



**Health and Safety Standard
for Emergency Hazards,
*including Damp & Mould***



Emergency Hazards Standard (including Damp and Mould)

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Related H&S Policies/Standards

Health & Safety Policy

Accident/Incident (Reporting & Investigating)

Selecting & Managing Contractors

* Related policy & Standards are available within the  [Health & Safety Management System](#)

1. Scope

This Standard for dealing with Emergency Hazards, including damp and mould is applicable to all properties managed by The Charity. It is to be implemented by nominated managers and staff (including agency staff) fulfilling the responsibilities outlined below.

2. Purpose

Health and Safety Standards form part of The Charity's Health and Safety Management System. This Standard outlines the responsibilities and arrangements for assessing and mitigating risks associated with emergency hazards, including damp and mould as defined in point 3 below.

This standard will assist The Charity in complying with current legislation and guidance, such as:

[Decent Homes Standard](#)

[Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\)](#)

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[Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018](#)

[The Housing Act 2004](#)

[Environmental Protection Act 1990](#)

[Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#)

3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Standard, the following definitions will apply:

Significant Hazards: As defined under Awaab's Law significant hazards are defined as a risk of harm to a social housing tenant's health or safety that a reasonable landlord would take steps to make safe as a matter of urgency, but not necessarily within 24 hours. Significant hazards (damp and mould causing health risk): must be investigated within 10 working days and made safe within 5 working days after the investigation finishes.

Emergency Hazards: As defined under Awaab's Law emergency hazards are issues that pose an imminent and significant risk of harm. Examples include gas and electrical hazards, broken boilers, total loss of water supply, major leaks, broken external doors or windows, and severe cases of damp and mould that are materially impacting a tenant's health. Emergency hazards must be investigated and made safe within 24 hours.

Damp: Damp refers to the presence of moisture, water and condensation being present within a property.

Mould: Mould is a form of fungus that breaks down dead organic material. It is usually produced in damp and humid conditions.

4. Responsibilities

Awaab's Law requires social housing landlords to investigate and repair hazards including damp and mould within strict timeframes, dependent upon the risk level of the hazard. These include investigating reported hazards within 10 working days, providing a written summary of findings to the tenant within three working days, and completing necessary safety work within five working days, or within 24 hours for emergency hazards. Landlords must also provide alternative accommodation if repairs cannot be completed within these time limits and keep detailed records of the process.

To manage emergency hazards and damp and mould risks in the properties for which The Charity is responsible, the following specific responsibilities have been identified:

4.1 Responsible Person - Group Director of Property & Places

The Charity's nominated responsible person for emergency hazards, damp, and mould is the Group Director of Property & Places, who shall have overall responsibility for ensuring the implementation of this Standard; by ensuring adequate resources are available for the Head of Property to fulfil their responsibilities and by monitoring the overall compliance.



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4.2 Head of Property

The Head of Property has responsibility and control of maintenance and repair activities for The Charity's premises and must assist the director of Property & Places in fulfilling the duties in this Standard.

Whilst the Head of Property may delegate responsibilities to competent person(s) to assist them with their duties, they have overall responsibility for the management and operational implementation of this Standard; and to ensure that significant and emergency hazards, including damp and mould are effectively dealt with, so far as is reasonably practicable, and to ensure that residents, employees and other relevant persons are not exposed to the associated risks by having adequate controls in place. They must:

- a) Ensure all relevant persons are aware of and competent to fulfil their responsibilities as outlined within this Standard.
- b) Ensure appropriate information, instruction, training, and supervision is provided to identified employees.
- c) Ensure there is an effective procedure for managing reports of hazards, including damp and mould to enable inspections/investigations and subsequent remedial actions to be conducted within the defined timeframes.
- d) Ensure that competent contractors, including a damp and mould specialist(s) is included in The Charity's approved supplier list, for assistance with complex and/or difficult issues which cannot be resolved in-house and to help identify the root cause of these issues.
- e) Ensure that an ongoing review is conducted of The Charity's premises that, due to their construction type, age, condition, or which have had historic issues with damp and mould may be more susceptible to damp and mould growth. *
- f) To consider future changes to government legislation and housing standards etc. regarding damp and mould to ensure The Charity's approach complies with current legislation and best practice etc.

4.3 Property Manager's Responsibilities

Property Managers are responsible for The Charity's properties within their allocated region. The Property Managers will support (and deputise, where necessary) the Head of Property, in fulfilling the responsibilities of this Standard. They must liaise with the Head of Property regarding emergency hazards and damp and mould issues in properties in their region and must:

- a) Ensure arrangements are in place to access reports of hazards and/or damp and mould reports
- b) Ensure all emergency hazards are investigated and appropriate action taken within 24-hours of notification.
- c) Ensure that all reports of hazards and/or damp and mould issues identified and/or reported within their allocated region are inspected within seven-days.
- d) Ensure that all significant hazards are investigated within 10-working days of notification
- e) Where possible, efforts should be made to resolve the issues at the point of inspection but must be achieved within 28-days, wherever possible.

- f) Ensure the person conducting the investigation notifies the Property Manager of any complex issues, including damp and mould that requires the services of an external specialist and updates The Charity's maintenance database accordingly.
- g) Where the emergency hazard and/or the damp and/or mould issue cannot be resolved in-house then arrangements must be made with the appropriate approved contractor at the earliest opportunity.
- h) Utilising specialist contractors & surveyors to consider and implement the most effective method to remove/treat the hazard and/or damp/mould, identifying and rectifying the root cause of the issue and look to future proof the dwelling from future damp and mould issues.
- i) Ensure detailed records of all reports, investigations, and repair work throughout the process are upload the Charity's property database.
- j) Supply the Project Manager with information related to the initial investigations within three-days and subsequent works conducted so they can provide up to date information to the resident throughout the process
- k) The timeframe to complete follow up works should be monitored to ensure the works are programmed within a reasonable timeframe and will be linked to the complexity of the type of issue, as well as the type of building.
- l) The Property Manager must review the contractors report pertaining to the hazards and/or damp and mould and address the recommendations within the report at the earliest opportunity and confirm if the dwelling/unit remain habitable or not.
- m) Where necessary liaise with the Project Manager regarding the need to offer suitable, alternative accommodation at the landlord's expense if the property cannot be made safe within the specified timeframes.
- n) Decanting the resident should be considered either temporarily or permanently depending on the severity of the issue.
- o) Following successfully removing the hazard and/or damp and mould, to liaise with the Project Manager and The Charity's Property Surveyor to agree a suitable re-inspection regime to ensure that the hazard and/or damp and mould has been eliminated and continue to monitor the property within an appropriate timeframe.
- p) When future works are being planned through the capital programmes or void works, consideration should be given on how best to complete preventive measures, or adaptations, that will lessen the chances of damp and mould growth in properties e.g. installing anti mould paint and silicone, installing/upgrading enhanced ventilation or heating systems etc.

4.4 Project/Scheme Manager's Responsibilities

The Project/scheme manager must support the Property Manager and the Head of Property in the day-to-day implementation of this standard and shall, within their area of responsibility:

- a) At the point of tenancy, provide residents with information on what to do to help minimise hazards, including damp and mould and what to do if they have concerns within their dwelling/unit.

- b) To keep up to date records of underlying health issues of all residents that may make them more vulnerable to illness related to damp and health issues such as respiratory illness etc.
- c) Ensure the monthly wellbeing/room checks are conducted and the reports of hazards and/or damp and mould are uploaded to The Charity's maintenance database and are available to the Property Manager for monitoring purposes.
- d) Ensure that all staff are aware of signs of damp and mould as per [appendix 1](#) and are included in the monthly wellbeing/room inspections.
- e) Report any suspected issues related to hazards and/or damp and mould as soon as possible via The Charity's repairs database, following communication from an affected resident, wellbeing/room inspection or other communications etc.
- f) Check if the resident has any health conditions that may be exacerbated, by damp and mould issues and ensure these works are prioritised with the Property Manager.
- g) To enable access to affected units, provide background information regarding the resident or property, to relevant persons, including maintenance operatives and Property Managers
- h) Where necessary, sourcing alternative accommodation for resident dependant on the severity of the case and agreeing/implementing a management plan/follow up inspection regime with the Property Manager, as appropriate.

4.5 Housing Officer

The Housing Officers must support the Project/scheme Manager and the Property Manager in the day-to-day implementation of this standard and shall, within their area of responsibility:

- a) Complete training relating to hazards and damp and mould issues in properties.
- b) To provide residents with information on hazards, including damp and mould at the point of tenancy and annual reminders of how to minimise and/or report hazards and damp and mould issues related to their property.
- c) To complete monthly wellbeing/room inspections and assess resident's dwellings and communal areas, for signs of hazards and/or damp and mould. Reporting any suspected signs of hazards and/or damp and mould in The Charity's maintenance database, being categorised as a 'Damp & Mould' job.
- d) To assist with access to dwellings with hazards and/or damp and mould issues as required for inspection and treatment of the issue(s).
- e) To provide the resident with regular updates on the work and timeframes for the issue to be resolved etc.
- f) To ensure that all identified hazards and/or damp and mould issues have been resolved, support the Property Manager and Property Inspector in monitoring properties that have had hazards and/or damp and mould issues and report on any repeat/new issues in each dwelling where necessary.
- g) To support residents with issues relating to hazards and/or damp and mould in their dwelling. To provide advice and information on ventilation, enhanced cleaning regimes, heating etc to help prevent damp and mould spore build up following repairs being delivered.



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4.6 Job Co-Ordinator

The Job Co-Ordinator's must support the Property Manager in the day-to-day implementation of this standard and shall, within their area of responsibility:

- a) Review The Charity's maintenance database for reports of damp and mould and ensure these jobs are assigned within 48-hours of being reported, to enable the initial visit to occur within the required seven-day timeframe.
- b) Liaise with the Project Manager to arrange access for maintenance operatives, cleaners, and/or third-party contractors as required to assess, undertake removal/remedial and prevention works as required.
- c) To collate information provided by maintenance operatives, cleaners, and/or third-party contractors.
- d) To monitor that initial inspection has taken place and feedback from the inspection has been uploaded against the unique job reference on The Charity's maintenance database, regarding works undertaken following each visit, which may include the job being closed with relevant evidence.
- e) Where the issue has not been resolved within 28-days and requires further investigation, liaise with the relevant Property Manager and where it is deemed necessary ensure arrangements are in place with The Charity's approved contractor at the earliest opportunity and a timeframe for remedial works has been provided.
- f) To monitor the progress of the contractor to ensure that works to remove the hazards and/or damp and/or mould is achieved within the agreed timeframe.
- g) To ensure the contractors report and relevant evidence is uploaded to The Charity's maintenance database against the relevant job and ensure the Property Manager is alerted to the report.
- h) Raise any related job, arising from the damp and mould specialists report, to cover any follow-on works and monitor through until completion.
- i) To inform the Property Manager and Project/scheme manager when all works have been completed, so a suitable inspection regime can be implemented, where necessary, to monitor the property following the works being completed.

4.7 Employees

Employees are responsible for taking reasonable care of themselves and others that may be affected by their actions or lack of actions and must:

- a) Report any defects that they believe may be linked to hazards and/or damp and mould to their line manager or the customer service advice team.

5. Document Control

This document is maintained, updated, and controlled through The Charity's intranet site. Documents printed from this site and kept as a hard copy should not be considered as current when referred to later.

6. Appendices

6.1 Identifying Damp and Mould

Damp and mould are linked to moisture build up on surfaces, which can be exacerbated by a lack of heating and ventilation. Damp and mould are often prevalent on external walls, around windowsills, in areas with limited ventilation/heating, rooms that are overcrowded, have adjoining pipework that leaves rooms smelling musty and the air moist.

Signs which may indicate there is a damp and mould issue within the property include:

- Musty and damp smells.
- Patches of discoloured wallpaper and paint on a wall.
- Excessive water droplets on a windowsill or wall.
- Dark patches of mould on the walls, floor, ceiling and around windows.
- Rotting or damaged skirting boards.
- A white residue left on walls and flooring.
- Walls that are cold to touch.
- Lifting or peeling wallpaper.
- Increased humidity in the air.

If any of the above criteria are identified, or if it is suspected that damp and mould are prevalent in one of The Charity's premises, the issue must be reported via the normal channels to report a maintenance issue as soon as practicably possible.

See [Appendix 1](#) for an outline of common types of damp that will have varying root causes and solutions, including Rising Damp, Penetration Damp, Defective Plumbing, and Condensation.

6.2 Rising Damp

Rising damp occurs when the water on the ground level rises into the house or building. Having bypassed the damp proof course – a layer of waterproof material in the wall of a building near to the ground. Mould does not usually accompany rising damp as the salt prevents it from growing. However, if left untreated, it can cause other issues such as cracked plaster and lifting wallpaper.



6.3 Penetrating Damp

Found exclusively on external walls and ceilings. Penetrating damp is caused by water passing through a building defect such as a missing roof tile or pointing. It will be most evident after rainfall and will appear as an obvious damp patch. This will dry out as the weather improves. As the water can pick up salt as it passes through the building material, mould will rarely grow as a result of penetrating damp. Much like with rising damp, if there is any salt present, this will stop the mould from being able to grow.



6.4 Defective Plumbing

Whether it's a leak from the toilet, shower, sink or a pipe, defective plumbing can affect internal walls and ceilings. Appearing as an obvious damp patch, damp from defective plumbing will appear no matter the weather outside. However, it may get worse after utilities are used, such as the shower is turned on or the toilet is flushed.



6.5 Condensation

The most common cause of mould is condensation. Water which collects as droplets on a cold surface when humid air is in contact with it. Cold mornings when heating is turned on and how much water is sitting on the surface of windows. Condensation is most commonly found on or around windows. Especially during the winter, but also regularly

grows within the corners of a room and on north facing walls. It can even be found behind large objects such as beds and wardrobes. In areas that do not get much ventilation – especially when up against an external wall. There are many contributing factors to condensation, and many are a result of lifestyle. From simple actions such as boiling a kettle or drying clothes indoors, there is a lot that we do every single day that adds to the amount of moisture in the air.

