

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Policy has been developed to give a consistent and informed approach to ensuring that Tenants live in warm, safe, and comfortable homes. Damp, mould and condensation are issues which can have a serious impact on the health and well-being of our tenants, and cause damage to homes.
- 1.2 SBHA is committed to a proactive, approach to damp, mould and condensation. This will be achieved by developing and implementing processes to prevent, assess, reporting on, and give advice and take actions to support tenants experiencing damp, mould and condensation.
- 1.3 Damp, mould and condensation can occur in a range of circumstances, types, size, age and location of properties. More information on causes, prevention and repair can be found on our website and in our damp and mould leaflets.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide commitment to the prevention, timely identification, and effective remediation of dampness and mould within its housing stock.
- 2.2 **SBHA will seek to ensure that Tenants live in safe, warm, comfortable homes by:**
- Providing dry, warm, healthy, and safe homes which are free from any hazards.
 - Providing a supportive, empathetic, informed response when concerns about damp, mould and condensation are reported.
 - At the point of reporting undertake a triage assessment based on risk assessment including health, other vulnerabilities, household circumstances and property/location attributes to identify higher risk cases which will require a priority action.
 - Operate a case management approach to ensure all cases are tracked through to completion.
 - Developing our people to be able identify the signs and causes of damp, mould, and condensation and how these can be remedied.
 - Carrying out appropriate investigation to identify the cause of damp, mould, or condensation, using specialist contractors/advisers where cases are more complex
 - Ensuring the Officer inspecting and addressing any issues provides clear and frequent communication about any actions that are required, providing a direct point of contact for the Tenant.
 - Working in partnership with contractors and tenants to identify the cause of these issues and providing support to tenants to make positive changes to reduce humidity levels.
 - Carrying out any remedial works required as quickly and efficiently as possible.
 - Protecting homes from deterioration and damage resulting from, or contributing to damp, mould and condensation.
 - Monitoring to identify which properties are more at risk of moisture issues and take responsive or preventative action as required.

- Using asset and Tenant insight to design our investment programmes.
- Making use of technology to help tenants to understand and manage their homes and to understand the cause and solution to moisture issues. Where required provide/in partnership provide a range of wraparound services designed to support Tenants in their homes to prevent damp and mould.

3.0 RELATED POLICIES & GUIDANCE

3.1 This policy should be considered along with the following:

- Repairs and Maintenance Standards
- Estate Management Policy
- Customer Service Standards
- Asbestos Policy
- Health and Safety Policy and Control Manual
- Decant & Home Loss Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Empty Homes Management Policy
- Tenancy Agreement Terms and Conditions
- SFHA Guidance – Putting Safety First

4.0 LEGISLATION & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

4.1 SBHA must comply with all applicable legislation and guidance, including but not limited to:

Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (as amended)
 Housing (Scotland) Acts 2001 & 2010
 Housing (Scotland) Act 2006
 Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Part III)
 Scottish Housing Regulator Regulatory Framework and ARC indicators
 UK Health Security Agency / Health Protection Scotland guidance
 Housing (Scotland) Bill (forthcoming provisions)
 Equality Act 2010
 Scottish Public Services Ombudsman Model Complaints Handling Procedure

4.2 Deliver services that comply with regulatory and statutory obligations to ensure the health and safety of tenants and properties are maintained at all times. This Policy has been developed to ensure compliance with the following legislation and regulatory requirements:

- Housing Scotland Act 2014
- Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS)
- Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing (ESSH) and any subsequent new legislation on energy efficiency

5.0 REPORTING PROCESS

5.1 Tenants should report any concerns about damp, mould and condensation at an early stage to prevent serious problems developing. This can be done through various channels including telephone, email, face to face or via the website.

5.2 Tenants reporting concerns about damp, mould and condensation will be treated with empathy and respect taking account of tenants' circumstances, ethnicity, vulnerability etc. A triage assessment will be undertaken with the tenant to identify the risk level in order to

prioritise cases.

- 5.3 Regular contact by the Officer inspecting and dealing with any issues will be made to keep Tenants informed of progress until the matter is resolved.
- 5.4 SBHA team members and contractors will report any signs of damp, mould and condensation if this is seen within any home during the course of their visit and advise the Tenant that they are reporting the issue so an assessment can be made to address any issues which are causing the damp/mould. This will be done in a manner which does not leave the Tenant feeling blamed for any issues identified.

6.0 TRAINING

- 6.1 Our people will be provided with training to:
- Provide advice and support to Tenants who report damp, mould, and condensation in their homes.
 - Identify the cause and arrange works to resolve matters.
 - Provide access to support and resources for tenants to make positive changes in their homes to reduce humidity levels.
 - All frontline team members will receive training on damp, mould and condensation awareness.

7.0 INVESTIGATION AND ACTION

- 7.1 Upon notification of damp and mould, SBHA will undertake a triage assessment in consultation with the tenant to determine the appropriate route and timescale for inspection as follows:
- High Priority Case – an inspection appointment will be agreed with the tenant with the aim of being completed within 5 working days after the day of the initial contact
 - Medium Priority Case - an inspection appointment will be agreed with the tenant with the aim of being completed within 8 working days after the day of the initial contact
 - Low Priority Case - an inspection appointment will be agreed with the tenant with the aim of being completed within 10 working days after the day of the initial contact
- 7.2 The aim of the damp and mould inspection is to assess the fabric of the building to determine the cause of damp/mould and organise any remedial works that may be required to remedy the issue. During this visit, tenants will be advised how SBHA and tenants can work together to improve the situation e.g. offering advice and support on reducing humidity levels and basic energy efficiency advice where appropriate. Where more specific energy advice is required, this will be referred to SBHA's Warm & Well Co-ordinator for further advice and assistance.
- 7.3 In some complex cases, a specialist contractor/consultant may be required to carry out a further damp and mould inspection/survey to help identify the cause and determine works to resolve the matter.
- 7.4 Where works are required, we aim to carry these out in line with repairing timescales, however major works may be required to be programmed. It may not always be possible for tenants to remain in their home while works are carried out and, if required,

appropriate decant arrangements should be discussed with the tenant where this situation arises. Works will be carried out irrespective of any dispute or claim raised by the tenant in relation to the damp and/or mould. Where inspections, surveys or works are required and the Tenant repeatedly denies reasonable access, SBHA may give the Tenant 24 hours of a controlled gain entry to undertake the works. The Tenant may be re-charged the costs of the controlled gain entry.

- 7.5 Tenants will receive updates on the outcome of the inspection and regular updates on how and when works will be carried out. It is the responsibility of the Officer carrying out the inspection to ensure communication with the Tenant.
- 7.6 Follow-up contact will be undertaken with the tenant within 3 months of the work being completed to assess whether the action taken has been effective. If the works are found not to be effective further surveys and works will be considered until the issue is resolved.
- 7.7 All empty homes will undergo a damp inspection as part of the empty homes process and any resulting works completed prior to let.

8.0 PREVENTATIVE WORKS

- 8.1 SBHA will take action to identify homes that have, or may be at risk of developing, problems with damp and mould, utilising information about our homes and tenants to help us understand risks in relation to damp and mould.
- 8.2 SBHA will develop and deliver a programme of inspections and cyclical works to carry out repairs and maintenance which could contribute to preventing damp, mould and condensation from arising.

9.0 INSIGHT AND TECHNOLOGY

- 9.1 Information from our complaints, responsive, cyclical, and planned repairs and maintenance activities will be used to identify trends where particular property types or areas are experiencing moisture related issues. This information will be used to ensure that improvement works such as replacement heating, windows and doors are designed to keep homes safe and dry. Any lessons learned from complaints and/or complaint themes will be used to consider changes to policy, procedures, and approach.
- 9.2 There is a range of information and technology available to help prevent, assess and treat problems with damp, mould and condensation. SBHA may make use of this to address damp and mould in our homes to keep them free from disrepair and support tenants to understand how to make positive changes. The use of smart technology will be considered which can be used to monitor temperature and humidity levels remotely to identify where and when issues occur so pro-active action can be taken to prevent or resolve issues.
- 9.3 Damp meters will be used during inspections to identify the extent and location of moisture. Other equipment such as thermal imaging cameras can be used to assist with diagnosis of problems and remedies where deemed appropriate.

10.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Director of Property Services** will ensure that there is a robust policy, procedure, and framework in place to fulfil SBHA's responsibility as a landlord.

- **Senior Asset Planning Manager** is responsible for identifying types of homes at increased risk of damp and mould and determine programmes of work required to proactively prevent damp and mould and ensuring stock condition surveys report on any issues as part of SHQS.
- **Head of Programme and Delivery** will ensure that policy and procedures are implemented and the framework is effective in operation/delivery. Ensures team members are provided with appropriate training to carry out their duties in respect of damp and mould and provide assurance that the approach taken is being followed and is effective. Ensure that performance reporting is robust in line with SBHA and SHR requirements and control actions are identified to strengthen performance where required.
- **Repairs & Maintenance Manager** will manage the monitoring, delivery, management, and reporting of works to resolve damp and mould issues identified.
- **Head of Support Services** – will ensure an affective risk assessment process is implemented and the framework for high priority and or complex cases is effective.
- **Neighbourhood Property Officer (Damp & Mould)** – will provide a professional, empathetic and supportive service ensuring that high priority/complex cases are fully investigated and followed up to conclusion and tenants are kept informed.
- **Neighbourhood Property Officers** will provide a professional, empathetic and supportive service ensuring that the cause of damp, mould and condensation cases are fully investigated and followed up to conclusion and tenants are kept informed of timescales and progress.
- **Damp & Mould Senior Customer Services Adviser** - will operate case management ensuring all cases are tracked to completion including an appropriate post inspection call where works have been undertaken to ensure effectiveness. Responsible for the provision of performance data and initial trend analysis.
- **Solutions Team** will act as a first point of contact for reporting. This includes undertaking the triage assessment with the Tenant to determine priority and arranging either necessary repairs and/or damp and mould inspection ensuring relevant information is provided to officers and initial advice and information is provided to Tenants.
- **All Team Members and Contractors** will notify the solutions team of any damp and mould issues they see in homes during their visits.
- **Tenants** will report damp/mould issues to SBHA promptly and provide reasonable access for inspections and remedial works.

11.0 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 11.1 Key performance Indicators (KPI's) will be measured and reported to monitor performance, assess effectiveness and provide assurance. This will include management KPI's and Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) indicators. Performance will be reported monthly to the Executive Team, quarterly to the Customer Board and Board of Management and annually to the Scottish Hosing Regulator as part of the ARC submission.

12.0 EQUALITIES

- 12.1 This policy seeks to ensure that in operation and application, SBHA will not unfairly discriminate against any person within the protected characteristic groups as defined within the Equality Act 2010, and will adhere to Outcome 1 of the Scottish Social Housing Charter (Equalities) which provides "Social landlords perform all aspects of their housing services so that every tenant and other customer has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services".

13.0 COMPLAINTS

13.1 If a Tenant is dissatisfied with the handling of their damp and mould report, they can use our formal complaints handling procedure.

14.0 REVIEW

14.1 This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years or when there is a significant change in legislation.