



Damp and Mould Policy

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Policy Owner Role Title	Head of Property
Responsible Director	Customer and Operational Services

Policy Checklist

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
Key Procedure	Damp and Mould
Sign off by Policy Officer	February 2025
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Approved: November 2025

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Contents

1.0 Introduction and scope.....	3
1.1 Objectives.....	3
1.2 Feedback and Improvement	3
1.3 Timeframes and definitions.....	4
2.0 Policy Statement	4
2.1 General approach.....	4
2.2 Communication.....	5
2.3 Preventative measures	5
2.4 New Homes	5
2.5 Energy Efficiency.....	6
2.6 Repairs	6
2.7 Access	6
2.7 Major works	7
2.8 Disrepair	7
2.9 Mutual Exchanges and Empty Homes	7
2.10 Disposals	7
2.11 Vulnerability Statement	8
3.0 Roles and Responsibilities.....	8
4.0 Performance Measures	9
5.0 Related Documents.....	10
5.1 Internal	10
6.0 Relevant Legislation	11
7.0 Compliance.....	13
7.1 Home Standard	13
8.0 Equality & Diversity.....	13

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:

- Right Services
- Right Homes

We will use household information such as size, ages and any health related issues and property data to inform our individual responses to reports of damp and mould. Tailored approaches are more effective and can better inform understanding of our customers and properties.

This policy also contributes towards the delivery of the following strategies

- The Customer Experience Strategy
- The Asset Management Strategy

1.1 Objectives

The objectives of this Damp and Mould policy are to ensure that Wandle has a strong, proactive approach to damp and mould that centres on our customers, their health and safety and maintaining regulatory and legal compliance.

It aims to ensure that Wandle's approach to preventing and tackling damp or mould, in our customer's homes, is in place from when we build our homes throughout their use.

1.2 Feedback and Improvement

Where appropriate we will make amendments to our policies and procedures and look to develop our approach through feedback and learning. This may include looking at complaints, responses to Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) surveys, direct feedback from customers and evolving best practice in the sector such as outcomes from Housing Ombudsman investigations.

pg. 3

Approved: November 2025

Next Review: November 2028

We will also consult with our customer panels, and where possible other customer groups to help us to gain understanding. In line with good practice and where possible we will proactively call customers or perform a desktop audit, before closing cases. In some cases, depending on the scale of the work we will also perform an in person post inspection.

We will also aim to call customers back customer three months after completion of works, to check that there has been no reoccurrence of the issues.

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

1.3 Timeframes and definitions

Under the requirements of Awaab's Law we will assess each reported case of damp/mould using a risk assessment questionnaire to determine the extent of mould and relevant vulnerabilities. Each report of damp or mould will be categorised into relevant risk: Emergency, Significant or Routine. Definitions of each risk type is as follows:

- **Emergency** - an imminent and significant risk which could cause immediate harm to the health or safety of the resident if not addressed within 24 hours.
- **Significant** - poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of the resident and requires prompt action to resolve. Significant cases require an inspection within 10 working days, with subsequent work for a significant hazard to be completed within 5 working days.
- **Routine/Out of scope** – reports of mould which do not pose an imminent or significant risk of harm to the resident. Survey to be completed within 28 days and works to be started no later than 12 weeks from initial report.

2.0 Policy Statement

2.1 General approach

Wandle's approach is to work together with customers to identify, treat and prevent damp mould in their homes. The service will be driven by root cause analysis and holistic resolution of issues with customers at the heart of the process.

Our approach to address damp and/or mould will be rooted in empathy, respect and an awareness of the range of circumstances our residents may face. We recognise some households may be living with additional vulnerabilities, such as health conditions, disabilities, age. Which can increase the risk posed by prolonged exposure to mould. In line with the requirements and spirit of Awaab's Law we will listen carefully to resident's concerns, act without blame, and respond promptly with tailored support.

Where possible Wandle will take a proactive approach to preventing damp and mould and include supportive discussions about preventative measures. Identifying best practice throughout service delivery and liaising with other registered providers will form part of a progressive and innovative approach.

We will use root cause analysis to identify and document underlying causes of damp and mould and may use smart technologies to monitor and record data about internal moisture and humidity levels to both provide reassurance and tailor our interventions.

2.2 Communication

Wandle's approach relies on good communication between Wandle and our customers at all stages of the process, including making sure our customers are kept properly informed throughout the process of their case.

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. However, we will also make sure the site based staff will be trained to report any instances of damp and mould as well as ensuring that any instances picked up during stock condition surveys are referred to the damp and mould team.

The Contact Centre will assist with identifying and triaging initial reports of damp and mould and, where practicable, lower level cases may be managed more quickly by diagnosis utilising video and photographic evidence.

Where the presence of damp and mould in our customer's homes is identified, staff and contractors will be empathetic, informative and solution focused to supporting customers to address the damp and mould in their homes. This will be underpinned by an initial visit or desktop assessment aimed at diagnosing on a root-cause analysis basis and discussing required actions and timescales with customer.

Residents will be kept informed throughout the process of investigating the cause of the mould in their property, with written updates provided to the resident no later than three working days after the investigation is completed. The Damp and Mould Team will be responsible for ensuring the written updates are sent to the resident within time.

2.3 Preventative measures

Wandle will use internal stock condition data and benchmarking to help identify properties that may be at the greatest risk of damp or mould so we are able to communicate with customers and take any necessary actions to prevent issues before they arise or materially worsen.

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. We will also publish information on our website and in newsletters to inform customers about practical ways to minimise the risk of damp and mould issues developing.

2.4 New Homes

Wandle's new homes are all built to high standards of ventilation and energy performance. Mould in a home can be 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. We will obtain feedback from customers in new homes to inform future new build specifications.

2.5 Energy Efficiency

Ensuring a home is energy efficient is an 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. This will be supported through the adoption of a Wandle Standard as set out in our Asset Management Strategy.

2.6 Repairs

Where a customer reports damp and mould in their property as a repair, we will act in line with our Damp and Mould policy and procedures. As well as diagnosis of the problem and related causal factors customers will also be provided with guidance on preventative measures, this includes tips on reducing condensation in their homes.

When undertaking repairs for damp and mould, such as installing ventilation or undertaking 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. Repairs undertaken to address or mitigate the causes of damp and mould in our homes will be completed in line with both our Damp and Mould Policy and our Repairs and Maintenance Policy.

Our in-house operatives and repairs team will be trained on recognising signs of damp and mould in homes and will report back to the repairs team for further works or inspections where required. Utilising the on site presence of operatives, neighbourhood officers and the wider team to identify and report back on damp and mould issues, broadens the scope to capture and resolve problems as well as providing reassurance to customers.

2.7 Access

Where a customer reports a case of damp and mould to us, we will ensure that we take adequate steps to gain access to the property to address the issue. We will use multiple mediums of contact, such as phoning, texts, emails and letters to contact our customers as required.

Where necessary, we will follow the steps set out in our No Access Framework, to ensure we are able to get into a property to undertake necessary works.

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 and job definitions. It is essential that there is a joined up approach between minor and major works so that resolution is seamless from a customers perspective.

Where the timescale for completing these works is likely to fall outside of the timescales set out in the policy, we will ensure that customers are made aware of any potential delays and the reasons for them. We will ensure customers are kept updated of timescales throughout the process. Where necessary we will complete additional repairs to mitigate the risk until the full works can be completed.

Should such work require the customer to be moved out of the property for any period, this will be dealt with this in line with our Decant procedure. Dependent of the total costs of resolution, it may be appropriate to refer properties for a more detailed evaluation within our asset management approach in relation to potential property disposals.

2.8 Disrepair

Where disrepair claims are submitted to Wandle which involve reports of damp and mould in our customer homes, we will act in line with our disrepair and damp and mould procedures. This will include making sure that any reported cases of damp and mould are acted on and a mould wash will be arranged to remove risk, before external surveys have attended. We will also ensure that any necessary repairs are raised as soon as possible, following the survey, rather than waiting for a case to be settled.

The damp and mould team will be made aware of these cases so that there is holistic data capture and recording for action and reporting purposes.

2.9 Mutual Exchanges and Empty Homes

When a customer 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 and identify causal factors.

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. This will factor in whole life cycle component replacement cycles as well as the damp and mould issue in addition to demand and replacement options.

2.11 Vulnerability Statement

We will triage, during an initial call with a customer reporting damp and mould, whether any member of the household (or child who stays there at least once a week) is vulnerable to damp and mould and will ensure that this is appropriately flagged on our systems.

Where a resident is vulnerable to damp and mould, we will endeavour to carry out a mould wash, prior to undertaking more detailed investigations into the root cause, within the timeframes of Awaab's law. Where we are made aware of a vulnerability and where the presence of damp and mould may increase risk or worsen a condition, it may be pertinent (in some cases) to remove customers from the risk temporarily, in such cases we will act in line with our Decant procedure, so we can address the issue and allow the customer to move back to their permanent home. Tenant's will still have the right to remain in their homes should they choose.

We will capture information on the household including health issues, vulnerabilities, overcrowding and identify if a temporary move should be offered to the household whilst the remedial works are completed.

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 and Operational 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 Property

The Head of Property is responsible for day-to-day operations management and implementation of the damp and mould process.

Head of Assets

The Head of Assets has overall responsibility for stock condition surveys, where damp and mould issues may be identified, and investment planning where component lifecycle replacements may be key to remedial work actions in addressing damp and mould.

Damp and Mould Team

The Damp and Mould Team will be responsible for ensuring case management for properties experiencing damp & mould and adhere to the relevant timeframes as per the law including sending written updates to the resident following survey.

Head of Repairs

The Head of Repairs is responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the repairs and early stage interventions relating to damp and mould.

Head of Customer Service Delivery

The Head of Customer Service Delivery is responsible for ensuring that Neighbourhood Officers identify and refer damp and mould issues that they come across on home visits, including through the tenancy audit process. They are also responsible for the overall Decant procedure, where necessary.

Head of Customer Experience

The Head of Customer Experience is responsible for the majority of initial telephone based reports of damp and mould received through the contact centre and obtaining sufficient information from customers for reports to be triaged into the damp and mould process.

Legal Services Coordinator

The Legal Services Coordinator is responsible for providing reports, through the relevant Director, to the executive team on disrepair related damp cases. This includes providing analysis and outcomes through quarterly Insight reports.

Colleagues

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.

Customers

We expect our customer to inform us when there is damp or mould in their homes. We also expect our customers to provide us access to complete necessary inspections or works in their homes.

4.0 Performance Measures

Performance measures for damp and mould will be reported to the Executive team on a monthly basis and to Customer Experience Committee and Board through the performance report.

We will monitor the performance of this policy, and our approach to damp and mould, through the following channels:

- TSM performance data
- Complaints, satisfaction surveys and ombudsman determinations relating to damp
- Disrepair cases involving damp
- All customer contact involving damp including specific follow-up calls to customers reporting damp and mould

pg. 9

Approved: November 2025

Next Review: November 2028

- 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.

The following performance measures, which are linked to the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, will be used as a benchmark for the performance of this policy

Measure	Target or Baseline Performance
Number of damp and mould cases reported	N/A
% of emergency damp and/or mould cases investigated and made safe within 24 hours	100%
% of significant cases investigated within 10 days	100%
% of routine cases acted on within 28 days	100%
% of cases where a written response has been sent to the resident within 3 days of investigation being completed	100%
% of cases where works had started within 12 weeks	100%
% of customers contacted 3 months post work completion.	100%

5.0 Related Documents

5.1 Internal

Strategies	Asset Management Strategy, Customer Experience Strategy, Value for Money Strategy, No Access Framework
Policies	Complaints Policy, Repairs Policy, Empty Homes Policy, Sales and Asset Disposals Policy

pg. 10

Approved: November 2025

Next Review: November 2028

Procedures	Damp and Mould procedure, Major Works procedure, Disrepair procedure , Decant Procedure, Disposal Procedure
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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 minimising 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
Awaab's Law (20225	Awaab's Law sets out our responsibilities for tackling hazards (as defined by HHSRS) in the homes of our customers (such as damp and mould). The law also sets out our responsibilities for ensuring we communicate effectively with our residents during the process.	This policy sets out how Wandle will deal with reports of damp and mould within the requirements of Awaab's Law
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 Rating System (HHSRS)	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.

Legislation	Main powers and relevance to the policy subject	How we use or comply with legislation
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. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. This will be reflected in the linked Equality Impact Assessment.
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, specifically the requirements of Awaab's Law and Housing Ombudsman Guidance on managing damp and mould in homes. 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

pg. 13

Approved: November 2025

Next Review: November 2028

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.