



## Damp & Mould Policy

<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>Damp &amp; Mould Policy</b>
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<b>Date of Approval:</b>	<b>January 2023</b>
<b>Date for Next Scheduled Review:</b>	<b>January 2026</b>
<b>Review Body:</b>	<b>Board</b>
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Complete:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Policy Published on Web:</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Scottish Social Housing Charter Standard</b>	<b>4, 5, 13</b>
<b>Scottish Housing Regulator Standard:</b>	<b>3, 4</b>
<b>Scottish Housing Regulator Guidance:</b>	<b>Letter to landlords – Advice on tenant safety damp and mould</b>



## **Vision**

***By providing aspirational homes and high-quality services we will transform communities to enhance the quality of life of our customers.***

## **Values**

- ***Customer and Community Focused***
- ***Treating our customers with respect***
- ***Accountable***
- ***Making a difference***
- ***Innovative***
- ***Equal access to services and opportunities for all***

## **Strategic Objectives**

- ***Deliver first class customer services***
- ***Provide quality homes, communities and sustainable tenancies***
- ***Achieve robust financial management and governance excellence***
- ***Empower, develop and engage our staff***
- ***Build strong collaborative relationships locally and nationally***

December 2022



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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 A recent publication highlighted an English based Housing Association's failure to act on reported dampness and mould, within one of its properties. Which resulted in the tragic death of a two-year-old, with the mould issue to be the primary cause. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has acted promptly, by requesting all Scottish Housing Associations outline and evidence how they approach, mould and condensation issues, what actions taken and how individual occurrences of condensation and mould are dealt with when raised by tenants.
- 1.2 Ardenglen Housing Association are acting immediately to safeguard its tenants, moving forward. This will also form part of the Tenants Health and Safety Compliance report, which will be reported to the Board of Management March 2023. It is also recognised that the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) have acted in a similar action of that of its English equivalent.
- 1.3 The association wants to ensure that our tenants and communities have warm, safe, and healthy homes to live in and as a basic right, which should be fulfilled by the association.
- 1.4 Estimates in the UK are that between 10-50% of homes are affected by condensation and damp conditions. Social Housing and low-income communities, where this is often prevalent, has been found to be caused by overcrowding, lack of appropriate heating, ventilation, and insulation, also lack of support and guidance from landlords.
- 1.5 A purposeful approach to the prevention, treatment and remediation of these issues will benefit our tenants and communities. Moving forward our tools will include better data and recording of condensation and damp with an action plan, improved reporting and identification of condensation and mould, an end-to-end tenant's service with better joined up advice, guidance, and support. This includes a better use of innovative technology prevention schemes.

## 2. Introduction and Objectives

- 2.1 The Association is committed to maintaining its homes to a high standard, which adds value to the home and surroundings. Maintaining high quality and secure homes can improve the lives of our tenants and achieve an elevated level of customer satisfaction.
- 2.2 This policy document has been written to ensure that wherever possible, tenants are not adversely affected by the causes of condensation, damp or mould and drives forward, an agenda of initiative-taking action to tackle and manage and report on the causes of the above.

- 2.3 This policy and associated procedures will consider recommendations made in a Housing Ombudsman Service Report – *Spotlight on: Damp and Mould – October 2021*. If any reports of guidance are issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator, then the association will act accordingly to any recommendations and will update the Policy and Procedures accordingly.
- 2.4 The Associations stock profiles includes;
- 433 housing units across 12 phases of development.
  - Stock consists of 257 units first built in the 1950's and refurbished in the early 1990's
  - 176 units constructed between 1994 and 2000. In addition to the above, post 2000
  - AHA gained a further 549 units. These homes comprise a further 286 units of 1950'- built tenements refurbished in the early 1990's, 253 units constructed post 2000 and 9 units constructed in 1920's.
  - Total stock base is 982 units.
- 2.5 This Policy and Procedure applies to the entire property portfolio under the control of the association and to all operations continued under its control without exception.

### **3. Key points of the Policy and our approach to managing dampness, mould and condensation;**

The association commits to;

- 3.1 Provide and maintain a comfortable, warm, and healthy home, free from damp, condensation, mould, or disrepair for our tenants.
- 3.2 Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way and to recognise that having a dampness or mould issues in a home can be distressing for our tenants and ensure we are supportive in our approach.
- 3.3 Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate, damp, mould including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- 3.4 Work in partnership with tenants to resolve and understand how to reduce condensation, damp, and mould issues, also retain a register with action plans, surveys, and outcomes, which will be reported to the Board of Management on a quarterly basis.
- 3.5 Ensuring that the fabric of our homes is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from, or contributing to, damp and mould issues.
- 3.6 Undertake responsive repairs to alleviate damp and mould issues as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise damage to the fabric, fixtures, and fittings of the property.

- 3.7 Enhance the understanding of the associations housing stock and the archetype of properties and components from the stock condition data, which have a higher likelihood to suffer from damp and mould.
- 3.8 Plan resources to respond to anticipated higher demand of enquiries and required inspections and work in partnership with specialist companies for the provision of specialist survey reports, including making use of new technology such as linked environmental sensors that can be installed within reported problematic damp or mould homes and can be monitored online and to better understand cause and solution.
- 3.9 Provide staff with the skills and testing equipment to identify and differentiate between signs of damp, condensation, mould and understand the causes and remedial action.
- 3.10 To consider the issues of damp condensation and mould when designing investment programmes for example heating, ventilation, and insulation.
- 3.11 To comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements, sector best practice and tenants' health and safety compliance.

#### **4. Legislation and Statutory/Regulatory Requirements**

- 4.1 In developing this policy and procedure, recognition was taken of the legislative requirements and good practice set out in the following documents:
  - Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
  - Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974.
  - Scottish Housing Quality standards (SHQS)
    - \*Meet the Tolerable Standards.
    - \*Be free from serious disrepair.
    - \*Be energy efficient.
    - \* Have modern facilities and services.
    - \* Be healthy, safe, and secure.
  - Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing (EESH 1&2).
- 4.2 This policy and procedural document also defines the Associations procedures to ensure the risks associated with condensation, damp and mould issues are properly addressed, assessed, and managed and, in doing so, ensuring that all relevant legal duties are discharged.

#### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

- 5.1 The following Table 1 summarises the association's structure of responsibilities to ensure that those with the most appropriate daily operational functions can manage, supervise, and conduct condensation, damp, and mould related control measures as appropriate.

Table 1

Designation	Role Responsibility
Board of Management	The Board of Management are collectively responsible for providing leadership and direction on Health and Safety matters. The Damp and Mould Policy to be approved by the Board of Management.
Chief Executive Officer	The CEO will hold ultimate responsibility for the development and implementation of the Damp and Mould Policy.
Directors	The Directors hold delegated operational responsibility. Implementation and management of the policy and operational procedures for the management and control. Co-Ordinate and deliver on the operational compliance with the Damp and Mould Policy and Procedures. Provision should also be made to ensure that all staff within AHA are aware of who is responsible and ensure that provision is made for any training and development needs.
Health and Safety Committee	H&S Committee will be responsible for periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the Damp and Mould Policy and Procedures. Considering reports by Directors on a quarterly basis. Acting immediately if any serious deficiencies are identified and escalating concerns to the CEO.
Employees	All persons employed by AHA, must be aware of the Damp and Mould Policy and Procedures, ensuring that any works that maybe conducted on condensation damp or mould provides less disturbance to the tenants as possible and to always ensure their health and safety.

## 6. Damp and Mould Procedures

6.1 The Damp and Mould Procedures have been prepared to ensure compliance with the Associations Damp and Mould Policy, as set out within a separate document and at produced for operational levels for staff.

The following are actions that the association are undertaking immediately are;

- Producing Damp and Mould Policy and Procedures
- Producing Damp and Mould register which will record any issues and actions taken also hold all evidenced based actions, survey reports etc.
- Damp and Mould issues and actions will also be reported within the associations Tenants Health & Safety Compliance report.

- Damp and Mould issues and actions will be reported to the Board of Management on a quarterly monthly cycle and the Policy will be updated on a two-yearly cycle unless new legislation is updated.
- Providing information leaflets and updating the association website, also inclusion within the newsletter.
- Awareness training for all staff.
- Specialist training for Maintenance Officers
- Standardised inspection sheets to ensure robust and consistent approach
- The association will work with other like-minded, RSL's to ensure a common robust approach to damp and mould issues, as Tenants Health and Safety is paramount.

6.2 The association will also adopt a system of priority colour coding for condensation, damp and mould issues within it's properties. This will also be included within the damp and mould register and adopted procedures.

Medium Priority	Urgent Priority	High Priority
Condensation	Damp	Mould

## 7. Monitoring and Compliance

7.1 This Policy will be reviewed every three years and as required by legislation, regulation or internal organisational change. A quarterly report will also be submitted to the Board of Management.