



# Damp, mould and condensation policy

## 1. Aim and scope of policy

The aim of this policy is to:

- Outline our approach to the management of damp, mould, and condensation to ensure all properties are well maintained, as well as free of damp, mould, or condensation that could risk the health and safety of our Customers.
- Ensure we meet our statutory and regulatory obligations.

## 2. Policy

### Definitions

The general term 'damp' covers three possible problems with distinct causes:

- **Penetrating Damp** – Water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure.
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- **Rising Damp** – The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.
- **Condensation** – Condensation occurs when humid air comes into contact with a cold surface, it then condenses producing water droplets that, if left to untreated, will form mould growth. The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:
  - Lack of ventilation within the property.
  - Inadequate heating
  - Inadequate insulation.
  - High humidity
- **Mould** – This 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 is present. There is evidence to suggest that health conditions can be made worse by damp and mould in housing.

### Our response to damp, mould and condensation

The actions we take are designed to prioritise the most severe cases and the most vulnerable customers. Cases are grouped into categories to assist us with the correct diagnosis and specification of remedial actions. These have been ranked to assist us in the management of a proportionate response to the issue.

Category	Property: Extent of hazard	Person triggers	Any immediate action
<b>CAT 1 Highest risk</b>	Mould severe. Coverage beyond window reveals, effecting all rooms in the property.	Customers with respiratory issues. Customers with vulnerabilities/disabilities. Children under 14, if severe mould.	We raise an emergency make safe / repair for any remedial works required or abatement measures (such as a mould wash) or offer our Customer to decant into suitable alternative accommodation.
<b>CAT 2 High risk</b>	Mould moderate. Damp and mould evident to plaster surfaces, fixings & fittings, more than 1M <sup>2</sup> .	Aged over 65.	We raise an emergency repair/make safe for any remedial works required or abatement measures (such as a mould wash) or offer our Customer to decant into suitable alternative accommodation.
<b>CAT 3 Medium risk</b>	Minor Mould. Mould only identifiable around windows and door reveals, not extending to plaster surfaces elsewhere in the property. Mould only identifiable to furniture and stored items.	All Customers.	Make safe and raise required repairs.
<b>CAT 4 Low risk</b>	No Mould Present, but case opened as our Customer has reported issues.	All Customers.	Investigate, advise, and monitor.
<b>CAT 5 Low Risk</b>	All remedials are completed to address root cause, now monitoring.		

### Remedial Action Timescales

**CAT 1 & 2** - We will survey / make safe within two working days, provide a written summary of findings to our Customer that includes details of any hazard identified and next steps (including an anticipated timeline for repair and a schedule of works) within a further two working days and begin repair works within seven calendar days of the written summary being issued.

**CAT 3 & 4** - Within fourteen calendar days of being reported, we will provide a written summary of findings to our Customer that includes details of any hazard identified and next steps (including an anticipated timeline for repair and a schedule of works). We will satisfactorily complete repair works within a reasonable time period. Our Customer will be informed of this time period and their needs will be considered.

**CAT 5** - We will remain in contact with our Customer every six weeks to check on condition until such a time that our Customer agrees there are no further issues and that the cases can be closed. If there has been no response from our Customer for a period of 6 months, we will write or email to confirm we are closing the case, but we can open again at any time should they make contact.

### **No Access**

Where we visit a property and no one is at home, we'll call our Customer on the number provided. If we can't make contact, a no access calling card will be left at the property. The card will indicate the reason for the call and a contact number for our Customer to make a new appointment.

If we don't gain access, the repair will remain open to allow time to make contact and rebook the repair. We'll try to gain access on at least two more occasions to carry out required inspections and work.

All no access appointments will be recorded within our system.

### **Performance & Customer Satisfaction**

To measure and monitor our effectiveness and to provide assurance we have a number of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are measured and reported:

- Number of surveys raised and appointed.
- Time between survey and commencement of works.
- Number of completed surveys.
- Timescale for surveys.
- Number of remedial works raised and appointed.
- Number of completed remedial works.
- Timescales for remedial works.
- Quality assurance.
- Customer satisfaction.
- % cases closed and subsequently reopened with 12 months.

## **3. Responsibilities**

### **VIVID Responsibilities**

#### **Property inspection**

- Our Damp, Mould and Disrepair Specialists will inspect a property when a repair is reported relating to suspected damp, mould, and condensation in line with the categories as detailed within section 2.
- At the property inspection we will investigate and diagnose the cause of damp or condensation and deliver effective solutions dealing with the cause of the damp or condensation and not just the symptoms.

#### **Customer advice to minimise condensation**

- We'll provide advice and guidance on how to minimise damp, mould, and condensation, particularly when there are no apparent causes relating to design or construction of the property.
- Advice provided will include directing our Customers to sources of information and support on energy savings if they have difficulty in heating their home.
- The advice will be available at sign up of new tenancies, publicised on the website, social media and regularly featured within our Customer newsletter. It will be periodically reviewed with our Customer Repairs Working Group.

#### **Customer support**

- Where internal conditions within a home such as overcrowding or hoarding of personal belongings are contributing to the damp and mould conditions and influencing health and wellbeing of the occupants or are preventing inspections or repairs works being carried out, we will provide support and assistance to review our Customer's options.

#### **Damp and Mould follow up**

- We will remain in contact with customers every six weeks until our Customer agrees there are no further issues and that the cases can be closed. If there has been no response from our Customer for a period of 6 months, we will write or email to confirm we are closing the case, but we can open again at any time should they make contact.

#### **Evaluation of Repairs & Maintenance Data**

- All reports of damp, mould and condensation are recorded on our repairs and maintenance database using appropriate keywords and appointments. Our damp and mould team will maintain oversight of the process.
- We'll review performance measures and feedback from complaints to monitor that we are responding to damp, mould, and condensation instances appropriately in accordance with our policy.
- We'll use historical data to identify common themes and inform any required changes to our service delivery.

#### **Proactive Approach**

- Our Property Services and Asset Management functions will periodically evaluate repairs and stock data to identify property archetypes that are more prone to damp, mould, and condensation to inform our asset management strategy. This proactive approach will either inform future planned programmes or identify properties to be targeted that require regular stock condition surveys.
- Reviews of stock data will include properties that have a lower energy performance certificate (EPC) rating, blocks of flats where damp has been reported to multiple properties or where certain archetypes of properties are more prone to historical or repeated damp, mould, or condensation issues.
- We'll use all opportunities when we visit our Customer's homes to identify damp, mould, and condensation, such as repairs and stock condition inspections, tenancy update and contractor visits, ensuring damp, mould, and condensation issues are reported and investigated.
- We'll inspect properties and engage with Customers in homes that are more prone to damp, mould, and condensation issues.
- As part of our asset management strategy, we'll develop planned programmes as appropriate that address any building construction causes of damp, mould, or condensation.

#### **Customer Responsibilities**

- Report any evidence of damp or faulty equipment that will affect the humidity and moisture in our Customer's home (faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, heating system failure etc.)
- Allow access for inspections and for the carrying out all remedial works and servicing of appliances (gas boilers and ventilation systems).
- Help reduce the conditions that lead to condensation dampness by:

- Keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum e.g., covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outside (where possible), where it is safe to do so, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
- Seek to adequately heat rooms (The World Health Organisation recommends 18°C.).
- Keeping their home well-ventilated e.g., opening windows during cooking / bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan or ventilation system installed in their home is regularly cleaned and working, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.

#### **Customer Responsibilities; Leasehold & Shared Ownership**

- Where our Customer is a leaseholder or shared owner in a flat (dwelling) within a structure that we are responsible for (i.e. a flat within a block of flats), we will remedy any root cause repairs that we are responsible for. If the root cause is not obvious (e.g. water penetration), our leaseholder or shared owner should commission their own survey to establish the root cause. If the root cause is our responsibility, we will refund the cost of the survey.

#### **4. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

A Customer EIA has been completed and determined that the D, M & C Policy will positively impact a number of people based upon their protected characteristics.

#### **5. Related documents & Links to legislation**

##### **Related Documents**

- Damp Mould & Condensation procedure.
- Repairs responsibility matrix.

##### **Links to Legislation**

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, Section 11, and Section B
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2018
- Housing Health and Safety Ratings System (under the Housing Act 2004)
- Housing Act 1988
- Equality Act 2010
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

<b>Consultation requirements</b>	<b>Last Consultation Date</b>	<b>Date for next consultation</b>
Customer led Repairs Working Group	07/06/24 to 14/06/24	July 2027
<b>Equality Impact Assessment required?</b>	<b>Last EIA date completed</b>	
Yes	24/06/24	

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Author	Owner	Approval level e.g. Board	Date approved	Review date
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