

Our Damp and Mould policy

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| Responsibility: | Head of Strategic Asset Management |
| Approved by: | Director/Executive Director/ET/Board |
| Approval Date: | 11 April 2023 |
| Review Date: | 11 April 2024 |

Damp and mould policy

| Summary |
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| <p>This policy sets out how we'll deal with any damp and mould in your home.</p> <p>We'll do this through having:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a reactive approach: where you've reported damp or mould to us. <p>and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a proactive approach: where our data, customer complaints or colleagues indicate that damp or mould may exist. <p>Where damp or mould is identified in your home we'll communicate with you, provide information in a format that meets your needs and work with you to find a long-term solution that reduces the risk of damp and mould in your home.</p> |

1. Introduction

- We want you to feel proud that you live in a good quality, safe, home and place. Living in a home that has damp and mould is bad for your health and wellbeing and may cause you and your family distress. We've adopted a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould, and we'll act in a timely manner to deal with any issues in your home.
- There are several causes of damp or mould that may affect your home. These include:
 - Leaking pipes or overflows either within your home or from a neighbour's home
 - Rain getting in through the roof where a tile or slate is missing
 - Rain getting in around windows or doors
 - Blocked or damaged gutters and downpipes
 - Structural problems such as a defective damp proof course leading to rising damp.
 - Condensation in the air within your home – including condensation caused by poorly functioning heating or ventilation systems.
- We'll be both proactive and reactive in the way we deal with damp or mould. This policy sets out what we'll do and what you can expect. In the longer term, we aim to reduce the reactive work we need to carry out because of damp and mould through improving the fabric of homes and making the best use of technology to support early diagnosis.

2. Scope

- This policy applies to all the homes we're responsible for, whether you rent your home, are a shared ownership homeowner or a leaseholder.
- We'll comply with all relevant legislation and deal with damp or mould in line with the recommendations in the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight report on damp and mould as far as reasonably practical.
- We have several policies that explain how we ensure you're safe in your home. You can find these policies on our website or obtain them by contacting our Customer Service Centre.

3. Managing damp and mould

- We know that experiencing damp and mould can be distressing. We'll treat you with empathy and kindness and never suggest that it's your fault. We'll train our teams to act quickly and offer immediate advice where needed:
 - All Moat colleagues will be required to complete our on-line E-learning module - Dealing with Damp and Mould for Housing.
 - Moat colleagues who visit your home will attend a training course to ensure that they can identify damp or mould, undertake a basic assessment of the severity and take action to deal with it.
 - Moat surveyors will be trained on how to prevent damp or mould in your home.
 - We'll work with our contractors to ensure that any of them who visit your home identify any damp or mould and report it to us so we can deal with it.
- We'll deal with damp and mould in your home in two ways:
 - Reactive approach: This is when we're told that there's damp and mould in your home by you or someone else, for example a Moat colleague or contractor.
 - Proactive approach: This is when we use technology, and what we know about your home, to identify whether damp and mould may occur to make improvements to reduce the chances of damp and mould occurring.

Reactive approach – Dealing with damp and mould

- You can report damp or mould to us in several ways:
 - by telephone: 0300 323 0011
 - by email customer@moat.co.uk
 - on our online portal [myMoat](#)
 - on web chat [Moat | Contact us](#)
 - by telling us in person to any Moat employee
 - writing to us at: Moat, Mariner House, Galleon Boulevard, Dartford DA2 6QE

- Whenever we become aware of damp or mould in your home, we'll work with you to establish the severity and cause by discussing it with you, asking you to provide photographs if you can and, if necessary, visiting you at home.
- If you're a shared owner or leaseholder and we're not responsible for the inside of your home, we'll visit you at home to make sure that the cause is not related to any part of the building that we're responsible for e.g., a communal part of a block or a neighbouring home. If the cause is from a part of the building that's our responsibility, we'll take action to rectify. If the cause relates to parts of the home that are your responsibility, we'll help you to find a solution that addresses the issue. ^[06]
- We'll assess the damp and mould in your home by using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) as category 1 (severe), category 2 (moderate) or category 3 (slight).
- We'll agree with you a suitable and convenient day and time for a surveyor to visit you at your home to fully assess the damp or mould, preferably within the following timescales if that works for you:
 - HHSRS Category 1* (Severe) 48 hours
 - HHSRS Category 2 (Moderate) 14 days
 - HHSRS Category 3 (Slight) 28 days

*At the inspection we'll consider and discuss with you temporary re-housing where category 1 damp or mould has been confirmed.
- The surveyor will provide us with a report which will identify any work that needs to be carried out at your home. We'll provide you with a copy of the report within 5 working days of the inspection and complete the work in a timely and efficient way. If you're a shared owner or leaseholder, we'll complete any work that is our responsibility and give you advice about any other work that is needed.

Minor work will be completed within 21 days. Minor work may include:

- Repairing any leaks in your home or a neighbour's home
- Washing away mould and repainting affected areas
- Improving existing heating or ventilation systems
- Repairs to roofs, gutters or sealing around windows or doors.
- Where major work is required to your home, we'll agree an estimated timescale with you within five working days of issuing the report:

Major work may include:

- Specialist damp proofing work
- Renewal of part or all the roof covering
- Installation of new heating or ventilation systems
- Replacement of windows or doors
- Work that affects multiple rooms in your home where we'll will need to agree a program of work with you.

Proactive management approach – Preventing damp and mould

- We've set up a task force to manage our approach to damp and mould. They'll be responsible for ensuring we continuously develop innovative, flexible, and creative solutions to effectively identify any damp and mould in your home, get rid of it and do anything we reasonably can to make sure it doesn't come back.
- We'll use the repairs data and complaints information we hold on our systems to identify any trends and learning opportunities to inform our proactive approach to damp and mould.
- If we identify that your home has some similarities to other homes where damp or mould has been identified (which indicates there may be a trend), we'll contact you to gather more information.
- We'll contact you to arrange for one of our surveyors to carry out a home improvement survey of your home at least once every five years. The purpose of the home improvement survey is to review the condition of your home and identify any improvements that are needed.
- When we do work to improve your home, we'll improve ventilation if it's likely that this will help to prevent damp or mould and you're happy for us to complete the work.
- If you tell us that you're finding it difficult to heat your home, we'll let you know how we can support you directly or by referring you to other organisations who might be able to offer support. We'll also offer you an energy advice home visit to give you free energy advice.
- We'll undertake a damp and mould survey as part of our empty homes process and ensure your new home does not have damp or mould.
- Where you've swapped your home through our mutual exchange policy and are still our customer, we'll offer to do a home improvement survey within three months of you moving into your new home.
- We may use technology to identify homes that may be particularly susceptible to damp and mould.

4. Communication

- If our data analysis suggests that your home may be particularly susceptible to damp and mould we'll contact you by telephone, or through your preferred method of communication if you've provided us with this information.
- Once we become aware of damp or mould in your home, we'll keep in touch with you in a way that meets your needs whilst we put the right solution in place.

- Once we've done everything, we think is needed to solve the problem:
 - We'll contact you 12 weeks after we complete the work to check that there's no damp or mould in your home.
 - We'll contact you again in 6 months after we complete the work to check that there's still no damp or mould in your home. If the work was undertaken to deal with category 1 (severe) damp or mould, we'll offer to inspect your home in person.
 - If you've experienced category 1 (severe) damp or mould, we'll offer you a digital monitoring solution that could tell us when the conditions exist for damp or mould in the future.
- We'll need you to follow any advice given to you during the work. Any information we give you about damp or mould will be in a format that's right for you and easy to understand. For example
 - Leaving window vents open,
 - Using extractor fans when cooking, showering, or bathing
 - Not blocking air vents

5. Record keeping and reporting

- We'll keep accurate records of all damp or mould cases that we're aware of. We'll use these records to inform our proactive approach to managing damp and mould.
 - We'll have a dedicated damp and mould dashboard that will monitor how we perform against the commitments we've made to you in this policy.
- 5.3 We'll discuss damp and mould cases and our performance, including financial control, at our monthly asset management group meetings.
- 5.4 We'll report our performance quarterly to our Customer and Communities Committee (CCC).
- 5.5 We'll arrange for a programme of audits to be carried out by external auditors to provide assurance that our processes are robust and that our contractors are operating compliantly.

6. Impact Assessments

- Equality Impact Assessment – completed and agreed by the Executive Director for New Business and Development]
- [Data Protection Assessment – make sure this has been completed and agreed by the Executive Director]

Appendix

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| Link to Corporate Strategy |
| The policy supports us to keep our customers safe and living in homes that are well-maintained. |
| Definitions |
| Use bullet points to explain key terms in the policy as follows, <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reactive approach: This is when we're told that there is damp and mould in your home by you or someone else, for example a Moat colleague or contractor.• Proactive approach: This is when we use technology and what we know about your home to identify whether damp and mould may occur to make improvements to reduce the chances of damp and mould occurring.• HHSRS: This is the Housing Health and Safety Rating System which sets out how we as your landlord should assess the health and safety risks that may exist in your home. |
| Linked Policies |
| Repairs and Maintenance Policy Empty Homes and Allocations Policy Mutual exchange Policy Resident involvement Strategy Decant Policy Complaints Policy Health and Safety policy |
| Legislation |
| Housing Act 2004 Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018 Landlord and Tenant Act (section 11 – Repairs and Maintenance) 1985 Home Standard, Regulator of Social Housing, 2015 The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 Decent Home Standard Environmental Protection Act 1990 Equality Act 2010 Data Protection Act 2018 Building Regulations Act 1984 |
| Customer Engagement |
| We sought the views of our Customer Advocates when developing this policy. The statement about customers needing to follow any advice we've given them about how to prevent damp and mould was added after customers suggested we added it. |