



First Priority Housing Association Damp & Mould Policy

Scope	The policy applies to all of First Priority Housing Association's tenants
Policy relates to	Tenancy Policy Repairs and Maintenance Policy Complaints Policy
Version	2.0
Release Date	
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out our approach on managing reports of damp and mould within FPHA properties.
- 1.2 This policy applies to all properties for which we are responsible for carrying out repairs as determined by their tenancy agreement and the lease we have in place with the superior landlord.
- 1.3 We need this policy to ensure that we:
 - Do everything, we reasonably can to make sure our customers stay safe, healthy, and well in their homes. Damp and mould are issues which can have a serious impact on the health and well-being of our customers, and cause damage to homes.
 - To demonstrate the importance and organisational priority that FPHA places on the ability of our customers to live in safe homes, to our customers, staff, and stakeholders
- 1.4 The policy also applies to employees, stakeholders, and contractors who have identified responsibilities both within this document and in line with supplementary procedures/ information and guidance.

2 Introduction and Aims

- 2.1 FPHA is committed to maintaining its homes to a high standard which adds value to the homes and their surroundings.
- 2.2 Maintaining high quality, secure homes can improve the lives of our tenants and achieve high levels of tenant satisfaction. Our homes give people the space and security to create meaningful lives and the foundation to build the best possible life.
- 2.3 This policy has been written to ensure that wherever possible, residents are not adversely affected by the causes of damp and mould and drives forward an agenda of proactive action to tackle/manage the causes of damp and mould.
- 2.4 Comply with legislative, regulatory, and contractual obligations
- 2.5 Ensure the fabric of our homes is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould and related issues by following the preventative and remedial actions outlined in this Policy.
- 2.6 Develop a proactive and positive culture regarding the treatment of issues raised by customers reporting presence of damp and mould spores.
- 2.7 Adopt a hierarchical, risk-based approach when diagnosing and resolving damp and mould issues, with a clear priority given to those customers with underlying health issues and vulnerabilities.

- 2.8 Support customers in resolving damp and mould issues where they result from or are exacerbated by the use of the property, and provide our customers with appropriate, clear, sensitive, practical, and accessible advice.
- 2.9 Ensure colleagues are trained to enable them to spot potential causes of damp, mould, and condensation so they can advise or signpost customers, diagnose problems, and provide solutions.
- 2.10 When applying this policy, make reasonable adjustments for the needs and vulnerabilities of our tenants. Risk assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation.
- 2.11 This policy and associated procedure will take into account recommendations made in the Housing Ombudsman Service Report – Spotlight on: Damp and Mould – Oct 2021.

3 Legislation and Regulation

- First Priority Housing Association will deliver a service that complies with regulatory and statutory obligations to ensure the health, safety and security of people and property are maintained at all times.
- The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) provides The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from 2012 including 'The Home Standard'.
- Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025' (Awaab's Law)
- 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 Definitions

4.1 There are differences between damp and mould. Below are commonly used definitions we have adopted for the purposes of our Policy and to inform our understanding of damp and mould.

- **Damp** - Structural dampness is the presence of unwanted moisture in the structure of a building, either the result of intrusion from outside or condensation from within the structure
- **Mould** - Mould is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces. It is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present.

5 Damp causes

5.1 There are four different causes of damp and mould in the England. Each cause of damp and mould will require a different solution to resolve the issue.

- **Water leaks** – a leak could stem from defective pipework in the property (either internally or externally) or through the actions of our tenants or Support Providers
- **Rising damp** – when moisture rises up from the ground, up through the structure of the property
- **Penetrating damp** – water that has penetrated the external walls or internal leaks that cause damage to surfaces or structure
- **Condensation** – moisture that is found in warm air that when it comes into contact with cold air or surfaces, condensing and causes water droplets

6 Reporting damp and mould

6.1 Damp and mould should always be reported immediately. Tenants, their Support Provider or someone else supporting them can report cases directly using the methods below:

- Telephone (0333 3440 911)
- Email
- Online portal
- Face to face (through their Housing Manager or Officer)

6.2 FPHA staff and contractors should also report damp and mould cases, where they are identified or suspected. These can be reported internally and must always be consistently recorded on our repairs reporting system, before following the same policy and process thereafter as tenant reported cases.

6.3 When reporting damp and mould, we encourage the person reporting the case to send us supporting information like photographs if they are able to. This helps us to better diagnose the damp and mould.

6.4 We will triage all damp and mould cases to establish where customers have any relevant underlying health issues or vulnerabilities so that these cases can be prioritised.

6.5 Advice will be given at the first point of contact, through the Help Desk. Advisors will request photographs of any damp or mould, posted by customers at the time of reporting. If the reported condensation or damp issue, cannot be resolved through advice or by the customer directly, or requires further investigation, an engineer will visit the customer to carry out a diagnosis and if required, complete any minor repairs e.g., mould treatment with fungicidal wash, improved ventilation, repairing any cracks or failed sealant etc.

6.6 Where initial remediation measures do not resolve the issue, we will instruct a specialist damp organisation to survey the property, taking relative humidity and moisture content readings and typically recommending a basket of repairs to remedy leaking pipework, and rainwater goods, and/or replace faulty humidistat extractor fans, install positive ventilation units and deal with hygroscopic salts in plaster.

7 Our approach to damp and mould

7.1 FPHA will utilise a structured, staged, embedded approach to advising customers who report any damp or mould in their homes to conform with the requirements of the 'Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025' also known as Awaab's Law

7.2 To meet the requirements of Awaab's Law, FPHA will:

- Investigate any potential emergency hazards and, if the investigation confirms emergency hazards, undertake relevant safety work as soon as reasonably practicable, both within 24 hours of becoming aware of them
- Investigate any potential significant hazards within 10 working days of becoming aware of them
- Produce a written summary of investigation findings and provide this to the named tenant within 3 working days of the conclusion of the investigation
- Undertake relevant safety work within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant hazard
- Begin, or take steps to begin, any further required works within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant or emergency hazard. If steps cannot be taken to begin work in 5 working days this must be done as soon as possible, and work must be physically started within 12 weeks
- Satisfactorily complete works within a reasonable time period
- Secure the provision of suitable alternative accommodation for the household, at the FPHA expense, if relevant safety work cannot be completed within specified timeframes
- Keep the named customer updated throughout the process and provide information on how to keep safe

- 7.3 For more complex cases where the customer or a member of their household has underlying health issues and where more intrusive building work is required, we will explore short or longer term decant options.
- 7.4 We will keep customers informed and updated about any property inspections, diagnosis of issues and the timetabling of works, where these are required.
- 7.5 If we are unable to gain access and the integrity of the property, its fabric and/or the safety of the customer or those in the vicinity of the property is compromised, we will take appropriate enforcement action.
- 7.6 We will consider appropriate compensation where our failure to deliver the service we have committed to requires this.
- 7.7 We will utilise the Stock Condition Survey programme alongside other internal property and customer interventions including the Housing Officers inspections to identify any category 1 hazards or high scoring category 2 hazards, as specified in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). These will be actioned immediately on identification.

Categorisation	Description	Reaction/ response
Emergency Hazard	<p>Extensive damp and mould in multiple bedrooms and living areas or very vulnerable tenants with chronic health and vulnerability factors (e.g. respiratory conditions)</p> <p><i>(Note: this could also apply to tenants' where their mental health condition or learning disability limits their capacity to take the necessary precautions to avoid harm)</i></p>	<p>Emergency investigation and make safe works completed within 24 hours.</p> <p>Relocate to temporary accommodation if required.</p>
Significant Hazard	<p>Multiple areas of extensive damp and or mould growth in main living area for the tenant, tenants with levels of known vulnerabilities that exacerbate risk.</p> <p><i>(Note: this could also apply to tenants' where their mental health condition or learning disability limits their capacity to take the necessary precautions to avoid harm)</i></p>	<p>Urgent attendance within 5 days to carry relevant safety works, 10 days to carry out an investigation</p>
Low	<p>Little to no or minor damp or mould (e.g. condensation around windows), no known vulnerability identified</p>	<p>Provide advice to tenant and care provider, monitor in ongoing property visits every 8 weeks.</p>

8 Post completion inspections

8.1 All damp and mould cases will be subject to 3-month post completion reviews. This period begins from the date that the works are confirmed as completed. A member of our housing team will attend to complete a visual inspection. If any issues are discovered that have not already been reported, the case will be reopened and reinvestigated using the same process as outlined above.

9 Supporting Our Customers

9.1 We will work with tenants and their support providers on how to prevent damp and what they should do to remove mould. This will be reaffirmed by our Housing Officers during their regular property inspections.

10 Staff training

- 10.1 We will ensure that all relevant staff receive regular training on the diagnosis of condensation and mould and where required recognised or accredited expert external training will be offered.
- 10.2 We will ensure all staff undertaking any property related visits look out for signs of damp and mould whenever they visit a customer's home and escalate any findings immediately via the help desk.

11 Reporting and monitoring

- 11.1 There is a central damp and mould case tracker that is maintained by our managing agent.
- 11.2 Cases are monitored on a weekly basis by senior management alongside the managing agent.
- 11.3 Bi-monthly reports are included as a standing item within the Operations Report presented to Board.
- 11.4 As part of our monitoring, we will identify themes and trends in damp and mould reporting. This could, for instance, help inform programmes of work or campaigns to tenants.
- 11.5 There are weekly and monthly performance monitoring meetings covering damp and mould. Each case is monitored on a weekly basis to ensure that progress is being made on each case (as per our Policy timescales) by our Head of Property Services. Any cases that are not being progressed in line with our Policy will be escalated to the Operations Director.
- 11.6 Our Board receive an update on damp and mould cases at each Board meeting.

12 Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

- 12.1 Our tenants who have learning disabilities and or mental health conditions can experience difficulty in "self-managing" cases of damp and mould. They are often reliant on the support of their Support Provider or appointees.
- 12.2 We provide an Intensive Housing Management service that includes regular visits to our properties and meetings with our tenants and Support Providers. This provides opportunities to identify cases of damp and mould, as well as offer support to tenants with cases.
- 12.3 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and can be found within Section 12 of this Policy.

12.4 Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristic		Explanation (if required)	Controls
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on minority ethnic groups? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	N		
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact due to gender (including pregnancy and maternity)? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	N		
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact due to disability? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Y	<p>Our tenants by their nature are some of the most vulnerable in society. They can therefore be impacted more when cases of damp and mould are present.</p> <p>The nature of their disabilities combined with any medical conditions could make self-managing cases of damp and mould challenging.</p>	<p>Anyone that is supporting the tenant is able to report damp and mould on their behalf to support the tenant.</p> <p>Support Providers are offered guidance by the housing team on how to identify damp and mould, as well as management actions where cases are in progress.</p> <p>We are ultimately responsible for the safety of our tenants. Staff will receive training on damp and mould awareness and the management of cases. This includes preventative measures for reducing the likelihood of damp and</p>

			<p>mould within tenants' homes.</p> <p>We will work with an approved set of contractors that are aware of Awaab's Law and can adhere to the timescales and measures set out in our Policy for any open cases.</p>
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people due to sexual orientation? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	N		
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people due to their age? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	N		
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people due to their religious belief (or none)? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	N		
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people with dependants/caring responsibilities? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	N		
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people due to them being transgender or transsexual? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	N		
Is it likely that the policy could have a positive or negative impact on people due to their marital or civil partnership status? What evidence (either	N		

presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?			
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