

# Damp and Mould Policy

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## 1. Purpose

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- 1.1 This Policy explains how Camden Council as a landlord will take a zero tolerance and prevention approach to deal effectively with damp, mould and condensation, putting residents at the heart of everything we do. The Council is committed to ensuring that our residents have safe, warm and decent housing.
- 1.2 It sets out the approach to identification and causes of damp, mould and condensation, response and repairs works, landlord and tenant responsibilities, support and communications to our residents, using data to help prevent occurrence, and education, training and awareness.
- 1.3 The policy addresses the recommendations in The Housing Ombudsman’s ‘*Spotlight on Damp and Mould – It’s not Lifestyle*’ published in October 2021 which criticised many landlords for blaming residents and their lifestyles for damp and mould.
- 1.4 In November 2022, the Coroner’s ‘Prevention of Future Deaths Report’ following the tragic death of 2-year-old Awaab Ishak, in Rochdale, concluded that Awaab died of a respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to extensive mould. This policy incorporates the lessons learned and addresses the 10 key landlord tests in the subsequent Ombudsman follow up report published in February 2023

## 2. Scope

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- 2.1. This policy sets out how Camden Council as a social housing landlord will deal effectively with damp, mould and condensation when it arises, how it will work to prevent it with the aim of ensuring that no resident is at risk of harm from damp and mould.
- 2.2. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of Property Management and Housing services, who work closely together to deliver the overall response to damp and mould. It also describes the role of all staff across the Council and those who work in other organisations who visit Camden Council residents in their homes.
- 2.3. This Policy applies to:
- All tenants who rent their homes under a Camden Council tenancy agreement and residents who are licensees where Camden Council directly manages temporary accommodation
  - All tenants who rent their homes owned by Camden Council and managed by a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO)
  - Camden Living intermediate rent tenants where there is a service level agreement to provide a repairs service
  - All leaseholders where the property defect falls under the Council's responsibility within the terms of their lease
  - All officers and external contractors working in Property Management and Housing services to design and deliver repairs and damp and mould related services, those who help to identify vulnerable people most at risk, and respond to resident complaints and members enquiries
  - All Council officers who visit residents' homes
  - Referrals from those who come into contact with residents who have damp and mould in their homes e.g. GPs, health visitors, midwives, school staff, social workers, carers
- 2.4. This policy does not apply to licensees who have been placed by the Council in procured private rented accommodation. It is the managing agent's responsibility to ensure the property is in a good standard of repair, that damp and mould reports are responded to in a timely manner and that repairs are completed within reasonable timescales. Where the licensee has reported unsuitable accommodation standards, an inspection will be carried out by the Council's Temporary Accommodation service. There is a separate procedure for this.

### 3. Definitions

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- 3.1. For the purposes of this policy and related policy documents, the following definitions apply:
- **Tenant** – any person with a tenancy agreement with Camden Council for a Council home
  - **Licensee** – any person with a license agreement with Camden Council for a Council home
  - **Leaseholder** – any person that has a property lease agreement with Camden Council for a Council home
  - **Council property** – any land/property owned by the Council either freehold or leasehold
  - **Tenant Management Organisation** - an organisation set up under the UK Government's Housing (Right to Manage) Regulations 1994, where residents of council housing or housing association homes in the UK take over responsibility for the running of their homes which are still owned by the housing provider.
  - **Humidity** – (relative humidity (RH) is a measure of the water vapour content of air, expressed as a percentage
  - **Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)** – a system for landlords to assess property conditions to ensure they are safe and free from hazards. Includes conditions relating to damp and mould.

### 4. Roles and responsibilities

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<b>ROLE</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>
Director of Property Management	<p>Delivery of damp and mould repairs and remedial works to Camden Council's social housing and Camden managed temporary housing stock in line with available budgets.</p> <p>Identify stock most at risk of developing damp and mould and proactively identify interventions e.g. as part of stock condition surveys, Camden's Asset Strategy, Capital Works programming and Responsive Repairs.</p> <p>Where possible and resources are available, design out damp and mould through capital works or repairs, e.g. provision of additional ventilation or modification of heating systems.</p>

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Where damp and mould cannot be prevented due to the characteristics of a property, or the scale of investment needed, identify the options available.

Communications to residents about prevention and repairs including sharing summaries of surveys or checklists. Education, training and awareness to staff, contractors, residents and referral agencies.

Monitor performance data, complaints and ombudsman decisions on damp and mould related services and take improvement actions where appropriate.

Ensure that residents whose homes are identified for disposal or regeneration do not receive a poorer standard of service or lower living conditions.

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Director of Housing

Ensure that tenants can be offered a decant to safe accommodation when the condition of the home is harmful to health and/or works are disruptive so that remedial works can be carried out.

Neighbourhood Housing Officers know their tenants and can identify vulnerable residents including hoarders, overcrowded households and can signpost to information, advice, guidance and support e.g. fuel poverty, repairs, health services.

Neighbourhood Housing Officers can provide some advice directly themselves and understand when to signpost to the Repairs Service.

Ensure that residents whose homes are identified for disposal or regeneration do not receive a poorer standard of service or lower living conditions.

Monitor performance data, complaints and ombudsman decisions on damp and mould related services and influence/take improvement actions where appropriate.

Design out damp and mould in planning and delivery of new build housing.

Ensure that residents whose homes are identified for disposal or regeneration do not receive a poorer standard of service or lower living conditions.

	Design out damp and mould in planning and delivery of new build housing.
Director of Development	Ensure that residents whose homes are identified for disposal or regeneration do not receive a poorer standard of service or lower living conditions.

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## 5. Policy statement

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5.1. Camden Council recognises the impact that damp and mould can have on the health and well-being of residents and damage to its homes. Tackling damp and mould when it arises and prevention is a priority. The aim is to ensure that no one is at risk of harm from damp and mould and to eradicate it where possible.

5.2 The Council treats all reports of damp and mould seriously and understands potential health implications if left untreated, especially to the groups that are particularly vulnerable where health impacts are more severe. These health risks include respiratory problems, conditions that impact the immune system as well as the mental health of residents.

5.3 Camden Council as landlord will:

- *Work to ensure that residents live in a dry, warm, safe and healthy environment which is free from hazards*
- *Comply with legislation, regulatory and contractual (tenancy and lease) obligations*

### 5.4 **Repairs**

- *Have easily accessible ways to report cases of damp, mould and condensation*
- *Deliver a safe, consistent and high standard of response to all reports taking into account health risks to residents as well risk to property*
- *Take responsibility for diagnosing and resolving damp and mould within reasonable timescales*
- *Identify the correct root cause so that appropriate remedial works are delivered to prevent reoccurrence*
- *Communicate regularly with residents using empathy and respect in a timely way to explain the cause, next steps and timescales to minimise any distress caused and not prejudice or blame lifestyle*

- *Support residents in resolving damp and mould where the cause is identified as use and occupation by explaining both verbally and in writing appropriate, clear and practical advice and guidance on steps they should take*

## **5.5 Proactive & Data Driven**

- *Improve data driven performance monitoring for repairs service delivery*
- *Keep accurate, clear and up to date records*
- *Proactively inspect and assess empty homes to ensure they have sufficient ventilation and heating proportionate to the size of the home and ensure new tenants understand how it works*
- *Ensure a data driven preventative asset strategy approach to tackle the risk of condensation, damp and mould within the stock portfolio*
- *Explore proactive measures to prevent occurrence and reoccurrence including use of technology*

## **5.6 Education, Training & Awareness**

- *Embed a working culture where all staff are trained to see safety as their responsibility and do not blame lifestyle for condensation, damp and mould*
- *Ensure that Property Management staff and contractors are trained to identify potential causes of damp, mould and condensation so they can advise residents, diagnose and provide solutions*
- *Increase education, training and awareness for residents, all Council officers, councillors and partner organisations through a range of tailored communications*

**5.7** When applying this policy, reasonable adjustments will be made for people who have a disability, taking into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

## **5.8 Causes of damp, mould and condensation**

5.8.1. Any form of damp is the presence of excess moisture that should not be there. The 4 most common forms of damp in buildings are rising damp, penetrating damp, traumatic damp, and condensation. It is important to understand the difference between them because they each need different solutions.

5.8.2. **Rising damp** is water that rises from the ground through the floor and brick walls of a building, around a meter high. Causes can include blocked cavity wall voids, pipe leaks, defective guttering and drainage pipes. Old buildings

are more likely to be prone to rising damp due to the design, construction and building defects.

- 5.8.3. **Penetrating damp** is where water penetrates the building from the outside to the inside, for example, because of a leak, cavity bridging, a bridged damp proof course, defective rainwater goods/guttering and flashing, and exposure to wind driven rain.
- 5.8.4. **Traumatic damp** can be caused by leaking water from waste and heating pipes, overflowing baths or sinks, burst or defective pipes or water storage vessels inside the building. It can originate from outside the building, for example from another building or from flooding. It's caused by severe and often sudden housing damage, unlike penetrative damp which usually deteriorates over time.
- 5.8.5. **Condensation** occurs when warm, moist air touches a cooler surface such as tiles, windows or walls. This is known as the dew point when the air loses its capacity to retain water vapour. It can be seen on a cold glass of water on a hot day, a mirror after a shower, and cold windows in winter. It is usually found in kitchens and bathrooms, north facing walls or windows, areas of coldness, and areas of low air circulation such as behind wardrobes, beds and sofas especially when they are pushed up against external walls. If left for a lengthy period, it can cause damp and/or mould. Most homes in the UK are affected by condensation.
- 5.8.6. Water vapour is generated by people, pets, plants and appliances in our homes and by the evaporation and movement of excess moisture from buildings due to design construction and/or defects. How we live has an impact on the amount of water vapour in the air. Considering modern living a family of 4 can produce around 24 pints/13.5 litres of moisture per day or more. Contributory factors include more home-based working, overcrowding and fuel poverty. A hygrometer can be used to measure water vapour, relative humidity, air and surface temperature to determine the dew point to assess when condensation will form and where.
- 5.8.7. **Mould** is a type of fungus which spreads through spores. These are often invisible to the naked eye but are in the air around us all the time and can quickly grow on surfaces where there is prolonged dampness or where water has formed.

## 5.9. Reporting Damp and Mould

5.9.1. Tenants, licensees and leaseholders are encouraged to report repairs:

- Online via the website [Report a mould problem - Camden Council](#) and select the most convenient appointment time

- Webchat [www.camden.gov.uk/repairs](http://www.camden.gov.uk/repairs) with the option of using the multi-lingual service. You can send a photo or video (Monday to Friday 9am-12pm and 2pm-5pm)
- WhatsApp and text message on 07360 277909 again with the multi-lingual option. This can be used to upload videos and photos (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm). Uploading photos or video calling can support a more efficient and accurate triage assessment.
- Telephone 0207 974 4444 (Repairs option 3) for enhanced tenants. (Monday to Friday 9am-12pm & 2pm-5pm) Emergencies should be reported by telephone anytime.
- For residents who are hard of hearing the live chat/WhatsApp and SMS text along with video calling can allow a 3-way interaction to take place with a resident and their chosen support including a British Sign Language interpreter.
- Licensees in temporary accommodation directly managed by the Council, where staff are onsite, can also report repairs to the Customer or Resident Service Officers

## **5.10. Diagnostic Scripting**

5.10.1. All damp and mould repairs reported will be triaged according to priority, risk to health and severity using a diagnostic script which is available on the online reporting form. This script will be reviewed and updated according to the latest health information on groups that are particularly more vulnerable to health impacts, industry standards or requirements.

## **5.11. Responding to a Report**

5.11.1. Emergency action within 24 hours or the next day will make safe where there is risk to life and/or property. This can include a mould wash to remove mould spores, arrange emergency accommodation to decant the tenant, where necessary, and instruction for a full survey to identify the root cause and recommended remedial works.

5.11.2. For moderate and low risk cases an officer will aim to visit a property where damp and mould has been reported within 10 working days (moderate risk) or 20 working days (low risk) of receiving a report. During the initial tenant report and visit, any negative impact on the health of the resident or anyone living in the household will be considered, and a standardised assessment survey checklist will be completed and shared with the resident.

5.11.3. Timescales may be updated by the Repairs Service and published on the Camden website.



5.11.4. The resident will be informed of the next steps and estimated timelines or actual timelines where they are known for completion of works. Residents will be notified via text message, wherever possible, to confirm the appointment once agreed, with reminders sent 2 days prior and 7am on the day of the appointment.

## **5.12. Identifying correct root cause**

5.12.1. The approach used to identify the root cause of damp, mould and condensation considers the 3 contributory factors to internal damp and mould and will be assessed in order of the following priorities:

1. Failure in original design and construction of building
2. Any defects present
3. Use and occupation

5.12.2. Factors 1 and 2 relating to design, construction and defects will be considered first during the assessment, before concluding use and occupation. For example the type of construction or design e.g. lack of adequate ventilation or heating systems. Defect solutions for example can include repairing leaking rainwater goods, roof repairs, and rectifying internal water leaks in heating systems.

5.12.3. All parties involved in the repairs process including surveyors who identify the cause and make recommendations for remedial works, repairs contractors, Camden's employees and workers must ensure that design, construction issues and defects are reviewed first.

5.12.4. Where use and occupation is identified as the cause, an awareness raising leaflet will be provided to the resident, together with a verbal advice and guidance on how to reduce condensation with an interpreter and translation where required. A [How to Prevent Condensation, Damp and Mould' Video](#) is also available in different languages on Camden's website with subtitles. Humidifiers may also be loaned in some circumstances and additional ventilation can be considered.

5.12.5. Overcrowded households are more likely to have homes with damp, mould and condensation due to more people living in a space than the building is designed for. Where overcrowding is identified as a contributory factor where there are insufficient bedrooms for the number of occupants, the Repairs Service will advise on ventilation and consider additional measures where appropriate and also refer to the Neighbourhood Housing Officer to provide advice and guidance to the tenant on options to try and move to a larger home, if this is not already in progress.

5.12.6. The recommended temperature inside a property is between 18-21 degrees centigrade, it can be slightly higher depending on the age, medical condition

of the resident and affordability of fuel for heating the property. Humidity should be between 45% - 65% much above these levels can lead to building fabric problems, mould growth and dust mites.

- 5.12.7. Overheating the home can also create mould growth due to condensation and lack of adequate ventilation. Excessively dry conditions can lead to skin infection and vulnerability of airway. Overheating and fuel wastage is also detrimental to the environment and climate change.
- 5.12.8. Inspection checklists and/or summaries of survey reports identifying the root cause and recommended remedial works will be shared with the resident, so the resident understands what has been investigated, what the findings are to date, and next steps. If a repair cannot be completed due to unforeseen circumstances or a complication, the resident should be kept informed. All contact should be documented, including reasons for delay and estimated timescales, for example sourcing labour or materials.

### **5.13. Disrepair Claims**

- 5.13.1. On receipt of a Letter of Claim the Disrepair Team should book an appointment with the tenant directly and send the survey report to the tenant and to the tenant's solicitors, so that works can start as soon as possible. This should also assist Camden with avoiding further repairs delay. Once the repairs have been scheduled, Legal can liaise with the tenant's solicitors to secure access so the repairs will be done with their knowledge. There is an exception where works specified are in dispute, in which case both parties' solicitors must agree.

### **5.14. Landlord responsibilities**

- 5.14.1. Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 places an obligation on the Council as landlord, to maintain the exterior and structure of the property. This includes installations for the provision of water, heating systems, drainage, sanitary appliances and gas and electricity. It ensures a rented property is kept in a good state of repair.
- 5.14.2. As set out in its leases or tenancy agreements, Camden Council commits to meeting its legal obligation to keep in repair the structure and exterior of the building, including roof tiles, gutters, drains and pipes.
- 5.14.3. Keeping in repair and proper working order the installations for water, gas and electricity includes basins, sinks, baths, toilets, water tanks and pipes, gas pipes, boilers, electrical wiring, radiators and any other installation for space heating and water heating.
- 5.14.4. The tenanted property should be compliant with the Decent Homes Standard where social housing must be in a reasonable state of repair and provide a

reasonable degree of thermal comfort. Works to bring homes up to the Decent Homes Standard generally forms part of the Capital Programme and compliance with the standard can be dependent on the resources available each year to the Council. Projected compliance with the Decent Homes Standard (and any forthcoming amendments to the Standard) will form part of the Council's Asset Management Strategy.

- 5.14.5. The Council shall investigate and determine the cause of damp, mould and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with the tenancy agreement. Any surveys and inspection findings will be shared with the resident and these will be explained with translation available when required. Where there are cases of recurring damp and mould, specialist survey reports will most likely be required, damp and mould will be monitored over a period and cases will remain open for as long as necessary until resolved.
- 5.14.6. The Council will endeavour to carry out improvements, to deliver repairs and maintenance to homes within its budget, respond to resident needs and offer choice to tenants, aiming to create a warm, safe, healthy environment and striving to ensure that no one is at risk of harm from damp and mould, eradicating it where possible.
- 5.14.7. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 under the Homes Standard reinforces the responsibility of social landlords to deliver a cost-effective repairs service for homes and communal areas whilst maintaining financial prudence and value for money with an appropriate balance between planned and responsive repairs. Where there are budget pressures priorities will be assessed according to risk.

## **5.15. Reasonable timescales for inspection and completion**

- 5.15.1. Reports will be triaged into priorities according to risk to life and/or property.
- 5.15.2. The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 has powers to set time limits for completion of repairs including damp and mould. Following consultation this is anticipated to come into effect in 2024 with proposed amendments to the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985.
- 5.15.3. Where repairs fall within the scope of responsive repairs and the Right to Repair Scheme, or the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 Clause 42 'Social Housing leases: remedying hazards,' these will be dealt with in accordance with the specified timescales which are published on the website [Housing repairs - Camden Council](#)
- 5.15.4. Residents will be advised of the estimated or actual timescale for next steps, inspection visits and completed works. On repairs completion, residents will be sent a text message within the week requesting satisfaction feedback.

5.15.5. Where there are delays to works completion this will be clearly communicated to tenants. It is important that tenants are involved in the monitoring and re-reporting process if it reoccurs. Where symptoms of dampness persist after works, tenants should contact the Damp and Mould Team to report it.

5.15.6. In some complex cases a process of elimination may be required and a period of monitoring will be necessary after completion of each element of works. For example, drying out may take longer than 1 month.

## **5.16. Supporting tenants**

5.16.1. Where damp and mould are identified as a result of condensation, Camden Council aims to support residents to alleviate any contributory factors that might exacerbate the issue, for example, by improving poor ventilation or offering advice about how to manage and control moisture levels. Camden also recognises that residents who struggle with fuel costs will find it more difficult to control moisture levels. More information about the financial support available to residents experiencing fuel poverty is available on the [Council's website](#) or via the Council switchboard 020 7974 4444.

5.16.2. Camden recognises that not every resident will be in a position to resolve condensation and mould themselves. Appropriate support can be provided in relation to the specific circumstances of resident need.

## **5.17. Tenant responsibilities**

5.17.1. Tenancy agreements require tenants to '*use the premises in a tenant like manner*'. This means that tenants are expected to take good care of the home, carry out daily maintenance tasks and not do anything that directly leads to a deterioration of the fabric of the building or the installations and facilities provided.

5.17.2. For example in relation to damp, mould and condensation they should:

- Keep the home clean
- Reduce moisture levels and condensation
- Ventilate the property
- Heat the property appropriately – the Council will signpost tenants where there is financial hardship and fuel poverty
- Keep furniture away from walls – leave a gap for airflow
- Report signs of damp and mould early on

- 5.17.3. Tenants and landlord responsibilities for repairs are set out on the website [www.camden.gov.uk/repairs](http://www.camden.gov.uk/repairs) and the [Tenants Guide](#)
- 5.17.4. Under the Defective Premises Act 1972 the London Borough of Camden as landlord cannot be liable for injury or damage caused by something that the tenant is responsible for repairing.
- 5.17.5. Tenants must allow access for inspections and repairs when given reasonable written notice (24-48 hours), in accordance with their tenancy agreement. In an emergency, for example, in the case of a flood, fire, or gas safety, the Council can enter the home of a tenant in order to carry out urgent repairs without having to provide 24 hours' notice. If Camden is unable to gain access and the integrity of the property, its fabric and/or the safety of the resident or those in the vicinity is at risk, appropriate action will be taken. For example this may include, but is not limited to, obtaining an injunction for access.

## **5.18. Rehousing for Essential Repairs**

For complex cases, or where intrusive building work is required and/or there is a serious health risk to the resident or a member of their household, Camden will consider moving them to alternative accommodation as set out in the [Essential Repairs Transfer Procedure](#).

- 5.18.1. The individual circumstances of the resident will be considered. Appropriate checks will be carried out at the property to ensure it is suitable for the resident to return to.
- 5.18.2. In line with our Compensation Policy, compensation will be paid where the service has not been delivered. This includes where furniture or belongings have been damaged and/or distress and inconvenience caused. Each case will be considered with respect to the individual circumstances of the resident and their household.

## **5.19. Data Driven Performance Improvement**

- 5.19.1 All services delivering damp and mould repairs will use data to drive positive change, monitor performance and inform service improvement. This will include repairs visits and completions, disrepair cases that will be monitored and reported, asset data linked to damp and mould reports which will inform works programming priorities, together with financial data, as the Council has budget thresholds to adhere to and a statutory responsibility to return a balanced budget.

## **5.20. Proactive measures to prevent occurrence including asset management planning, technology and monitoring**

- 5.20.1. The Council will use stock condition surveys, customer feedback, and repairs reports to ensure a data driven risk-based approach to condensation, damp and mould. It will use data to understand where there is a reoccurring problem or to identify multiple cases, caused either by property archetype and construction, property defects, use and occupation or a combination of all three. The Council will target preventative remedial work where trends and causes are identified. These will be prioritised according to risk and inform the capital works programme e.g. installing double glazing, roof replacement and ventilation.
- 5.20.2. As part of a proactive and holistic approach to preventing and identifying the causes of damp, mould and condensation, the Council will explore, review and make use of technology and monitoring equipment for some homes. Such equipment could gather data on fans and ventilation units, indoor temperatures and humidity, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide levels, air quality, occupancy patterns, draught detection and thermal efficiency.
- 5.20.3. The Council undertakes Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assessments as part of its stock condition surveys which helps to inform investment requirements and priorities. The prevalence of Category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards are assessed by fully trained surveyors with results returned electronically to the asset management system to action and track. The Council is moving to a continuous 'rolling' stock condition survey process, whereby a proportion of the stock is inspected every year. This will result in more internal surveys being carried out with the aim of having recent internal survey data for all tenanted homes.
- 5.20.4. The Council is working to improve its voids processes so that properties that may be prone to damp and mould are correctly assessed and managed. As part of the Asset Management Strategy and Overcrowding Strategy the housing stock will be optimised over time, so that unsuitable properties with high maintenance costs will be removed and replaced with more suitable family friendly homes purchased using the capital receipt, delivered by the Family Friendly Housing Purchase Programme.

**5.21. Ensuring repairs or improvements responding to decarbonisation and are affordable to residents**

- 5.21.1. Camden Council has developed a 'Road Map to Net Zero' which prioritises the least energy efficient homes first and allow us to better understand how current best practice standards can be applied to retrofit projects (PAS2035/ PAS2030) and our everyday works. The PAS2035/30 standard incorporates an assessment to identify the risk of condensation developing which is dependent on the type of energy efficient measure being installed, as well as the ventilation approach required to mitigate condensation.

5.21.2. At handover stage of net zero retrofit projects residents will be provided with information on how the measures installed interact with each other, especially the new ventilation strategy. For some deeper retrofits, such as where there are upgrades from single to double glazing, and installed wall insulation, temperature humidity sensors will be installed in random different archetypes to monitor the indoor environment.

5.21.3. Where repairs and improvements are planned, these will be sustainable and affordable to residents. For example, a new heating system should not result in increased heating bills to unaffordable levels and double glazing should not be installed with inadequate ventilation which could create a damp, mould and condensation problem.

## **5.22. Increasing education, training and awareness, embedding a safety culture and taking responsibility**

5.22.1. All staff will be provided with tailored training to recognise condensation, damp and mould, and potential causes and impacts. Staff have a responsibility to report all signs of damp and mould and keep accurate, clear and timely records. Contractors and Camden's Direct Labour Organisation will report dampness if they find it on a visit to a property, or if they find it as part of their repair work. A 'How To' video on damp and mould will shortly be available to all staff.

5.22.2. An annual damp and mould communications plan will be delivered whereby every autumn there will be refresher and update training provided to staff, councillors and communications to residents.

5.22.3. Training, education and awareness will be extended to colleagues who may work in different organisations and visit residents in their homes, such as health visitors and midwives who may make referrals.

## **5.23. Publicising learning and demonstrating changes**

5.23.1. Camden will publicise its learning and demonstrate changes delivered including from new and updated information (industry, health and government) and as a result of feedback from residents, staff, councillors, complaints and ombudsman cases. This can include positive comments and feedback as well as highlighting problems when the Council gets it wrong. Lessons learned from complaints and ombudsman cases will be integrated into training to help deliver positive change.

## **5.24. Complaints**

5.24.1. If a resident is not satisfied with the way a report of damp and mould has been handled they can make a complaint in line with our [Complaints Policy](#).



- 5.24.2. A complaint can be made by phone, email, letter or using the online form on the [Complaints page on our website](#).
- 5.24.3. Once the complaints process has completed, and the issue has not been resolved a resident can escalate to the Housing Ombudsman. Additionally, the Ombudsman provides free impartial advice at any point including before making a complaint or while Camden are investigating a complaint.
- 5.24.4. A resident can also contact their local councillor or Member of Parliament.

## 6. Review

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- 6.1. September 2024 followed by a 3-year cycle.
- 6.2. This document will be reviewed more frequently if required by changes in legislation, regulation, feedback from residents and other key stakeholders, or improvement initiatives.

## 7. Related documents

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### 7.1. Complaints Policy

[Essential Repairs Moves Procedure](#)

Compensation Policy

### 7.2. Key legislation:

- Defective Premises Act 1972
- [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#) – section 11 landlords must carry out basic repairs within a reasonable timescale
- [Environmental Protection Act 1990](#) - gives tenants and local councils powers to take legal action where homes contain a ‘statutory nuisance’, which includes where they are in such a state as to be prejudicial to health.
- [Housing Act 2004](#) states that properties must be free from hazards at the most dangerous ‘category 1’ level, as assessed using the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\)](#), a risk-based evaluation tool. This includes mould and all types of dampness. ‘Category 1’ hazard means that an occupier of or visitor to the property may require some form of medical attention over the course of a year.
- [Decent Homes Standard 2006](#) – social housing must be free of Category 1 hazards and should be in a reasonable state of repair and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. Either disrepair or inadequate thermal comfort of both, may result in damp and mould.



- [Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018](#) - require that properties are free of hazards, including damp and mould, which are so serious that the dwelling is not reasonably suitable for occupation in that condition. The current occupier may be taken into consideration when determining whether the property is suitable.
- [Social Housing \(Regulation\) Act 2023](#) – powers to set time limits for social landlords to address hazards such as damp and mould ('Awaab's Law') anticipated to come into effect in 2024 with proposed amendment to Landlord & Tenant Act 1985
  - Home Standard is a set of standards that social housing providers must meet to ensure homes are safe, comfortable and well maintained. There is a requirement to manage financial resources with an appropriate balance between responsive and planned repairs to housing and communal areas, taking an approach that is cost effective, responds to tenants' needs and offers choices, and strives to complete repairs with a 'right first-time' approach.

### 7.3. Reports and Government Guidance:

[Housing Ombudsman Spotlight report on damp and mould](#) – October 2021

[Housing Ombudsman One year on follow up report: Spotlight on damp and mould – it's not lifestyle](#) – February 2023

[Awaab Ishak: Prevention of future deaths report - Courts and Tribunals Judiciary](#) – November 2022

[Damp and mould in social housing - learning the lessons - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) – September 2023

[Baily Garner Damp and Mould Toolkit in conjunction with Professor Mike Parrett](#) – November 2023

## 8. Information and version control

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### 8.1. Information

Title	Damp and Mould Policy
Document number	01
Author	Lisa-Marie Bowles

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Responsible officer	Gavin Hayes, Director of Property Management	
Audience	Officers, residents and councillors in the London Borough of Camden	
Policy Area	Property Management and Housing Management	
Corporate Plan & Principles	<p>This document contributes to the Camden Corporate Plan ‘<i>We Make Camden</i>’ commitment “to have enough, safe, decent, safe and warm, family friendly housing.”</p> <p>Aligns to Housing’s guiding principles:</p> <p><b>Proactive</b> Yes  <b>Accessible</b> Yes  <b>Caring</b> Yes  <b>Together</b> Yes</p>	
Consultation requirements	Internal	Not required
	External	Not required
Impact Assessment requirements	Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	TBC
	If an EIA was not completed, please state why this was not required	To be completed following systems review & Awab’s Law implementation
Next review date	September 2024 followed by a 3-year cycle	
Approved by	Gillian Marston, Executive Director of Supporting Communities and Cllr Meric Apak, Cabinet Lead for Better Homes	
Approval date	15 February 2024	
Effective date	20 February 2024	

## 8.2. Version control

Version	Date	Summary of Changes	Actioned by (role)
1	15 Feb 2024	Damp and Mould Policy	Director of Property Management