

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy

Policy Statement

Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is:

- to ensure that Orwell's homes remain free from problems relating to damp, mould and condensation;
- to prevent health issues from occurring or worsening due to damp, mould and condensation;
- to set out how Orwell will respond to reports of damp, mould and condensation;
- to set out the actions that customers can take to prevent significant damp, mould or condensation issues.

Legal Obligations

This policy is informed by the following legislation and regulations:

- Housing Act 2004 and the Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Decent Homes Standard
- Minimum Level of Energy Efficiency Standard

It also links to the Housing Ombudsman Service 'One year on follow up report: Spotlight on damp and mould – it's not lifestyle' which can be found here: [One year on follow up report: Spotlight on damp and mould – it's not lifestyle \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/reports/spotlight-on-damp-and-mould-it-s-not-lifestyle) and the Government guidance note '[Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-of-damp-and-mould-in-the-home)'

This policy will continue to be reviewed in line with changes to guidelines and legislation, such as the proposed Awaab's Law and Decent Homes Standard.

Orwell's Commitment

Most homes in the UK will experience small, isolated patches of mould, especially during the winter. Condensation mainly occurs during cold weather and appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. It is often found in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards, and often forms on north facing walls.

Normal household activities constantly release moisture into the air. Good practice in the home minimises and alleviates condensation, and in many cases will prevent it causing dampness and persistent mould.

Whilst some damp, mould and condensation is normal and can be remedied easily with a quick wipe down, significant mould growth can cause serious health problems, especially for people with asthma and other underlying health conditions. As such, it is important that Orwell works together with its customers to take swift action to resolve such issues when they arise. We want to do everything we reasonably can to make sure our customers stay safe, healthy and well in their homes. Damp and mould are issues which can have a serious impact on the health and wellbeing of our customers, and cause damage to homes.

We are committed to providing dry, warm, healthy and safe homes for our customers which are free from any hazards. We are also committed to complying with all relevant legislation, guidance and best practice around damp and mould.

We will ensure the fabric of our homes is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp.

We will treat customers reporting damp, mould and condensation with empathy and respect and will not prejudge the reason for any issue. We will try to understand any barriers related to language, culture, disability, and/or neurodiversity that customers may face when experiencing or seeking to report damp and mould. Where we identify that a customer is at increased risk to damp and mould due to health, age or other vulnerabilities, we will prioritise and provide additional support.

If the conditions of a home are impacting on our customers health and wellbeing we will work in partnership across our Repairs, Property and Housing Management teams.

If a customer or another professional notifies us about damp or mould in one of our homes, we will take the concern seriously, assess the issue with urgency to identify its severity, and aim to identify and tackle the underlying causes promptly, and with urgency when concerns have been raised about health. We will inform customers what is being done to resolve the issue and what the likely timescales for the work will be.

We will always try to establish the source of the damp, whether there is any defect to the property that is causing it, and then carry out the appropriate remedial work.

We will ensure staff are trained to enable them to spot potential causes of damp, mould and condensation so they can advise customers, diagnose problems and provide solutions.

When applying this policy, we will make reasonable adjustments for people who have a disability and will take into account the provisions of the Equality Act 2010. Our staff and contractors will work together with our customers to deliver this policy.

We provide weekly performance updates on damp and mould along with updates to our Board via the Board Performance Report. In addition we analyse and review our data to provide a proactive response if we discover systemic issues with customer groups, property types, repeat cases or customers who may not have been in contact with Orwell.