

Maintenance & Asset Management	Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy
Providence Row Housing Association	Version: 1



Damp, Mould and Condensation (Awaab's Law) Policy

(replaces PRHA Strategy & Action Plan for Responding to Reports of Damp, Mould & Condensation in PRHA Properties)

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PRHA Damp, Mould and Condensation (Awaab's Law) Policy

PRHA is committed to managing and mitigating issues relating to damp, compensation, and mould in PRHA's social housing stock under Awaab's Law, part of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

Our aim is to provide and maintain dry and healthy homes for our social housing residents. This policy sets out the measures we take to meet this standard.

1.Scope and Audience, Policy Purpose

The scope of this policy are the health and safety risks to residents caused by damp, mould and condensation. These can be caused by two factors:

- a fault with the building structure
- how the building is responds when in occupation

We aim to provide and maintain dry, healthy homes by:

- responding to reports of damp and mould when notified;
- and carrying out necessary and reasonable repair.
- recording and tracking related orders to completion.
- targeting areas to prevent damp and mould using our stock condition data.
- providing our residents with advice and guidance.

The purpose of this policy is to show how we meet this aim by:

- acting as a resource for the stated audience in respect of the decant process.
- demonstrating our commitment to fair and consistent application of this process across PRHA buildings

Definitions

This policy covers rising damp, penetrating damp, and condensation damp. If not addressed, these types of damp can lead to mould growth, posing a hazard.

A hazard refers to a potential source or situation that could cause harm to humans, property, or the environment.

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Rising damp:

This is where there is a movement of moisture from the ground rising up through the structure of the building due to a breach of the damp proof course.

Penetrating damp (including internal leaks):

This is where water penetrates the external structure of the building or internal leaks. The cause of this may include:

- defective components, for example roof coverings, external walls, doors and windows.
- defective or blocked rainwater gutters, pipes and blocked drains.
- defective or leaking internal waste pipes, hot and cold water and heating systems.

Condensation dampness:

This occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. The most common causes of this include:

- Inadequate ventilation (where ventilation is not in place or not used, for example opening windows, trickle vents and extractor fans).
- Storing possessions directly against walls and preventing adequate airflow.
- Inadequate heating: for example undersized radiators or heating not being used.
- Inadequate thermal insulation: for example defective wall and loft insulation.
- Poor building design and construction: specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.
- High humidity: for example, not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the property.

3 Dealing effectively with damp, mould and condensation

Conducting Investigations:

- We will investigate potential hazards to our homes within 10 days of receiving notification to determine its presence.
- Our investigations will aim to identify hazards and assess their impact on residents' health or safety.
- The investigation will undertake a full risk assessment on the household
- Investigators will possess the necessary skills and experience to conduct thorough assessments, and hold an HHSRS awareness qualification;
- We will provide advice and guidance to residents, and make referrals to our Financial Wellbeing Team or external agencies where appropriate.
- We may utilise technology, such as photos and videos, for remote investigations.

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Assessing Risk:

We will refer to government guidance on the health risks of damp and mould in the home to assess hazards reported by residents:

- Hazards with the potential to negatively affect residents' health or safety will be addressed within the scope of Awaab's Law.
- While 'significant risk of harm' is subjective, we may refer to the HHSRS categorisation for guidance.
- Temporary works, such as removing mould spores in cases of damp and mould, will be conducted promptly to ensure the safety of residents while wider repair works are planned.

Medical Evidence:

- We will consider the individual needs of residents throughout the repair process, where this has been shared with us.
- Residents generally won't need to provide medical evidence to demonstrate the impact of hazardous conditions on their health, to avoid unnecessary burdens. However, in cases where all reasonable measures have been taken and there is little evidence of impact, we **may** request medical evidence for further assessment.

Written Summaries of Investigation Findings:

- Within 3 days post of the investigation being carried out, we will provide residents with a written summary of findings. The summary will:
- include details of how and when the investigation was conducted and the job title of the investigator.
- For identified hazards, it will describe the hazard, its potential risk to health or safety, and outline temporary repair measures and timelines for permanent fixes.
- If a full investigation exceeds 10 days, an initial investigation will be promptly conducted with next steps communicated to residents, this will be included in our investigation report which must be provided to our residents within 3 days post the investigation.
- If a hazard is deemed not to pose a significant risk, a written explanation and proposed next steps will be provided.

Completing Repair Works:

Our commitment to completing repair works aligns with our existing obligations under section 11 of the Landlord and Resident Act 1985, which imply terms into tenancy agreements regarding repairs to be made within a reasonable timeframe.

Emergency Repairs:

We will not provide a written summary before completing emergency repair works. Hazards such as gas leaks, broken boilers, lack of water supply, electrical

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hazards, significant leaks, and broken external doors or windows threatening home security, will be prioritised as either a 3-hour or 24-hour emergency order. This includes prevalent mould growth impacting a resident's ability to breathe.

Urgent Repairs : 7 days

If the investigation identifies a hazard posing a significant risk to the health or safety of the resident, repair works will commence within seven calendar days of issuing the written summary.

When complex remediation works are needed, we may consider a phased approach. This involves implementing temporary measures to address immediate risks, with plans for additional works detailed in the written report.

Routine Repairs : 28 days

We will fix non-significant risks within 28 days of a resident's report in line with our routine repair timeline. If an investigation does not find that a hazard poses a significant risk, we'll explain in writing why it's not covered by Awaab's Law and outline our next steps;

If we can't meet these timelines due to genuine reasons beyond our control, we will document the reasons for the delay. This ensures our actions are proportionate and achievable, prioritising resident well-being.

Long Stop:

If for any reason works cannot commence immediately a long stop can be authorised by the CEO/Deputy CEO giving clear reasons for the delay in commencement of works. Examples include major repairs or where planning or other permissions are required.

Decanting for Unsafe Properties:

As part of our investigation within 10 days or as part of addressing emergency repairs and throughout the process of investigating and addressing reports of Damp and Mould we will assess the need to decant the household in the property. This is part of our Awaab's Law checklist and will be undertaken at the time of completing the household risk assessment.

In the event that a hazard posing a significant or imminent risk of harm cannot be addressed within the specified timescales, we will offer residents suitable alternative accommodation, in line with our Decant Policy until it is safe to return. This includes circumstances where temporary repairs or measures cannot make the property safe immediately.

Record Keeping:

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We will maintain clear records of all efforts to comply with the proposals, documenting all correspondence with residents and contractors. If circumstances beyond our control prevent us from meeting the timescales, we will provide a record detailing the reasons for the delay.

4 Resident Responsibilities

It is the resident's responsibility to maintain the internal decoration of their home to a reasonable standard. The way a resident uses their home can impact damp and mould. A resident must use preventative measures to assist in controlling damp and condensation.

This can include:

- Reporting signs of damp and excess mould.
- Reporting faulty equipment that will hinder the management and control of damp and condensation, for example;
 - faulty extractor fan
 - unable to open windows
 - lack of heating
 - Regularly wiping down moisture from surfaces that attract excess condensation, e.g. window panes.
 - Cleaning mould as soon as it is discovered.
 - Allowing access for inspections and the repair works required.
 - Keeping moisture to a minimum, for example:
 - covering pans when cooking,
 - drying laundry appropriately,
 - keeping kitchen and bathroom doors closed when cooking or bathing;
 - Adequately ventilating the home, for example:
 - keeping trickle vents in windows open
 - allowing room for air to circulate around furniture
 - using and ensuring that extractor fans are working

Adequately heating rooms and ideally keeping humidity under control (average recommended temperatures should be maintained at around 20°C, bedrooms around 16-19°C, corridors around 15- 18°C

5 Performance Reporting

KPI measures will be produced and provided on a bi-annual basis to senior leadership team and board. As a minimum, these KPI measures will include reporting on the:

6 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

PRHA aims to treat all residents fairly, with respect and professionalism.

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We want our residents to have clear information and equal access to our services. If English is not the first language, or there is a disability that makes communicating with us more difficult we will find ways to enable access to information and the service. **Ensuring residents can fully understand reporting and treatment process is central to providing a full service.**

7 Disputes and appeals

Where a resident wishes to dispute a decision related to a damp and mould enquiry, this will be reviewed by a senior officer not involved in the original decision.

If the resident is not satisfied with the decision, they have the right to make a complaint through PRHA's Complaints Procedure

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8 Awaabs Law: PRHA templates, checklists and action plan

G:\Property Services\6 Damp and Mould

1. Awaabs Law Timeline Sheet
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4. Damp and Mould investigation Report
5. Resident Household Risk Assessment
6. Damp and Mould Policy
7. Damp and mould leaflet for residents
8. Awaabs Law KPIs
9. Guidance for no access
10. PRHA Awaabs Law Action Plan

9 Awaabs Law Timeframe summary table

Timescales: 15 days to investigate, inspect, send summary report and begin work. (nb emergencies no longer than 24 hours) – once emergency repair addressed then if further work to recategorise to urgent.

Residents must be kept updated throughout the process and information given on how to keep safe

Work area	Timeframe
Address all emergency repairs	Within 24 hours
Investigate and assess report of damp and mould	Within 10 days
Provide resident with written report and summary	Within 3 days post investigation
Begin works	Within 5 days following investigation
Long stop: within 12 weeks if a reason works cannot commence immediately	Long stop only: within 12 weeks – by approval CEO/Deputy CEO only

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