

WESTFIELD HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Damp and Condensation Policy

1.0 Policy Statement

In October 2021, the Housing Ombudsman issued “*Spotlight on Damp and Mould*”, outlining the approach expected of social landlords in managing damp and mould concerns raised by tenants. This report set out 26 recommendations for improving the management, prevention, and response to damp and mould.

Following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020, caused by prolonged exposure to mould in poor housing conditions, Awaab’s Law was introduced as part of the *Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023*. This law requires landlords to investigate and address reported health hazards within specific timeframes to ensure residents live in safe, decent, and healthy homes.

From 27th October 2025, the Awaab’s Law provisions come fully into effect, introducing *statutory timescales* for damp and mould investigations and repairs. Key points are:

- Applies to social housing landlords (housing associations and local authorities).
- Requires landlords to treat damp and mould as a serious health and safety issue, not a lifestyle problem.
- Landlords must carry out a health-risk assessment when damp or mould is reported.
- Sets strict legal timeframes for responding to reports of damp and mould:
 - Initial inspection within 14 days of receiving the report.
 - Emergency repairs within 24 hours if there is an immediate health or safety risk.
 - Non-emergency repairs within a 7-day or 21-day timeframe, depending on severity.
 - All works completed within a “reasonable period” and tenants kept informed throughout.
- Landlords must provide tenants with written findings within 3 working days of the inspection, including what was found, required works, and a schedule of completion.
- Tenants must be given clear information about damp, mould, and what the landlord will do next.
- Required works must not be delayed due to tenant blame or lifestyle assumptions.
- Repairs must be completed even if access is difficult, with landlords expected to make reasonable attempts.
- The law strengthens the Housing Ombudsman’s ability to take action where landlords fail to comply.
- Applies to all new and existing tenancies in social housing.

These timescales are now legally binding and form part of our core service standards for responsive repairs and property safety management.

Westfield Housing takes a zero-tolerance and proactive approach to damp and mould. We are committed to acting swiftly and effectively, making it easy for residents to report issues, and ensuring appropriate actions are taken within defined timescales.

All inspections and remedial works will be undertaken in line with the *Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)*, ensuring that risks to health are properly assessed, recorded, and mitigated.

We will investigate all reported cases holistically, identify the root cause, carry out remedial works in a timely manner, and provide advice and guidance to help prevent recurrence. We will also use available data and technology to identify and address risks proactively, before they escalate into hazards.

Our aim is to ensure all tenants live in safe, well-maintained, and healthy homes, treated with respect, dignity, and fairness.

2.0 Definitions and Background Information

a) Damp

‘Damp’ is the presence of unwanted moisture within a property that may cause damage to the structure or pose health risks to occupants. The main mechanisms causing damp are:

- Rising damp
- Penetrating damp
- Condensation
- Mould growth

Each case will be assessed under the HHSRS, which classifies damp and mould as potential Category 1 or Category 2 hazards, depending on the severity and potential health risk.

b) Rising Damp

Moisture moving upwards from the ground through the walls or floors by capillary action. Typically affects ground floor walls up to around 1.5m. Common indicators include:

- Dark “tide marks” or staining low on walls
- Peeling wallpaper or rotting skirting boards

c) Penetrating Damp

Occurs when moisture passes horizontally through walls due to building defects such as damaged gutters, roofing, or pointing. Indicators include:

- Damp staining or patches on walls
- Localised mould or plaster damage

d) Condensation

Condensation occurs when moisture in warm air meets a cold surface. It is the most common cause of damp and can usually be reduced through improved ventilation and tenant awareness.

An average household can produce up to 17 litres of moisture per day from daily activities such as cooking, bathing, and drying clothes.

We will provide tenants with practical advice and leaflets to help reduce condensation.

e) Mould

Mould refers to fungal growths that thrive on damp surfaces in poorly ventilated areas. Certain types of mould present a Category 1 hazard under the HHSRS due to their impact on respiratory health.

We will always treat the presence of mould as a serious health risk and respond in accordance with our Damp and Mould Procedure and Awaab's Law timescales.

3.0 Policy Aims

- To ensure a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould in all Westfield Housing properties.
- To comply fully with Awaab's Law, the HHSRS, and the Decent Homes Standard.
- To take prompt and proportionate action to assess and resolve all reports.
- To maintain accurate and transparent records via our Damp and Mould Register.
- To protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of tenants, particularly those identified as vulnerable.

4.0 Responsibilities

Damp and mould management is a shared responsibility between Westfield Housing (as landlord) and the tenant.

Westfield Housing Responsibilities:-

- To investigate every report of damp or mould within 10 working days and determine the root cause in line with Awaab's Law and the HHSRS.
- To ensure all employees and contractors are trained in identifying and managing damp, mould, and condensation in accordance with HHSRS guidance.
- To record all health risks using the HHSRS scoring framework and maintain oversight via the Damp and Mould Register.
- To complete required works within the defined priority timescales (DMC1–DMC5) and communicate progress clearly to tenants.
- To carry out a follow-up inspection within 3 months of completion to confirm the issue has been fully resolved.
- To ensure all homes meet the Decent Homes Standard, including appropriate levels of insulation and ventilation.

- To inspect all properties at re-let or mutual exchange to confirm they are free from damp and mould.
- To share inspection findings and reports with tenants, and to act on any independent surveyor's recommendations promptly.
- To consider vulnerability and individual needs when planning works or temporary decant arrangements.
- To analyse complaints and inspection data to identify recurring trends and improve prevention and response strategies.

Tenant Responsibilities:-

- To report damp and mould issues promptly.
- To follow advice provided on ventilation, heating, and condensation control.
- To allow reasonable access for inspections and repairs.

Contractor Responsibilities:-

- To report any observed signs of damp or mould, regardless of the nature of their work.
- To follow Westfield's Code of Conduct and comply with this Policy and Procedure.

5.0 Risk, Reporting, and Monitoring

- All cases of damp and mould will be recorded in the Damp and Mould Register, monitored by the Property Services Officer.
- Inspections will utilise the Full Property Damp and Mould Inspection Form, which records:
 - Room-by-room humidity and temperature readings
 - Visual assessment
 - Tenant vulnerability factors
 - Photographic evidence and equipment readings (e.g., protimeter, ventometer)
- Follow-up contact will be made within three months of completed works to verify resolution.
- Complaint trends, lessons learned, and repeat cases will be reviewed quarterly and shared with the Executive Team and Customer Panel.
- KPIs will be reviewed monthly, and performance against HHSRS compliance will form part of the bi-monthly contractor meetings and employee one-to-ones.

6.0 Legal and Legislative Framework

This policy aligns with the following:

- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) – used to identify and assess damp and mould as a Category 1 or 2 hazard and ensure proportionate action.
- Awaab's Law – establishes statutory timescales for inspection, communication, and repair.
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 – ensuring homes are fit for occupation at all times.
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 – establishing the duty to maintain properties free from hazards.
- Decent Homes Standard (2006) – requiring homes to be warm, weatherproof, and with modern facilities.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-health-and-safety-rating-system-guidance-for-landlords-and-property-related-professionals>

7.0 Linked Documents

- Damp and Mould Procedure
- Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- Compensation and Reimbursement Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Procurement Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

Further information and guidance are available at: www.westfieldha.org.uk

To be completed by Corporate Services Officer

Document Control

Business Owner (name & job title)	Helen Timney, Property Services Officer
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Date Reviewed	October 2025
Reviewed By	Board – 15 th December 2025
Next Review Due	May 2026
Effective Date	15 th December 2025

Document History

Date	Version Number	Author	Description of Update
1 Nov 2025	1.4	HT	Amendment in line with Awaabs Law (27.10.25) and revised timescales and updating staff to employees
16 Sept 2024	1.3	HT	Split Policy & Procedure
8 May 2024	1.2	HT	Review of Policy and Procedure
22 May 2023	1.1	HR	Minor updates including reference to Awaab's Law.
25 May 2022	1.0	HT	New Damp & Condensation Policy