

Homes and Neighbourhoods

Islington Council

222 Upper Street

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Report of: Rebecca Nicholson, Head of Integrated Services

Meeting of: Housing Scrutiny Committee

Date: 17th July 2023

Damp, condensation and mould

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 June 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 would welcome suggestions for further improvements in the delivery of these important services to provide excellent services to all 36,000 residents who occupy a home managed by Islington Council.
- 1.4. An update on the damp, condensation and mould programme to be presented in a future Housing Scrutiny Committee as determined by the committee:
 - 1.4.1. Performance data based on the key performance indicators that have been agreed.
 - 1.4.2. Tenancy and property visits phase two pilot findings and overview of how the work is embedded in the service.
 - 1.4.3. Overview of how data and systems have been used and developed to improve service delivery.
 - 1.4.4. A review of how the service better communicates the process for damp and mould and how it acts for different causes.

- 1.4.5. The service reviews its investment work to target damp and mould as well as other priorities such as decent homes, fire safety, net zero carbon
- 1.4.6. The service completes and considers its pilots in to remote technology.
- 1.4.7. Update on the development of referral pathways for other services such as GPS and Health Practitioners
- 1.4.8. Overview of blocks with high level of damp and mould prioritised for capital work and investment
- 1.4.9. Provide evidence of how the service is prioritising and managing major work transfers and demand from over crowding
- 1.4.10. Action plan implemented from the recommendations set out in the Housing Ombudsman's paragraph 49 special investigation report.
- 1.4.11. Overview of the Social Housing Regulators pilot inspection and any learning that can improve services for residents in relation to damp and mould.

2. Update overview

- 2.1. We have received feedback on key performance indicators, and this has informed headline key performance indicators. A sub-set of indicators are being scoped. See section 2.1.1. for more details.
- 2.2. Further demographics data and "known to" Adult Social Care and Children Social Care has been added to the One View dashboard. We continue to work with Public Health to have a strong data-led approach, as such a structured data monitoring plan has been designed and agreed for the short-, mid- and long-term time of the programme.
- 2.3. Phase two of our Urgent Response has been launched and letters to the remaining tenants who have reported damp and mould between Jan 2020 – Dec 2022 were sent on the 19th of June 2023, from that mail-out there are 37 jobs raised. We are monitoring responses and will design a process for contacting tenants who are yet to respond.
- 2.4. We continue to apply learning from our on-going engagement with residents and the learning from benchmarking and Housing Ombudsman special investigation reports. The council is also studying the outcomes of all Housing Ombudsman investigation

reports into other council's and housing associations to learn from these reports to ensure Islington Council continuously improves the services for our residents.

- 2.5. The Homes and Neighbourhoods service attended the Islington Health and Wellbeing Board on the 4th of July and provided an update on the programme. The report was positively received, and this has now led to the Health and Well-Being Board agreeing to undertake a strategic review of Health and Housing work to improve the health outcomes, educational attainment, reduce stress in households and improving the living conditions for our communities.
- 2.6. The Housing and Neighbourhoods service since the meeting of the Health and Well-Being Board have reached out to Health colleagues to progress this important work and a meeting is being arranged to conduct this strategic review over the next 12 months,
- 2.7. With Childrens Social Care leads we have initially agreed a frequent data sharing arrangement to maintain the level of visibility of the whole household and risk factors. This area of work will expand to Adult Social Care. The Homes and Neighbourhoods service is meeting with the Adult Social Care service on the 11th of July 2023, to progress this seamless delivery of services.
- 2.8. The Tenancy and Property Visits pilot is in phase two. There are tenanted properties in the North and South of the borough that will be visited, a new digital tool has been designed with the aim to improve data quality and reporting.
- 2.9. A dedicated referral form for local partners like health and social services has been designed and a proposal paper to the Damp and Mould Taskforce Board with further engagement with partners to refine the process.
- 2.10. Training continues and is built into continuous learning. Training for elected members was conducted in June 2023 and July 2023 around Damp and Mould and Disrepair,
- 2.11. In June there was a meeting with University College London to discuss a research project to inform the services we deliver in relation to damp, condensation and mould. This will be an academic input and review of damp techniques and processes to ensure the most up to date and rigorous systems are adopted. Reusing Net Zero Carbon data to prepare funding/investment bids targeting damp and Net Zero Carbon.
- 2.12. The council conducted a positive meeting with the Housing Ombudsman on the 6th of July 2023, relating to the Section 49 investigation. Officers will provide an update to the Housing Scrutiny Committee on the outcomes of this meeting
- 2.13. The council is conducting 30 community drop-in sessions for all 36,000 residents living in an Islington Council property from June 2023 to the end of September 2023. These community drop-in sessions will ensure our residents voices are heard and the council acts upon these views. These community drop-in sessions will ensure the

council walks in the shoes of our residents and services provided going forward meet the expectations and needs of our residents.

2.14. The proposed new housing allocations scheme will be presented to the Executive meeting on the 20th of July 2023. Proposals contained in the new housing allocations scheme will ensure people living in damp and mould properties are provided with higher priority for rehousing through the Choice Based Lettings scheme.

2.15. Elected member training on damp and mould and disrepair was conducted during June and July 2023 to ensure elected members are empowered to challenge the service for the benefits of our residents.

2.16. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

2.16.1. Table 1:

Damp and Mould Key Performance Indicator Proposal
1. Number of damp and mould cases reported every month
2. Remediation actions within timescale
3. Breakdown of cases by Cause (Tenancy Support, Repairs, Improvement, Fuel Poverty, overcrowding)
4. Number of repeat damp and mould cases
5. Number of stage 1 and 2 complaints
6. Equalities – indicator might change depending on deep dive analysis Demographics: Number of damp and mould cases by ethnicity Vulnerabilities: Number of damp and mould properties with adult social care or children social care residents

Financial Implications

There are no known new financial implications associated with this report

Legal Implications

There are no know new legal implications associated with this report.

Environmental Implications

The contents of this report will improve the environment of the home and thereby the well-being of households. There are no wider environmental implications associated with this report.