

DAMP & MOULD POLICY

Version Number	V2
Date of Current Version	January 2024
Approved by / Date	N Khan / February 2024
Annual Review Date	January 2025
Full Review Date	June 2025

Executive Summary:
<p>This policy sets our zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould in our homes and provides reassurance to all our tenants that RBH will respond in a timely manner to inspect, clean and treat all signs of damp and mould and rectify any faults to prevent a reoccurrence.</p>

Policy Grouping/Directorate(s)	Customer & Community	
Author Name / Job Title	Mark Fisher / Head of Damp & Mould	
Policy Owner / Job Title	Nadhia Khan / Executive Director of Customer & Community	
EIA Completed	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Publication	Intranet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Website <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Notes:		

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines Rochdale Boroughwide Housing's (RBH) zero tolerance approach to damp and mould within its homes. This does not mean zero cases; it means that we will work hard to proactively identify, diagnose, prevent, respond to, and manage damp and mould within our homes.
- 1.2 There are many root causes that lead to damp and mould within our homes, some examples are rising damp, penetrating damp, defective plumbing, and condensation.
- 1.3 We recognise that this has the potential to have an impact on our customers and their family's physical and mental health.
- 1.4 Exposure to damp and mould can exacerbate and negatively impact those prone to a range of respiratory problems, including asthma, allergies, and other respiratory illnesses.
- 1.5 These health problems can have a significant impact on our customers, particularly those who are vulnerable, such as children, the elderly, and people with pre-existing health conditions.
- 1.6 Living with damp and mould can also impact on a customer's mental health and well-being as well as the customer's quality of life and enjoyment of their home. The policy reflects RBH's commitment to proactively manage damp and mould.

2 Context

- 2.1 RBH is responsible for ensuring homes are in good repair. The responsible person in the Society is represented by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive of RBH is therefore the overall 'Responsible Person' for ensuring that all home safety matters are implemented.
- 2.2 The Executive Director of Customer & Communities is responsible for the implementation of this policy and associated procedure and is responsible for reporting performance to the Board.
- 2.3 As a landlord, RBH recognises that it is legally and morally responsible to repair and maintain and 'keep in repair' our homes. Homes must be safe, healthy, and free from risks that could cause harm.
- 2.4 We will encourage and advise our customers how they can report any concerns of damp and mould so that effective action can be taken to resolve problems. We will work collaboratively with our customers to support the prevention of damp and mould.
- 2.5 RBH defines damp and mould as:
 - Damp - Excess moisture in the property
 - Mould - Microscopic fungus that grows in damp places
- 2.6 This Policy has been developed in line with the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight on Damp and Mould Guidance (2021), and Housing Ombudsman Special Report on Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (2023).

- 2.7 Despite specific challenges with damp and mould, due to having a large number of older properties combined with a damp climate, RBH will proactively manage damp and mould.

3 Policy Statement

- 3.1 We will ensure damp and mould are assessed at every visit to a home and not always requiring a customer to report directly to RBH.
- 3.2 We will ensure that our customers are aware of how to report any problems with damp and mould, and what to expect when reported.
- 3.3 We set clear targets for inspecting and treating damp and mould and will prioritise those households with children and vulnerable adults. Our assessment will consider the extent of damp and mould in the home and the profile of the household to ensure the needs of children and vulnerable customers are factored in when deciding on the priority for works to be carried out.
- 3.4 We will investigate 100% of all reports of damp and mould (including any active disrepair cases), using a formal hazard assessment when making our decisions and prioritising our tasks.
- 3.5 We will inform customers of the findings of the investigations at the time of the visit, including identifying the possible causes of damp and recommending effective solutions. All necessary remedial works and the estimated timescales to complete the works will be communicated to our customer.
- 3.6 All homes identified with damp or mould will be investigated to identify the root cause(s) of any damp and mould if applicable, ensuring suitable and sufficient control measures are put in place to prevent damp and mould re-occurring. This assessment will take into account the severity of the damp and/or mould ensuring any work required has the appropriate priority given.
- 3.7 We will maintain accurate records for each home, ensuring that records for all inspections and work planned and completed are recorded on our information systems.
- 3.8 Customers will be given comprehensive advice and guidance, via leaflets, conversations and on the company website. This will be tailored to all groups and individuals, fully taking their personal circumstances into account on how to prevent damp and mould in a variety of formats and languages.
- 3.9 We will undertake any repairs identified that could be contributing to damp and mould forming such as leaks, structural issues or unblocking gutters. This will also include more permanent measures such as installing additional ventilation or insulation were deemed necessary.
- 3.10 Where the damp and mould reported is severe, it may be necessary to arrange a temporary move in line with our Decant Policy, to allow for extensive remedial work to be completed. In very extreme cases we may approve a permanent direct offer to move to another mutually acceptable property.

- 3.11 We will take all reasonable steps to plan and to carry out any remedial works that are required with our customers, but if access is refused, we will consider taking appropriate action, which may include legal action, to ensure we can access the property and take actions to remedy issues.
- 3.12 We will contact customers via email, telephone or visit, 6, 12 and 18 months after the treatment to ensure that the initial treatment has been successful. This includes carrying out further works if required.
- 3.13 We will ensure there is adequate ventilation, including mechanical ventilation where necessary, in kitchens and bathrooms prior to reletting our empty homes. When damp and mould is found in an empty home, we will ensure that it is treated and/or repaired as part of the empty homes' procedures.
- 3.14 We will maintain a competent damp and mould task force, who will be experienced in the identification, treatment and the prevention of damp and mould.
- 3.15 We will provide awareness training to all staff on damp and mould, refreshed annually.
- 3.16 We will ensure that relevant information about customers and homes across our different systems and sources is recorded and used to make decisions about where to target our resources to prevent the occurrence and, resolve problems relating to damp and mould.
- 3.17 We will use our data to ensure we know our stock and the archetypes of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould and the components in our properties which may cause damp and ensure plans are in place to implement measures to resolve these issues.

4 Monitoring

- 4.1 All damp and mould work is monitored by a dedicated damp and mould task force. A report on damp and mould is submitted weekly to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Monitoring of compliance with this policy will be routinely carried out by ELT and Board.

5 Review

- 5.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 5.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

6 Assurance

- 6.1 RBH will get external assurance on the implementation of this policy each year until 2025.
- 6.2 Our Quality Assurance programme and our customer satisfaction process will seek feedback to ensure residents are satisfied with our damp and mould service.

7 Links with Other RBH Documents

7.1 This policy links to the following policies and strategies:

- Succeeding Together
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Sustainable Growth Delivery Plan
- Complaints Policy
- Disrepair Policy
- Decant Policy
- Empty Homes Standard