

# Damp and Mould Policy

Department Policy: Asset Services

Policy Reference:

Policy Version:



## 1. Purpose

The aim of this policy is to proactively manage the potential risks arising from damp and mould in our properties including communal areas. Committing to meeting the needs of our customers and providing homes that are safe, warm, and dry.

Through this policy, we will establish appropriate processes, guidance, and knowledge to ensure all our properties are well maintained and free of 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 is to ensure we assist our customers, supporting them to provide remedial work for damp and mould and improve the homes they live in, this will also ensure that The Riverside Group meets its legal, contractual, regulatory, and statutory obligations.

## 2. Scope

This policy explains how we 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 One Housing; customers under a licence.
- Customers who own their home through shared ownership where Riverside has a repairing obligation under the terms of the lease.
- All property 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.
- 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.

### 3. Principles

Riverside will:

- Ensure that customers are treated in a fair and consistent way. Taking into account all circumstances, so where we provide advice, that advice is suitable and assists our customers' needs.
- Focus on working in partnership with customers ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Communicate effectively to our customers at all times in relation to the delivery of our responsive repairs service and enable them to communicate effectively with us.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable repair solutions and improvements to eliminate damp including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that customers have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Comply with statutory, regulatory, and contractual requirements and good practice.
- 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.
- 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.

## 4. Definitions

### 4.1 Rising Damp

The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.

### 4.2 Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)

Water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure.

### 4.3 Condensation Damp

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets.

The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:

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

## 5. Further Information & Support

### Riverside England and Wales

- Housing Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness For Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Health And Safety At Work Act 1974
- Landlord And Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11)
- Housing Act 2004 - Housing Health And Safety Recording System
- Defective Premises Act 1973 (Section 4)
- Home Standard – Inc. Decent Homes Standard

### Riverside Scotland

- The Scottish Housing Regulator Performance Standards.
- The Scottish Housing Quality Standard / EESSH (Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing)
- The Scottish Social Housing Charter
- Housing (Scotland) Act 1987
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2010

- Neighbourhood And Community Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Tenant Involvement And Empowerment Standard
- Riverside Decant Procedure
- Riverside Empty Homes Standard
- Riverside Our Planned Standard
- Riverside Responsive Repairs Policy
- Riverside Customer Home Improvement Procedure
- Riverside Complaints Policy
- Tenancy Agreements
- Safeguarding Policy
- Riverside Financial Redress Procedure
- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Environmental Health Protection Act 1990
- Property Factors (Scotland) Act 2004
- Tenements Scotland Act 2004
- Procurement Regulations
- Right To Repair

## 6. Roles & Responsibilities

### 6.1 Our Responsibilities

- We shall investigate to determine the cause of damp and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with our 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.
- We will introduce a new data intelligence framework to enhance our customer and property information, which will shape our future investment programmes.
- Promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to control damp and condensation.
- Ensure that all employees have training and are aware of and understand the delivery of the service that will meet the aims of this policy.
- Undertake a property inspection when a repair is reported relating to suspected Damp, Mould & Condensation.
- Inform the customer of the findings of the investigations following a property visit. 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 /measures; 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.
- We are responsible for insulating 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.
- We are responsible for maintaining customers' homes to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if these problems occur.
- We will undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation dampness. This may include but is not limited to: upgraded ventilation system installation, improved indoor air movement and quality best practices.
- We will 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 need to decorate 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. Please see Section 6.3.

In some cases, remedial work may not be necessary requiring additional support and advice to be provided to the customer on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation damp. This support will be provided through a framework in partnership with our co-creation with our customer champion network.

***If it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. 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.***

## **6.2 Customer Responsibilities**

- 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 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.
  - Adequately heating rooms – ideally at 18°C.
  - Keeping the house well ventilated e.g., opening windows during cooking / 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.

- Follow 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 this has not been successful contact us immediately.
- Allow access for inspections and for the carrying out of all remedial works.
- If following an inspection by a surveyor, the outcome shows that all reasonable measures are in place for the customer to adequately control condensation and mould, further advice and support will be given to the customer.
- The tenancy agreement, licenses and long leases recommends that the customer arranges adequate household contents insurance for the home that they occupy.
- 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 from us in accordance with their tenancy agreement.

### **6.3** Assisting our customers

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

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. 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. Risk Thresholds

Risk Appetite	Risk Thresholds	Risk Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ We seek to avoid any health and safety concerns for our customers and others.</li> <li>▪ We seek to avoid legal, contractual or regulatory breaches regarding Disrepair.</li> <li>▪ We have zero tolerance for service failures including abandoned repairs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.</li> <li>▪ Compliance with all Asset Key Performance Indicators.</li> <li>▪ Completing all necessary damp inspection checklists.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of damp and mould repairs received.</li> <li>▪ Number of Disrepair claims received.</li> <li>▪ Number of abandoned jobs relating to damp and mould.</li> <li>▪ Monthly monitoring of KPI performance.</li> <li>▪ Number of complaints received</li> <li>▪ Customer satisfaction scores</li> </ul>

## 8. 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, considering 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.