

# **City of York Council - Building and Housing Services Damp and Mould Policy**

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# Policy Statement

- This policy outlines City of York Council's approach to the management of damp, mould and condensation in our tenants' homes.
- The policy will provide staff, tenants and other stakeholders with guidance about actions City of York Council will take to respond and prevent damp and mould and demonstrates the importance that we place on meeting our responsibilities and obligations.
- City of York Council recognises the impact that damp, mould and condensation in a home can have on the health and wellbeing of the people who live there as well as causing damage to the property. City of York Council recognise the importance of providing a safe and healthy environment to help our tenants lead a good life.
- Under the Housing Health and Safety rating system (HHSRS), damp and mould cases can be categorised as Category 1 (CAT1Q) hazard which is the highest, most serious form of hazard classification.
- In addition from October 2025 social landlords have to address 'damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to all tenants to fixed timescales'.
- This policy provides a framework as to how City of York Council will meet the above requirements.

## Scope

- This policy applies to tenants who rent their homes from us, communal areas in residential accommodation under the management of City of York Council, all temporary accommodation managed by City of York Council.
- For Leaseholders we will meet our responsibilities as set out in the lease.
- Shared Ownership properties as appropriate.

## Key principles

The key principles set out in this policy are:

- City of York Council have a zero tolerance approach to the presence of damp and mould in our tenants homes. We acknowledge that damp and mould will occur in some homes. This zero tolerance approach reflects the council's commitment to efficiently and effectively dealing with such instances and taking a

positive, pro-active approach to reducing the risk of damp and mould occurring.

- We recognise that all staff across Housing have a duty to recognise and address damp
- We will take a proactive approach to reports of damp and mould and use data to inform further potential issues.
- We will provide easy access to services and ensure that we respond within timescales defined in our repairs policy.
- We will take into account individual tenant needs, circumstances and vulnerabilities when investigating and addressing concerns raised.

## **Key legal and regulatory references**

- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (section 1)
- Housing Act 2004
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Homes (fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2015
- Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions claims (England 2012)
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2025
- Awaab's Law 2025

## **Types of damp**

This is not an exhaustive list and highlights commonly used terminology.

Damp: an excess of moisture that can't escape from a structure, which can also go on to cause significant damage to the building. There are three to four main causes of dampness in homes which each require different solutions.

- Rising Damp: water that rises through fabric and brick walls of a building after being absorbed from the surrounding ground.
- Penetrating damp: water penetrates the fabric of the building from the outside to the inside, for example, because of a leak.
- Condensation: occurs where warm, moist air touches a cooler surface such as tiles, windows, or walls. If left for a long period of time, it can cause damp and/or mould.

Mould: is a type of fungus. It spreads through spores, which are invisible to the naked eye but are in the air around us all the time and can quickly grow on surfaces where dampness persists, or water has formed into a visible covering

## **City of York Council's responsibilities**

In preventing and managing issues relating to damp, mould and condensation, City of York Council are responsible for:

- Maintaining the main fabric of the building in good condition including: walls, roof, chimneys, doors, windows, guttering, fascia and soffits.
- Maintaining internal parts of the property such as pipework, heating, insulation and ventilation.
- Ensuring that we provide a responsive and timely service to tenants who report faulty components and repairs.
- Ensuring that reports of damp and mould are responded to within timescales as set out in Awaab's Law which came into effect in October 2025.
- Use data collected from various sources including stock condition surveys, to proactively identify potential issues.
- Delivering the specific commitments made in this policy.

## **Tenant responsibilities**

Tenants should also contribute to the prevention and treatment of damp, mould and condensation by:

- Reporting any damp and mould issues and anything that may contribute towards it such as leaks, broken extractor fans, windows not opening properly, heating not working promptly.
- Checking for mould and cleaning signs of mould when they appear.
- Following advice and guidance on how to prevent and manage damp and condensation provided by City of York Council on the City of York Council website and factsheets available on request from [housing.serviceimprovements@york.gov.uk](mailto:housing.serviceimprovements@york.gov.uk)
- Heat the property adequately (recommended between 18°C and 21°C.)
- Allow access to council employees or appointed contractors carry out repairs, servicing and for inspections.

# Our approach

## Pro-Active approach

- City of York Council will take action to identify homes through a data driven, risk based approach. This data will include information from our stock condition surveys, Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and information from environmental sensors, where fitted.
- We will also identify opportunities for extending the scope of our diagnosis within buildings, for example, by examining neighbouring properties and make the most of opportunities to identify early signs of damp and mould, to ensure the initial response is as effective as possible.
- As part of the council's Home Improvement Programme we will ensure we take steps to remove root causes of damp and mould.
- Void (empty property) works address issues of damp and mould in order to meet the council's lettable standard for housing.
- We will pro-actively check for Damp and Mould problems when we prepare for Home Improvement and Energy Retrofit works and will carry out rectification works at the same time, if possible.
- We provide information on our website, social media and in our newsletter, Open Door.
- We will co design, with our tenants, factsheets about the causes of damp and mould and provide meaningful advice and guidance about what tenants can do to help prevent it and how we will respond to reports that are made.
- We will ensure that all frontline staff have the skills and knowledge to identify signs of damp and mould, that ongoing training is provided and that staff are aware that identifying and reporting it is everyone's responsibility.
- All council properties will receive a property visit as a minimum every 5 years through stock condition surveys, EPC survey, voids inspections, gas servicing, electrical inspections and tenancy and wellbeing visits. These visits will be an opportunity to identify any damp and mould problems. The majority of properties, however, will be visited annually.
- We will continue to work with Tenants Scrutiny, Tenants Voice, learn from information in complaints and informal feedback to ensure that we are listening to the tenants voice, seeing things from their viewpoint and informing improvements to our service

## **Reactive approach**

- We will ensure that tenants can easily report damp and mould.
- We will support tenants to take appropriate actions to prevent damp and mould, where there is an issue of condensation, through advice about ventilation and heating to control moisture levels.
- Where there is a serious problem with damp we will ensure that the tenants circumstances are taken into account and carry out risk assessment. Following this there are a number of actions that we may take:
  - Provision of de-humidifiers
  - Installation of ventilation systems
  - Dry lining walls or applying mould resistant coverings
- We will ensure that we communicate effectively with tenants and keep them informed of the findings of property inspections and when the works will be carried out. If there are any changes to the works planned or the timetable we will ensure that tenants are kept up to date and provide reasons for the changes.
- Where there are extensive or intrusive building works needed and/or there may be health risk to anyone in the household we will discuss relocating the tenant. This will be carried out on a case by case basis and in line with our relocation policy.

## **Access to the property**

- As set out in our tenancy agreement tenants are required to allow access to our properties to carry out inspections and works. This is necessary for us to maintain our homes.
- Where we are not able to get access our Compliance Access Officer will work with the tenant wherever possible but where we have identified a HHSRS category 1 risk or where we feel there is an immediate health and safety risk we may take legal action to gain access to the home and ensure necessary works are carried out.

## **Supporting our tenants**

- We will offer support to our tenants where needed to enable them to prevent damp and mould where possible; including by heating their property to the recommended temperature of between 18°C and 21°C. This will include identifying any affordability issues on Tenancy and Wellbeing visits, looking at welfare benefit maximisation and issuing fuel vouchers.

- Where there are overcrowding issues, for example, we can support tenants to register for a more suitable home, via a mutual exchange or the housing register and assist with clearing the property.

## Training

- We will ensure that front line staff receive relevant training to recognise damp and mould. Additional training will be provided to the Repairs Inspector and Area Repairs Team Leaders to provide specialist skills to diagnose causes of damp and identify what remedies are available.

## Performance monitoring and learning from complaints

- We will monitor complaints involving damp and mould so we can learn from them and ensure that they inform improvements to the service.
- We will respond to complaints involving damp and mould promptly when reported to the Housing Repairs Team on Telephone: 01904 551550 or Email: [housing.repairs@york.gov.uk](mailto:housing.repairs@york.gov.uk).
- The council's complaints process available to all tenants should the response or work fall short of the standards set out in this policy. All tenants can make a complaint on our website at [Raise a comment, compliment, complaint or concern – City of York Council](#).
- In the event of a disrepair claim we will ensure that we continue to prioritise the repair and the health and safety of the tenant.

## Key Performance Indicators

### Hazard Investigation Timeliness

- % of emergency hazards investigated within 24 hours
- % of significant hazards investigated within 10 working days

### Tenant Communication

- % of investigation reports sent to tenants within 3 working days of conclusion of investigation

## **Remedial Action Timeliness**

- % of emergency hazards made safe within 5 working days of investigation
- % of significant hazards resolved within agreed timeframes – as above

## **Vulnerability Prioritisation**

- % of hazard reports involving vulnerable tenants (e.g. children, elderly, respiratory conditions)
- % of vulnerable tenant cases prioritised and resolved within target timeframes

## **Repeat Issues**

- % of properties with recurring damp/mould issues
- % of repeat cases resolved with long-term solutions (e.g. ventilation upgrades)