WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Approved by Resident Volunteers

Wokingham Borough Council

Damp and Mould Policy

September 2026



This is the Policy for Damp and Mould for Wokingham Borough Council's Housing Service.

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SIGNING OFF SECTION

This Policy has been subject to consultation, proof-reading, ease of reading and sign off with the following:

- Asset Management and Compliance Team.
- Repairs and Maintenance Consultative Panel.
- Local Housing Companies (Loddon Homes Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd).
- Legal Services.
- Housing Leadership Team.
- Housing Innovation Partnership.

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Damp and Mould Policy

1. Policy Overview

1.1 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) manages approximately 3,000 residential properties.

1.2 This policy provides a framework within which damp and mould services will be managed. It includes the associated roles and responsibilities, as well as the governance arrangements to ensure WBC is meeting its legal and moral duty to ensure that council tenants, employees, contractors and visitors are adequately protected from all foreseeable damp and mould risks that may arise in homes and buildings owned and/or managed by the Council.

1.3 This Policy will be supported by a Damp and Mould Management Plan (DMMP), which provides operational details to managing and delivering damp and mould services including monitoring arrangements, risk management, access procedures, and emergency protocols. The operational procedures in the DMMP set out how WBC will meet the statutory obligations outlined in this policy; therefore, the DMMP is enforceable through this policy.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all residential properties managed by Wokingham Borough Council are free from damp and mould, and that any reported or identified issues are addressed promptly, effectively, and in a manner that safeguards the health and wellbeing of residents.

2.1 This policy is designed to protect the health and safety of tenants, residents, staff, contractors and visitors by reducing the risks associated to mould, which can contribute to respiratory illness, and damp, which can affect the structure and performance of a building with the presence of unwanted moisture in the building fabric.

2.2 This policy outlines the statutory and regulatory obligations applicable to WBC and states the governance arrangements in place to meet these.

3 Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all residential properties owned and managed by Wokingham Borough Council where damp and mould issues have been reported.

3.2 It covers:

- Council-owned tenanted dwellings,
- Temporary accommodation provided by the Council,
- Communal areas of residential blocks,

- Facilities provided on Gypsy, Roma and Travellers (GRT) sites,
- Properties managed by Wokingham Borough Council on behalf of a client.

3.3 The policy applies to all employees, contractors, and agents acting on behalf of the Council in the delivery of damp and mould services. It does not apply to commercial or corporate properties, which are subject to separate facilities and health and safety arrangements.

4. Legislation and Regulatory Requirements

4.1 Wokingham Borough Council recognises its statutory and regulatory obligations in relation to damp and mould services, which can be found listed below:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Defective Premises Act 1972 (Section 4)
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Party Wall Act 1996
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Reporting of Injuries Diseases & Dangerous Occurrence Regulations 2013
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Pre Action-Protocol for Housing Condition Claims England 2021
- Building Regulations – Ventilation: Approved Document F 2022
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (Section 42) and the Consumer Standards framework – Safety and Quality Standard
- Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025

4.2 To comply with these requirements WBC will ensure compliance with the relevant statutory requirements. This will include but is not limited to the following activity:

- Ensure that works in relation to damp and mould are carried out by a third party contractor with suitable accreditations.
- Ensure that all parties contracted/commissioned by WBC to carry out works in relation to damp and mould are working to WBC's Policy and Management Plan, incorporating the applicable statutory and regulatory obligations.
- Ensure reports of damp and mould issues are handled using a case management approach which includes five key phases:
    - Reporting,
    - Triaging and Prioritising,
    - Surveying,
    - Works; and,
    - Post Works.
- Ensure an effective operational tracker system is in place to capture damp and mould cases, and monitor case management progression to conclusion, with associated details, documents and information recorded for accurate service performance reporting.
- Provide a variety of options for easily reporting damp and mould issues, ensuring availability to tenants, residents, employees and contractors.
- Ensure vulnerability information associated with the household reporting the damp and mould issue is captured so effective triage and prioritisation takes place, and the respective WBC systems are updated with the latest vulnerability information.
- Ensure reports of damp and mould issues are investigated, using appropriate technology and equipment (e.g. protimeter, thermal imagery etc.) to identify the suspected root cause of the issue reported and ensure the necessary works are completed to prevent recurrence.
- Ensure damp, mould and condensation issues present in void properties are investigated (as above), to identify the suspected root cause of the issue and ensure the necessary works are completed prior to the property being relet.
- Arrange for any treatments, repairs and/or other associated works identified from the investigation to be completed within the required timescales for emergency hazards and significant hazards and ask the third -party contractor(s) for evidence of works completed.
- Depending on the works required, and complexities associated with the property and/or residents, it may be necessary to arrange a decant for a temporary period to enable to works to take place.
- Ensure the correct ventilation is in place within buildings which promotes air flow and reduces moisture.
- Provide tenants with a digital hygrometer with supporting guidance leaflet to support ventilation and temperature control, in instances where condensation and moisture build-up has been identified during the investigation phase.

- Contact residents three months following the completion of their damp and mould works, to check if any recurring or new damp issues need reporting, as part of a proactive case management strategy to damp and mould services.

5. Definitions

5.1 For the purpose of this Policy and the DMMP, the following definitions apply:

- WBC: Wokingham Borough Council.
- Tenant: a person that has signed a tenancy agreement to rent a home from WBC.
- Licensee: a person who is granted permission to occupy a property without acquiring tenant rights.
- Resident: a person that is registered as living in a WBC home.
- Leaseholder: a person that owns a home within a WBC owned building.
- Visitor: a person that visits a WBC home / building and is not referenced amongst the above definitions.
- Employee: a person that is employed and works for WBC.
- Client: a person /company which WBC is working on behalf of e.g. Loddon Homes Ltd and Berry Brook Homes Ltd.
- Contractor / Agent: a person / company that works on behalf of WBC.
- Mould: a fungus which spreads through spores which can quickly grow on surfaces where dampness persists, or moisture has formed on surfaces. Mould can often look like black, white, or green patches and when its undisturbed it can cause allergic reactions and irritations to people.
- Damp: the presence of unwanted moisture in the structure of a building caused either by the intrusion of water from outside of the building or from internal elements such as leaks or caused by condensation within the structure. Damp can be caused by leaks from plumbing faults, failed appliances and poorly sealed baths and showers, as well as Rising Damp or Penetrating Damp.
- Rising Damp: The movement of moisture from the ground rising up through the structure of the building though capillary action and can occur if the damp proof course (DPC) of a property has failed.
- Penetrating Damp: Water ingress into properties. Examples include defective mortar with gaps/holes, broken roof tiles, leaking gutters, blocked drain/gulley, floods or leaks from pipework.
- Moisture: very small drops of water, either in the air or on a surface.
- Condensation: the natural output of the process of moisture in the air meeting cold surfaces like tiles, walls, windows, and worktops, and turns water vapour into liquid, as water droplets. When air gets colder, it cannot hold a lot of moisture, so droplets of water may appear near windows or doors, in the corner of rooms, behind cupboards or wardrobes, or on other cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. It mainly occurs during cold weather and it's more likely to happen in homes with more people in them.

- Humidity: a measure of how much water vapour is in the air. High levels of humidity are typically recognised when the environment is warm with excessive water vapour in the air.
- Hygrometer: an instrument which measures humidity with a gauge or digital display. A relative humidity rating between 40% to 60% on a hygrometer is considered ideal.
- Awaab's Law: legislation (under Section 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023) requiring landlords to fix reported hazards within set timescales to protect the health and wellbeing of residents and prevent a property falling into disrepair. It's named after two year old Awaab Ishak, who died in 2020 from a respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his home.
- Emergency Hazard: is one that poses an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety of the occupiers in a residential dwelling. An 'imminent and significant risk of harm' is defined in the regulations as a risk of harm to the occupier's health or safety that a reasonable lessor with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe within 24 hours.
- Significant Hazard: is one that poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of the social home. A significant risk of harm is defined in the regulations as a risk of harm to the occupier's health or safety that a reasonable lessor with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe as a matter of urgency.
- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013): Requires the reporting of damp and mould-related incidents that cause death, or major injury.
- HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System): A risk-based evaluation tool to help local authorities identify and protect against potential risks and hazards to health and safety from any deficiencies identified in dwellings.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) is the landlord responsible for ensuring the statutory and regulatory obligations are met.

6.2 The Chief Executive is the appointed Duty Holder and has the overall responsibility for health and safety across the organisation and will nominate appropriately qualified and suitable experienced people to discharge those duties in relation to the management of damp and mould services.

6.3 The Cabinet Member for Housing Services is responsible for ensuring performance on housing safety and compliance is reported to tenants and Members as appropriate.

6.4 The Service Director for Housing Services is responsible for ensuring that sufficient resources are provided for ongoing delivery of the policy, and that employees have the appropriate competencies and qualifications, and for setting budgets that are sufficient to meet compliance requirements.

6.5 The Strategic Asset Manager is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this Policy. They are also responsible for procuring services within the respective budgets allocated, as well as adhering to the Housing Services assurance framework in relation to damp and mould services.

6.6 The Repairs and Maintenance Manager is responsible for the contract management of suppliers and contractors as well as the performance monitoring and management of these agreements to ensure compliance with legislation. They are also responsible for ensuring that relevant employees and contractors have the necessary qualifications and training to undertake their roles in respect of delivering damp and mould services.

6.7 The Damp and Disrepair Lead is responsible for the day-to-day operational duties to ensure damp and mould services are carried out within the required timescales and is supported by the Damp and Disrepair Coordinator who will ensure documentation and service records are stored, with the respective systems and trackers updated. Both will also support the Repairs and Maintenance Manager with the contract management duties of the suppliers and contractors engaged to deliver damp and mould services, and associated repairs and maintenance works.

6.8 Contractors will employ competent operatives who will have the knowledge, skills and experience to complete investigations, eradication, treatment and repair works. They will arrange appointments with tenants and administer the required communications to arrange access. Upon completion of the relevant damp and mould services, and repairs and maintenance works, they will provide the relevant evidence, documents and reports to WBC.

6.9 Tenants will allow reasonable access to their homes for the delivery of damp and mould services, and will report any signs of damp, mould, condensation or ventilation issues to the Council, or its third party contractors at the earliest opportunity. They will also notify the Council of any vulnerabilities to ensure damp and mould services are triaged and prioritised correctly. They will also follow any guidance provided to promote ventilation and prevent moisture build-up, in instances where condensation issues have been identified.

7 Governance

7.1 Damp and mould performance reports will be produced and presented to several internal groups and forums, aligned to the Housing Services assurance framework, to provide evidence of compliance and ensure suitable operational and strategic oversight.

7.2 In addition, the following quality assurance activity is undertaken:

- The Damp and Disrepair Lead and Damp and Disrepair Coordinator will check all investigation and survey reports for completeness and will liaise with the respective contractor regarding any concerns until a satisfactory conclusion.
- A WBC Building Surveyor, independent to the contractor completing the damp and mould works, will complete a percentage of post-inspection checks.
- The Damp and Disrepair Lead or Damp and Disrepair Coordinator will make an outbound call to the tenant three months following the completion of their respective damp and mould works to ensure there is no further recurrence. In the instances of recurring, or new, damp and mould issues reported at the post works check, a new case will be logged.
- Internal audit will provide independent assurance on the operation and effectiveness of controls regarding damp and mould services. The frequency is agreed as part of the Internal Audit Programme and reported to the respective WBC Committee.

7.3 Employees undertaking key roles within the delivery and management of damp and mould services will have access to training and support applicable to their roles.

7.4 Damp and mould related accidents, incidents and near misses will be reported on WBC's health and safety system in accordance with the Council's health and safety procedures and will be investigated by a member of the Asset Management and Compliance team. Any RIDDOR reportable incidents will be reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

8 Policy Review

8.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner, if and whenever there are any relevant changes to legislation, regulatory requirements, case law or good practice that would impact this policy, as well as any required service improvements identified through internal audits, service reviews, learning from complaints or regulatory judgements.

8.2 The review process will:

- Assess the effectiveness of existing procedures and controls.
- Incorporate feedback from audits, inspections, and performance monitoring.
- Reflect any organisational changes or lessons learned.
- Ensure continuous improvement in the management of damp and mould services.

8.3 The Strategic Asset Manager will lead on future policy reviews and any revisions will be approved through the appropriate governance channels and communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

9 Equality and Diversity

9.1 Wokingham Borough Council is committed to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in the delivery of all its services, including damp and mould. The Council recognises that some residents may have specific needs or vulnerabilities that require reasonable adjustments or additional support to ensure they can comply with damp and mould requirements and access services safely.

9.2 In implementing this policy, the Council will:

- Ensure communication and information relating to damp and mould services is accessible and available in a range of formats and languages, where required.
- Make reasonable adjustments for individuals with disabilities, health conditions, or support needs, including offering alternative access arrangements or involving support services.
- Treat all residents with dignity and respect, free from discrimination based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Monitor the delivery of damp and mould services to identify and address any inequalities in outcomes or access.

9.3 This commitment supports the Council's broader responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and its duty to foster good relations, eliminate discrimination, and advance equality of opportunity.

10 Appendices

10.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment Form

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