/aftercare questionnaires.</p> <p>We are working on a data led project to target properties that may have damp and mould, included within this is analysis of past programmes of retrofit works within our stock.</p>
<p>Communication with tenants to manage expectations and build trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-winter education and communication with residents</li> <li>- Education on prevention,</li> <li>- Raise awareness of how to report damp and mould</li> <li>- Raise awareness of high-profile cases</li> </ul>	<p>The Project Group has reviewed the Council's communication with tenants regarding damp and mould including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The preventative guidance and awareness-raising information available to all tenants,</li> <li>- Our communication about damp and mould with tenants at every interaction,</li> <li>- Aftercare, post-works and feedback communication following a damp and mould issue.</li> <li>-</li> </ul> <p><u>Preventative guidance and awareness raising information includes:</u></p> <p>'Help reduce mould' guides are given out by our surveyors at visits to properties, and to all new tenants at sign-up. These leaflets provide tenants with information for controlling condensation and mould in their homes.</p> <p>We are updating our damp and mould guidance on the Council's website, in partnership with the Environmental Health service. This includes updating damp and mould information on the online 'report a repair' service.</p> <p>In 2023 our annual publication 'keynotes' included an article on keeping your home free from condensation. This publication is distributed to all council-owned residential</p>

	<p>properties. We will continue to raise awareness of damp and mould in the 2024 edition of Keynotes.</p> <p>We are planning on displaying posters and information at Community Hubs and in communal areas, to advise residents on how to manage condensation and report any issues.</p>
Use skills and knowledge from other social housing providers	<p>Our Maintenance &amp; Voids Manager is meeting with other social housing providers regularly to discuss cross cutting issues and best practice.</p> <p>Members of the Project Group attend sector webinars and forums to participate in discussions about best practice and lessons learnt in damp and mould management and prevention.</p>
To consider using lime plaster which is antifungal	We have committed to exploring preventative options such as lime plaster and antimould paints.
To consider additional provision for outdoor washing lines to reduce indoor drying	We have added an action to review priority areas for installation of additional outdoor washing line provision in communal areas.
Obtain regular tenant feedback	<p>We carry out tenant satisfaction feedback surveys after repairs are completed. We plan to carry out satisfaction surveys following damp and mould works.</p> <p>We are regularly reviewing feedback as part of the complaints process.</p> <p>We are recruiting to a Tenant Engagement Officer to work closely with residents and gain feedback.</p> <p>We meet regularly with the tenant representatives of housing committee.</p> <p>We will be submitting data to the Social Housing Regulator as part of the new Tenant Satisfaction Measures from April 2024.</p>
Improve inter department communication and systems	We will work with Environmental Health on shared resources, communication and training plans for damp and mould.
Liaise with care agencies who have access to the property or who have built rapport with the resident to check the condition of the home	<p>We ask questions about individual cases of damp and mould during multi-agency approach meetings.</p> <p>We will include a requirement within the new housing system to capture details of care agencies who are involved with a tenant's care. We will use this data to communicate the damp and mould reporting process to relevant care agencies.</p>
Follow up on tenant reports and take responsibility as a landlord	We will include target timescales within our policy and procedures, ensuring we respond within 24 hours to critical risk cases, within 5 working days to high risk and within 28 working days to medium and low risk cases.
Ensuring all calls are answered, especially out of hours	<p>Calls to Property Care are answered and call statistics are monitored by the Senior Resource Planner and Business Support Manager.</p> <p>A regular contract meeting is held with the service provider for Out of Hours calls, including reviewing key performance indicators of their performance.</p>