

**Homes and Neighbourhoods**

**Islington Council**

**222 Upper Street**

**N1 1XR**

**Report of: Rebecca Nicholson Head of Integrated Services and Ian Swift Director of Housing Needs and Strategy**

**Meeting of: Housing Scrutiny Committee**

**Date: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

# Damp, condensation and mould programme

## Update Report

### 1. Recommendations

- 1.1. This report aims to provide the Housing Scrutiny Committee with information and progress made to date on the damp, condensation and mould programme since the previous update to the Housing Scrutiny Committee in March 2023.
- 1.2. Officers encourage the Housing Scrutiny Committee to appraise this work and make suggestions of how the council's work in this critical area can be improved.
- 1.3. Officers are requesting the Housing Scrutiny Committee to review and feedback on draft key performance indicators for the damp, condensation and mould programme outlined in section 3.6.

### 2. Introduction

- 2.1. An extensive progress report on Islington Councils damp, condensation and mould programme was presented at Housing Scrutiny Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

This report is to provide a further update on the programme and outlines key features of the programme.

- 2.2. The five largest Housing Associations operating in Islington will be attending the June 2023 Housing Scrutiny meeting to investigate this work with our partners.
- 2.3. Learning and best practice continues to take place with other local authorities and Registered Social Landlords, as well as London Councils, Housing Quality Network and other professional bodies.
- 2.4. The programme's progress continues to be shared at various boards across the council including the council's leadership, safeguarding boards and Islington Housing Group etc.
- 2.5. Technical equipment, like sensors and other early intervention and prevention tools, are being scoped for procurement.
- 2.6. New and existing policies and procedures relating to damp, condensation and mould service activity are being created or amended based on evidence-led learning to improve service delivery and joint working.

### 3. Update

#### 3.1. Urgent response

- 3.1.1. Of the 3,471 properties that have reported damp and mould between January 2020 to Dec 2022, contact has been attempted with 2772 and contact has been made with 1,626 households.
- 3.1.2. 1152 have responded that they do not have damp and mould in their properties.
- 3.1.3. 474 have responded that they do have damp and mould in their properties and require a visit for a diagnostic survey. 212 jobs have been completed, 42 are in progress, 175 are pending works, 44 are either: the surveyor has not been able to gain access to the property, duplicate or works are no longer required, and one has been referred to the legal team.
- 3.1.4. Further qualitative analysis on resident feedback will be analysed and used to improve services.
- 3.1.5. Additional data of tenants in properties, who have reported damp and mould in the date period as mentioned in point 3.1.1., known to Adult Social Care and Children's Social Services has been approved and we are currently in the process of adding this to this to the existing dataset. This will improve our understanding of risk factors and guide service delivery.
- 3.1.6. Further work is underway to understand a deeper understanding of demographics and disproportionality.

## **3.2. Tenancy and Property Audit**

- 3.2.1. After internal officer consultation it has been decided that the name of this work will change to Tenancy and Property Visits.
- 3.2.2. During March and April 2023 a pilot of this work has been conducted at Halton Mansions to review impact related to tenants and on services, results of which are in the process of analysis, this will be available at the end of May 2023.
- 3.2.3. There are 152 properties and nine blocks, all Islington tenants have been sent a letter about the visits.
- 3.2.4. So far approximately 60 tenanted households have completed the form, with further appointments booked for visits over the next couple weeks, due to tenants receiving a letter and providing a suitable time for a visit.
- 3.2.5. Leaseholders are invited to join the Community drop-in sessions.
- 3.2.6. Initial officer feedback has shown that officer visits have been positively received by tenants who have agreed to a visit.
- 3.2.7. A further community drop-in session for Halton Mansions, where this pilot was conducted, was held on the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Leads from various service areas were available to provide information and action any issues raised. Of the 152 properties only five residents attended. The assumption as to why there was low attendance is that tenancy officers had made contact via the Tenancy and Property Visits, further analysis is to be conducted.
- 3.2.8. It should be noted that Community drop-in sessions will be launched for all 36,000 tenants and leaseholders across the borough in community-based locations which will bolster our understanding of residents damp, condensation and mould issues.

## **3.3. Housing Allocation Policy**

- 3.3.1. The results of the Housing Allocations Policy consultation, which closed on the 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023, has been analysed and presented to Corporate Management Board, and will be presented to the July Executive meeting.
- 3.3.2. 950 responses were received from residents, as well as 81 partner organisations also responded with only 10% of partners not supporting the proposed changes.

## **3.4. Training**

- 3.4.1. As outlined in the Damp, condensation, and mould programme Progress Report February 2023, the training programme to technical and non-technical housing officers, to bring awareness of damp and mould and well as customer care, is well underway.
- 3.4.2. Technical Housing Property Services officer training there are 55 officers who have or are scheduled to attend training.

- 3.4.3. Non-technical Housing officers damp and mould training began in 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023, so far 43 officers have completed training and a further 53 booked to attend in May and June 2023.
- 3.4.4. Between March – June 2023 there are 268 Housing Property Services officers who have or are scheduled to attend customer care training and approximately 160 Tenancy and Housing Needs staff scheduled to or have attended.
- 3.4.5. Trauma informed training is an established course delivered by Homeless Link with on-going training for Housing officers.
- 3.4.6. Further training is being scoped for staff outside the Homes and Neighbourhoods department to bring understanding and awareness to officers who have contact with residents.
- 3.4.7. Briefings of damp, condensation and mould are being included in induction packs and presentations to existing and new staff.

**3.5. Housing Ombudsman**

- 3.5.1. In collaboration with the Housing Ombudsman, Islington Council hosted the Meet the Housing Ombudsman event on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023. 150 people attended the event online and in-person.
- 3.5.2. The special investigation continues with officer meetings to start at the end of April 2023.
- 3.5.3. Following the initial submission of documents outlining the extensive damp and mould programme there was a further request for information to support the investigation.
- 3.5.4. Results of the investigation are due September 2023.

**3.6. Key performance indicators (KPIs)**

- 3.6.1. Programme KPIs are being refined and we invite the Housing Scrutiny Committee to review and provide feedback.
- 3.6.2. The draft KPIs have been shared for comment with Housing Quality Network who have been commissioned to be Homes and Neighbourhoods critical friend.
- 3.6.3. The programmes draft KPIs are:

Theme	KPI Name
Urgent response	Number of damp and mould reports between Jan 2020 - December 2022
	Number of properties effected by damp and mould between Jan 2020 - December 2022

## Demographics

% have been contacted (LBI and Kwest) on reports between Jan 2020 - December 2022

% who have reported to still have damp and mould in their properties between Jan 2020 - December 2022

Number of damp and mould cases that have reported damp and mould after 3 month review

% where the root cause is a repair

% where the root cause is a overcrowding

% where the root cause is a need for tenancy support including poverty

% where the root cause is a building improvement

% of tenants are known to ASC with confirmed damp or reporting damp

% of tenants are known to CSS with confirmed damp or reporting damp

% of tenants are known to ASC and CSS with confirmed damp or reporting damp

% of tenant or member of household have vulnerabilities with confirmed damp or reporting damp

Number of damp and mould reports

## Demographics

Active  
Damp and  
Mould  
cases

% active damp and mould reports

% closed damp and mould cases

% Category 1 HHSRS

% Category 2 HHSRS

	% where the root cause is a repair
	% where the root cause is a need for tenancy support including poverty
	% where the root cause is a building improvement
	% where tenants are known to ASC with confirmed damp or reporting damp
	% where tenants are known to CSS with confirmed damp or reporting damp
	% where tenants are known to ASC and CSS with confirmed damp or reporting damp
	% where tenant or member of household have vulnerabilities with confirmed damp or reporting damp

Knowing our stock	Top 10 estates with high number of properties reporting damp and mould?
	List of blocks with number of reports of damp and mould?
	Number of stock condition surveys
Complaints	% by year
	Number of complaint relating to or including elements of damp and mould
	% Stage 1 complaints relating to or including elements of damp and mould
	% Stage 2 complaints relating to or including elements of damp and mould
	% Housing Ombudsman cases relating to or including elements of damp and mould

Casework Taskforce	Number of cases actioned through the casework taskforce
	% open
	% closed
	Number of households that have been moved due to major work transfer related to damp and mould

	% in temporary accommodation
	% are now in permanent accommodation
	% tenants are still in property
	Number of no-access cases
	Length of time taken to resolve case
	Number legal disrepair cases
	Number of cases that are in legal proceedings due to no access

Tenancy and Property Visits	Number of tenancy and property visits - total and % complete
	% no access
	% damp and mould referral
	% tenancy fraud referral
	% support services referral (separated by service)

Training	% surveyors fully trained
	% all housing staff trained