

DAMP, MOULD & CONDENSATION MANAGEMENT (AWAAB'S LAW) POLICY

1. Purpose

The aim of this Red Kite Group policy, in the first instance and as far as reasonably possible, is to prevent the occurrence of damp, mould and condensation (DMC) in our tenant's homes and where DMC occurs, to manage its consequences and impact in an efficient and effective way in line with Awaab's Law.

To achieve this aim, we will take a proactive approach and act promptly in instances where DMC is reported. Our proactive approach involves investing in and undertaking energy efficient measures and repairs to improve and maintain the fabric and internal living environment of our tenant's homes.

We have adopted a data-led, proactive approach using the comprehensive stock condition data we hold which is regularly reviewed and informs proactive action requirements needed. The intelligence we gain through general visits to our tenants' homes and that received through dealing with individual instances of DMC reported, all help to inform and support our proactive approach.

This policy provides an effective DMC approach which is based as far as is reasonably practicable on a 'zero tolerance' principle. In delivering this we will;

- Ensure that tenants and leaseholders are treated in a fair and consistent way
- Assist our tenants and where appropriate our leaseholders to maintain a safe and healthy internal environment within their home
- Take the necessary actions through our responsive repairs and planned investment programmes to maintain our tenants' homes to a high standard and avoid instances, due to the condition of the home that result in damp and condensation
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable solutions and improvements to prevent damp, mould and condensation occurring but where this is reported, act swiftly to manage and eradicate issues
- Provide practical solutions, information and advice to help tenants manage and control condensation
- Regularly review budgets and resources available to ensure we have the capacity to address any damp and mould cases identified
- Not delay undertaking works if a complaint or legal case is being pursued by the tenant.
- Undertake and apply this policy in line with our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy and consideration to occupants vulnerabilities

We will comply with statutory requirements that impact on DMC. This policy excludes sheds and outbuildings and areas not classed as part of the internal structure of a home i.e. habitable area.

2. Definitions

Damp is the presence of excess moisture or wetness in a property. It is usually caused by condensation, leaks or rising damp from the ground. It can lead to mould growth.

Damp is usually caused by condensation or by leaks, such as but not restricted to:

- Leaking or broken pipes, wastes, drainage and overflows
- Rainwater from defective roof coverings
- Blocked or leaking gutters
- Penetrating dampness around windows, through walls and due to raised ground levels
- Rising damp due to lack of, or no effective, damp proof course

Mould is a fungus and is the most tell-tale sign that is frequently associated with damp and condensation.

Condensation is a condition that is common in many homes, which is caused by water droplets in the air. It is more likely in poorly heated or poorly insulated homes and usually gets worse in the colder winter months.

Condensation can often develop in kitchens and bathrooms. Moisture is released into the air through normal daily activities, such as washing, cooking, drying clothes, showering and bathing and can occur commonly on windows or external walls, or cold surfaces.

Within Awaab's Law, significant and emergency hazards are defined as follows:

- **Significant** hazards, pose a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of a tenant of a social home.
- **Emergency** hazards, pose an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety of a tenant of a social home.

3. Context

Our approach in dealing with DMC has been shaped by and is consistent with the Housing Ombudsman issued Spotlight report on Damp and Mould, which highlights the approach expected of social landlords. Our aim is to follow the Housing Ombudsman recommended proactive approach to dealing with tenant complaints and to comply with the legislation established and set out within Awaab's Law.

Damp, mould and condensation are treated in a similar way and afforded the same level of priority as compliance-related activity thus ensuring the risks associated are progressed with similar priority.

Where we refer to our homes in this policy, we include any tenanted homes irrespective of whether homes have been identified for future disposal or marked for regeneration.

4. Responsibility

The Head of Property is responsible for the implementation and review of this policy and for ensuring that relevant staff are informed and trained on its content as required.

Reviews to this policy will be subject to sign off and approval via Red Kite's process for all policy approvals with final approval by the Board.

5. Legal Framework

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11 – Repairs and Maintenance Pre-Action)
- Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Disrepair
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating
- Decent Homes Standard
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 ("Awaab's Law")

6. Key Principles

6.1 Responding to reports of DMC

Our response to any notification of damp, mould and condensation will be in accordance with our comprehensive end-to-end management process. Appropriate tracking of cases is fundamental to ensure that matters are progressed against the standards and timescales set out in our detailed Damp, Mould and Condensation (DMC) Management Procedure.

Whilst we will be consistent in our response, we will adjust priority response times according to vulnerability and health matters of those affected.

We adopt a sympathetic and supportive approach but as stated will treat DMC in the same way as other compliance-related disciplines such as gas and electrical safety etc. Therefore, we will follow a 'zero-tolerance' approach ensuring that where DMC cases are reported or identified we act quickly, inspecting the home through pre-appointed visits undertaken by experienced and trained technical staff capable of assessing and diagnosing all types of DMC matters aligned with regulatory standards.

6.2 Case management

We actively monitor DMC cases through to completion; this will include in cases where access may be subsequently refused, following legal options such as injunctions to gain access (upon exhaustion of our no access process). All cases will be closed by confirming in writing to tenants that we believe the DMC matter has been resolved.

This will only happen after further contact with tenants following a predetermined period, dependant on the type and extent of the DMC reported originally and the subsequent works undertaken. We will ensure that tenants are kept informed throughout the DMC process as required, in accordance with the requirements defined within the legislation and in accordance with the preferred method of communication for our tenants These being:

- Reported hazards – 24 hrs
- Hazards triaged within 24 hrs of being reported
- Investigation reports issued within 3 working days

We make it easy for tenants to self-report DMC cases either in person, online or by telephone, enabling us to raise cases quickly and conveniently. Our process to manage reported cases is set out within our process map for recording, investigating and undertaking reported cases.

All cases are monitored, with monthly reporting on performance and adherence. Performance is measured against the key metrics established within Awaab's Law:

- Hazard reported acknowledged within 24 hours
- Reported cases triaged within 24hrs
- Emergency inspections conducted in 24 hours
- Significant inspections conducted within 10 working days
- Investigation reports issued within 3 working days
- % of emergency repairs completed within 24 hrs of being reported
- % of significant safety repairs completed within 5 working days following inspection
- % of preventive repairs commenced within 5 working days of inspection
- % of preventative repairs completed in 20 working days
- % of households decanted within 24 hrs of emergency hazard report
- % of households decanted within 5 working days where property cannot be made safe

Performance review of these KPi's is undertaken at operational and strategic levels, with regular reports on monthly performances reviewed by Committees and Board.

We provide detailed information and advice on DMC through our website, leaflets and general one-to-one discussion. We understand that DMC can result from an inability to heat a home. We will help support tenants in extreme cases through financial support and by providing nonstandard items such as carpet and thermal curtains (this will not be a standard approach and will only be used in very exceptional cases following a robust assessment process).

We will signpost tenants to support agencies and partners that can also provide additional support and advice. The wellbeing of our tenants will always be at the forefront of decision making.

In cases where the home can and should be adequately and affordably ventilated and heated, we will work with our tenants to try and resolve the issue. In these circumstances a move to another home will not necessarily result in a better outcome for the household and therefore we will work collaboratively to get to a resolution.

We understand that there is a balance in such cases but are committed to undertake all works reasonable to ensure we help tenants resolve DMC that are not a result of a building defect, building design or landlord failure etc.

6.3 Proactive management of DMC

During the various visits we undertake to tenants' homes, through general inspections and Home Check visits and programmed stock condition surveys etc the opportunity will be taken to assess condition and building defects that may lead to DMC problems, this will also include instances such as self-neglect, hoarding, overcrowding, and poor behaviour.

Visits will typically be undertaken by staff within our communities and property teams, but any member of staff visiting a tenant's home will be expected to note and report any instances of DMC.

Similarly, all contractors and service providers to Red Kite are required to report any related DMC issues that are identified to them or that they identify themselves when attending a tenants home. All staff and contractors have been provided with DMC awareness and guidance on how to report anything they identify or is brought to their attention when in a tenants home.

Regular reviews of reports of DMC will also look at any trend analysis to identify where proactive plans can be put in place.

Through our extensive investment programmes and continuous maintenance activity we will improve the thermal efficiency of our tenants' homes and maintain them to a high standard.

Appropriate technology and new materials will be considered and where appropriate installed to help improve the internal environment of homes and reduce the risk of DMC. To achieve this, where necessary, retrofit assessments, (which will model energy efficiency measures required) will be undertaken to assess practicality and requirements in order to improve the EPC rating of our homes to band C or above. We will achieve this by a series of energy efficiency measures including but not restricted to:

- Cavity Wall Insulation
- External Wall Insulation
- Loft insulation top-up

Our new-build homes are designed and constructed to reduce the risk from DMC (greater consideration is given to this area where we develop the homes directly).

We have self-assessed our DMC processes and approach against the 26 suggested recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman and have designed our processes to meet with these suggested good practice requirements. Our tenant groups will oversee this policy and our performance against it.

6.4 Complaints and dissatisfaction

For tenants who are not satisfied with the way we have dealt with their DMC case there is the opportunity to use our formal complaints process which includes the ability to appeal against formal complaint outcomes as well as to escalate to the Housing Ombudsman if they remain dissatisfied with our conclusion. Whilst we do all we can to prevent complaints we use the feedback we receive as positive information and use this to learn and improve services accordingly.

6.5 Training and competency

Our staff receive regular training to ensure they have the correct level of knowledge for diagnosing and addressing DMC situations and can spot signs which may lead to problems. New starter staff undergo awareness training as part of their new starter programmes and periodic refresher training is provided to technical staff.

Our technical staff are required to reach an accredited training standard to ensure they have the knowledge to adequately deal with the various issues that cause DMC and can adequately diagnose/remedy these. Our frontline staff and our contractors dealing with DMC related matters are competent and trained appropriately.

7. References

- Regulatory Framework for Social Housing
- Housing Ombudsman – Spotlight Report – Damp and Mould

The key documents and references are listed in the legal framework section of this document.

8. Related Strategies Policies & Procedures

This document should be read in conjunction with our;

- Damp, Mould and Condensation Management Procedure
- Repairs Policy
- No Access Procedure
- Asset Management Strategy
- Sustainability Strategy (draft)
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Compensation Policy and Procedure

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Equality Impact Assessment completed			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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