

Public Health

4th Floor, 222 Upper Street, N1 1XR

Report of: Director of Public Health

Meeting of: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 4th July 2023

Ward(s): all wards

Subject: Damp, and mould report

1. Synopsis

This report outlines the work conducted by Islington Council following national reaction and response to the publication of a coroner's report concerning the tragic and preventable death of a two year old child in Rochdale.

The report details the work conducted since November 2022, in partnership with health, adult social care, children's services and other external and internal partners to address damp and mould in the 36,000 homes managed by Islington Council.

The report also highlights the general importance of housing and health to each other.

2. Recommendations

The Health and Wellbeing Board is asked to:

Note the accompanying report on damp, condensation and mould in homes managed by Islington, and phased progress to improve the situation.

Consider whether there are other actions which health and social care services can make together with the Homes and Neighbourhood team to further tackle the issue of damp, condensation and mould and its effect on the quality of life and health and wellbeing of tenants.

Consider whether a wider and deeper dive into health and housing at a future Health and Wellbeing Board would assist with developing partnership approaches and working around this wider determinant of health and wellbeing, including other issues currently under review such as overcrowding.

3. Background

Mould and damp indoors is caused by an excess of moisture, which may be caused by design or maintenance issues of properties and can also be caused by condensation. Depending on the cause of damp and mould, repairs or alterations may be needed and/or other steps or changes followed to reduce the amount of moisture in the air. It is important that the mould is removed.

Mould can cause ill health through allergens and irritants that it releases, and may also sometimes release toxic substances. These can cause allergic reactions and can trigger asthma impacts among other impacts; people living in homes with damp and mould are more likely to have respiratory conditions and are more vulnerable to respiratory infections. Groups which are particularly vulnerable include babies and children, older people, people with respiratory problems, skin problems and/or weakened immune systems, including those undergoing chemotherapy.

The attached report aims to provide the Health and Wellbeing Board with information and progress made to date on damp, condensation and mould programme in homes managed by the council. Of the 3,471 homes (close to 10% of all properties) that have reported damp and mould between January 2020 to Dec 2022, all have been attempted to be contacted as part of a first phase which sought to rapidly identify affected homes, including those with vulnerable tenants, and to act on and remedy damp, condensation and mould in those affected properties

This work is now moving into a second phase to develop longer term intelligence, systems and responses to this key housing and public health issue, including developing a deeper understanding of demographics and disproportionality of those affected.

4. Implications

4.1. Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report. The measures and recommendations proposed in this report are not currently quantifiable. Any recommendations from this report, if adopted, will need to be expanded upon and reviewed with the financial implications assessed.

4.2. Legal Implications

There are no new legal implications arising, after consideration and as part of this report on council housing.

4.3. Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030

There are no known environmental implications associated with this report.

The environmental implications could relate to the improvement of the living environment for households once the damp and mould has been resolved.

A new assessment of environmental impact can be considered once the implementation of the measures and recommendations proposed in this report are in place.

4.4. Equalities Impact Assessment

This report positively promotes the council statutory duties relating to Equalities and Human Rights and addresses inequality in Islington through the improvement of services and homes for our residents.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

The recommendations have been made to improve the health and wellbeing for our residents, reduce inequality, promote higher education attainment, increase the enjoyment of life and provide good quality homes and housing services for the 40% of the population of Islington who live in homes managed by the council.

Appendices:

Damp, condensation and mould in council housing in Islington report

Background papers:

None

Final report clearance:

Signed by: Jonathan O' Sullivan

Director of Public Health

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