



## TUNTUM HOUSING ASSOCIATION

DOCUMENT CONTROL	
<b>Policy name:</b>	Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy
<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Author:</b>	Barrington Billings - Head of Asset Management & Development
<b>Approved by:</b>	21 March 2024   Board
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<b>Customer facing:</b>	Yes

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Tuntum Housing Association is committed to providing good quality homes and excellent services that meet the standards agreed with our tenants. This policy sets how we will respond to reports of damp and mould in our tenants' homes, and the surrounding buildings we are responsible for.

1.2 This policy has been written to ensure that, wherever possible, residents are not adversely affected by the causes of damp, mould and condensation and provides for a proactive approach to manage reports of damp, mould, and condensation.

1.3 The key objectives of this Policy are to comply with relevant legislation (specifically the Landlord and Tenant Act, 1985, Housing Health and Safety Rating System within the Housing Act 2004 and Decent Homes Guidance) and will consider and address recommendations made in the Housing Ombudsman Service Report – Spotlight on: Damp and Mould – Oct 2021.

### 2. Policy statement and aims

2.1 The aim of our Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy is to:

- a) Ensure we provide and maintain dry, warm, healthy homes for our tenants.
- b) Provide clear lines of responsibility within Tuntum in the management of damp, mould, and condensation.
- c) Outline how we will respond consistently to all reports of damp and mould and ensure all cases are responded to and addressed quickly and efficiently.
- d) Develop a zero-tolerance approach to reports of damp, mould, and condensation.
- e) To ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould.

2.2 We will achieve these aims by:

- a) Providing tenants with information on how to reduce condensation in their homes and publicising what damp and mould remediation work we can do.
- b) Equipping our staff with the knowledge of the health risks of living in damp and/or mouldy homes by training and empowering staff to be able to spot the signs of damp, mould and condensation and be able to give the most appropriate advice to our tenants.
- c) Carrying out regular occupancy and complex checks, where we will look for damp and mould.

- d) Creating a case file for every property that has reported damp and mould and interventions will continue until the issues have been resolved.
- e) Taking a “case-based” approach to reports of damp and mould. Where we need our customer’s support in reducing mould growth, we will work with our customers until we are satisfied that the problem has been resolved. We will provide clear and easy-to-understand information for tenants to support the reduction of any condensation-related problems in their homes. This information will be available in different languages where necessary.
- f) Performing regular stock condition surveys will help us know which types of home are likely to suffer from damp and mould.
- g) Investing in preventative measures like anti-mould paint when surveying a void property to be re-let.
- h) Budgeting appropriately so that we have the funds assigned to react to reports of damp and mould.
- i) Complying with all statutory and regulatory requirements relating to damp and mould.
- j) Treating tenants in a fair and non-discriminatory way, in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010.

### **3 Legislation or regulatory requirements**

3.1 Tuntum will meet all our statutory and regulatory obligations. These include:

- a) Housing Act 1985, 2004
- b) Decent Homes Standard
- c) Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- d) Defective Premises Act 1972
- e) Right to Acquire guidance
- f) Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- g) Tenancy Agreement (agreed between MHA and its tenant)
- h) Equality Act 2010
- i) Regulator of Social Housing Home Standard
- j) Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards

### **4 Scope of the Policy**

4.1 This document should be used by all employees, customers, stakeholders including contractors and partners of Tuntum, to understand the obligations placed upon the association to respond to reports of damp, mould, and condensation. The policy applies to all buildings managed and owned by Tuntum where we have a responsibility to maintain them.

### **5 Definitions:**

- a) **Damp** refers to the presence of moisture, water, and condensation within a home. Problems with damp in your home can easily occur without any warning signs and can cause serious damage if left untreated.

Damp occurs when moisture collects but does not have a chance to dry out fully. When a warm and moisture-laden area meets a cold internal surface, it condenses at what is called a dew point. This creates a damp patch, often a breeding ground for black spot mould. Damp is very common in the UK and usually builds up in areas of the home without much air movement.

- b) **Rising damp** is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. Water gets through or around a defective damp proof course (DPC) or passes through the masonry that was built without a DPC. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms. It will be present all year round but can be more noticeable in winter. It is extremely uncommon but is generally due to a problem or fault with the home, which requires repair.
- c) **Penetrating damp** appears because of a defect in the structure of the home, such as damaged brickwork, missing roof tiles, loose flashing, or leaking rainwater goods. These defects allow water to pass from the outside to the floors, walls, or ceilings. Penetrating damp 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. It is the result of a problem or fault with the home, which requires repair.
- d) **Mould** is a type of fungi that are naturally occurring organisms playing a major role in the earth's ecosystem. Mould grows best in damp and poorly ventilated areas and reproduces by making spores. Moulds are present virtually everywhere, indoors, and outdoors and can grow in and on materials such as food, furniture, fabrics, carpets, walls, paper, timber, and plumbing.

The number one cause of damp and subsequent mould in homes in the UK today is a lack of ventilation and heating. It is normal to have some mould growth in winter, but you need to stay on top of it to prevent it from getting more serious. In most cases, black mould is caused by condensation.

- e) **Condensation** comes from the moisture in the air in your home from cooking, cleaning, bathing, and even breathing turning into water. Condensation will form on the coldest surfaces in the room first, like windows, the corners of the room, and external walls. It is usually found in kitchens, bathrooms, the corners of rooms, on north-facing walls – all places that either tend to have a lot of moisture in the air, or to be cold generally. It is also found in areas of low air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are pushed up against external walls. It is mostly a seasonal problem, occurring during the colder months, as we ventilate our homes less in an effort to keep us warm. This can mean a build-up of water vapour in your home, which may cause condensation. Condensation is not necessarily a problem as long as the surface has time to dry out daily.

## 6 Roles and Responsibilities

### 6.1 Tuntum's responsibilities

- a) To ensure that we maintain the structure of our homes in good repair as set out in our Asset Management Strategy.
- b) Maintain the heating, sanitation, and service installations of rented homes where we have installed these or where we have adopted the responsibility of these through relevant policies (i.e. adaptations to homes; or through previous tenant improvements).

- c) Provide tenants with the information they need to work their heating and hot water systems efficiently and help them minimise condensation.

## 6.2 Tenant's responsibilities

- a) Tenants are responsible for ensuring no damage occurs to their home as defined by the Tenancy Agreement.
- b) Tenants will be provided with information and guidance on minimising condensation in their home and this should be followed.
- c) Tenants are responsible for reporting any cases of damp or mould to Tuntum as soon as they are aware of it.

## 7 Reasonable Adjustments

- 7.1 Tuntum Housing Association is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and will make reasonable adjustments to the policy to recognise, accommodate and support individual needs, where needed.

This Policy adheres to the Associations approach to Equality and Diversity. All staff members will take a proactive approach to ensure that no individual or group is discriminated against or treated differently as a direct or indirect result of this Policy.

## 8 Monitoring, including audit and review

- 8.1 We will monitor and review this policy in conjunction with residents to ensure its effectiveness and relevance to the Association's stated aims and objectives. The Head of Asset Management & Development is responsible for the ongoing monitoring of this policy through the work of frontline staff, particularly those engaged in property maintenance and housing management.

When monitoring data, we will look at repeat incidents to see if issues are reoccurring. Issues, will be collated and reported to the Customer Experience Committee and the Board at each meeting and will seek to cover the following key areas:

- a) Number of cases reported
  - b) Number of cases inspected
  - c) Number of cases completed
  - d) Degree of severity (i.e. high, medium, or low) and proportion
  - e) Any known major incident related to damp, mould, and condensation
- 8.2 In terms of assurance, this will be subject to our strategic and corporate risk assurance framework, which includes first, second and third line of defence checks involving reporting to committees and the Board quarterly and independent internal or external audits.
  - 8.3 This policy document will be reviewed every three years or sooner if needed to ensure that it complies with up-to-date legislation and accepted good practice.

## 9 Policy

- 9.1 Tuntum Housing Association is committed to maintaining our homes in accordance with the Decent Homes Standard.

- i. We will work to make sure that all of our homes are insulated to the appropriate standard to help to reduce condensation in your home.
- ii. Should damp or mould occur, we will be responsible for resolving the cause and making good any damage to the fabric of the property.

9.2 We want to work with our tenants to help to reduce condensation, damp, and mould in their homes.

- i. We will send information to all tenants on how to reduce condensation. This will be provided at least once a year as a direct mail and promoted in our tenant newsletter on our website and social media channels.
- ii. We will advise in our tenant newsletter on how to heat your home efficiently and provide the latest advice on our website.
- iii. We will compile a list of areas of a home that are likely to cause damp and ensure that and repairs to these components are monitored, in order to carry out preventative action in future.
- iv. When we carry out a stock condition survey or an occupancy check, we will take photos and highlight to our tenants any areas of concerns so that they are aware and can take preventative action.
- v. In line with our Carbon Neutral Strategy, we will look at replacing inefficient heating with traditional or renewable heating. Along with whole home 'retrofit works' which address all areas which affect the warmth of your home.

9.3 What our tenants can expect when they contact us regarding damp and mould:

- i. We are conscious of the varied nature of our housing stock and aim to provide our tenants with advice that is relevant to their home. Should a tenant contact us to report damp or mould in their home, we will arrange for one of our surveyors to visit within the following timescales.
  - Within 7 working days for high-risk person or incident
  - Within 10 working days for medium or low-risk person or incident
- ii. When we decide to send an independent surveyor, we will share the outcome of all surveys and inspections with our tenant, so that they understand the findings.
- iii. Following a visit from a surveyor, we will categorise any incident of damp and mould as either high, medium, or low risk and remedial work undertaken within the following timescales:
  - 5 working days for confirmed cases classified as high-risk.
  - 10 working days for confirmed cases classified as medium or low-risk.
- iv. Should any work be needed to fix a problem relating to damp or mould we will act in line with our repairs policy and carry out the remedial work within 21 working days.
- v. Where work is completed and the cause is close to a connecting wall of a neighbouring property, we will contact the neighbour to offer a surveyor visit should we own the property. If we do not own your neighbouring property, we will write to the neighbour and inform them of the type of work completed to ensure that a reoccurrence of the issue does not happen. This communication will happen within 10 working days of the work being completed.

- vi. To ensure that our work has effectively removed damp from a home, we will revisit each job completed 6 weeks post-completion. This will give us information on whether we have eradicated the cause of damp or mould and whether further action is necessary and will help to shape the advice we provide our tenants.

9.4 How our staff will be equipped to respond to tenant’s concerns:

- i. We will make sure our maintenance staff follow this policy when responding to concerns around damp and mould.
- ii. Our surveyors will be trained and experienced in diagnosing the causes of damp and mould.

**10 Equality Impact Assessment**

10.1 We are committed to celebrating diversity. To ensure equal access to our services is available, Tuntum will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and all other legislative requirements relating to equality. We will endeavour to ensure that all tenants receive a consistent level of quality service.

10.2 Under the *Equality Act 2010* Tuntum must consider whether our policies adversely affect our customers and/or staff. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken for this policy and will be drafted to reflect the various needs of all our tenants, including vulnerable tenants.

**11 References**

RELATED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	Link to reference
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Act 1985, 2004</li> <li>• Decent Homes Standard</li> <li>• Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)</li> <li>• Defective Premises Act 1972</li> <li>• Right to Acquire guidance</li> <li>• Landlord and Tenant Act 1985</li> <li>• Tenancy Agreement (agreed between MHA and its tenant)</li> <li>• Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• Regulator of Social Housing Home Standard</li> <li>• Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards</li> </ul>	
RELATED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS	
Reference	
Key Strategy	Corporate Strategy
Other Strategies	Asset Management Strategy, VFM strategy
Policies	Aids & Adaptations, Asbestos, Complaints, Data Protection, Decant, Gas Safety, Electrical Safety, Fire Safety, Legionella, Health & Safety,

	Recharge Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse Policy, Empty Homes, Tenancy Fraud, Modern Slavery Statement, Decent Homes,
Other documents	Tenancy Agreement, <u>Code of Conduct for Employees, Board Members, and Involved Residents</u> , Tuntum's Contractor Service Standard Agreement, Tuntum Financial Regulations, Environmental Sustainability

## 12 Contacts

If you have any queries on this policy, please contact the Head of Asset Management & Development.