

Document Name:	Damp and Mould Policy
Policy Date:	September 2025
Approved by:	Cabinet - 2nd September Cabinet
Review Date:	September 2028
Policy Author:	Lewis Parr – Strategic Lead – Regulatory Compliance

Our Vision

Our Housing Service vision is that all homes in East Suffolk are safe, suitable, and sustainable, in communities where residents are proud to live.

This vision supports the Sustainable Housing theme in the Council's Corporate Strategy: Our Direction 2028.

Equality and Diversity Statement

East Suffolk Council is intent on ensuring people or communities do not face discrimination or social exclusion due to any of the following protected characteristics: age; disability; sex; marriage & civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; pregnancy & maternity and socio-economic deprivation.

This document complies with the Council's equality & diversity policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Damp and Mould are classified as a Hazard under the Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme (HHSRS) 2006. There may be associated hazards linked to excess cold. The death of Awaab Ishak in 2020 was attributed to prolonged environmental exposure to mould in his home. The potential seriousness of conditions that give rise to mould growth needs to be recognised. Damp and Mould can also cause breathing difficulties, asthma, rhinitis, skin conditions and the condition is often linked to mental ill health.
- 1.2. The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 amended the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, with the aim of ensuring that all rented accommodation is fit for human habitation. While it did not create new obligations for landlords, it required landlords to ensure their properties are fit for human habitation at the beginning of, and throughout, the tenancy. The Landlord and Tenant Act does not define “fit for human habitation”, but in considering whether a property is “fit for human habitation” consideration should be given to repair, stability, freedom from damp, internal arrangement, natural lighting, ventilation, water supply, drainage and sanitary conveniences, facilities for preparation and cooking of food, the disposal of wastewater and any other prescribed hazard.
- 1.3. The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 also strengthened tenants’ means of redress where landlords do not fulfil their obligations, with the expectation that if tenants are empowered to take action against their landlord, standards will improve. The Act gives the tenant the right to take their landlord to court if they consider their home is not fit.
- 1.4. Clause 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 (known otherwise as Awaab's law) inserts into social housing tenancy agreements an implied term that requires social housing landlords to comply with new requirements to be detailed in secondary legislation. This secondary legislation, likely to be named the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025, will require social housing landlords to repair certain hazards (including mould and damp) within prescribed timescales. If a social housing landlord fails to meet these prescribed timescales, then tenants will be able to act against the landlord for breach of contract. This is a further strengthening of regulatory requirements by including timescales, as the Fitness for Human Habitation Act 2018, used “within reasonable timescales” for completion of work.

- 1.5. This policy has been developed to reflect clause 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and to reflect the timescales set out in that legislation for inspections and work to be completed.

2. Definitions

2.1. For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- **Tenant** – means any person that has a tenancy agreement with the Council.
- **Leaseholder** - means any person or organisation that has a domestic property lease agreement with the Council.
- **Council Property** – means any land/property owned by the Council’s Housing Revenue Account either as the freehold or leasehold owner.
- **Rising damp** - Characterised by a tide mark on ground floor walls, often accompanied by salt deposits (‘efflorescence’), rising damp is caused by the movement of moisture from the ground, rising up through the structure of the building through capillary action.
- **Penetrating damp** - Water penetrating the external structure of the building causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure. For example, roof leaks, gutter leaks, water ingress through poor pointing or render, bridged damp proof courses or storm water flooding.
- **Plumbing leaks** – leaks from any parts of the plumbing, heating or drainage system, above ground or underground.
- **Condensation** –occurs when an imbalance of heating, moisture and ventilation leads to air borne moisture condensing and settling on cooler surfaces as water.
- **As Built Defect** –is a building defect which met building regulations at the time of construction but would fail to meet modern building standards today. Common examples include single skin walls, rat-trap bond walls, cold bridge details, ground levels within 150mm of damp proof course, lack of damp proof course or lack of damp proof membrane.
- **Humidity (relative humidity (RH))** - is a measure of the water vapour content of air, expressed as a percentage (%RH). RH is strongly proportional to temperature and highly sensitive to temperature changes.
- **Excess humidity** – for the purpose of management of damp and mould, excess humidity is where RH indoors exceeds or is likely to exceed 60%. Indoor humidity at this level is harmful to respiratory health and can lead to the formation of mould in homes.

- **Moisture producing room / wet room** – a room in which moisture is created through use of appliances, for example kitchens, bathrooms and shower rooms.
- **Habitable room** – a room that is utilised for dwelling purposes e.g. living, eating, sleeping. The Council has a responsibility to ensure that habitable rooms are capable of being free from damp and mould. Rooms not forming part of the habitable property include garages, external stores, sheds, former coal stores and external WCs. These rooms are often unheated and uninsulated, so can be prone to condensation mould if not well ventilated.
- **Significant Hazard**- in relation to a social home, a relevant hazard that poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of the social home.
- **Emergency Hazard**- in relation to a social home, a relevant hazard that poses an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety of an occupier of the social home.

3. Legal Requirements

3.1. The Policy has been developed in context of the following statutory legislation and guidelines: -

- Clause 42- Awaab's Law (as introduced in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023)
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Decent Homes Standard
- Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance on damp and mould
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Housing, Health and Safety Rating Systems (HHSRS) as part of The Housing Act 2004.
- October 2021, Housing Ombudsman published a spotlight report on Damp and Mould
- The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025
- Secure Tenants of Local Authorities (Right to Repair Regulations 1994)

4. Policy Statement

4.1. East Suffolk Council will ensure a fair and consistent approach to damp and mould. It ensures that the Council provides a reactive and responsive role where damp and mould is identified, a proactive role to prevent damp and mould occurring and an empathetic service to residents who report damp and mould in their homes.

4.2. We aim to ensure that our damp and mould policy is clear and transparent for our tenants.

5. Aims and Objectives

5.1. The aim of this policy is to ensure that all Council homes are safe, healthy, and free from damp and mould hazards, in line with statutory responsibilities and the Council's vision for sustainable housing. The policy supports a proactive, responsive, and empathetic approach to managing damp and mould in residential properties.

5.2. Specific objectives are to:

- Ensure tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy home environment is provided.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp and mould, including managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp, condensation and mould.
- Comply with statutory requirements and deliver good practice.
- Maximise the available budgets and ensure that they are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp and condensation problems proactively through planned preventative works, as well as reactive as needed.
- Ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould and condensation.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1. To ensure the effective prevention, identification, and resolution of damp and mould issues, East Suffolk Council sets out the following responsibilities for key stakeholders recognising there is a shared responsibility overall:

6.2. Landlord- East Suffolk Council

- 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. This will help avoid rising damp, penetrating damp and plumbing leaks.
- Review the effectiveness of heating and ventilation systems as part of the assessment of condensation complaints.
- Proactively look for damp and mould when staff and operatives visit its properties.

- Ensure budgets are available to deal with damp and mould.
- Ensure that there are suitable processes in place to allow residents to raise any repairs.
- Ensure a contractor or in house provision is in place to deal with any repairs.
- Provide adequate ventilation.
- Provide adequate insulation.
- Deal with any reports of damp or mould timely, adequately, and efficiently.
- Investigate reports of damp and mould timely, adequately, and effectively.
- Ensure the contractors or in house provision undertaking the works are doing so timely, adequately, efficiently, and effectively.
- Ensure the works completed have been successful.
- Provide literature and guidance on how to reduce damp and mould.
- Ensure staff are trained and informed to deal with damp and mould.
- Engage with and support tenants to manage their home effectively and to minimise risk of damp and mould arising.

6.3. Tenants

- Report any signs of damp and/or mould promptly using the Council's available reporting channels as soon as it is noticed.
- Cooperate with inspections and allow access for repair works to be carried out. The Council's **Access policy** sets out our approach to gaining access to your home for inspections and remedial work.
- Follow guidance provided on adequate ventilation and moisture control to help reduce the risk of damp and mould.
- Notify the Council if recommended remedial actions do not resolve the issue.

6.4. Contractors

- Proactively looking for damp and mould.
- Ensuring that reports of damp and mould are logged/reported back to the Council.
- Ensure that residents are effectively communicated with through the process.
- Deal with any reports of damp or mould timely, adequately, and efficiently.
- Ensure that operatives and contractors undertaking the works are doing so timely, adequately, efficiently, and effectively.
- Provide the necessary tools and materials to be able to undertake the works adequately, efficiently, and effectively
- Ensure the works completed have been successful
- Escalating any no access issues to the council immediately.

7. Damp and Mould case management process

- 7.1. ESC will have a clear step by step process for managing and resolving reports of damp and mould in its homes.
 - 7.2. Tenants and leaseholders can report repairs by phone, email, letter, in person, on our website or through our social media pages.
 - 7.3. Damp and mould issues may also be identified by visiting professionals and housing officers, in which case, this will be reported back to the repairs service.
 - 7.4. All repairs coming through the Council's call centre will be triaged using a triage diagnostic script. The script is designed to determine the most likely cause or causes of damp or mould, and to arrange for repairs or advice to combat this. It may be necessary for the script to be used more than once, as symptoms improve and change.
 - 7.5. Survey appointment (Investigation) within 10 working days of the call from resident or a staff member reporting damp/mould in a property.
 - 7.6. Following survey, a written summary of the findings will be issued to the resident and delivery contractors within 3 working days of the survey.
 - 7.7. Written summaries will state if the risk is significant, an emergency or not and the timescale for works to be completed.
 - 7.8. The delivery timescales are triggered by the investigation conclusion date, typically this will be the written summary date.
- Significant Hazard- - complete relevant safety works and begin or take steps to begin any further supplementary works to prevent the hazard from reoccurring within 5 working days of concluding the investigation *. Where further supplementary works are required and it is not possible to begin them within 5 working days, the landlord must start these as soon as reasonably practicable and within 12 weeks of the investigating concluding
 - Non-emergency and non-significant hazards- if a hazard does not meet the requirements to be classed as an emergency or a significant hazard, then any remedial work required to rectify the issue will be dealt with as a routine repair.
- * Works undertaken in this period may be interim works (such as a mould wash) to reduce the risk pending further works which require more time- up to 12 weeks- to be completed.
- 7.9. Hazards can be defined as "significant" through guidelines set out by the government, which considers issues such as the severity of the problem alongside the age and

vulnerability of the tenants. Notably, defining a risk as "significant" to health will not require a doctor's note.

- 7.10. Emergency repairs must be completed within 24 hours- and this may also include a mould wash to reduce the risk pending further work requiring more time to be completed.
- 7.11. Where extensive works may be required, the Council will consider the individual circumstances of the household, including any vulnerabilities, and whether it is appropriate to move tenant(s) out of their home at an early stage, any such moves will be carried out in accordance with the [Decant Policy](#).
- 7.12. Within 5 working days of agreed works being completed, a post works inspection will be completed, with agreed sign off from the resident.
- 7.13. 1 month after the works are completed, an aftercare telephone call will be undertaken to ensure that the damp/mould issue is resolved.
- 7.14. 6 months after the works are complete an aftercare telephone call will be made to ensure the damp and mould issues have been resolved. Should the resident raise any concerns that the issues are not resolved, a further inspection will be carried out.
- 7.15. 12 months after the works are complete an aftercare telephone call will be made to ensure the damp and mould issues have been resolved. Should the resident raise any concerns that the issues are not resolved, a further inspection will be carried out

8. Communication, Support and Education

- 8.1 The causes of damp and mould are complex, and, in many cases, our tenants may need support to understand the causes of damp, mould and condensation, as well as how to avoid this. The Council will ensure that this education is in a range of formats including verbal, written, visual and video.
- 8.2 We regularly remind tenants how to report repairs to us. We are developing our online platform so customers can report repairs online and even, where appropriate, can schedule their own repairs. As well as [online reporting](#), tenants can also report repairs using traditional approaches, in person or on the telephone.
- 8.3 We have developed information for tenants about how to identify condensation and mould problems with their property and what they can do to help tackle the problem,

and this can be found on our [website](http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/damp-mould-and-condensation) (www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/damp-mould-and-condensation) or available as a leaflet too.

- 8.4 We will give residents advice on how to prevent condensation, damp and mould and what they should do to remove mild cases of mould. However, we recognise that not every resident will be able to resolve condensation, damp and mould themselves. We will provide appropriate support in such cases in relation to the specific circumstances and the individual resident's needs.
- 8.5 Some residents, including young children and people with some health conditions, such as respiratory issues or immune deficiencies, and those with disabilities, are potentially more vulnerable and at greater risk because of damp and mould. When damp and mould issues are reported we will ask residents if they or household members have any health needs or disabilities requiring their repairs to be prioritised.
- 8.6 We know that some residents cannot afford to heat their homes adequately due to their financial situation. We will work with residents to ensure that they are receiving the income to which they are entitled, and further support and advice is available on our website [Fuel, energy and utilities » East Suffolk Council](#).
- 8.7 Where homes are overcrowded, humidity will tend to be higher, and this increases the likelihood of condensation. We will work with the resident and explore solutions which may include moving to a more suitable home if this is available and appropriate. This may include exchanging [Exchanging your council home » East Suffolk Council](#), or joining the housing register [Register for Social Housing » East Suffolk Council](#).

9. Customer Feedback

- 9.1. Tenants are encouraged to inform us of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service provided via ESC's Customer Feedback Policy: [Customer feedback » East Suffolk Council](#)

10. Data, records and performance monitoring

- 10.1. We will ensure our approach to record keeping is accurate and robust supporting a risk-based approach to dealing with damp and mould.
- 10.2. We will maintain a core asset register of all properties we own and/or manage, with component/attribute data against each property.

- 10.3. Sources of data on the Council's properties can come from a variety of routes such as tenancy audits, stock condition surveys, repair and maintenance inspections, EPC surveys, and complaints.
- 10.4. We will enhance our understanding of our assets in relation to damp and mould and have proactive programmes for managing this issue. This will include analysis of stock condition data, our residents, and complaint levels (or lack of) to drive a data and risk-based approach.
- 10.5. We will ensure our planned preventative investment/retrofit programmes consider and help prevent condensation, damp and mould.
- 10.6. To ensure the policy is being rigorously implemented we will monitor performance against the following indicators:
- number of cases reported and identified and the timeliness of which they were dealt with
 - number of cases visited and assessed
 - number of cases where all identified remedial works have been completed.
- 10.7. The aim of the monitoring framework is to:
- increase resident satisfaction around the management of damp and mould
 - reduce ad hoc repairs relating to damp and mould
 - reduce recall visits for damp and mould
 - reduce complaints linked to damp and mould
 - reduce disrepair cases linked to damp and mould.
- 10.8. Performance and any incidences of non-compliance will be reported regularly to the Senior Leadership Team and Cabinet.

11. Training

- 11.1. All Council housing staff who visit tenants in their homes will receive training on understanding the causes and symptoms of damp and mould, the potential impact on health, and the importance of reporting concerns. Technical officers and operatives will receive more in-depth training to aid diagnosis and ensure appropriate investigations and repairs are carried out.
- 11.2. Accepted methods of diagnosing and treating dampness are regularly being reviewed and developed by industry experts. Technical officers will continue their professional development by monitoring changes in best practice and adopting new techniques.

12. Policy Review

- 12.1. The Strategic Lead for Repairs and Maintenance, Strategic Lead for Regulatory Compliance, Strategic Lead for Housing Investment and the Strategic Lead for Housing Services will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of this policy.
- 12.2. We will review this policy every three years, or sooner if there are any changes to legislative, regulatory, best practice or operational issues.

13. Version Control

Version:	Date:	Author:	Rationale:
1.0	July 2025	Lewis Parr – Strategic Lead – Regulatory Compliance	New Policy