

## **Damp, Mould and Ventilation Policy**

### **1.0 Aim / Purpose of the Policy**

1.1 Through this Policy, Coastline will adopt a proactive approach to resolving condensation damp and mould issues in homes. We will work with customers, support agencies, cleaning and ventilation specialists to ensure that all reports of poor internal environment are investigated and resolved.

1.2 This policy confirms our approach to diagnosis and use of independent expertise;

- the steps to be taken;
- timescales, effective communication and appropriate mitigations; and
- customer aftercare checks.

Information and advice are key tools in supporting customers to prevent damp and mould. Reference to "lifestyle" as the primary cause will no longer be used as these issues are a consequence or mixture of property construction, maintenance issues, lack of information, limited customer choices, affordability to heat and or other specific vulnerabilities.

### **2.0 Background / Introduction**

2.1 As a landlord Coastline is responsible for:

- Maintaining the structure and exterior of the property, keeping it in good repair including roofs, drains, gutters and external pipes;
- Keeping installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation in good repair and proper working order; and
- Keeping installations for space heating and water heating in good repair and proper working order

2.2 Within Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), Damp and Mould Growth, it includes risks to physical and mental health from House Dust Mites and mould or fungal growth as these are caused by dampness and/or high humidity, in particular;

- Reduced ventilation levels; and
- Increased humidity, especially beyond 70%.

2.3 The specification of ventilation equipment in kitchen and bathroom replacement projects will be robust and provide adequate extraction. Heating and insulation systems will be designed using good practice and take into account archetype, location, elevations and potential use of the building.

2.4 Decarbonisation improvements will include the use of sensor technology and Internet of Things (IoT) where appropriate, taking into consideration ventilation standards and provide an opportunity to reduce the risk of poor internal environment in the longer term.

### **3.0 Legislation, Statutory Regulatory duties & references**

3.1 We will ensure that we carry out damp and mould surveys in accordance with best practice and relevant policy and legislation, including the following:

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Building Act 1984 & 2000
- Building Regulations 2010
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Environment Act 2021

3.2 In addition to in-house inspections, technical team managers will ensure that their project managers implement regular independent site inspections using external companies where appropriate; for example the corporate Health and Safety Consultant and specialist ventilation companies.

#### **4.0 Ventilation Policy Principles and Objectives**

4.1 The key principles of the Damp and Mould Policy are:

- To provide healthy internal living environments in all homes for customers; and
- To ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould.

We will achieve these aims by:

- Helping customers understand how to reduce condensation;
- Informing both customers and staff about the health risks of living in damp and/or mouldy homes;
- The use of proactive surveys;
- Engagement of specialists;
- Providing high levels of support, for example hardship payments and signposting to energy switching advice where necessary; and
- Publicising damp remediation work that we can do.

4.2 Training colleagues, contractors and operatives to:

- Spot signs of condensation, damp and mould and understand the causes and remedies of these;
- Understand and follow the Damp, Mould and Condensation Procedure and Flowchart (Appendix A);
- Carry out maintenance to reduce the occurrence of damp and mould;
- Know our stock and the archetypes of properties that are more likely to suffer from damp and mould issues;
- Understanding the components in our properties which may cause damp;
- Invest in both preventative and reactive measures;
- Plan resources to respond to higher demand in winter;
- Make sure that appropriate budget levels are assigned to reducing the cause of damp and mould;

- Provide colleagues with the correct equipment to assess damp in properties and find resolution to the problem if it is our responsibility;
- Comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements and with best practice relating to the provision of this service; and
- Treat customers in a fair and non-discriminatory way.

4.3 Coastline will also work with other landlords to procure high quality products, share knowledge and experiences, liaising with Environmental Health and other energy advice agencies.

4.4 Customer-facing colleagues will be included within training to increase knowledge and understanding of ventilation, condensation and water ingress in homes. Colleagues discovering poor internal environment within homes will take responsibility to report the issues and ensure that homes are referred for technical surveys.

5.0 **The main principles / policy section is the bit of the template most likely to have additional heading areas**

5.1 **Outline of Customer Responsibilities**

5.2 Mould can be caused by condensation and may adversely affect customers' health and quality of life. Customers are responsible for looking after their homes to their best ability and for requesting and following advice to try to reduce the risk of condensation that results in mould growth.

Mould caused by condensation is usually black and typically grows in bathrooms, kitchens and bedrooms. Attention should be made to areas where wardrobes and other furniture items are placed which may reduce the circulation of air, leading to condensation. This can be particularly challenging when furniture is placed against external walls.

**Customer support available:**

- Customers can find advice about how to prevent or reduce condensation via Coastline's website;
- There are many expert independent websites which also provide advice and guidance;
- Contact our repairs team via MyCoastline or telephone 01209 200200

5.3 **Coastline's Responsibilities**

5.4 Coastline is responsible for;

- Insulating and providing central heating systems in all customers' homes in accordance with Decent Homes Standard to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring;
- Maintaining customers' homes to avoid penetrating and rising damp or for carrying out remedial action if these do occur;
- Provision of an easy to access and robust repairs service; and
- Providing support, advice and guidance to help customers reduce the risk of dampness.

5.5 Coastline is also responsible for correctly diagnosing any faults within customers' homes and specifying remedial works to be completed within an appropriate timescale, in line with service standards.

#### 5.6 **Planned, Cyclical and Voids Works**

- All planned maintenance specifications will include aspects to improve the internal environment of homes, for example extractor fans in bathroom and kitchen;
- Cyclical Maintenance Contracts will be in place to service and maintain specialist ventilation appliances within homes; and
- The Voids Standard will include checks to ensure that ventilation equipment is serviced and functional before occupancy by customers.

#### 6.0 **Service Standards (E&D, GDPR etc)**

#### 6.1 **Preventative Work**

To reduce the occurrence of condensation, damp and mould in our homes we will:

- Carry out proactive mould, condensation and ventilation customer surveys using repairs data to identify homes at risk;
- Promote information about how to reduce condensation;
- Identify a list of components most likely to cause damp;
- Liaise with our contractors to monitor these items and when officers carry out repairs visits and arrange to replace any components where the condition has deteriorated and may result in damp;
- Use modern technology, in agreement with customers, to monitor trends and humidity levels;
- Highlight any areas of concern at the time of each stock condition survey;
- Carry out work to fix any problems that are found;
- Tackle fuel poverty through a range of initiatives starting with those who are most vulnerable and in need. These include, replacing inefficient heating with traditional or renewable heating, insulation programmes and whole property 'retrofit works' which address all areas which affect the warmth of customers home;
- Investigate the possibility of providing secure drying areas in communal flat blocks to reduce the need to dry washing on radiators or inside flats;
- We aim to carry out a stock condition survey for each property every 5 years;
- Review each damp and mould works order raised after 8 weeks to see if the proposed solution has been effective; and
- All maintenance teams to follow damp and mould policy to prevent damp and mould by tackling issues when involved with works on the property.

#### 6.3 **Reactive Work**

In line with **Appendix A – Damp, Mould and Condensation Flowchart** when customers contact us in relation to a Damp and Mould issue we will:

- Respond within two working days to any reports of mould, condensation and ventilation issues;
- Document customers report within a repairs order within two working days to engage our approved ventilation specialist;

- Order specialist surveys to be completed within 20 working days in line with our non-emergency repairs priority;
- Arrange for any mould to be cleansed as part of the remedial works;
- Discuss ways in which customers can make changes to improve the situation;
- Inform other parties, such as neighbouring homes, if they are causing the issues;
- Complete a full property survey which may include an inspection of cavity wall insulation, thermal imaging, take damp and humidity measurements and carry out an underground survey via CCTV if appropriate; and
- Carry out post inspections of remedial works 8 weeks after completion.

We will evaluate the results of the survey to establish the cause of the problem and advise customers of the remedial action we will take, steps customers should take and any further work that is required in the future, together with a timeframe for this. The Coastline website will also provide damp and mould advice and guidance.

6.4 New build homes will meet the ventilation requirements set out within [Building Regulations Approved Document F](#) and [Domestic Ventilation Compliance Guide](#).

7.0 Appendix A – Damp, Mould and Condensation Flowchart

