

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy

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1. Our purpose

We're proud to be able to support tens of thousands of people across England by providing affordable housing and care to help people live independently.

Everything starts at home, and we are privileged to be able to do work which makes a real difference to the lives of people in our communities. Everything we do is about people – whether that's providing a good quality, safe home or providing care which helps someone to live an independent life.

Our Colleagues and Board and Committee members live and breathe this social purpose.

2. Overview

GreenSquareAccord (GSA) aims to provide high quality homes that are safe, warm and dry. To achieve this, we aim to manage reports of damp and mould, or contributing factors (such as condensation) in a proactive way. This may be through the completion of reactive repairs, planned works or in some cases by providing advice and information to customers on measures they can take to help manage damp and mould through changes to the way they use their home.

3. Aims and Objectives

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

In applying this policy, GSA objectives are to:

- Comply with all current legislation and good practice
- Ensure we provide and maintain dry, healthy homes for our customers
- Undertake effective inspections and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp
- Focus on working with our customers to ensure that they have a safe and healthy environment to live in comfort
- Ensure our customers have access to and / or are provided with advice and guidance on managing and controlling condensation and mould
- Provide a service that is accessible to all, to include (but not limited to) translated letters to arrange appointments
- Set and monitor key performance indicators
- Ensure our process supporting this policy is clear, comprehensive, and available to all customers, colleagues and contractors
- Ensure that appropriate budgets are available to reduce the cause of damp and mould
- Make provision in responsive repairs budget to cover remedial action
- Have a robust approach in managing damp, mould, and condensation

4. Scope of Policy and Exclusions

The scope of this policy will cover how GSA surveying, repairs and locality teams will work jointly to control, manage and eradicate damp. This will include:

- All properties that are tenanted and communal areas
- Emergency and temporary accommodation
- Identifying types of damp i.e. rising / penetrating and condensation damp
- Identifying GSA responsibilities for dealing with damp, mould and condensation
- Providing guidance, advice and support throughout the process to customers living in properties or temporary / emergency accommodation
- Identify situations where GSA will not be able to undertake works to rectify condensation damp

5. Roles, Responsibilities and Duties

- 5.1** The Group Board and Executive are responsible for seeking evidenced assurance that all legislation and regulation relating to this policy are complied with and providing the necessary resources to deliver the policy and associated processes effectively.
- 5.2** The Director of Asset Strategy and Investment is accountable for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and provide evidenced assurance of this to the Group Board and Executive.
- 5.3** The Head of Service is responsible for adequately resourcing the team and having effective processes and procedures in place to implement this policy.

- 5.4** Operational Management are responsible for ensuring that this policy, processes and procedures are adhered to and that colleagues are appropriately trained.
- 5.5** Health and Safety Team (H&S) shall provide advice and guidance on the appropriate methods of risk assessment, control measures arising and management of works as appropriate to the areas of work covered by this Policy.
- 5.6** Everyone has a responsibility to report damp and mould where it has been identified and to resolve the issue, this includes:
- ✓ Customers
 - ✓ Leaseholders
 - ✓ Contractors
 - ✓ Locality officers
 - ✓ Any other GSA colleague attending a property

6. Impact Assessments and Key Considerations

- 6.1 As part of the development of this Policy, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken. It concluded the activity has no significant negative impact on any group due to the mitigations that have been considered.
- 6.2 We will also ensure customers have fair access, which suits their individual need. This will include providing translations for community languages and additional support for customers who may require this.
- 6.3 On request GSA will provide translations of all its documents, policies and procedures in various languages and formats including braille and large print. Additionally, work has commenced with GSA Comms team to produce a version of this policy that is suitable for neuro-diverse customers.
- 6.4 Customers individual needs will be taken into account when delivering our repairs service, this includes any actions needed in relation to damp and mould. Where extensive works may be required, we will consider the individual circumstances of the household, including any vulnerabilities, and whether or not it is appropriate to move customer(s) out of their home at an early stage.
- 6.5 To safeguard customer welfare, alternative sources of heating will be explored with customers whose gas has been capped for safety reasons.
- 6.6 GSA will produce a damp and mould customer engagement plan through consultation with Customer Panel over the coming months.

7. Definitions – Types of damp

The types of damp covered by the policy include rising damp, penetrating damp and condensation damp.

- **Rising Damp:** This is where there is a movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.
- **Penetrating Damp:** (including internal leaks) This is where water penetrates the external structure of the building or internal leaks that cause damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure. The cause of this may include:
 - Water ingress due to poor or defective (original) design and / or workmanship of the property
 - Defective components for example roof coverings, windows and external doors
 - Blocked or defective rainwater gutters and pipes
 - Leaking or defective internal waste pipes, hot and cold water systems including heating systems
 - Flooding due to burst pipes
- **Condensation Damp:** Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air meets a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. The building conditions and features that can increase the risk of condensation include:
 - Inadequate ventilation either not in place or not used i.e. natural opening windows, mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens or trickle vents on windows.
 - Inadequate heating
 - Poor building design and construction, specific cold area causing bridging which are integral with the construction of the property.
 - Defective or inadequate insulation in lofts.
 - Inadequate thermal insulation i.e. wall insulation.
 - Lack of ventilation i.e. not opening windows, not using extractor fans, blocking up vents and air bricks, not allowing air to circulate around (and particularly behind) furniture
 - Lack of space around possessions that prevents air flow through the property, this includes cupboard spaces
 - Drying laundry inside the home and not covering pans when cooking can lead to high humidity

8. Our Policy

This policy details GSAs approach to how the risk of damp and condensation is managed and how GSA will respond to reports of damp and condensation within its portfolio, received by customers, or which become apparent to GSA staff as part of their daily duties. Such occurrences of damp and condensation can lead to mould growth and subsequent detriment to GSA's assets and customers. GSA will aim to proactively manage the risk through:

- ✓ Cyclical surveying of its stock
- ✓ Reactive repairs
- ✓ Planned preventative investment
- ✓ Tracking complaints associated with damp, mould and condensation

- ✓ Tracking disrepair claims that cite damp, mould and condensation
- ✓ Providing information and guidance to customers
- ✓ Ensuring help and assistance is available for customers with vulnerabilities or who do not have English as their first language

It is important that causes of damp and condensation are diagnosed and understood to effectively remediate, this includes a proactive approach to addressing reports and providing relevant information and signposting to customers where appropriate.

Damp, mould and condensation in a property are usually caused by a fault with the building, which is the landlord's responsibility, it can also be caused due to how the building is used by the occupier which is the customers responsibility. This policy broadly sets out how GSA will address the issues of damp, mould and condensation.

GSA are committed to work with our customers where mould is present and identify solutions and remedial action to these problems, some of which will require the cooperation of our customers.

GSA will continue to improve the condition of its homes through investment and by taking advantage of funding to improve the energy performance rating (EPC) of a property.

Where properties are identified for future disposal or are within an area marked for regeneration, GSA will proactively satisfy themselves that customers do not receive a poorer standard of service or lower living conditions, that steps are taken to avoid homes degrading to an unacceptable condition and that they regularly engage and communicate with these customers.

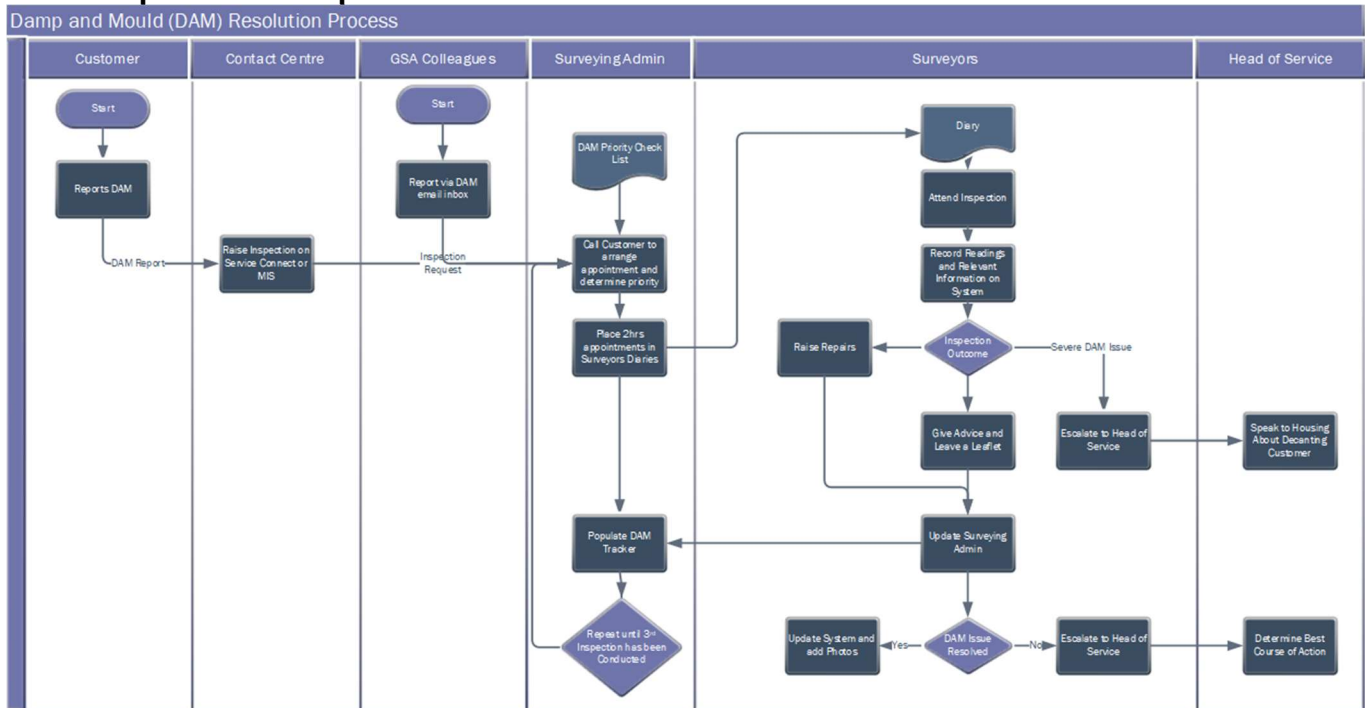
In addition to providing a safe home environment to our customers, GSA are to comply with all relevant legislation.

GSA have developed a damp and mould process which aims to:

- ✓ Ensure a suitable and sufficient response to all reports of damp, mould or condensation, which could include an initial offer of a remote video consultation where demand against inspections is high
- ✓ Identify the cause occurring in homes.
- ✓ Identify opportunities for extending the scope of their diagnosis within buildings, for example by examining neighbouring properties, to ensure the response early on is as effective as possible.
- ✓ Order remedial works where required.
- ✓ Ensure cases are kept open and proactively monitored until we have conclusive evidence that the issue has been permanently fixed
- ✓ Ensure that we clearly and regularly communicate with our customers regarding actions taken or otherwise to resolve reports of damp and mould.
- ✓ Provide advice or other assistance to customers, where there is condensation present in their home.
- ✓ Increase awareness for our customers, colleagues and contractors through a range of communications and information on how to manage / prevent condensation in the home

This process was reviewed and approved by Customer Panel in January 2023 and has since been socialised and embedded with existing colleagues and is included as part of the induction process for new colleagues joining GSA whose role requires them to follow this process:

The damp and mould process:



As a result of a surveyor or external contractor carrying out a damp and mould inspection, there may be requirement for remediation repairs or a mould wash to be carried out. Remediated repairs will be prioritised in accordance with repairs required, all mould wash's will be attended to within 7 days (P2 – Urgent response). The table below sets out GSA response times to repair requests. The response timelines will be updated as new legislation is published and implemented.

Priority	Response Time	Description
P1 – Emergency	Attend within 4 hours and complete within 24 hours	Issues that present an immediate danger to customers and/or will result in severe damage to property / require a decant. Make safe/ secure / isolate as minimum, repair if possible and complete with 24 hours although further follow on works may be required
P2 – Urgent	7 days	Issues that require urgent attention to prevent future damage to property with no immediate danger to person and/or property
P3 – Routine	28 days	Standard responsive repairs

P4 – Planned Routine	84 days	Work that's falls outside of the usual time/cost scope of responsive repairs and need time to plan completion
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9. Monitoring and Reporting

9.1 GSA has devised a damp and mould tracker to capture all reports of damp and mould. The tracker is managed daily by a dedicated Damp & Mould Coordinator within the Asset Surveying and Programme Management team. The damp and mould tracker will also be reviewed:

- Weekly by Locality Surveying Managers
- Weekly by Locality Managers (Homes & Communities Team)
- Monthly by the Head of Service
- Bi-monthly by the Director

All (HHSRS) category 1's that have been identified through a stock condition survey or other sources will be reviewed weekly by the Head of Service and escalated to the Director and Chief Operating Officer. These will also be included in the bi-monthly damp and mould report to Executive Board.

9.2 A dashboard is currently under development that will provide oversight of works raised, completed and outstanding along with a more detailed overview of open cases, new cases and inspection performance across the month.

9.3 Weekly meetings are held with the DLO to discuss progress against damp and mould works raised.

9.4 Monthly reporting through GSA performance scorecard 'customer safety' which tracks:

- ✓ The number of damp and mould inspection requests received.
- ✓ New disrepair claims which relate to damp and mould
- ✓ New step 2 complaints relating to damp and mould
- ✓ HOS Determinations relating to damp and mould

9.5 Bi-monthly damp and mould report submitted to Executive Board

9.6 Tracking against Homes and Customer Experience Committee Deep Dive Damp and Mould action plan through the Performance Committee

9.7 Quarterly report submitted to the Health & Safety Committee

9.8 Colleagues within the Programme Management and Surveying Team will be briefed at monthly team meetings against the performance scorecard, to ensure understanding of how GSA are performing against the recommendations in the HOS Spotlight report on damp and mould and will conduct a monthly reflection on any improvements that can be implemented.

9.9 A weekly meeting with Customer Care Team to ensure effective internal communication between teams and departments, and ensure that there is overall responsibility for ensuring complaints or reports are resolved, including follow up or aftercare.

10. Quality Assurance

10.1 There are a number of systems in place to ensure appropriate quality assurance of our approach to damp, mould and condensation. These include:

- Internal Audit – KPMG will be commissioned to carry out an internal audit against GSA's Management of Damp and Mould
- A deep dive into Damp and Mould led by the Homes and Customer Experience Committee, carried out in January 2023, resulting in tracked action plan.
- We will carry out stock condition surveys once every five years to assess and check the condition of our stock and any damp and mould related issues will be reported to the Damp and Mould Coordinator to allow the resolution process to begin.
- We undertake internal desktop audits of 100% of all damp and mould case outcomes following reinspection.
- We will carry out an independent audit of the damp and mould process at least once every two years, to specifically test for compliance with legal and regulatory obligations and identify any non-compliance issues for correction.
- Damp and mould is monitored through the corporate risk mapping and reviewed quarterly.
- Weekly meetings are held with contractors to provide a report on repairs raised in relation to damp and mould. This is to ensure mould washes are attended within 7 days and repairs are attended within specified priority targets.
- GSA will look to implement customer satisfaction feedback on how we have managed their damp and mould issue

11. Communication, Training and Implementation

11.1 This policy is available to view by all customers on the GSA website and will be updated with any changes when reviews of the policy are undertaken. Internally this policy will be viewable and accessible by all colleagues and stored on the group's intranet site.

11.2 Together with customers, GSA will review the information, materials and support provided to customers to ensure that these strike the right tone and are effective in helping residents to avoid damp and mould in their properties.

11.3 All colleagues and contractors who enter customer homes or communal areas will be required to ensure this policy is read and understood.

- 11.4 All Surveying Colleagues who have responsibility for carrying out duties relevant to the policy will receive regular training, invitation to webinars, seminars and industry events that promote best practice and remain fully briefed against this subject.
- 11.5 Only suitably competent colleagues, or consultants, will undertake surveys, prepare written schedules of works and sign off/monitor works in respect of damp and mould cases.
- 11.6 Only suitably competent contractors will undertake rectification works in respect of damp and mould cases.
- 11.7 All consultant and contractor checks will be undertaken during procurement and then on an annual basis and evidenced appropriately.

12. Legal and regulatory framework

We acknowledge and accept our responsibilities for the provision, management and delivery of this service and will comply with the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements of the following:

- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Energy Act 2013
- Regulatory framework for social housing in England (April 2012)
- Decent Homes Standard 2010
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System 2005 (HHSRS)
- Housing Act 2004
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 Section 11

13. Information Sharing and Confidentiality

We will provide information as required in line with relevant law and regulation.

We collect information (personal data) to enable us to:

- manage and support our relationship with you to comply with legal obligations
- improve our services
- achieve our legitimate business aims

We are committed to complying with data protection legislation when handling your data.

You have rights including access to your data and to object to the way it is processed. For more information on how and why we process your data and how you can exercise your rights please view our full Privacy Policy on our website at Privacy notice – GreenSquareAccord.