

RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Damp & Mould Policy

DRAFT

Review due:

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy sets out specific guidance to ensure that the Damp & Mould present in RBC properties is managed effectively. It also aims to prevent the development of Damp & Mould in properties which are on estates where Damp & Mould has previously been reported.

1.2 The Council will ensure that our procedures to manage Damp & Mould are followed, in accordance with best practice, which will assist the service in achieving the aims of this policy.

1.3 In publishing this policy, RBC aims to ensure its services are in line with the following section from a recent letter from the Housing Ombudsman Service to all Chief Executives of members of their service:

I would also highlight two areas of the report. Firstly, my report recommended landlords take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. I further recommended landlords consider a dedicated policy to support decision-making and an urgent, proactive approach. I am asking all landlords to actively consider whether such a policy is required, if not done so already. If a dedicated policy is genuinely not considered necessary, I ask you to be really clear why.

2. Aim

2.1 This policy aims to ensure that the Council meets its obligations as a landlord and seeks to provide assurance that damp & mould is adequately managed, ensuring the safety of our tenants and leaseholders.

2.2 The primary aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure that our tenants have a safe homes to live in.
- Ensure the sustainability of our properties by managing damp & mould problems as they emerge, so that they do not contribute to potential structural problems.

2.3 These aims will be achieved through the following means:

- The Housing Service has set out a clear approach for the management of damp & mould in our properties, which will include:
 - Monitoring properties where there is potential for Damp & Mould to develop. This will be achieved by tracking the frequency of Damp & Mould repairs in each of our estates.
 - Monitoring the condition and age of the components of our properties (for example doors & windows).
 - Using the processes available in our Damp & Mould procedure to inspect and monitor the progress of reported Damp & Mould in our properties.
 - Performance Monitoring on complaints, number of repairs, MP and Councillor enquiries, and the number of disrepair cases which mention Damp & Mould.

3. Scope

3.1 This policy covers the life cycle of any report of Damp and/or Mould, whether found as part of the preventative monitoring detailed above, or through a repairs request sent to the Housing Repairs team.

3.2 Access for preventative work regarding Damp & Mould is covered by the current Tenancy Agreement (under section 6 – Access).

3.3 In line with government guidance, for example: [Housing disrepair legal obligations: good practice guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), RBC expects that adequate audit trails have been maintained internally for Damp & Mould repairs & inspections.

4. Responsive Repairs which involve Damp & Mould

4.1 RBC aim to complete a relevant inspection as soon as possible of the affected property upon receipt of a report of Damp & Mould being received.

4.2 Where inspections are carried out, factors to be considered include:

- Fuel poverty – if a resident is struggling to pay for heating, financial support can be offered through the RBC website: [Reduce fuel bills – Runnymede Borough Council](#) or [Difficulty paying your rent – Runnymede Borough Council](#) or through Customer Services.
- If there are factors that might be within the tenant's control to affect the presence of damp & mould, for example:
 - Ventilation;
 - Heating (with due consideration to the financial position of the tenant);
 - Arrangements for drying clothes;
- Inspectors will routinely provide information leaflets and letters regarding damp & mould.

4.3 Damp & mould repairs which are deemed to be the result of wilful neglect or damage to the property by any resident of a property will be subject to the terms of the RBC Recharge Policy.

4.4 Tenants have a Right to Repair for qualifying works (up to a value of £250) – for a full list, see: [Using the right to repair scheme - Citizens Advice](#)

5. Policy statement

5.1 The Council will take every opportunity to involve interested tenants in managing and developing this service. Including utilising their skillschallenging our performance at core groups, and advising on revised policy changes.

5.2 The Council recognises that in certain cases there may be underlying issues that contribute to access problems. These can relate to a support need, language or format issue, or a specific tenancy management problem. In these circumstances, where it is reasonably practicable to identify the need, the Council will try to overcome or resolve the cause of the problem and be sensitive to the issue before pursuing legal action.

5.3 Appropriate and regular training will be provided to all property and first point of contact staff.

5.4 Properties which have recently been void should already meet the specific damp related requirements set out in the Runnymede void standard before re-let.

6. Council Roles & Responsibilities

6.1 The following roles have responsibilities:

The Chief Executive - overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

Head of Housing Technical Services - will take the lead on the consistency of the council's approach regarding these reports.

6.2 Employees

All employees, irrespective of their position shall:

- Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be adversely affected by damp & mould, including members of the public, tenants, visitors and contractors.
- Co-operate as appropriate with other staff and agencies to ensure compliance with this policy and all other legal requirements.
- Halt works that, constitute a serious risk to health and safety.
- Report any concerns that they may have in relation to the management of damp & mould.

7. Consultation, communication and training

7.1 The Council will provide clear and comprehensive advice and information to residents, with an aim for a single point of contact.

7.2 Internal stakeholders have also been consulted.

8. Legislation and Regulation

The following regulation relates to this policy document:

The Home Standard – sets expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide tenants with quality accommodation and a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service.

[Home Standard - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The Decent Homes Standard – sets expectations for the maintenance standards of homes which should be let by Local Authorities.

[COVER \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The Equality Act, 2010 - protects people against discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in employment, and as users of private and public services based on nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

[Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

The Fitness for Human Habitation Act, 2018 – enhances protections for tenants against hazards in rented properties.

[Guide for local authorities: Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

9. Related Policies & Documents

Recharge Policy
Repairs Policy
Void Standard
Damp & Mould Procedure

10. Monitoring and performance management

10.1 The Council aims to review this policy in three years or sooner if needed to ensure it reflects current legislation and latest examples of best practice.

10.2 Technical Services will monitor contractor performance (KPIs) and any complaints from residents.

10.3 Business Development plan to put in place a system to monitor the potential for future repairs requests from our estates (by mapping where previous requests/complaints have emerged).

11. Equalities Implications

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out for this policy.

11.2 An EIA is a way of assessing the impact, or likely impact, that a particular policy, procedure or decision will have on particular groups. This is used to assess whether in making the decision whether the Council has complied with its public sector equality duty under S149 of the Equality Act 2010 (as amended) to; eliminate discrimination and any other conduct that is prohibited under this act and to advance equality between those who share a protected characteristic.

11.3 The screening found that there will be no negative impacts on residents with Protected Characteristics.

12. Version Control

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
V1	January 23	First draft completed		Tom Branagan	