

# **Damp and Mould Policy**

**2025-2028**

## **Equalities Statement**

Bolsover District Council is committed to equalities as an employer and when delivering the services it provides to all sections of the community.

The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, advancing equality and fostering good relations between all groups in society.

### **Access for All statement**

You can request this document or information in another format such as large print or **language** or contact us by:

- **Phone:** [01246 242424](tel:01246 242424)
- **Email:** [enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@bolsover.gov.uk)
- **BSL Video Call:** A three-way video call with us and a BSL interpreter. It is free to call Bolsover District Council with Sign Solutions, you just need WiFi or mobile data to make the video call, or call into one of our Contact Centres.
- Call with [Relay UK](#) - a free phone service provided by BT for anyone who has difficulty hearing or speaking. It's a way to have a real-time conversation with us by text.
- **Visiting** one of our [offices](#) at Clowne, Bolsover, Shirebrook and South Normanton

<b>Policy Details</b>	<b>Comments / Confirmation (To be updated as the document progresses)</b>
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Date policy forwarded to Performance & Communications (to include on Extranet and Internet if applicable to the public)	

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## **1.Introduction**

Bolsover District Council is committed to ensuring that all tenants live in safe, healthy, and well-maintained homes. We recognised the impact that damp and mould can have on the health and wellbeing of our tenants.

This Policy has been developed to respond to the problems highlighted by the Housing Ombudsman, Regulator of Social Housing and to comply with Awaab's Law.

Dragonfly Management (Bolsover) Ltd "Dragonfly Management" is the Council's wholly owned company who delivers the repairs and maintenance service on behalf of the Council. Within this policy, "the Council" this includes the Housing Department and Dragonfly Management delivering their service to the Council.

## **2. Scope**

This policy outlines the Council's approach to managing damp and mould in homes (habitable rooms). It is aimed at ensuring residents receive appropriate information regarding the causes and control of damp, and mould as well as how the Council carry out our duties in relation to the provision of a "healthy and safe" home. The policy does not apply to outbuildings, passageways, or porches.

This policy covers all assets of Bolsover District Council that fall within Housing Revenue Accounting (HRA).

This policy is relevant to all employees, residents, contractors, stakeholders, and other persons who may work on, occupy, visit, or use premises owned or managed by the Council, or who may be affected by The Council's activities or services.

The policy should be used by all to ensure they understand the obligations placed upon the Council and Dragonfly Management to maintain a healthy and safe environment within the home of each resident, and within all communal areas of buildings and other properties we own and/or manage. Adherence to this policy is mandatory.

## **3. Aims and Objectives**

The key aim of this policy is to raise awareness of the issues surrounding damp and mould for those living in our properties and to set out the Council's zero-tolerance approach to addressing and resolving reports of damp and mould in its tenanted properties.

In addition the Policy will;

1. Provide a clear framework for identifying, reporting, and addressing damp and mould issues.

2. Ensure timely and effective responses to reports of damp and mould, and to ensure that repairs to alleviate damp (for example work to guttering and drains, replacing tiles, repairing leaks to pipework, etc.) are carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise impact on the health of the resident and damage to the structure, fixtures and fittings of the property
3. Promote tenant awareness and provide access to information in a variety of formats and access to support to help residents prevent and reduce risks of damp and mould in their homes. **INSERT WEBSITE LINK**
4. To ensure all tenants are treated in a fair, respectful, empathetic and consistent way.
5. Comply with relevant legislation and regulatory standards, including the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

## 4. Strategic Context

4.1 This Policy and its delivery is compatible with the following Council policies and documents:

- **Tenancy Agreement** – a contract between a tenant and the Council setting out the legal terms and conditions of the tenancy.
- **Housing Repairs Handbook** – sets out how the Council will provide a repairs service to tenants. The Handbook also sets out the tenants' responsibilities for maintaining their home.
- **The Council's Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy**
- **Lettable standard** - sets out the minimum standard properties will meet when they are let to new tenants

## 5. Definitions

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

- **Damp: refers to** an excess of moisture in a building, typically resulting from either condensation, penetrating damp or rising damp. It can cause damage to buildings and harm the health of occupants if not treated
- **Condensation:** occurs when 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.
- **Penetrating damp:** water penetrates the fabric of the building from the outside to the inside, for example, because of a leaking roof.
- **Rising damp:** water that rises through fabric and brick walls of a building after being absorbed from the surrounding ground.

- **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. It appears as fuzzy or slimy patches in various colours, often black or yellow. Mould needs to be removed carefully to avoid spreading spores and to prevent it causing ill health.
- **Vulnerable Tenant;** a tenant who has characteristics that mean they are less able to cope with a situation which may impact on their health, safety or wellbeing and have an increased need for support.
- **Habitable rooms;** policy only applies to living areas within the home, not outbuildings, passageways or porches

## 6. Roles and Responsibility for Implementation

The Council has overall responsibility for the Policy. The Council will formally approve this policy and review it every three years (or sooner if there is a change in legislation or regulation).

Dragonfly Management has operational management and delivery responsibility for repairs and maintenance and ensuring compliance with damp and mould legislation.

It is the responsibility of all officers to ensure the Damp and Mould Policy is understood and implemented. Monitoring of the performance and delivery of the Policy will be reported to Housing Stock Management Group on a quarterly basis.

## 7. Legislation, Guidance and Regulatory Standards

- **Housing Act 2004, Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS),** This places a legal duty on landlords to assess and regularly review the condition of their properties to ensure that properties are safe and free from hazards. This includes issues related to damp and mould.
- **Housing Act 2004, Part 1,** this requires the local authority to take into account the impact of health and safety hazards in housing on vulnerable occupants, when deciding on what action to take to improve conditions.
- **Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018:** This act requires landlords to ensure their properties are fit for human habitation at the beginning and throughout the tenancy. This includes addressing issues like damp and mould.
- **Environmental Protection Act 1990:** This act can be used to address statutory nuisances, including damp and mould, that are prejudicial to health.
- **Defective Premises Act 1972** – this sets out a duty of care to carry out repairs, ensuring that all individuals who could be affected by relevant defects are

reasonably safe from person injury or damage to their property as a result of the defects.

- **Landlord and Tenant Act 1985:** This act requires landlords to keep the structure and exterior of the property in repair. The Council will respond to and fix repairs which are required to address damp and mould issue.
- **Decent Homes Standard:** This standard requires social housing to be free of serious hazards, including those caused by damp and mould.
- **Building Regulations 2010:** When undertaking controlled work, such as improvements to heating and ventilation systems, landlords must comply with these regulations.
- **Awaab's Law:** Coming into effect from October 2025, this law mandates that social landlords must investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould within set time periods and repair all emergency hazards within 24 hours.

## 8. Responsibilities

### The Council's Responsibilities:

- All resident facing colleagues and operatives are responsible for spotting damp and mould, reporting and recording information they gather.
- We will ensure that all reports of damp and mould will be fully assessed and responded to appropriately to minimise the risk of conditions returning.
- Dragonfly Management staff and subcontractors will be competent to diagnose and remedy damp / mould issues.
- A detailed stock condition survey will be carried out on each property at least every 5 years, including an assessment against HHSRS to ensure that properties remain free from Category 1 and 2 hazards.
- Relevant Managers within the Council and Dragonfly Management are responsible for ensuring the policy is understood and followed for existing and new colleagues.

### Tenant Responsibilities:

- The tenants' responsibilities are set out in the Tenancy Agreement and including the requirement to notify the Council immediately if any repairs are required at the Property which are the Council's responsibility.



- The tenant must give the Council, or its contractors access to the property provided a minimum of 72 hours prior written notice have been given to inspect for repairs, carrying out repairs, servicing equipment and/or for any other reasonable housing management purpose.
- All residents should seek advice and permission before carrying out any changes within their homes to ensure that any alterations do not contribute to damp and mould.
- Tenants are asked to carry out small practical measures to help reduce conditions that lead to condensation, damp and mould by:
  - Keeping temperatures within the home between 18 and 21
  - Drying washing outside where possible
  - Not putting furniture against outside walls to allow air flow
  - Opening windows or trickle vents during the day
  - Using mechanical ventilation where installed in the property, for example extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms, and Positive Input Ventilation systems (PIV)
  - Informing the Council if their household circumstance changed, particularly if someone moves into the property.
- An information leaflet is on the Councils website **INSERT LINK**, this is regularly updated and sent out to tenants.

## 9.Responding to a report

Residents/tenants can report suspected damp and mould through a variety of methods

- Logging a repair - [repair online](#)
- By speaking to a Customer Adviser at one of our [contact centres](#), this can be either over the telephone (01246 242424) or in person.
- By [email](#).
- Via our Twitter page @BolsoverDC
- By writing to us at Bolsover District Council, The Arc, High Street, Clowne, Derbyshire S43 4JY

### Process for dealing with reports of damp and mould

All initial reports of damp and mould will be recorded within the Housing Management System, utilising the repair diagnostics software to determine the priority, with consideration given to any tenant vulnerabilities.

Where an Inspection is required, an appointment will be offered to attend the property as soon as possible within 10 working days.

During the inspection an assessment will be made by the Repairs Coordinator to establish the cause of the damp or mould. They will discuss any actions that can be taken to reduce the occurrence of mould by both the Council and the tenant.

The inspection outcome will be recorded on a form to capture all relevant information as set out below (Total Mobile generated form saved to swordfish)

- How and when the investigation was conducted, and the job title of the individual who conducted the investigation.
- Any following investigations that are required, and if so when they will take place
- If a hazard was found and if so what
- Whether the hazard is likely to pose a significant risk to residents' health or safety
- If it does pose a risk:
  - [If applicable] what temporary repairs are needed to make the property safe until the problem can be permanently rectified
  - what the Council will do to permanently rectify the problem and the likely timescales for this
- How to contact the Council with any queries

A copy of the report will be issued to the tenant within 2 working days of the inspection.

If the inspection result finds that there is a significant risk to the tenant, the Council will start work within 5 working days to make the property safe. This may include treatment of mould.

For minor works not affecting the tenants health, the repairs will be raised and completed as quickly as possible within the Councils existing repair priorities.

Specific vulnerabilities and tenants needs will be considered as part of this prioritisation process alongside the assessment of the risk.

Where there is a need for a technical specialist (e.g. specialist damp survey) this will be requested and completed within 10 working days. The tenant will be kept informed of the outcomes and any further work required.

Where it is deemed necessary for emergency works, these will be raised and completed within 24 hours of the inspection.

Following completion of the works, quality assurance checks will be carried by contacting the tenant to confirm if the issue has been resolved and ensure the tenants is satisfied with the completed works. This will be within 3 months of the work.

Tenants must allow access to carry out inspections and to carry out work to prevent damp and mould. Where access is not allowed, the Council will keep records of all attempts to carry out its duties to ensure compliance with legislation. The Council will follow its no access procedure and may take legal action against the tenant.

## **10. Data and Records**

Information obtained from reports of damp and mould will be recorded and all remedial works actioned using our housing management computer system.

Data collection will be analysed to ensure we take a proactive and preventative approach to damp and mould.

We will use the data collection to identify trends in certain property types and will use this to inform future planned investment programmes such as loft insulation or window replacement.

## **11. Resident Engagement**

The Council consider good communication essential to raise awareness of damp and mould. We will provide information leaflets and signpost to useful resources. We will ensure that this information is effective in helping residents avoid mould issues within their homes and is available in a number of different formats.

Supporting our tenants

Upon receipt of the repair, and/or the initial inspection we will seek to identify any health conditions of the tenant and the household which may create a need to prioritise the repairs.

Where extensive works may be required we will consider the individual circumstances of the household, and any vulnerabilities, and whether it is appropriate to move the tenant out of their home. In these circumstances we will provide alternative temporary accommodation until the works or repairs are completed.

The Council will share information clearly and transparently and will ensure that information is available to residents via regular publications and information on its website.

## **12. Performance Reporting**

The Council will report robust key performance indicator (KPI) measures for damp and mould repairs against the timescales set out above.

Performance will be reported internally to The Council, Dragonfly Board and SLT on a quarterly basis. Dragonfly Management Limited will engage with tenants and develop its approach / systems to report on a regular basis. The position reported will be based on the following criteria:

**Data – the total number of:**

- Properties
  - Properties with open damp and mould cases
  - Total number of remedial works outstanding from D&M cases
  - Total number of overdue remedial works from D&M cases (broken down by how long outstanding under 3 months, 3-6 months, 6-12 months and 12months +)
  - Number of D&M cases classed as HHSRS hazards
  - Average time taken from receipt of D&M case to survey being completed.
  - Average time taken to complete remedial works following survey being completed
  - Number of cases where a tenant has been decanted as a result of the Hazard and work required
- **Narrative - an explanation of the:**
    - Current position;
    - Corrective action required;
    - Anticipated impact of corrective action; and
    - Any mitigation of risk to tenants
    - Progress with completion of follow-up works

### **13. Significant Non-Compliance and Escalation**

The Councils definition of significant non-compliance is any incident which has the potential to result in a potential breach of legislation or regulatory standard, or which causes a risk to health or safety. All non-compliance issues will be reported and escalated as soon as possible, and no later than 24 hours after the incident was identified, or of a Council or Dragonfly employee or agent becoming aware of it.

Any non-compliance issue identified at an operational level will be formally reported to the Senior Repairs Coordinator (Dragonfly Management) in the first instance, who will agree an appropriate course of corrective action with the Head of Property (Dragonfly Management) and report details of the same to the SLT at Dragonfly and the Council.

In cases of serious non-compliance, The Council will consider whether it is necessary to disclose the issue to the Regulator of Social Housing as required by the regulatory framework.