

Damp and Mould Policy

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POLICY: DAMP AND MOULD

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out how Rosehill will respond to reports of damp and mould in properties owned by Rosehill and manage any potential risks. We are committed to providing our tenants with safe homes to live in.
- 1.2 The specific objectives of this policy are to ensure appropriate control measures are in place to manage damp and mould in our stock. It will ensure that problems with damp and mould are identified and dealt with promptly.

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- 2.1 Whilst this Policy sets out to explain Rosehill's approach to damp and mould it must do so in the context of legal and regulatory requirements. Therefore the following relevant legislation and best practice has been taken into account in the development of this Policy:

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 (& subsequent amendments)
- The Environmental Health Protection Act 1990
- Right to Repair (2001)
- Putting Safety First: a briefing note on damp and mould for social housing practitioners

2.2 The Scottish Social Housing Charter

- 2.2.1 The Social Housing Charter came into effect in April 2012 and this sets the standards and outcomes that all social landlords should aim to achieve when performing their housing activities. The Charter replaces the Performance Standards and the outcomes relevant to this Policy are:

1. Equalities

Social Landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services.

2. Communication

Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get the information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides.

3. Participation

Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other customers find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with.

4. Quality of Housing

Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes, as a minimum, meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) by April 2015 and continue to meet it thereafter, and when they are allocated, are always clean, tidy and in a good state of repair.

5. Repairs, maintenance and improvements

Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants' homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done.

11. Tenancy Sustainment

Social landlords ensure that tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home; and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations.

13. Value for Money

Social landlords manage all aspects of their businesses so that tenants, owners and other customers receive services that provide continually improving value for the rent and other charges they pay.

2.2.2 Social landlords are responsible for meeting the standards and outcomes set out in the Charter. The Scottish Housing Regulator is responsible for monitoring, assessing and reporting on how well social landlords, individually and collectively, achieve the outcomes.

2.2.3 In line with the regulatory principles, the Regulator's approach to monitoring landlords' achievement of the outcomes and standards in the Charter will be based on each landlord's performance information and their own assessment of their performance. Therefore, for each year ending on 30th September, we will be expected to:

- Measure and assess our performance in progressing towards or achieving the Charter outcomes and standards
- Provide the Regulator with some key performance information on our achievement of the outcomes and standards
- Report our performance to tenants and other service users who use our services.

3. Our Values

3.1 The delivery of our Vision and Strategic Objectives is underpinned by our Core Values:

We will

- Invest and Support

We will be

- Engaged and Responsive
- Accountable and Compliant
- Fair and Approachable
- Efficient and Responsible
- Excellent and Committed

3.2 The existence and implementation of our Damp & Mould Policy is a good example of our Values in practice with particular reference to being engaged and responsive.

4. Definitions

4.1 Rising Damp – The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure (foundations, damp proof courses etc). This is covered by the Tolerable Standard.

4.2 Penetration Damp – Moisture penetrating the external structure (walls, windows etc) or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structures such as leaking pipes or cracked or blocked guttering. This is covered by the Tolerable Standard.

- 4.3 Condensation Damp – Excess water in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condensates producing water droplets. Several conditions contribute to increasing the risk of condensation – lack of ventilation, inadequate heating, inadequate insulation in areas of the building, high humidity and overcrowding.
- 4.4 Mould – A type of fungus that spreads through spores and are invisible to the eye but are in the air. It can grow quickly on surfaces where dampness persists, or water has formed into a visible covering.

5. Responsibilities - Rosehill

- 5.1 We will respond and undertake a property inspection when a repair is reported relating to suspected damp, mould or condensation. How to report a repair is communicated to tenants in many ways e.g. via our website, or newsletter publications and during sign up and new tenant visits. This inspection will be recorded and the findings effectively communicated to the tenant following the visit. This will include identifying possible causes of the reported issue, recommending solutions, and carrying out any necessary works along with estimated timescales. This will be in accordance with our Reactive Repairs Policy and include follow up checks/ post inspections. We will develop robust internal procedures to deal with issues of damp, mould and condensation.
- 5.2 Employing specialist independent surveyors / consultants for severe cases to provide advice on how to resolve the occurrence of damp or mould along with using competent contractors to carry out the works.
- 5.3 We will promote and provide general advice and guidance to our tenants on how to control damp and condensation and ways to report any issues.
- 5.4 Take a proactive approach to identifying any possible cases of damp and mould in our properties through our visits to tenants by staff or contractors along with our ongoing process of carrying out stock condition surveys along with our continued roll out of our planned maintenance programme.
- 5.5 Continue to maintain our homes to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard via planned and cyclical maintenance.
- 5.6 In cases where no remedial work is required but additional support and advice would benefit the tenant on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation damp. This will be jointly carried out by Technical Services and Housing Management Teams utilising external partnerships where necessary.

- 5.7 We will provide support and assistance for internal conditions such as overcrowding and excessive hoarding that are preventing inspections or remedial works being undertaken.
- 5.8 We will ensure that our staff both Technical and Housing Management are adequately trained with general awareness training for anyone that visits homes / responds to repair requests and further specialist training for all Technical Services staff that deal with damp and mould issues.

6. Responsibilities – Tenant

- 6.1 Tenants must report any evidence of rising or penetrating damp and faulty components that will affect the management of humidity / and or moisture in the home e.g. faulty extract fan, unable to open a window, breakdown of heating system.
- 6.2 Tenants can help to reduce the conditions that lead to condensation dampness by:
- Adequately heating rooms
 - Keeping the house well ventilated by opening windows particularly when cooking or bathing, using and keeping clean extractor fans and trickle vents and allowing air to circulate around furniture.
 - Reducing the amount of condensation generated in the house by cooking with lids on, drying laundry outside whenever possible, keeping bathroom and kitchen doors closed when bathing or cooking
- 6.3 Assist with allowing access for inspections / works.
- 6.4 Follow advice as provided by Rosehill and /or any independent parties involved in the process of rectifying the issues.

7. Performance Management

- 7.1 We will maintain internal information systems which are based around ensuring effective monitoring, control and reporting of damp and mould issues reported.
- 7.2 We will monitor:
- The total number of reported cases
 - Number of reported cases visited
 - Number of properties with follow up works
 - Number of times advice provided to tenants

- Number of properties being monitored to ensure issues have been resolved

7.3 Quarterly performance will be presented to the Management Committee for consideration.

8. Equal Opportunities

8.1 We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair treatment for all people in its work. In implementing this Policy, we will provide a fair and equal service to all people, irrespective of factors such as gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, language or social origin, or other personal attributes.

9. Tenant Participation

9.1 We are a tenant focussed organisation and as such we are committed to involving tenants in all aspects of our work and ensuring that tenants are included, informed and consulted about decisions that have an impact on the way their homes are managed.

9.2 As part of this commitment we will involve our tenants in the development of our policies and seek feedback where appropriate. We will ensure that any significant changes to this Policy and other Policies which will affect our tenants will be the subject of consultation.

10. Risk Management

10.1 In all the key areas of our business we need to consider any risks which may arise. To this end we have in place a robust Risk Management Policy and from this flows our Risk Register. We have identified our strategic risks which are regularly monitored by our Management Team and Audit Sub-Committee.

10.2 Key to the mitigation of the risks associated with decoration and floor-coverings allowances is having a comprehensive policy in place to manage the allowances. This policy sets out Rosehill's approach to the payment of allowances.

10.3 To ensure we continue to manage the associated risks we will periodically review this Policy to ensure compliance with all legislative requirements and regulatory and best practice guidance.

11. Complaints Procedure

- 11.1 We aim to get things right first time and provide a good quality service to our tenants and other customers. However, we acknowledge that things can go wrong and that some tenants or other customers may be unhappy with the service provided.
- 11.2 We promote our Complaints procedure through our website and periodic articles in our newsletters. In addition, we initially issued all of our tenants with a copy of the new Procedure introduced in October 2012. This information leaflet is also issued to all new tenants as part of the signing up pack.
- 11.3 We are required to report specifically to both our Management Committee and the Scottish Housing Regulator on any complaints concerning equalities issues.

12. Data Protection

- 12.1 On the 25th May 2018 the legislation governing data protection changed with the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Following the UK's exit from the EU, and the end of the transition period which followed, the GDPR formed part of the retained EU law and became the UK GDPR which together with the Data Protection Act 2018 constitute the UK's data protection legislation.

13. Policy Review

- 13.1 This Policy will be reviewed after three years or sooner to ensure it continues to reflect current thinking and practice and to comply with legislative requirements and regulatory guidance.



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