



Damp and Mould Policy

2022 - 2025

Damp and Mould Policy

Adopted / Date Reviewed:	Adopted: April 2022 Reviewed: December 2022
Review Period: Next Review:	3 Years December 2025
Contact Officer:	Corporate Head of Customers
Policy Version:	First version of policy – April 2022 Second version of policy – December 2022
Version Reviewed by: Version Approved by:	CLT on 15 December 2022 ELT on 15 December 2022 Operations Committee on 07 February 2023
Policy Links:	Lettings Policy Repairs and Maintenance Policy Complaints and Compensation Policy Tenancy Policy Asset Management Equality & Diversity Policy Health & Safety Policy

Brief Policy Summary:

This policy sets out how Lincolnshire Housing Partnership will manage reports of damp and mould in our homes. This includes, risk assessing every report, creating a clear action plan to remedy damp, mould and condensation and supporting customers to live well in their homes which will include the provision of advice and education on mould and condensation.

Contents

Aims of the policy	4
Legal and Legislation Requirements	4
Customer Consultation	4
Equality and Diversity	5
Scope of the policy	5
Guidance on risk assessing	5
Customer Journey Map	8
Types of damp	9
LHP's responsibilities	11
Customer Responsibilities	13
Monitoring	14
Equality Impact Assessment	15

Aims of the policy

1. This policy aims to address damp mould and condensation by reducing the likelihood of it occurring and speedily resolving instances when they do occur. We will:
 - Manage our homes to ensure that we proactively identify and react to instances of damp and mould
 - Risk assesses our asset and the potential impact of works on our customers, especially where vulnerabilities are present
 - Work in partnership with customers ensuring that a safe and healthy home is provided
 - Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to remove damp
 - Ensure that customers have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive support, advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation
 - Be supportive and responsive to customer vulnerabilities to ensure all customer needs, regardless of protected characteristics, are considered, addressed and solutions are agreed with customers
 - Comply with statutory requirements and good practice
 - Ensure that the fabric of the property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation

Legal and Legislation Requirements

2. The policy is aligned with the Regulatory Standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, specifically: - Home Standard, Registered providers shall: ensure that customers' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Governments Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.
3. The policy also aligned to the follow legislation:

Housing Act 2004 Part 1 – Housing Condition
Housing Act 2004 - Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
Decent Homes Standard
The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

Customer Consultation

4. We aim to put our customers at the heart of all of our services by encouraging customer involvement and consultation. We have consulted customers through our customer involvement framework in the development of this policy.

Equality and Diversity

5. LHP recognises that its colleagues and customers come from diverse backgrounds, with varying experiences and needs. LHP is committed to promoting equality and fairness and combating discrimination. This applies to everyone, regardless of gender, racial or ethnic background, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation gender reassignment, age, marital or parental status.
6. Both in policy and practice, the individual customer needs will be central to decisions made to rectify instances of Damp & Mould. All interactions with the customer along with solutions will be delivered in the LHP Way.

Scope of the policy

7. The scope of this policy covers how the LHP team with a Customer First collective cross departmental response, will manage and eradicate damp and mould. This includes:
 - Proactively reviewing all SAP energy ratings of D and below for our properties to identify those at risk of damp, mould and condensation
 - We will use our data to review, prioritise and target those properties at highest risk, as well as identify any damp, mould and condensation issues on the annual property review to all LHP homes
 - Risk assesses the potential for the property to cause harm to the customer's, as well as ensuring that the fabric of the building is protected from deterioration as a result of damp, mould and condensation
 - Risk assessing customer vulnerabilities and needs creating reasonable adjustments within our process to support them
 - Identifying the types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation damp
 - Identifying a presence of dust mites owing to damp conditions via testing
 - We act non-judgmentally when offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout this process to all customers living in LHP properties.
 - Having a clear plan to share with our customers on how LHP will work with them to remedy any issues

Guidance on risk assessing

8. The broad principles applied to this diagnosis matrix align with the HHSRS assessment criteria, weightings for classes of harm, likelihood and outcome. For the purposes of the diagnosis risk matrix we simplify the process to broad risk categories and assume that damp and mould is treated as high harm/outcome. The descriptors below are guidance only. However, this is the basis of our reaction period and activity.

Extreme/severe 4	<p>Reaction: Emergency attendance within 24 hours, triage with possible follow up surveyor appointment. Relocate to appropriate temporary accommodation if required.</p> <p>Description: Extensive damp and mould in multiple living areas, highly vulnerable residents, very young and elderly with chronic and or vulnerability factors.</p>
Severe/serious 3	<p>Reaction: urgent attendance book engineer to attend within 5 working days, likelihood of surveyor follow up.</p> <p>Description: multiple areas of extensive damp and/or mould growth in main living areas of bedrooms, living rooms, bathroom mould growth, and/or dampness highly visible on surfaces, levels of vulnerability present, young and elderly residents with known vulnerabilities that exacerbate risk.</p>
Serious/moderate 2	<p>Reaction: standard repair category book engineer to attend within 20 day timescale</p> <p>Description: multiple areas of damp and identified but limited in area and location, (e.g., under stair cupboard i.e., non-habitable space.)</p> <p>May be some low level of customer risk factor such as very young or elderly but no specific vulnerabilities</p>
Moderate/low 1	<p>Reaction: monitor only</p> <p>Description: to no risk minor damp or mould around windows no identified in vulnerability matrix, to be monitoring on annual Healthy Home visit.</p>

Risk assessment score matrix

Score	Classification	Response
4	Emergency engineer to attend	24 hours
3	Urgent engineer to attend	5 day
2	Standard engineer to attend	20 day
1	Annual Healthy Home visit	Annual

Risk assessment matrix

Vulnerability of Occupants	4	4	4	4	4
	3	3	3	4	4
	2	2	2	3	4
	1	1	2	3	4
		1	2	3	4
		Severity of Damp and Mould			

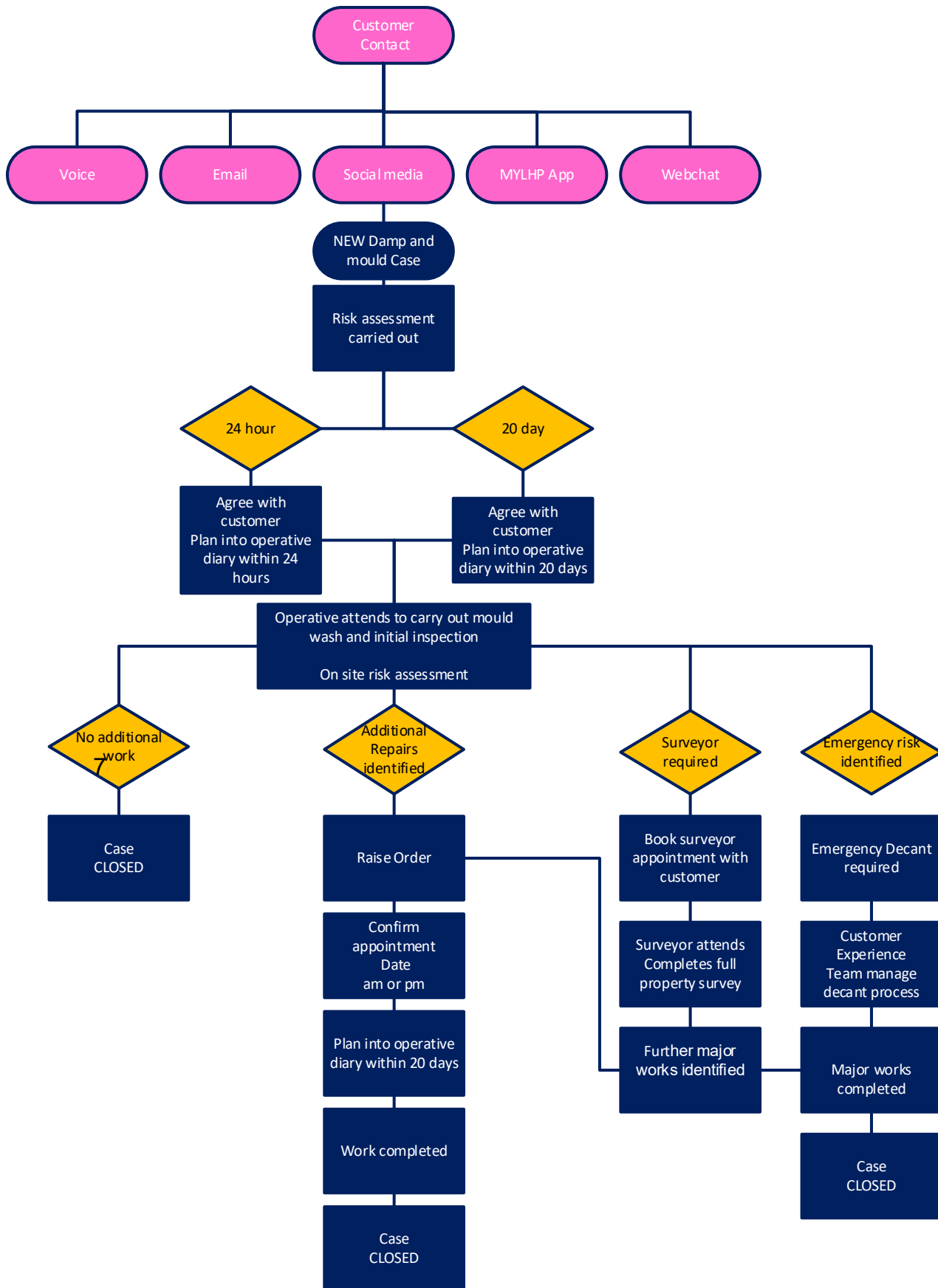
Vulnerability Factors

9. The most at risk customers are the very young and elderly. This is further amplified where vulnerability factors are applied in terms of damp and mould, this relates to known medical vulnerabilities such as asthma, allergies, chronic conditions and learning difficulties, where self-management present added complexities. The most at risk therefore fall into the high-risk demographic with medical/vulnerability present.

Scale and Scope of Damp and Mould

10. It is important to recognise that not all damp and mould presents the same risk to our customers. The most immediate risk however relates to severe mould growth which presents airborne toxicity and is therefore especially dangerous to those described above. Mould growth within living/habitable rooms is also a factor as well as spread in multiple areas.
11. Minor instance of mould such as around window frames and in silicon is considered lower risk and should be treated as not urgent. Once mould appears in any degree on ceilings walls and soft furnishing it becomes higher risk and needs urgent attention.
12. Damp from either building fabric failure, DPC or DPM failure (rising damp) leaks through roofing guttering etc (penetrating damp) and internal leaks also present high risk. Immediate response should be actioned in the most severe/obvious case.

Customer Journey Map



Types of damp

13. The types of damp covered by the policy.

Rising Damp

14. The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action. This is caused by:

- building defects, usually a breakdown of damp-proof course or damp-proof membrane in the floor, allowing moisture to enter the structure.

15. Signs to lookout for:

- Commonly where a damp-proof course breaks down you may see a 'tide mark' line appear around the perimeter of rooms
- Wet patches appearing on walls
- Flaking or bubbling plaster
- Rotting skirting boards and flooring

16. This type of damp rarely produces mould but can damage décor and fixtures within your home.

Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)

17. Water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure. The cause can be the result of, for example:

- Water ingress due to defective or poor original design / workmanship of the structure
- Defective components for example roof coverings, external wall doors and windows
- Defective or blocked rainwater gutters and pipes
- Defective or leaking internal waste pipes, hot and cold water and heating systems
- Flooding due to burst pipes

Condensation Damp

18. Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. This can take two main forms:

- Surface condensation arising when the inner surface of the structure is cooler than the room air
- Condensation inside the structure (interstitial) where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials (e.g., walls), which then condenses when it reaches colder conditions within the structure

19. The conditions that can increase the risk of condensation are:
- Inadequate ventilation e.g., natural opening windows and trickle / background vents and mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens
 - Inadequate heating e.g. undersized boilers and radiators, draught stripping
 - Inadequate thermal insulation. e.g., Missing, or defective wall and loft insulation
 - High humidity e.g., presence of rising and penetrating damp and not covering pan's when cooking or when drying laundry inside the house
 - Overcrowding – With more occupants living together increases the moisture levels through cooking and showering in the home

Mould

20. Mould 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 damp is present. Mould is part of a group of very common organisms called fungi that also include mushrooms and yeast. It is present virtually everywhere, both indoors and outdoors.
21. Mould may grow indoors in wet or moist areas that lack adequate ventilation, including walls/wallpaper, ceilings, bathroom tiles, carpets (especially those with jute backing), insulation material and wood. If moisture accumulates, mould growth will often occur on indoor surfaces. Many different types of mould exist, and they all have the potential to cause health problems.
22. In order to reproduce, mould produces tiny particles called spores. Spores are carried in the air and may cause health problems if inhaled by people who are sensitive or allergic to them.
23. Health effects of mould exposure include a runny or blocked nose, irritation of the eyes and skin and sometimes wheezing. For people with asthma, inhaling mould spores may cause an asthma attack. Very rarely, people may develop a severe mould infection, usually in the lungs. It is important to note that most people will not experience any health problems from coming into contact with mould

Dust Mites

24. Whilst dust mites can be common in all homes, they can thrive in environments that are humid and warm. Whilst most people will not be affected by this, others can have an allergy to them. Symptoms of this type of allergy include:
- Runny nose or sneezing
 - Coughing, wheezing and breathlessness
 - Itchy skin or raised rash (hives)
 - Itchy, red, or watery eyes
 - Itchy nose, mouth or throat

25. Where properties are warm and humid, and where symptoms such as the above are identified that are not caused by other illness or reason, a dust mite test will be completed.

LHP's responsibilities

26. We will:
- Proactively manage our properties using a risk-based approach by reviewing our data and prioritising and targeting those at highest risk
 - Listen and ask appropriate questions when you report damp, mould or condensation issues and apply this information to our risk matrix so that we can understand how best to help you
 - Dependent on the information you provide and the outcome of the risk matrix assessment, you may require a visit by an LHP engineer in the first instance to assess the work required and complete any necessary repairs
 - If a surveyor visit is required, a suitable appointment will be made for them to attend and diagnose the root cause of damp, mould or condensation through different methods of testing and outline a suitable repair plan to remedy
 - A repair plan will be put in place following any surveys and assessments and you may be referred to our Customer Experience Team for liaison support
 - If works required can be done safely with you remaining in your home, these will be planned into our current repairs timescales and an appointment provided
 - Where there is no structural damp present and all ventilation and heating devices are working correctly, but you are experiencing condensation and mould issues, LHP will continue to support you by providing technology that can monitor humidity, temperature and air quality in your home and work with you to reduce environmental impacts that could be causing this
 - If works required are more intrusive in nature, or where personal circumstances and vulnerabilities mean you cannot remain at your home, LHP will include your home on our damp programme, and you will be temporarily decanted when works are due to commence. Properties requiring this type of work will be monitored on a register to ensure they are prioritised correctly based on the risk matrix assessment score
 - If any category 1 or 2 properties are identified as part of an HHSRS assessment, those customers will be moved to a suitable home until works are completed.
27. If there are any vulnerabilities or needs within your household that require extra support, or where reasonable adjustments to our process may be required due to these, you will be referred to our Customer Experience Team. This team will be able to work with you to understand what needs you have and to be a point of contact throughout any damp, mould and condensation works, decants through the damp programme, or required home moves.

28. We will ensure that our colleagues are appropriately trained, technically and in the LHP Way to investigate the cause of damp and mould to avoid misdiagnosis and to support the customer. All investigations will be carried out using the appropriate tools and monitoring equipment. This includes training for all LHP employees.
29. In some cases where surveys and testing highlight no structural damp and where ventilation and heating devices are working correctly, but you continue to experience condensation and mould, LHP will provide additional support and advice to the customer on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation damp and mould. This may be using environmental monitors that are installed in the home and provide real time data on temperature and humidity to both LHP via a cloud portal and the customer through a phone app. This information is stored via a cloud system and monitored by the customer experience team. Where the sensors identify a drop in temperature or high levels of moisture in the air, it will send an alert to the customers app with instructions and tips on how to remedy the environment. We will use this data to highlight where environmental impacts within the home may be contributing to damp and mould.

Cost of Living Impact

30. We recognise that the current financial climate is difficult for some of our customers, especially in relation to energy costs. Our Customer Experience Team will be trained on how to support and signpost customers who are experiencing fuel poverty to LHP's Money Support Team. The Money Support Team can advise on all aspects of a customer's personal finances, including benefits, grants, and schemes. When a customer is experiencing fuel poverty or highlights other financial difficulty, we will always make them aware of this service and request their permission to refer for an appointment and review of their circumstances.

Your Home

31. We will diagnose the cause of damp, mould and condensation and provide solutions that will support our customer and address the cause of the damp, mould and condensation
32. If a surveyor is required to diagnose the cause of the damp, mould and condensation, they will use a set process for testing and survey and determine a repairs plan
33. We have trained our colleagues to be able to provide advice and support to customers impacted by damp and mould in their homes to support them to live well in their homes
34. We will ensure only competent persons are employed to provide high levels of technical and customer service
35. We will inform the customer of the findings of the investigations following the home visit and survey. This will include identifying the possible causes of damp, recommending effective solutions and all necessary remedial works/actions/enhancements and the estimated timescales to complete the work required to address the issues

36. We will undertake improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation damp, for example installation of mechanical extractor fans, fresh air vents and repairing existing insulation.
37. We will make good internal surfaces following work carried out, ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for the customer to redecorate.
38. We will respond to a report of damp, mould and condensation and complete any remedial works as quickly as possible dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem and on the complexity of the solution required. Our customers will be consistently updated and consulted regarding appropriate start dates for works to commence.
39. Where Internal conditions within a home for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongs are having a detrimental effect on health and wellbeing of the customers, or are preventing inspections or remedial works being carried out, LHP will provide support and assistance to review the customers housing needs and will work with the customer to provide interim and appropriate decant accommodation.
40. Where it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary decant to an alternative property. The customer will be supported through this process to find suitable interim or alternative accommodation.

Customer Responsibilities

41. Using the information provided in our letters and website on types of damp, mould and condensation, we will ask customers' to regularly check for damp and mould and to immediately report to LHP evidence of rising and penetrating damp and also faulty equipment that will hamper the management and control of damp and condensation (faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, lack of heating etc.)
42. We will ask customers who are utilising environmental monitors to access their app regularly and follow advice to improve the temperature and humidity of their homes to decrease opportunity for condensation to form.
43. Redecoration: We will, replaster, apply a mist coat of paint and then emulsion. Where remedial works have been undertaken wallpaper should not be hung by the customer for at least six months.

No access or refusal of access to a property

44. Where damp or mould has been identified either by a customer or by LHP or a property has been assessed as high risk through LHP data insight, customers will be required to allow access for inspections and for the carrying out of remedial works (in accordance with their tenancy agreement)
45. LHP do consider this to be a health and safety concern for customers and will consider alternative methods of gaining access, such as seeking an injunction.
46. All properties identified as hard to access or refusal of access will be managed through LHPs standard "hard to access" process.

Monitoring

47. LHP will monitor our damp and mould reports and repairs through its compliance framework and report:

- Monthly to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT).
- Quarterly to the Operations Committee and to Board:

Reporting will include:

No	PI	Frequency	Comment/ Observation
PI: 1	Total number of new damp/mould related repairs reported in month.	Monthly	<i>Total</i>
PI:1a	Total number of new damp/mould related repairs reports (Major - 24 hr response)	Monthly	<i>Total</i>
PI:1b	Total number of new damp/mould related repairs reports (Minor - 20-day response)	Monthly	<i>Total</i>
PI: 2	Total number of damp/mould related repairs completed/cases closed .	Monthly	<i>Total</i>
PI: 3	Percentage of damp/mould related repairs completed within target timescale of 24 hours	Monthly	<i>100%</i>
PI: 3a	Percentage of damp/mould related repairs completed within target timescale of 20 working days	Monthly	<i>100%</i>
PI:4	Average number of days to complete damp/mould related repairs	Monthly	<i>TBC</i>
PI: 5	Total number of damp/mould related repairs as work in progress at the end of the month.	Monthly	<i>Total</i>

Equality Impact Assessment

Damp & Mould Policy

Provide a brief summary of the aims and main activities of the initiative (bullet points):

This policy sets out Lincolnshire Housing Partnerships Customer First approach in managing reports of damp and mould in our homes.

Completed By:	Corporate Head of Customers	Date:	December 2022
----------------------	-----------------------------	--------------	---------------

STAGE 1: SCREENING

This stage establishes whether a proposed initiative will have an impact from an equality perspective on any particular group of people or community – i.e., on the grounds of race, religion/faith/belief, gender (including transgender), sexual orientation, age, disability, or whether it is “equality neutral” (i.e., have no effect either positive or negative).

Q 1. Who will benefit from this initiative? Is there likely to be a positive impact on specific groups/communities (whether or not they are the intended beneficiaries), and if so, how? Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality ‘neutral’ i.e. will have no particular effect on any group? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

We do not envisage that this policy will have a negative impact or particular impact on any group but will positively impact on all customers experiencing damp, mould, and condensation.

Q 2. Is there likely to be an adverse impact on one or more minority/under-represented or community group as a result of this initiative? If so, who may be affected and why: Or is it clear at this stage that it will be equality ‘neutral’? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

No - We will assess the needs of the customers, based on the following criteria

- If there are none
- Mobility / Ill Health
- Mental Health, extreme mobility challenges and serious ill health regardless of works required.
- Where works are intrusive and there are mobility challenges, the option to decant whilst works complete will be offered and a move supported.

Q 3. Is there sufficient data on the target beneficiary groups/communities? Are any of these groups under or overrepresented? Do they have access to the same resources? What are your sources of data and are there any gaps? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

Yes - This policy is aimed at all who receive this service from LHP

Q 4. Outsourced services – if the initiative is partly or wholly provided by external organisations / agencies, please list any arrangements you plan to ensure that they promote equality and diversity. *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

N/A

Q 5. Is the impact of the initiative (whether positive or negative) significant enough to warrant a full impact assessment – see guidance? If not, will there be monitoring and review to assess the level of impact over a period of time? *Please consider all aspects of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

No

Q 6. To be completed at six monthly review Detail actions taken to assess the level of impact over a period of time, or to address any gaps in data. *Please consider all aspect of Diversity including as a minimum: Age, Disability, Gender/Transgender, Race/Ethnicity, Religion/Faith/Belief, Sexuality*

N/A