



# Damp & Mould Policy

Ref: 216

## **1. Policy Aim**

This policy sets out the approach of The Pioneer Group to reduce and manage the likelihood of damp, condensation and mould occurring in the properties it manages.

Undertake effective investigations and implement reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to manage damp, mould, and condensation. Offer advice and assistance to customers living in our properties, including information on how to prevent damp, mould and condensation.

## **2. Scope**

This Policy relates to tenants, leaseholders, and the occupants of buildings, owned, leased, or managed by The Pioneer Group

This policy is subject to amendments following the consultation and implementation of "Awaab's Law".

## **3. Related Documentation**

- Tenants Handbook
- Repairs Handbook
- Tenancy Agreement
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Asbestos Policy
- Contractor Management Policy
- Major Works Policy
- Planned and Cyclical Repairs Policy
- Equipment and Adaptations Policy
- Leasehold Management Policy
- Health and Safety Management Policy
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE)- Electrical Safety at Work Guidance Document.

## **4. Compliance**

- The Housing Act 2004
- The Landlord and Tenant act 1985
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Environmental Protection Act 1999
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2018
- RSH Consumer Standard
- Leasehold Reform Act 2002
- Building Regulations, 2010 plus 2013 amendments
- Building Safety Act 2022
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Equality Act 2010

## **5. Background/Context**

- 5.1 There are many root causes that lead to damp, mould, and condensation within our homes. This has the potential to have an impact on the resident and their family's physical and/or mental health and well-being. Both Pioneer Group staff and residents should work together to prevent or resolve damp, mould, and condensation issues.
- 5.2 As a social landlord The Pioneer Group will make sure that homes comply with the Decent Homes Standard, are maintained in a good state of repair and structurally sound and weather tight, with hot water and heating.
- 5.3 As a landlord we are legally obliged to keep our properties in a decent state of repair.

## 6. Types of Damp

For the purpose of this policy, three main types of damp are included, and are defined as Rising Damp, Penetrating Damp and Condensation Damp.

**Rising Damp** - The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action

**Penetrating Damp** (including internal leaks) - 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, for example:

- Water ingress due to defective or poor original design/workmanship of the structure.
- Defective components for example roof coverings, external wall 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.

**Condensation Damp** - Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air meets 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 (interstitial) where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials (e.g., walls), which then condenses when it reaches colder conditions within the structure.

The conditions that can increase the risk of condensation are:

- Inadequate ventilation e.g., natural opening windows and trickle/background vents and mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Inadequate heating g. undersized boilers and radiators, draught stripping.
- Inadequate thermal insulation. e.g., missing, or defective wall and loft insulation.
- High humidity e.g., presence of rising and penetrating damp.
- Poor building design and construction – specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.

Conditions that can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation – not opening windows, blocking up vents not turning on extract fans, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Poor heating – not heating the house, which can be a result of fuel poverty.
- Defective insulation –dislodged insulation in lofts.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the house can contribute to this.
- Overcrowding.

Mould is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces. This is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present

## **7. Policy Principles**

- 7.1 Damp and mould cases are to be managed on a case-by-case basis. Thorough inspections will be carried out in properties. Day to day contractors will be instructed to carry out necessary repairs to manage damp & mould. Dependant on the severity, damp specialists will be called upon to carry out an in-depth survey and carry out the recommended works. All repairs will be carried out in line with timescales set out in Awaab's Law and outlined within the damp, mould and condensation procedure. All emergency repairs will be carried out within 24Hrs.
- 7.2 Ensure staff and contractors are trained on how to recognise, manage, and identify solutions to damp, mould and condensation within a rented property.
- 7.3 We aim to use our stock condition data and customer insight to inform proactive programmes of inspection and property improvements and enhancements to reduce the possibility of condensation, damp and mould.

## **8. Our Responsibilities**

- 8.1 The Group will use the information that residents share with us to apply a risk assessment that will combine factors of the properties design and construction, along with the individual needs of the tenant, their family or other persons residing with them; to determine the most appropriate resolution.
- 8.2 To maintain our homes so that they meet the Decent Home Standard.
- 8.3 We shall investigate and diagnose the cause of damp or mould and deliver effective remedial solutions.
- 8.4 To remain in regular and effective communication with a resident, following a report of damp and mould being made, providing progress updates from beginning to end – especially on the occasion where an investigation into a case may be complex.
- 8.5 Provide our residents with comprehensive and focused advice and guidance on how to manage damp, mould or condensation.
- 8.6 To manage all reports of damp, mould and condensation using our Damp, Mould and Condensation Procedure.

- 8.8 In the situation of statutory overcrowding resulting in damp and mould, we will work with the resident and the Local Authority to review to explore the resident's options. The Housing Act 1985 explains that all Living Rooms and Bedrooms are included in the calculation of statutory overcrowding.
- 8.9 In the situation of hoarding resulting in damp and mould, we will refer to our Neighbourhoods Team for further guidance on how to best support the resident.
- 8.10 At the time of a void inspection, each room should be checked for damp, mould, and condensation. If identified, it will be managed and rectified as part of the void works.
- 8.11 As part of a Mutual Exchange, a property inspection is completed at which time, each room should be checked for damp, mould, and condensation. If identified, it will be managed and

## **9. Tenants Responsibilities**

- 9.1 Residents are required to report any repair, fault or damage to the Group as soon as possible, so to avoid the risk of harm or injury to a person or further damage to property. This extends to providing access.
- 9.2 Follow all advice and guidance issued by us, on managing and controlling damp, mould and condensation.
- 9.3 Regularly checking for and reporting any leaks, or faulty heating, windows, or extractor fans.
- 9.4 The resident is responsible for arranging adequate household contents insurance, to protect their personal items from damage caused by damp, mould, or condensation.
- 9.5 Redecoration: Where remedial works and mould wash treatments have been undertaken by us, the resident is responsible for redecoration. It is recommended that anti-fungal paint is used. For vulnerable or disabled residents, we will consider how to assist the redecoration process on a case-by-case basis.

## **10. Inspection Programmes**

- 10.1 Our Surveyors will carry out inspections by appointment prior to issuing repairs to a contractor where the repair has a high-cost implication or is of a complex nature. Industry best practice sets out that there is not an over reliance on technical officers, or inappropriate delays in the delivery of the service.
- 10.2 We will carry out diagnosis of repairs trends and planned inspections from time to time to ascertain the condition of properties and to help us plan for future programmes of works

## **11. Training**

We will ensure the provision of training for all front-line and Customer Service Centre staff on the identification, treatment and the prevention of damp, mould, and condensation. The training will enable them to:

- Become familiar with and understand the correct response needed when a damp or mould issue is identified by them or reported to them, including what advice to give and when to raise remedial works.
- Identify the correct equipment required to assess damp in properties and find resolution to the problem if it is our responsibility.
- Develop their knowledge on our stock and the archetypes of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould.

## **12. Performance Monitoring**

- 12.1 We will maintain internal information systems (MRI housing management system) which are based around ensuring effective monitoring, control and reporting of repairs and maintenance activities. Comprehensive records of all repairs and maintenance work shall be held in the MRI Housing management system, to ensure transparency in the way work has been carried out and authorised.
- 12.2 We will monitor repairs and maintenance performance using both regulatory and local performance indicators as follows:
- The average number of days taken to complete a repair
  - Overall Satisfaction with the repairs and maintenance service
  - Satisfaction with the contractor delivering the service
  - Expenditure against budget
- 12.3 In addition to monitoring the suite of contracted KPI's contract management will include:
- Monthly performance review meetings
  - Quarterly performance review meetings
  - Annual performance review meetings
- 12.4 Monthly (or as requested) performance, financial monitoring and statistical reports will be presented to:
- The Executive Leadership Team
  - Customer Insight Committee
  - Strategic Board
  - Scrutiny Committee

## **13. Responsibilities**

Strategic responsibility for implementation of this policy rests with the Director of Development and Asset Management.

The Head of Asset Management is responsible for implementing the policy and in conjunction with the Senior Contract Manager will be responsible for ensuring that continued management meets the requirements of all relevant legislation.

## **14. Data Protection Statement**

The Pioneer Group manages all of the data referred to in this policy in accordance with the GDPR Regulations 2018.