

Framework for damp, condensation and mould

Introduction

In response to the tragic death of Awaab Ishak due to damp and mould in his family's home, this framework has been created to help all services providing support and repairs to Islington residents with damp and mould issues and concerns. It has been agreed across Islington housing providers, social care services and health partners.

The framework's intention is to:

- Make services accessible, inclusive and responsive to issues related to damp and mould.
- Meet our statutory responsibilities and duty of care to residents.
- Enable all services to clearly report, risk assess and deliver an appropriate response to damp and mould in council properties, ensuring health factors, household make-up and property conditions are considered in this response.
- Build a robust system that improves the way all services manage risk and improves living conditions.
- Highlight and address the investment needs of the stock and suitably prioritise this against other priorities in the business plan.

It seeks to do this by:

- Establishing a data-led and informed process for reviewing existing and reporting new damp and mould cases for residents and all services.
- Identifying where and how damp and mould is reported and triaged for resolution, co-producing this with Islington housing providers, social care services and health partners.
- Putting mechanisms in place to identify contributing factors where damp and mould impact residents:
 - Causes of damp and mould in properties including, weather tightness, leaks, insulation, heating, structural thermal performance and ventilation.
 - Where damp and mould could exacerbate young children/vulnerable persons who have a pre-existing medical condition (asthma, emphysema, etc.) and/or make them more susceptible to illness.
 - Where household overcrowding is a contributing factor.
- Applying a longer-term solution for early identification and an Every Visit Counts approach, which will include a reporting and audit process, training and equipment to tackle causes of damp and mould.

Underlying principles:

- There are no excuses, and we will adopt best practice to damp and mould interventions.
- To co-produce an approach to tackling damp and mould and improving living conditions.

- The framework can help with compliance to meet the Decent Homes Standard¹, Housing health and safety rating system (HHSRS) operating guidance: housing inspections and assessment of hazards² and the duty of care through the services we provide to residents who live in our properties.
- The design of the framework acknowledges that there needs to be a staged approach to implementation, not only an immediate response to the issues related to mould and damp, but also building a sustainable proactive system that enables early identification and holistic support provision. These stages may run in parallel with each other as they are established.
- It recognises that this cannot be done all at once requiring collaboration, investment of resources and an on-going review process to ensure it is meeting the needs of residents and that services are enabled to carry out this work.
- The framework sets out three categories to respond to this approach:
 - **Urgent** – immediate response
 - **Every Visit Counts** – holistic approach
 - **Tenancy and property audit** – proactive interventions
- There will be an action plan that accompanies this framework.

Urgent

Accelerating our response to damp and mould, this category will review the existing data held on reports of damp and mould, drawing together information from services in “one view”, to effectively prioritise households that have reported damp and mould, repeated visits, risk factors and property conditions.

End-to-end processes will be put in place to ensure the management and review of cases have the appropriate response and that robust and meaningful outcomes are delivered, recorded, and tracked. Outcomes may vary, dependent on the level of intervention, but coordination and collaboration across all services is needed to mitigate the risk of bottlenecks or increased service pressures.

Training will be delivered to officers to provide support and confidence and enable a provision of high-level customer care to residents, as well as providing clarity on processes and responsibility.

Communication channels established for our residents and partner agencies to improve the accessibility of reporting damp and mould and the availability of support services, which gives residents confidence in our services and to feel safe and secure to live in their homes.

Every Visit Counts

Building upon the Urgent category, Every Visit Counts will provide a holistic approach to identifying property conditions and support needs of residents for every officer who conducts home visits irrespective of the reason they are attending. Through delivering public services and as a landlord to 40% of Islington population, there is a duty of care we need to provide for residents to live safely, securely, and well in their homes. It is our responsibility to be

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/decent-homes-standard-review>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hhsrs-operating-guidance-housing-act-2004-guidance-about-inspections-and-assessment-of-hazards-given-under-section-9>

professionally curious and take ownership of reporting and tracking areas of intervention and support.

This will be enabled through training, resources, and accessible recording processes.

A policy and standard operating procedure will be embedded to achieve consistency, quality outputs, reporting standardisation and will reduce the risk of miscommunication across services.

Tenancy and Property Audit

Bolstering Every Visit Counts there will be a programme of annual visits to council owned properties. An inspection will be conducted, recording the general condition of the property, as well as occupancy levels, and visual identification of repairs or interventions needed. The visit will also provide the offer to residents of signposting to support available, helpful information and advice.

An accessible and mobile reporting process will be created, including referral pathways established jointly with services.

Leadership, partnership and organisational commitment:

- To provide a leadership role to share and promote best practice to other social and private housing landlords managing homes in the borough.
- To work with health, social care, and advocacy groups to improve their referrals to us to better understand where occupants' health or well-being is being affected by damp & mould
- Clear and attainable priorities and working in partnership.