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DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to assist in the delivery of a damp and mould service that will be able to:

- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Comply with statutory requirements and good practice.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Maximise the available budgets and ensure that they are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp and condensation problems.
- Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.

2.0 SCOPE OF POLICY

The scope of this policy covers how Nehemiah Housing, and our tenants are able to jointly control, manage and eradicate damp and this includes:

- All Nehemiah properties that are tenanted, including any offices.
- Identifying the types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation damp, including internal leaks.
- Identifying obligations for dealing with damp and condensation.
- Educating tenants on the causes of damp and condensation.
- Offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process to all tenants living in Nehemiah properties.
- Identifies situations where Nehemiah have exhausted all avenues i.e., heating, ventilation all intact, but tenant still refuses to switch on heating, due to fuel poverty, we will refer them to the necessary support needed.

Approach

- Nehemiah Housing has become a proactive & remedial stance in diagnosis, remedial issue to damp and mould.
- Discussion of Damp and Mould is now a standard item on Nehemiah Tenant panel meetings.

3.0 TYPES OF DAMP COVERED BY THIS POLICY

3.1 Rising Damp

The movement of moisture from the ground rising up 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. 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.

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. 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.

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 g. undersized boilers and radiators, draught stripping.
- Inadequate thermal insulation. i.e., Missing, or defective wall and loft insulation.
- High humidity e.g., presence of rising and penetrating damp.
- Poor building design and construction – specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.

Conditions that can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation – not opening windows, blocking up vents not turning on extract fans, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Poor heating – not heating the house which can be a result of fuel poverty.
- Defective insulation –dislodged insulation in lofts.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the house can contribute to this.
- Overcrowding.

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.

4.0 LEGAL AND REGULATORY EXPECTATIONS

4.1 Nehemiah comply with relevant legislation and regulation, including:

I believe Nehemiah Housing will deliver a service that complies with regulatory and statutory obligations to ensure the health, safety and security of people and property are always maintained.

4.2 The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) provides The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from 2012 including 'The Home Standard'.

4.3 The key areas of legislation in this policy are:

- Defective Premises Act 1972 (Section 4)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- Housing Act 2004
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018

4.4 Related Policies and Procedures

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Tenancy Agreement
- Asset Management Strategy

5.0 SERVICE STANDARDS

- 5.1 We will investigate to determine the cause of damp and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with the tenancy agreement and repairs standard.
- 5.2 We will promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to manage damp and condensation. All residents reporting mould or damp will be inspected by a surveyor or contractor, and the necessary remedial works will be carried out by the contractor.

We will 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”.

We will inform the tenant of the findings of the investigations following a house 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. This will be communicated to the tenant keeping them up to date with their enquiry through the process from inception to completion.

Nehemiah will respond to a report of damp and condensation and complete any remedial works/measures within a reasonable timescale in accordance with the processes and procedures.

This will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem and on the complexity of the solution of the remedial works/actions required.

Nehemiah is responsible for insulating the tenant’s home in accordance with the Decent Homes Standard to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.

Nehemiah is responsible for maintaining a tenant’s home to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if these do occur.

Nehemiah will undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation damp, for example installation of mechanical extract fans, fresh air vents, repairing existing insulation, etc.

Remedial works will be carried out where it is reasonable and practical to do so. Nehemiah will have regard to the constraints of the existing building design and structure and will take a pragmatic approach in finding appropriate solutions.

Proactively checking one reported case of damp and mould but also checking the block to see if other properties are affected.

Nehemiah will make good internal surfaces following any remedial work carried out ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for the tenant to redecorate.

In some cases, remedial work may not be necessary. Additional support and advice will be provided to the tenant on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation and damp. This includes recommendations on everyday life changes and purchases.

We will ensure that all relevant front-line staff have training and are aware of and understand the delivery of the service that will meet the aims of this policy.

We will ensure that only competent contractors will be employed to carry out any works and that the tenant's possessions are adequately protected during the works.

Nehemiah will make reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and carry out the works and if required implement our no access Policy and Procedure.

Nehemiah will not be able to control condensation damp where it is unreasonable or impractical to do so or if any remedial action would be ineffective for example:

Poor construction / design (not meeting current construction and living standards) for example:

Non habitable rooms / For example:

- Out-buildings / sheds that have been converted including linking buildings between the house and outbuilding and other add-on structures.
- Unheated / uninsulated semi external storerooms.

Where Internal conditions within a home for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongs are having an effect on health and wellbeing of the occupants or are preventing inspections or remedial works being carried out, Nehemiah Housing will provide support and assistance to review the tenant's options that may include moving to more appropriate alternative suitable accommodation if needed.

Effective remedial action will not be possible in these instances until the situation(s) has been resolved.

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 tenant will be supported through this process to find suitable accommodation.

6.0 Training & Awareness

6.1 We will ensure that all our staff and contractors have training to raise awareness and create a good understanding of this policy.

We will ensure that all our staff, and contractors have training to raise awareness of and create a good understanding of damp and mould issues, related issues (i.e., health), cases and measures to combat these.

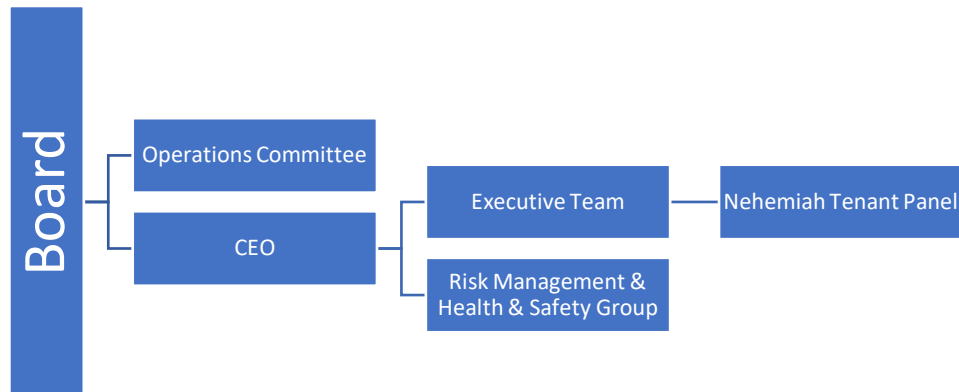
We will understand our stock, archetypes and components of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould.

We will provide our Officers with equipment to assess damp in properties and find resolution to the problem if it is our responsibility.

We will be using our website to publicise videos advising how damp and mould can occur and to create awareness to tenants as to how they can try and prevent

7.0 Leadership on Damp and Mould

The Board takes effective oversight and has overall responsibility for the management of damp and mould which may be present in our stock profile. In terms of how this is reflected from a governance perspective in operation this is illustrated in the diagram below.



The Board is cognisant of the fact that damp and mould have the potential to negatively impact on the lives of our tenants and has included damp and mould within its strategic risk register, from December 2022. Damp and mould is one of the top 3 strategic risks that the Board reviews. In addition, the Board has sight of a Damp and Mould Performance Dashboard from 23 February 2023 onwards, which provides a snapshot of instances of damp and mould and our progress in addressing it both proactively and reactively. The Board recognises that this will be a dynamic report reflecting changes over time, when it sees this report quarterly.

8.0 Lesson Capture and learning

Nehemiah now arranges fortnightly, meetings regarding complaints. Any damp and mould cases that has leads to a complaint will be recorded and discussed, a lesson capture will be brought up were we will review what has happened and what can be learnt, at times more training may be needed for the tenant, about how to prevent, and as soon as possible when signs show either try to clean down or notify a member of Nehemiah Housing. If additional ventilation is needed this can be organised.

9.0 Consideration of vulnerability

Nehemiah housing recognises that our Tenants could be vulnerable for many reasons. They might: Be prison leavers have mental health problems have, or be recovering from, drug or alcohol dependencies Have a disability Have autism spectrum condition Be receiving welfare benefits Have learning difficulties Be living with, or escaping from, domestic abuse, because of all these instances, if damp and mould is reported or found in the property whilst we are inspecting this will be reported and booked for remedial works in line with the severity of the findings.

10.0 Post inspections

Post inspections will be carried out on the most serious damp and mould cases or especially, were we know a tenant is vulnerable and unable to carry out any works for themselves or report that damp as occurring within their home.

11.0 APPEALS

Any customer who is not satisfied with our approach in assessing and managing their damp and mould concerns can make a formal complaint.

If the customer is dissatisfied with actions and decisions made under this policy, it will be dealt with under our Customer Complaints Policy.

12.0 Equality Impact Assessment

12.1 The damp and mould policy has been Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required? Yes

12.2 When was EIA conducted and by who?

The EIA conducted by Head of Governance & Company Secretary on the 30 July 2024.

13.0 Review Date

13.1 This policy will be reviewed every year, or when a change in good practice has occurred, or Legislation makes the necessary review.

13.2. This Policy should be read in-conjunction with the Repairs and Major Works Policy, Tenancy Agreement and Rechargeable Repairs.

Crib Sheet Example

Damp and Mould Checklist

Produce less moisture.

- Keep the kitchen door shut and leave the windows open and/or extractor fan on when cooking.
- Ensure all washing is hung outside if possible. Avoid drying it on radiators. If you need to dry clothes indoors, open the window and close the door of the room where the clothes are drying, so that moisture can escape outside rather than circulate around your home.
- Ensure your home is not overcrowded. More people and pets living in your home means there will be more moisture produced.
- Remove excess moisture.
Dry your windows and windowsills every morning as well as surfaces in the kitchen or bathroom that has become wet.
- Open the bathroom window and/or keep the extractor fan on when taking a shower or bath.
- Keep trickle vents in windows open. They are designed to ventilate your accommodation without causing draughts.
- Open the bedroom windows (for up to 20 minutes) in the morning and throw back the sheets or duvet to air the bed and bedding. A window slightly open is as good as one fully open. (Remember to close your windows for security when you go out).

Heat your home

- Having a medium-to-low level of heat throughout the house by keeping the heating on at low all day in cold weather will help to control condensation. Heating one room to a high level and leaving other rooms cold makes condensation worse in the unheated rooms. It will cost more initially to warm the walls, but when the walls are dry your heating bills will reduce.
- Do not put your heating on for short periods of time (one hour or less) – this will make the problem worse. The air will absorb moisture quicker than the walls can warm up.
- When the heating is turned off the air will cool quickly and condensation will be formed, cooling the walls further.
- Try to keep your home properly heated. It usually helps to have a low background temperature of at least 15 degrees in all rooms.

Try to remove mould growth whilst contacting your Landlord.

- Mould growth should be removed as soon as you see it.
- Where there is mould wipe down or spray walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash that carries a HSE 'approval number' or a weak water and bleach solution.
- Do not remove mould by using a brush or vacuum cleaner as this may disturb the mould spores and can increase the risk of breathing problems.

Ventilate your home

- Make sure you are ‘cross-ventilating’ your home – opening a small window downstairs and a small one upstairs (they should ideally be on opposite sides of the house or diagonally opposite if you live in a flat). At the same time, open the interior room doors, this will allow drier air to circulate throughout your home. This cross-ventilation should be carried out for about 30 minutes each day.
- Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom for about 20 minutes after use by opening a small top window. Use an extractor fan if possible.
- Keep a small gap between large pieces of furniture and the walls, and where possible! place wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.
- Do not over-ventilate your accommodation by leaving the windows open as your walls will lose all the heat stored in them. Only open the windows for a short period at a time so that any moisture is able to escape. Then close your windows, leaving a small gap of about 5mm. It is advised to open the window slightly anytime that condensation is forming on the glass.

Version Control

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1	09.02.23	Property Services Manager	New policy - discussion document
2	04.05.23	Property Services Manager	Amendments
3	18.07.23	Property Services Manager	Amendments
4	01.08.24	Property Services Manager	Amended Policy following Audit