



## **DAMP AND MOULD POLICY**

**APPROVED 14 AUGUST 2023**

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We aim to encourage an environment of equality amongst our customers, employees, Board members and other individuals. Our policy on equality and diversity sets out the principles that Thenue will apply to all its work in governance, employment and service provision. We will ensure that all our processes comply with our policy and that those suppliers of goods, services and works have Equal Opportunity policies.

Our information will be clear, simple and consistent and personal information gathered for the purposes of monitoring equal opportunities will be handled in accordance with the principles set out within the Data Protection Policy. Individual monitoring forms will be used for statistical purposes only and destroyed on completion of analysing.

We will seek to ensure that there are no barriers as a result of gender or marital status, race, colour, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes, including beliefs, or opinions, such as religious beliefs or political opinions.

## REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or earlier if there is a change in legislation or good practice.

## AMENDMENT REGISTER

Where any amendment or revision is made to the policies contained in this handbook, the appropriate section should be updated and the date amended accordingly. The former policy handbook should be kept in a separate file for reference purposes and to demonstrate an auditable trail of policy development.

Amendments of a more 'cosmetic' nature (e.g. changing Communities Scotland to The Scottish Housing Regulator) do not require Board approval; however will be entered into the amendment register (below).

All relevant personnel should be made aware of the amendments/revisions made.

Section/s	Amendment	Date approved by Board of Management	Next Review Date
All	New Policy	15.08.2023	August 2026

<b>Section</b>	<b>Contents</b>
1	Introduction
2	Policy and Legislative Background
3	Policy Definitions
4	Policy Objectives
5	Responsibilities
6	Reporting

## DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The aim of this policy is to proactively manage the potential risks arising from damp and mould in our properties including communal areas. Committing to meeting the needs of our customers and providing homes that are safe, warm, and dry.
- 1.2 This policy explains how we will control, manage, and eliminate damp. This policy will cover:
- Identifying the types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation dampness, including internal leaks.
  - Identifying the responsibilities for Thenue Housing Association and our customers in dealing with damp and condensation.
  - Communicate effectively, offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process to customers living in our properties.
  - Data gathering and reporting, identifying proactive methods in mitigating risk of damp and mould.

### 2. POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The following Thenue Housing Association Policies are relevant to this policy:
- Repairs Policy
  - Planned Maintenance Policy
  - Complaints Policy
  - Customer Service Policy
  - Estate Management Policy
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Allocations & Void Policy
- 2.2 The following legislation is relevant to this policy:
- The Scottish Housing Regulator Performance Standards.
  - The Scottish Housing Quality Standard / EESSH (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing)
  - The Scottish Social Housing Charter
  - Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
  - Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
  - Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
  - Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
  - Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
  - Disability Discrimination Act 2005
  - The Equality Act 2010
  - The Environmental Health Protection Act 1990
  - Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2004
  - Tenements Scotland Act 2004

### **3. DEFINITIONS**

#### **3.1 Rising Damp**

The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.

#### **3.2 Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)**

Water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure.

#### **3.3 Condensation Damp**

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets.

The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:

- Lack of ventilation within the property
- Inadequate Heating
- Inadequate loft insulation
- High humidity
- Overcrowding

### **4. POLICY OBJECTIVES**

Thenue will:

- Ensure that customers are treated in a fair and consistent way. Taking into account all circumstances, so where we provide advice, that advice is suitable and assists our customers' needs.
- Focus on working in partnership with customers ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Communicate effectively to our customers at all times in relation to the delivery of our reactive repairs and planned maintenance services, and provide the right environment for customers to communicate effectively with us.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable repair solutions and improvements to eliminate damp including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that customers have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Comply with statutory, regulatory, and contractual requirements and good practice.
- Ensure budgets are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp, mould, and condensation problems.

- Ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould, and condensation.
- Damp and mould issues should be treated and resolved before reletting a void property.
- Respond to all reports of damp and condensation and complete any repair works/measures in line with our Repairs Policy Handbook, complying with all legislation. 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 encourage our tenants to report cases of damp and mould through effective communication, utilising all channels, including website, newsletter and tenant app.
- We will make all reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and carry out the works, in line with our Repairs Policy Handbook.
- We will follow up each completed repair within six months of any damp and mould repair work being carried out.
- We will provide information to tenants through various channels, in line with our communication strategy, to ensure they have up to date advice on how to prevent condensation, damp and mould.
- We will use effective reporting mechanisms to inform our decision making and to evaluate trends and our performance.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **5.1 Tenue Responsibilities**

- We shall investigate to determine the cause of damp and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with our repairs policy.
- Diagnose the cause of damp correctly and deliver effective solutions based on the ethos of dealing with the cause of the damp not just the symptom, and wherever possible fixing first time.
- Promote and provide general advice and guidance to our tenants on how to control damp and condensation.
- Ensure that all relevant employees have training and are aware of and understand the delivery of the service that will meet the aims of this policy.
- Be proactive in identifying cases of damp and mould in our properties, through our and our contractors regular visits to tenants, including new tenant visits, no contact visits, major repair surveys, property MOTs and Energy Adviser visits.

- Undertake a property inspection when a repair is reported relating to suspected Damp, Mould & Condensation.
- Effectively communicate the findings of the investigations with the customer following a property visit. 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 works /measures; keeping the customer updated throughout the process from inception to completion.
- Ensure that only competent contractors will be employed to carry out any works and that the customer's possessions are adequately protected during the works.
- Employ an independent specialist surveyor for severe cases to provide advice on how to resolve the occurrence of damp and mould.
- Consider the use of technology to monitor air quality in the property, to assist in making decisions on how best to complete any works and what advice to give to the tenant.
- Carrying out Planned Maintenance works to insulate homes in accordance with Scottish Quality Housing Standard / Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH), to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.
- Maintaining customers' homes to avoid penetrating and rising damp and carrying out remedial action if these problems occur.
- Undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation dampness. This may include, but is not limited to - upgraded ventilation system installation to improve indoor air quality.
- We will make good internal surfaces following any repairs work carried out ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for the Customer to redecorate. Where there is need to decorate following remedial work carried out by us, we will provide a decoration voucher to cover the cost of the materials needed to make good the decoration.
- In some cases, remedial work may not be necessary, but require additional support and advice to be provided to the customer on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation damp. This support will be provided in partnership with our Repairs, Area Services and Property Services teams as required.
- If 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 accommodation.

## 5.2 Customer Responsibilities

- Immediately report any evidence of rising and penetrating damp (see definitions) 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.)
- Customers can help reduce the conditions that lead to condensation dampness by:
  - Keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum e.g., covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outside (where possible), where it is safe to do so, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
  - Adequately heating rooms – ideally at 18°C.
  - Keeping the house well ventilated e.g., opening windows during cooking / bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan or ventilation system installed in their home is regularly cleaned and working, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Follow all advice and guidance issued by us on managing humidity and moisture in the home which can lead to condensation. This information will be available on the Thenue website.
- If all reasonable efforts have been made to manage and control the presence of condensation and mould, and this has not been successful, contact us immediately.
- Allow access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works.
- If following an inspection by a surveyor, the outcome shows that all reasonable measures are in place for the customer to adequately control condensation and mould, further advice and support will be given to the customer.
- The tenancy agreement recommends that the customer arranges adequate household contents insurance for the home that they occupy.
- Where customers are considering making any alterations within their home they must seek advice and permission from us in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

## 5.3 Assisting our customers

- Where internal conditions within a home for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongings are influencing health and wellbeing of the occupants or are preventing inspections or repairs works being carried out, we will provide support and assistance to review the customer's options that may include moving to more appropriate or alternative suitable accommodation.
- We also recognise that some of our customers may need help when it comes to meeting their repair responsibilities. We may, entirely at our discretion, provide a service in addition to the statutory and contractual responsibilities, to assist



our customers who may need support to meet the conditions of their tenancy. We will make this assessment with the customer based on their individual needs, including whether there is anyone else who might reasonably assist them, and whether there are any immediate risks to their health or safety. This may include an extension to the scope of repairs which we carry out. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Where decoration is required after works associated with damp and mould, decoration vouchers will be provided to assist with the provision of paint and equipment. Further consideration will be given to customers and their specific individual or family circumstances, with a view to providing assistance which may include painting of finished surfaces. The nature of the decoration will solely be at our discretion.

## **6. COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY**

We will communicate effectively in the following way:

- Regular updates and advice statements on the website.
- Verbal advice from trained staff when visiting customers properties.
- Newsletters.
- Publish SHFA Guidance on Putting Safety First on website.

## **7. REPORTING**

We will report on cases of damp and mould in the following way:

- Number of damp and mould repairs requests received and number completed on time.
- Number of Tolerable Standard claims received and number processed within timescales.
- Number of complaints received relating to damp and mould and number processed within timescales.
- Number of completed post-inspections and number completed on time.

This will be monitored within our Quarterly Performance Reports to the Board of Management.