



Damp and Mould Policy

2023 - 2026

Damp and Mould Policy

Adopted / Date Reviewed:	Adopted: April 2022 Reviewed: December 2022 Reviewed: July 2023
Review Period:	3 Years
Next Review:	July 2026
Contact Officer:	Corporate Head of Customers
Policy Version:	Version 1: April 2022 Version 2: December 2022 Version 3: July 2023
Version 3 Reviewed by:	CLT on 20 July 2023 ELT on 26 July 2023
Version 3 Approved by:	Operations Committee on 08 August 2023
Policy Links:	Damp and Mould Procedure Lettings Policy Repairs and Maintenance Policy Complaints Policy Compensation Policy Tenancy Policy Home Strategy Equality & Diversity Policy Health & Safety Policy Surveying Procedure

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.

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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. This policy also sets out how we will support our customers to minimise the risk of damp and mould occurring and report it where there is evidence of its presence, this will also ensure that LHP meets its legal, contractual, and regulatory obligations We will:
 - Manage our homes to ensure that we proactively identify and react to instances of damp and mould
 - Risk assess our assets 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 the highest risk, as well as identify any damp, mould and condensation issues on the annual property review to all LHP homes
 - Use BI data to identify property types and areas where damp ‘hot spots’ may occur to find our silent customers who could be affected to ensure the properties are surveyed and any damp and mould issues are rectified in line with our process
 - Risk assessing the potential for the property to cause harm to the customers, 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.
 - Ensure that customers are treated in a fair and consistent way
 - Having a clear plan to share with our customers on how LHP will work with them to remedy any issues

Principles

8. LHP will comply with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements and good practice.
9. We recognise the most at-risk customers are the very young and the 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.
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 (damp proof course) or DPM (damp proof membrane) 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.
13. Respond to all reports of damp and condensation and complete any repair works/measures in line with the LHP Responsive Repairs policy. This will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem, the complexity of the solution and the repair works/actions required. We will follow Damp and Mould cases periodically to ensure repairs are completed and the situation remedied.

LHP's responsibilities

14. We will: -
 - Proactively manage our properties using a risk-based approach by reviewing our data and prioritising and targeting those at the 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, 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 in accordance with our repair policy

- 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 support you through its customer experience team and make reasonable adjustments on a case-by-case basis. This could include a permanent home move that may be subject to Home Loss Payment. 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.
15. 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.
 16. 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.
 17. 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.
 18. We may need to collect data from customers reporting damp and mould issues to allow us to take into account customers diverse needs when assessing their risk profile to ensure that this is no disproportionate impact.

Your Home

19. 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
20. 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
21. 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
22. We will ensure only competent persons are employed to provide high levels of technical and customer service
23. 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
24. 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.
25. We will make good internal surfaces following work carried out, ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for the customer to redecorate.
26. 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.
27. 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.
28. Where it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements may be made. This may be on a day-by-day basis, a temporary decant to an alternative property or a permanent move The customer will be supported through this process to find suitable interim or alternative accommodation.
29. We will take any opportunity to review recurrence of damp and mould issues by training staff who attend our properties most frequently to look out for signs of damp and mould and how to report issues to find a resolution for the customer.
30. 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

Customer Responsibilities

31. To immediately report any evidence of rising and penetrating damp (see types of damp) and faulty equipment that will affect the management of humidity and moisture in the home (faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, heating system failure etc.)
32. 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.)
33. 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.
34. Allow access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works. It is important that you engage with LHP for any appointments relating to damp and mould issues and allow access at a time convenient to you. If you have an active disrepair claim, LHP will still need to access your property to complete any surveys and works. Failure to allow access could result in legal action as per our no access process.
35. We ask customers to alert LHP to any instance of recurrence of damp and mould issues by reporting these to us via the usual repair reporting methods so these can be investigated and resolved in line with our process timescales.

No access or refusal of access to a property

36. 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)
37. 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.
38. All properties identified as hard to access or refusal of access will be managed through LHPs standard "hard to access" process

Monitoring

39. 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
New	Total number of damp/mould related repairs cases opened	Monthly	<i>Total</i>
PI: 2	Total number of damp/mould related cases closed.	Monthly	<i>Total</i>
New	Total number of cases open >6 months	Monthly	<i>Total</i>
New	Percentage of cases where the damp and mould wash completed in 24 hrs	Monthly	100%

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:	July 2023
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Guidelines: Things to consider

- Where a negative (i.e. adverse) impact is identified, it may be appropriate to make a full EIA (see Stage 2), or, as important, take early action to redress this – e.g. by abandoning or modifying the initiative. NB If the initiative contravenes equality legislation, it must be abandoned or modified.
- Where an initiative has a positive impact on groups/community relations, the EIA should make this explicit, to enable the outcomes to be monitored over its lifespan.
- Where there is a positive impact on particular groups, does this mean there could be an adverse impact on others, and if so can this be justified? - e.g. Are there other existing or planned initiatives which redress this?
- It may not be possible to provide detailed answers to some of these questions at the start of the initiative. The EIA may identify a lack of relevant data, and that data-gathering is a specific action required to inform the initiative as it develops, and also to form part of a continuing evaluation and review process.
- It is envisaged that it will be rare for full impact assessments to be required. Usually, where there are particular problems identified in the screening stage, it is envisaged that changing the approach at this stage, and/or setting up a monitoring/evaluation system to review a policy's impact over time will tackle the problem.

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*

We do not envisage any negative impact with any of our service delivery through the implementation of this policy. However, we will collect data to monitor diversity of customers impacted by D&M to identify if there is any disproportionate impact and review our process considering the outcome of this analysis.

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