

Damp and Mould Policy

Asset Services

GENERAL - EXTERNAL

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1. Purpose

The aim of this policy is to proactively manage the potential risks and promptly diagnose and prevent issues which may arise from damp and mould in Riverside properties, including communal areas; committing to meeting the needs of Riverside customers and providing homes that are safe, warm, and dry.

Through this policy, Riverside will establish appropriate processes, guidance, and knowledge to ensure all Riverside properties are well-maintained and free from damp and mould that could risk the health and safety of customers living in homes or buildings owned or managed by Riverside and its subsidiaries.

This policy also sets out how Riverside will support our customers to minimise the risk of damp and mould occurring and report it where there is evidence of its presence, this will also ensure that The Riverside Group meets its legal, contractual, regulatory and statutory obligations as a landlord.

2. Scope

This policy explains how Riverside will control, manage and eliminate damp, including but not limited to:

Who the policy applies to:

- Customers who rent their home under a tenancy agreement, including Riverside Scotland and former One Housing customers; customers occupying under a licence.
- Customers who own their home through shared ownership where Riverside has a repair obligation under the terms of the lease.
- All communal areas.
- Emergency or temporary accommodation.

What this policy will cover:

- Identifying the types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation dampness, including internal leaks.
- Identifying the responsibilities for The Riverside Group and our customers in dealing with damp and condensation.

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- Offering guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process to all customers living in our properties.
- Data gathering and reporting, identifying proactive methods in mitigating risk of all dampness.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Responsive Repairs Policy.

3. Legislation

Riverside England and Wales:

- Defective Premises Act 1973 (Section 4)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Home Standard – Inc. Decent Homes Standard
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004 - Housing Health and Safety Recording System
- Landlord And Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Riverside Complaints Policy
- Riverside Customer Home Improvement Procedure
- Riverside Decant Procedure
- Riverside Empty Homes Standard
- Riverside Financial Redress Procedure
- Riverside Our Planned Standard
- Riverside Responsive Repairs Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Tenancy Agreements
- Tenancy Standard
- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025

Riverside Scotland:

- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Procurement Regulations
- Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2004
- Right To Repair
- Tenements Scotland Act 2004
- The Environmental Health Protection Act 1990
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Scottish Housing Quality Standards / EESH (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing)
- The Scottish Housing Regulator Performance Standards
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter

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4. Principles

Riverside will:

- Comply with statutory, regulatory and contractual requirements and good practice.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable repair solutions and improvements to eliminate damp including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp, mould and condensation.
- Respond to all reports of damp and condensation and complete any repair works/measures in line with their Responsive Repairs policy, or Repairs and Maintenance Policy if in Scotland, complying with all legislation. This will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem, the complexity of the solution and the repair works/actions required.
- We will make reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and carry out the works. All logged repairs must have evidence of at least three attempts to contact the customer. Written communication must then be provided to the customer asking them to contact us to organise a new repair and record each attempt on our customer database.
- We will follow up each completed repair within six months of any damp and mould repair work being carried out.
- Ensure that customers are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Focus on working in partnership with customers ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Always communicate effectively in relation to the delivery of our responsive repairs service and provide a range of options for customers to report repairs.
- Ensure that customers have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Ensure budgets are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp, mould and condensation problems.
- Implement new data quality and insight measures to assist with informing us of the possible risks to our properties so that we can undertake proactive measures to eliminate damp, mould and condensation before it becomes a problem for our customers.

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Definitions:

- **Damp:** The build-up of moisture in a property which can lead to the growth of mould and other micro-organisms.
- **Condensation Damp:** When moisture generated in the property cools and condenses onto colder parts of the buildings (for example window frames, corners and low points on walls behind sofas or wardrobes). Normal occupant activities such as showering, drying laundry and cooking can generate moisture. If this moisture is unable to escape from the property, it can build up in the air and over time and can lead to damp and mould growth.
- **Penetrating Damp:** Water that gets into the property from outside due to defects in the walls, roofs, windows or floors.
- **Rising Damp:** Moisture from the ground that rises up through parts of the property in contact with the ground (walls and floors).
- **Traumatic Damp:** Can be caused by leaking water from waste and heating pipes, overflowing baths or sinks, burst pipes or defective water storage vessels inside the property. It can also originate from outside the property, for example from another building or from environmental flooding.
- **Mould:** A type of fungus which grows in moist environments. It can cause adverse health effects, as well as damage to buildings. Mould can often look like black, white or green patches.

Conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:

- Lack of ventilation within the property
- Inadequate heating
- Inadequate loft insulation
- High humidity
- Overcrowding

6. Roles & Responsibilities

Awaab's Law – Emergency and Significant Hazards:

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The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025, also known as Awaab's Law, introduces regulations to ensure that all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to customers are resolved in fixed timeframes.

For a hazard to fall under Awaab's Law repair requirements, it must:

- a) be a part of buildings or land for which we are responsible for
- b) be in our control to fix
- c) not be damage that is a result of breach of contract by the customer
- d) result from defects, disrepair or lack of maintenance
- e) be a significant or emergency hazard

Awaab's Law covers hazards defined by the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) (England) Regulations 2005, except for overcrowding.

Emergency Hazard:

- An emergency hazard is defined as 'posing an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety' of an individual.
- We will carry out an investigation **within 24 hours** of becoming aware of a potential emergency hazard. The investigation may be carried out either remotely or in-person if specifically requested by the customer.
- We will provide the customer with a written summary **within 3 working days** of the investigation concluding. The written summary will include details about the nature of the hazard, actions taken and any further steps required. In the event that all work is completed **within 3 working days**, a written summary will not be provided.¹
- Throughout our investigation, we will factor in individual circumstances, including the age and physical and mental health of the customer to assess the likelihood of harm materialising and the potential severity of that harm in the specific circumstances.
- If an emergency hazard is confirmed to be present, we will complete the relevant safety works **as soon as reasonably practicable but within 24 hours** of the investigation concluding.
- We will begin, or take steps to begin, any further supplementary works **within 5 working days** of the investigation concluding.
- We will physically start work **within 12 weeks** and complete them to the required standard within a reasonable period of time.

Significant Hazard:

- A significant hazard is defined as 'posing a significant risk of harm to the health or safety' of an individual.
- We will carry out an investigation **within 10 working days** of becoming aware of a potential significant hazard. The investigation may be carried out either remotely or in-person if specifically requested by the customer.
- We will provide the customer with a written summary **within 3 working days** of the investigation concluding. The written summary will include details about the nature of

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the hazard, actions taken and any further steps required. In the event that all work is completed **within 3 working days**, a written summary will not be provided.¹

- Throughout our investigation, we will factor in individual circumstances, including the age and physical and mental health of the customer to assess the likelihood of harm materialising and the potential severity of that harm in the specific circumstances.
- If a significant hazard is confirmed to be present, we will complete the relevant safety works **within 5 working days** of the investigation concluding.
- We will begin, or take steps to begin, any further supplementary works **within 5 working days** of the investigation concluding.
- We will physically start work **within 12 weeks** and complete them to the required standard within a reasonable period of time.

Hazards Summary Table:

	Emergency Hazards	Significant Hazards
Investigate potential hazard	Within 24 hours	Within 10 working days
Start safety works	Within 24 hours	Within 5 working days
Send written summary	Within 3 working days ¹	Within 3 working days ¹
Plan or start additional works	Within 5 working days	Within 5 working days
Physically start additional works	Within 12 weeks ²	Within 12 weeks ²
Satisfactorily complete works	Within a reasonable time period ²	Within a reasonable time period ²

² Please note that specific start and completion dates will be provided within the written summary.

Riverside's Responsibilities:

- Work will be carried out in accordance with our Responsive Repairs Policy.
- Diagnose the cause of damp correctly and deliver effective solutions based on the ethos of dealing with the cause of the damp, not just the symptom and wherever possible fixing first time.
- This will include identifying the possible causes of damp, recommending effective solutions and all necessary remedial works / actions / enhancements and the estimated timescales to complete the works; keeping the customer updated throughout the process from inception to completion.
- Ensure that only competent contractors will be employed to carry out any works and that the customer's possessions are adequately protected during the works.
- Insulate the customers' home in accordance with Decent Homes Standard / Scottish Quality Housing Standard / Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.
- Take responsibility for maintaining customers' homes to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if these problems occur.
- Undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation dampness. This may include but is not limited to upgraded

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ventilation system installation, improved indoor air movement and quality best practices.

- Make good internal surfaces following any repairs work carried out ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for the customer to redecorate. Where there is a need to redecorate following remedial work carried out by Riverside, we will provide a decoration voucher to cover the cost of the materials needed to make good the decoration.
- Promote and provide general advice and guidance, following a thorough investigation into the root cause, on how to minimise damp and condensation.
- Ensure that all Riverside employees and contractors have an awareness of the policy and receive adequate training to enable them to report issues of damp, mould and condensation and to support our customers.
- Ensure that technical staff are trained and competent in the diagnosis of damp, condensation and mould issues.
- Introduce a new data intelligence framework to enhance our customer and property information, which will shape our future investment programmes.

Riverside will always first consider whether the source of the damp and mould is a design, construction or maintenance issue which we can eliminate through work to the home. Where this is not the case, additional support and advice will be provided to the customer on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation damp. This support will be provided through the provision of advice and guidance literature and by working with our customers through our resident involvement network.

If the relevant safety work cannot be completed within the fixed timeframes, or it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in their home while the work is carried out, we will make arrangements for suitable alternative accommodation. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary decant to an alternative property. The customer will be supported through this process to find suitable accommodation.

In some cases, it may be necessary to re-house a customer, and their household, on a permanent basis if a medical professional advises that re-housing is the most suitable option. This will be considered in accordance with Riverside's Lettings Policy and local arrangements which apply within local authority areas.

Customer Responsibilities:

- It is the customer's responsibility to immediately report any evidence of rising and penetrating damp (see definitions) and faulty equipment that will affect the management of humidity and moisture in the home (faulty extract fan, unable to open windows, heating system failure etc).
- Customers must allow access for inspections and for the completion of all remedial works. Where customers are considering making any changes within their home (for example, converting rooms into one room, adding extensions, converting non-habitable buildings/spaces into habitable), they must seek advice and permission

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from us in accordance with their tenancy agreement. This is to ensure that the proposed alteration would not contribute to the accumulation of damp, mould, or condensation, as well as ensuring alterations comply with building control and planning guidelines.

Customers will keep us informed about any changes to their individual or household circumstances, including but not limited to the following:

- Pregnancy
- Weakened immune systems
- Pre-existing health conditions
- Mental health conditions
- Mobility issues
- Time spent in doors

This is particularly important when reporting repairs to ensure that we are able to accurately assess the level of risk involved and therefore, how we must respond appropriately given the specific circumstances of a household.

Customer Guidance:

Customers can help reduce the conditions that lead to condensation dampness by:

- Keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum e.g., covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outside (where possible), where it is safe to do so, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.
- Ensure that the home is adequately and evenly heated – the World Health Organisation (WHO) suggests that 18°C is the ideal temperature. A room temperature of 20°C may be more appropriate for the old, young or unwell. To avoid major condensation problems, it is advised that the temperature does not drop below 14°C.
- Keeping the house well-ventilated e.g., opening windows during cooking or bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan or ventilation system installed in their home is regularly cleaned and working, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Following all advice and guidance issued by us on managing humidity and moisture in the home which can lead to condensation. This information can be found on the Riverside website.
- If all reasonable efforts have been made to manage and control the presence of condensation and mould, and there is still an issue then the customer should contact Riverside immediately to report the problem.
- The tenancy agreement, licenses and long leases recommends that the customer arranges adequate household contents insurance for the home that they occupy.

Assisting Our Customers:

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Where internal conditions within a home (for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongs) are influencing health and well-being of the occupants or are preventing inspections or repair works being carried out, we will provide support and assistance to review the customer's options which may include moving to more appropriate or alternative suitable accommodation.

Riverside has an internal Affordable Warmth Team who can provide customers with advice and assistance where they are struggling to pay energy bills or there are issues with energy supply.

We also recognise that some of our customers may need help when it comes to meeting their repair responsibilities. We may, entirely at our discretion, provide a service in addition to the statutory and contractual responsibilities, to assist our customers who may need support to meet the conditions of their tenancy agreement. We will make this assessment with the customer based on their individual needs, including whether there is anyone else who might reasonably assist them, and whether there are any immediate risks to their health or safety. This may include an extension to the scope of repairs which we carry out. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Where decoration is required after works associated with damp and mould, decoration vouchers will be provided to assist with the provision of paint and equipment. Further consideration will be given to customers and their specific individual or family circumstances, with a view to providing assistance which may include painting of finished surfaces. The nature of the decoration will solely be at our discretion.

7. Risks

Risk Appetite	Risk Thresholds	Risk Indicators
- We seek to avoid any health and safety concerns for our customers and others. - We seek to avoid legal, contractual, or regulatory breaches regarding Disrepair. - We have zero tolerance for service	- Compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements. - Compliance with all Asset Key Performance Indicators. - Completing all necessary damp inspection checklists.	- Number of damp and mould repairs received. - Number of Disrepair claims received. - Number of abandoned jobs relating to damp and mould.

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failures including abandoned repairs.		• Monthly monitoring of KPI performance. • Number of complaints received. • Customer satisfaction scores.
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8. Appeals & Complaints

As detailed in the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard, customers are invited to hold us to account for the decisions we make, that impact upon them, under this policy.

If a customer wishes to complain about the service they have received under this policy, this should be managed through our Complaint Handling Procedure, which is governed by the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code of Practice. You can read our Complaints Policy: <https://www.riverside.org.uk/about-us/our-policies/complaints-policy/>

These associated policies and procedures are available on our website at: <https://www.riverside.org.uk/you-your-home/customer-feedback/> or <https://www.riverside.org.uk/about-us/our-policies/>. You can also contact our Customer Service Centre for more information.

9. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Riverside is committed to Equality, Diversity & Inclusion. We strive to be fair in our dealings with all people, communities and organisations, taking into account the diverse nature of their culture and background and actively promoting inclusion. This policy aligns with Riverside's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and has been subject to an Equality Impact Assessment.

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