



Dover District Council

Condensation, Damp and Mould

A guide for Dover
District Council tenants

Understanding damp and mould

Damp is the accumulation of moisture within a property, affecting building materials like walls, floors, ceilings, and foundations, as well as home furnishings such as carpets, curtains, wallpaper, furniture, and clothing. As well as causing damage, damp can also lead to growth of mould. A range of factors can lead to damp in homes.



Condensation damp

Condensation damp occurs when moisture within the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the building (for example window frames, corners and low points on walls behind sofas or wardrobes). This is the most common form of damp.

Original construction: the original construction of the property could mean it is more prone to condensation with situations such as; poor insulation, lack of ventilation, solid walls and single glazed windows.

Condensation may also result from environmental conditions, including:

- **Poor ventilation:** Not opening windows, blocking vents, not using extractor fans, and restricting air circulation around furniture.
- **Insufficient heating:** Not heating the home adequately, often due to fuel poverty. For advice on fuel poverty, please contact our Money and Benefit Advisor for support. Email housingrents@dover.gov.uk or call 01304 801084 and ask to speak to one of our Money and Benefit Advisors
- **High humidity:** Activities like cooking without covering pans, not using extractor fans, and drying laundry indoors.
- **Cluttered spaces:** Lack of space around possessions and storage, hindering air flow through the property.



Penetrating damp

Penetrating damp is water that gets into the building from outside due to defects in the walls, roofs, windows, or floors.

Rising damp

'Rising damp occurs when moisture from the ground travels upwards through the parts of the building that are in contact with the ground, such as walls and floors. This issue is commonly found in older properties.'



Traumatic damp

Traumatic damp can be caused by water leaking from waste and heating pipes, overflowing baths or sinks, burst pipes or defective water storage tanks inside the building. Traumatic damp can also originate from outside the property, for example, from another building or from environmental flooding.



Mould

Mould is a type of fungus which grows in moist environments. Mould can cause adverse health effects as well as damage to buildings.

It is important to recognise that not all damp and mould presents the same level of risk to tenants. The most immediate risk relates to severe mould growth of certain types of mould which may cause airborne toxicity and is therefore especially dangerous to some vulnerable tenants.

If you are concerned about symptoms that you believe may be linked to damp and mould exposure, we strongly advise you to contact your doctor.

DDC will generally not undertake any tests to identify specific mould types but will deal with all mould types in the same way to remove the hazard.



Preventing condensation and moisture in your home

Condensation is the most common cause of mould. This happens when moisture in your home, created by daily activities, condenses on cold surfaces.

Below are some useful tips for reducing moisture and condensation and treating mould in your home.



Whenever possible, keep windows open (even for a short period of time) to allow for good ventilation. Keep window trickle vents open and clean.



Wipe condensation from window sills and frames when needed. **The removal of condensation from walls and internal windows is your responsibility.**



Dry clothes outside or in a properly vented or condensing tumble dryer. If you dry your clothes in a room indoors, make sure you open window and keep the door closed.



Close your internal doors when you're cooking or showering. Keep them open at other times to allow air to flow through your home.



Keep an eye out for leaks. If you find a leak, report it to us as soon as possible to avoid further damage to your home and / or communal areas.



Keep your heating at a constant temperature around 19-21 degrees Celsius. It's cheaper to set the heating at lower temperature for longer, than high for short periods.



Use a dehumidifier or damp traps. These can help take moisture out of the air in your home.



Use extractor fans. These help to remove moisture when you're having a bath or shower, or when cooking. Ensure these are cleaned to prevent blockages.



Leave space between your furniture and the walls and avoid overfilling wardrobes to allow air to circulate.



You can treat mould using a designated mould cleaner that contains a biocide. Make sure you follow the safety guidance and product instructions, and don't paint over mould before cleaning it first.



If damp has been caused by a problem with the structure of your home or due to an outstanding repair, it's our responsibility to fix it. Listen to advice given to you by a member of our Property Assets team. Not all cases of damp and mould require our immediate intervention. You can deal with everyday non-severe damp and mould under guidance from us.

Damp and Mould Reporting process

Step 1: Try to manage condensation and damp in your home

The first step is to manage the condensation and damp in your home yourself, by following this guide and tips on our website.

Step 2: Report the issue

If the damp and mould persist, gets worse and/or spreads in your home, or there is damage to your home, you must report this to us. You will need to give us details (where, and in what room, for how long it has been there, what you have done to prevent / manage this yourself) and photos of the affected area and room(s) if possible.

Step 3: Triage

When we get your report, we will determine the severity of the damp and mould, and either provide you with further advice for managing it and preventing condensation or we will arrange an investigation according to the information you have provided.

Step 4: Investigation

We will categorise the investigation as emergency, significant or standard; the severity determines the timeframes which we act in accordance with.

Emergency investigation - complete safety works within 24 hours

Significant investigation - complete safety works within 5 working days

Standard investigation - complete works within a reasonable time scale

You must allow us or our appointed contractor access to your home to complete the necessary works. Refusal to allow us access is a breach of your tenancy agreement.

Step 5: Prevention advice

We will give you guidance on how to reduce future damp and mould, such as ventilating rooms and managing condensation. It is important that you follow this advice.

Step 6: Property health checks

We will contact you to find out how it's going. If we have installed specialist equipment to manage and prevent damp and mould, we will arrange a visit with you to check that the equipment is helping with the problem.

How to report an issue

If you're a Council tenant or a leaseholder, you can contact us several ways to report damp and mould issues in your home or communal areas:



Speak to a member of the Property team: 01304 801110



Send us an email: housing.repairs@dover.gov.uk



Scan the QR code or visit
www.dover.gov.uk/Housing/Damp-and-Mould,
to fill in our online form.



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