



Damp and Mould Policy

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| Policy Owner Role Title | Head of Customer Experience and Head of Repairs |
| Responsible Director | Executive Director of Customer Service |

Policy Checklist

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|---|------------|
| Is Customer engagement required? | Yes |
| Does this policy require input or validation from external or legal experts? | No |
| Is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) required? | Yes |
| Is a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) Required? | No |
| Is the Policy compliant with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements? | Yes |
| Has the Policy Development Guide been followed? | Yes |
| Sign of by Policy Officer | April 2023 |



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1.0 Introduction and scope

This Damp and Mould Policy has been developed in line with Wandle's values, which are:

- Think customer
- Build relationships
- Work together
- Aim high
- Own it

It will ensure that actions we undertake will be underpinned by our vision of:

"Homes to be proud of and services you can trust"

The Damp and Mould policy has also been developed in line with Wandle's Corporate strategy and contributes towards the following long-term strategic themes:

- Outcomes for Customers that makes us proud
 - This policy supports this objective through promoting a comprehensive approach to damp and mould throughout the business that puts our customers at its heart and works towards ensuring that our tenants are safe in their homes.
- Providing homes that we would be happy to live in
 - This policy supports this objective through setting out an approach to damp and mould which looks to address the problem at its route to minimise the presence of damp and mould in our homes.

This policy also contributes towards the delivery of the following strategies

- The Customer Experience Strategy
- The Asset Management Strategy

1.1 Objectives and performance monitoring

The objectives of this Damp and Mould policy are to ensure that Wandle has a strong, proactive approach to damp and mould that centres our customers and their health and safety. It aims to ensure that Wandle's approach to damp and mould, in our customer's homes is in place from, when we build our homes through to the empty home stage. We will monitor the performance of this policy, and our approach to damp and mould, through the following channels:

- Complaints, satisfaction surveys and ombudsman determinations relating to damp
- Disrepair cases involving damp
- All customer contact involving damp
- Preventative measures such as temperature and humidity sensors installed in properties
- Insights from homes visits, health and safety checks, stock condition surveys, neighbourhood visits and other business as usual activities.

1.2 Feedback and Improvement

Where possible, Wandle will always look to develop our approach through feedback and learning. This may include looking at complaints, responses to surveys and evolving best practice in the sector. Where appropriate we will make amendments to our policies and processes to ensure we are providing the best possible service to our customers.

We will use root cause analysis to identify and document underlying causes of damp and mould. Where a service failure has been identified we will develop smart action plans to avoid repeat failures. We will seek to gain strategic understanding through use of stock data feeds in our asset management and investment strategies.

We will also develop our approach in line with changes in legislation and regulation where necessary.

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 General approach

Wandle's approach is to work together with tenants to identify, treat and prevent damp mould in their homes.

Where possible Wandle will take a proactive approach to preventing damp and mould in our customers' homes. This will include using data and benchmarking to help us to identify properties that may be at increased risk. We will also analyse various sources of data to help us find potential trends or indicators that may allow us to identify properties or tenancies that are at higher risk.

2.2 Communication

Wandle's approach relies on good communication between Wandle and our customers at all stages of the process. This includes setting clear expectations to our customers that they have a responsibility to communicate to us at the earliest opportunity any signs of damp and mould in their homes.

Where the presence of damp and mould in our customer's homes is identified, staff and contractors should be empathetic, informative and solution focused to supporting customers to address the damp and mould in their homes.

2.3 Preventative measures

Wandle will, where possible, use data and benchmarking to help us identify properties that may be at risk of damp or mould, so we are able to communicate with our tenants and take any necessary actions to prevent issues before they arise.

Where possible we will look at the installation of temperature and humidity sensors in our properties, these will generally be placed in properties we have identified as being at increased risk. Information generated will enable a preventative approach to address and resolve the damp and mould where necessary.

2.4 New Homes

Wandle's new homes are all built to high standards of ventilation and energy performance. Mould in a home is often caused by poor ventilation and we will ensure that all tenants who moved into our new build homes have clear guidance on how to properly use any ventilation or heating systems in their homes.

Where a new build property is part of a Section 106 development, we will ensure properties are delivered to a high standard. Wandle's Clerk of Works will also undertake inspections and raise any actions required through the necessary channel or through our defects process.

2.5 Energy Efficiency.

Ensuring a home is energy efficient is important part of Wandle's long-term approach to preventing damp and mould in our homes, where poor energy in a property is often a strong indicator and contributor to such issues in a home. Wandle is committed, supported through our Asset Management Strategy, to meeting SAP 69 standards in all our homes by 2030 and to meeting government targets on Net Zero by 2050.

Wandle takes a 'fabric first' approach to improving the energy efficiency of our properties, to ensure work undertaken does not negatively impact the customer by making conditions worse for damp and mould.

2.6 Repairs

Where a tenant reports damp and mould in their property, we will act in line with our Repairs and Maintenance policy and Damp and Mould procedures. This may include providing tenants with guidance on preventative measures for the first 6 weeks, this will allow us to focus our resources on cases where these preventative measures do not resolve the issues

When undertaking repairs for damp and mould, such as installing ventilation or mould washes operatives will report back where necessary to ensure any repairs taking place address the causes of damp and mould rather than just tackling symptoms.

Our in-house operatives and officers will also have training on recognising signs of damp and mould in homes and will report back to the repairs team for further works or inspections where required.

2.7 Major works

In some cases, repairs identified to a property to deal with cases of damp or mould may require intervention beyond the scope of our normal day to day repairs processes. Where such cases are identified, they will be dealt with in line with our major works processes. Should such work require the tenant to be moved out of the property for any period, this will be dealt with in line with our Decant procedure.

2.8 Disrepair

Where disrepair cases are brought to Wandle which involve reports of damp and mould in our customer homes, we act in line with our disrepair procedures. This will include making sure that any reported cases of damp and mould are acted on and necessary repairs raised as soon as is possible, rather than after a case has been settled.

2.9 Mutual Exchanges and Empty Homes

When a tenant has moved out of their property, the property will be inspected as part of our tenancy management and empty homes policy and procedures. As part of this process, we will look to identify and address any signs of damp and mould in the property before the new tenant moves in.

2.10 Disposals

Where works for damp and mould or improving energy efficiency of a property meet our disposals criteria, as outlined in our Disposals policy, we may consider undertaking an options appraisal on the property.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Customer Experience Committee

The Customer Experience Committee are responsible for the monitoring and oversight of this policy at a governance level.

Executive Director of Customer Services

The Executive Director of Customer Services is responsible for the overall implementation and delivery of this policy and Wandle's approach to damp and mould

Head of Customer Experience

The head of Customer Experience is responsible for day-to-day operations management and implementation of the damp and mould process.

Head of Repairs

The head of repairs is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the repairs and inspections relating to damp and mould.

Disrepair Project coordinator

The Disrepair project coordinator is responsible for providing reports to the executive team on disrepair related damp cases and providing outcomes and insight from the damp sensor project.

All Staff

All Staff in the business have a responsibility to report cases of damp and mould that they may detect as part of their everyday duties.

4.0 Value for Money

Wandle will always strive to provide value for money in the services it provides for its residents. This policy aims to prevent Damp and Mould from an early stage and through early interventions help to ensure issues are addressed before they become extensive. This help to deliver value for money by preventing issues from become more costly repairs and resolve them to prevent potential future disrepair.

5.0 Related Documents

5.1 Internal

| | |
|------------|---|
| Strategies | Asset Management Strategy, Customer Experience Strategy, Value for Money Strategy |
| Policies | Complaints policy, Repairs Policy, Empty Homes Policy, Disposals Policy |
| Procedures | Damp and Mould procedure, Major works procedure, Disrepair procedure |

6.0 Relevant Legislation

| Legislation | Main powers and relevance to the policy subject | How we use or comply with legislation |
|---|---|---|
| Homes (Fitness for human habitation) Act 2018 | Amended the 1985 Act. It states that landlords must ensure that homes are 'fit for human habitation'. The Act does not define 'fit for human habitation', but landlords are considered responsible for repairs, freedom from damp, ventilation, water supply, drainage and sanitary conveniences, facilities for the preparation of and cooking of food, and the disposal of wastewater | This Policy sets out how Wandle will ensure our homes are fit for human habitation through the minimizing of the conditions in which damp and mould can occur and where it does occur setting out our approach to dealing with it within our tenants' homes |

| Legislation | Main powers and relevance to the policy subject | How we use or comply with legislation |
|---|---|--|
| Landlords and tenants act 1985 | Wandle is responsible for maintaining the structure of the property and keeping it in good repair • Keeping installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation in good repair and proper working order. | This policy sets out what we will do to ensure our properties are kept in good repair by minimising the impact of damp and mould. |
| Housing Act 2004- Housing Health and Safety | The legislation sets out how housing standards are enforced, including measures for recognising the level hazards and potential risk to health and safety in a property | This policy sets out our approach for minimising the presence of hazardous damp and mould in our homes. |
| Defective Premises act 1972 | The defective premises act states that the landlord is responsible for works (repairs) in the property and see that it is done in a professional manner, with proper materials. | Wandle uses the triage process when a report of damp and mould is received to ensure works is carried out timely and fit for habitation. |
| Environmental protection act 1990 | This covers the presence of pollutants in our properties, which would include mould particles | This policy sets out how we professionally manage the treatment of surfaces affected by damp and mould |
| Decent Homes Standard 2006 | Wandle is required to meet the current statutory minimum standard for housing, including keeping properties free of serious hazards. • Be in a reasonable state of repair. • Have reasonably modern facilities and services. • Provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort | This policy sets out our approach for minimising the presence of hazardous damp and mould in our homes. |
| Equality Act 2010 | This legislation requires our approach to damp and mould to not negatively impact those with protected characteristics. | We will have a clear understanding of our customers, based on their demographics and develop our services in line with these to ensure those with protected characteristics are not negatively impacted or affected by damp and mould. |

| Legislation | Main powers and relevance to the policy subject | How we use or comply with legislation |
|--|--|---|
| Pre action protocol for Housing conditions claims 2021 | This legislation sets out tenants right for redress where the landlord has failed to address issues within the home which would be considered disrepair. | This policy demonstrates our approach to dealing with damp and mould issues, both proactively and efficiently (when reported and when detected elsewhere) to prevent disrepair. it also sets out a proactive approach to damp and mould which seeks to minimise its occurrence. |

7.0 Compliance

Wandle will comply with all necessary regulatory standards. This policy contributes to the compliance with the following Regulatory Standards :

7.1 Home Standard

H1.1 Quality of Accommodation: Registered providers shall:

H1.1(a) ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard

H1.2 Repairs and Maintenance: Registered providers shall:

H1.2(b) meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes.

This policy contributes towards compliance with the standard by ensuring our homes are fit for habitation and ensuring the health and safety of our customers through an early intervention approach to damp and mould.

8.0 Equality & Diversity

Equality & Diversity is central to our business; promoting fairness and opportunity for customers and staff; helping provide the best services shaped by and for customers; and right for recruiting and developing our staff.

We are committed to celebrating diversity. To ensure equal access to our services is available, Wandle will comply with the Equality Act 2010 and all other legislative requirements relating to equality. We will work to avoid exclusions or restrictions that are not appropriate to the housing and support needs of our tenants and that may lead to

discrimination. We will endeavour to ensure that all tenants receive a consistent level of quality service.

Equality Consideration

Under the *Equality Act 2010* Wandle must consider whether our policies adversely affect our customers and/or staff.

The following table identifies whether this policy disproportionately impacts upon any individuals regarding the key protected characteristics, as identified in the Act:

| Special Characteristic | Any impact? (Yes or No) |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| age | Yes |
| disability | Yes |
| gender reassignment | No |
| marriage and civil partnership | No |
| pregnancy and maternity | Yes |
| race | No |
| religion or belief | No |
| sex | No |
| sexual orientation | No |

A detailed Equality Impact Assessment has been completed that details the adverse impacts identified and the steps that are in place to mitigate the impact sufficiently.