

Working together to identify the causes and remove damp and mould in your home

Damp and mould can be a serious problem for your home and health. It affects almost one in five homes in the UK no matter the age of the property. If you notice any damp and mould it needs treating quickly as it can make asthma and other respiratory illnesses worse due to inhalation of mould spores.

We take damp and mould very seriously. This leaflet has been produced to help you understand the causes of damp and mould, and the steps that we will take to resolve the issue.

It's important to let us know if you see signs of damp or mould in your home. We will identify the cause, treat the issue and follow up to ensure that the steps taken have been effective.

In some cases, there may also be some steps you can take to help reduce moisture in your home and avoid the risk of damp and mould forming.

This leaflet can be supplied in alternative languages or formats if required, e.g. Braille, in large print, or on tape.

**Call us on 01750 724444,
Freephone 0800 0193 222,
email enquiries@sbha.org.uk
You can also report damp via
the form on our website -
sbha.org.uk/damp-and-mould**



Identifying damp and mould

Damp and mould can occur in buildings of any age and can be caused by a range of factors, including issues with the fabric of the building, defective plumbing and condensation. See below for tips on how to identify these. The first three types of damp will require remedial work to be carried out.



Penetrating damp

Caused by rainwater penetrating through the external structure, this is usually recognisable by a damp patch or discolouration on the internal wall, or flaking paint or wallpaper.

Some examples of common causes and signs to look out for are broken or for blocked gutters or downpipes, or damaged roofs. Mould may begin to grow.



Rising damp

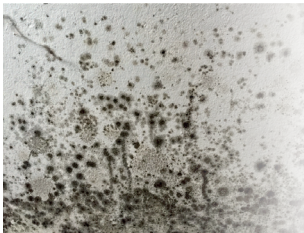
Rising damp is less common than penetrating damp as most homes have damp proof coursing (DPC) to prevent rising damp occurring. However this can fail or be breached due to debris in the cavity, or the external ground level being raised above the DPC level.

Signs in the home of rising damp are similar to that of penetrating damp, but it usually only affects basement and ground floor rooms.



Defective plumbing

Such as leaking pipes, wastes or overflows. Plumbing defects usually look and feel damp to the touch and remain damp whatever the weather conditions.



Condensation

Created by high levels of moisture in the air. Condensation is the most likely cause of any damp problems occurring in the home, and appears as pinpoint black spots. **See the back page for some tips to help you avoid it.**

What happens when you report damp or mould to us

As damp and mould can be caused by several factors, when you contact us, we'll need to ask you a few questions to help us understand the problem and to allow us to agree the next steps. Similarly, if you report the issue via our online form, there will be a few questions for you to answer that will help us to identify the cause.

We will arrange an inspection and, where damp is identified, we'll ensure that remedial works are carried out as quickly as possible. This may include repairs to:

- leaking internal pipes
- broken heating systems
- missing roof tiles or faulty guttering
- cracked walls or rotten window frames

We will also replace any damaged plaster, skirting boards or floorboards, and advise on re-decoration.

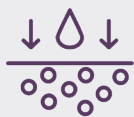
We will also follow up works to ensure that they have treated the issue effectively. If repairs do not resolve the issue, we will look at further improvements, for example installing a damp proof course.

What else are we doing?

- ✓ We're proactively identifying those homes which may have an increased risk of developing issues with damp and mould, so that we can take steps to prevent this.
- ✓ We're ensuring that front-line staff are equipped with the skills to identify causes and arrange treatment for damp, making use of specialist advisers where required.
- ✓ We've trialled damp sensors, which monitor temperature and humidity, allowing us to identify issues and take preventative steps. We're now looking at the results of this trial, and how this technology could be used more widely.
- ✓ We're providing more and clearer information on the steps you can take to help reduce the risk of mould in your home (see overleaf).

How you can help keep your home free of damp and mould

There are three factors which affect the amount of condensation a home produces:



How much moisture is created by daily living activities.



Temperature of the home and how cold or warm the air is.



How well ventilated the home is.

Top tips for reducing condensation in your home:



Dry clothes outside if you can. If drying inside, put them in the bathroom with the door closed and window open/fan on. Any tumble drier vents should go outside (unless it's self-condensing).



Keep furniture away from walls, particularly external walls to allow air to circulate around them. Allow room in wardrobes and cupboards for circulation.



Keep lids on pans when cooking, and don't allow kettles to boil for longer than you need to.



When bathing or cooking, use any extractor fans you have and open windows to remove the excess moisture from the air. Keep the doors closed to stop moisture travelling through your home.



Very cold rooms encourage mould to grow. It's recommended that you don't allow the temperature in your home to fall below 14°C.



Use trickle vents if you have them (see picture) and dry the windows and window sills of your home every morning where condensation has formed. If the weather allows, open your bedroom windows for 10 minutes in the morning to let moist air escape.



We know that many people are worried about heating costs right now. If you feel that this is preventing you from heating your home, please get in touch with us. We offer dedicated support to help you manage this.

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