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**MOULD AND DAMP POLICY**

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| **Department** | **Community and place** |
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**Introduction**

This policy is to act as guidance for the treatment of damp and mould throughout St Albans City and District Council’s housing stock. It also incorporates the timescales set out under Awaab`s Law which will come into force from 27 October 2025.

Types of damp covered by this policy are.

1. Rising Damp

The transference of moisture from the ground through the structure of a building via capillary action normally terminating 1 linear metre above ground

1. Penetrating Damp

Water penetrating the structure of the building (external walls, roofs) which could cause damp, rot, condensation, or damage to the internal surfaces.

1. Condensation Damp

Moisture held within warm air comes into contact with a cold surface causing water droplets to form and potentially mould to grow. This can be due to surface condensation when the inner surface is cooler than the air temperature or where water vapour pressure forces moisture through a porous material.

Conditions that can heighten the potential for mould and damp to occur are

* Inadequate ventilation of a property (trickle vents, mechanical extraction, non-mechanical ventilation)
* Inadequate heating of a property, (radiator renewals, draught proofing)
* Inadequate thermal insulation of a property, (lack of cavity wall insulation, loft insulation, external wall insulation)
* High humidity within a property, (potential leaks i.e. penetrating damp or rising damp passing moisture through the structure)
* Poor design or construction, (cold bridging due to lack of cavity wall/loft insulation)
* External leaks leading to penetrating damp, (missing pointing to external walls or roof leaks)
* Ground conditions causing rising damp to appear internally, (underground leak, fractured drain causing the ground to become saturated)

**Aims of Policy**

* To ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent manner for all reports of mould and damp,
* To ensure that tenants live in a safe and healthy home,
* To work in partnership with tenants ensuring that the needs of the household are considered in the investigations and decision making,
* To comply with the statutory requirements/legislation and good practice relating to mould and damp issues,
* To work in partnership with contractors, tenants, and leaseholders to ensure that a safe and healthy property is maintained, in terms of damp and mould matters,
* Investigate reports of damp and mould in a timely manner and implement all reasonable repairs and improvements to eradicate or manage damp including the management of condensation within the property as set out in Awaab’s Law,
* Ensure that tenants and leaseholders have access to, and are provided with, comprehensive advice and guidance on how to manage their property to minimise condensation within their home,
* Ensure that the fabric of the building is protected from deterioration and damage, thereby minimising the potential for condensation or damp to occur,
* Allocate funding through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and government funded schemes to upgrade the external fabric of the building in accordance with any practicable measures identified,
* Undertake feasibility studies on assets to establish suitability and future usage

**Scope of Policy**

The scope of this policy identifies how St Albans City and District Council, through its Asset Management team (reactive repairs and capital improvements), can assist its tenants and leaseholders to manage or eradicate damp and mould.

This includes.

* All St Albans City and District Council owned and managed properties (including temporary accommodation),
* All leasehold properties within St Albans city and District Council owned blocks, where the external fabric of the building could be causing an internal defect,
* Informing and educating residents about the different causes of mould and the types of damp (condensation, rising damp, penetrating damp),
* Identifying both St Albans City and District Council’s and tenant’s responsibilities for managing, and dealing with, damp and condensation,
* Providing guidance and education to tenants on how to manage and eradicate mould and damp within the property,
* Ensuring that all reports of moderate and excessive damp and mould affecting Council housing assets are followed up with a surveyor visit, with appropriate equipment to determine the cause and identify measures aimed to eradicate or reducing the problem to a tolerable and/or manageable level. This could be a combination of building fabric/ventilation measures and advice to residents on how to minimise condensation in their home,
* Where the cause cannot be determined by St Albans City and District Council’s Asset Management team, consideration will be given to engaging ‘external’ mould and damp specialists to provide detailed reports and recommendations to eradicate and/or provide further advice to residents,

**Responsibilities**

**Both St Albans District Council and its tenants are advised of, but not limited to, the responsibilities listed below.**

St Albans City and District Council

* Investigate any reports of mould and damp within 10 working days of being notified. Determine the type of damp present within the property and probable causes,
* Provide a written summary to the tenant of the survey carried out including a conclusion with a timeframe, if action is required within 3 working days of attending the property,
* Undertake remedial works within 5 working days of the report if there is a significant hazard identified within the investigation,
* Undertake any additional works within 5 working days of concluding the investigation unless it is not possible to carry out the works within this time frame. If 5 working days is unachievable all works will be physically started within 12 weeks of the conclusion of the investigation. This would be for larger damp proofing works where structural works may be required,
* Complete all works highlighted within the investigation within a reasonable time frame,
* Where damp and mould represents an emergency hazard the relevant emergency works will be carried out within 24 hours where practicable,
* That health risks, support needs or other circumstances that could make tenants more vulnerable to damp and mould are taken into account including any reasonable adjustments that may be required,
* Provide suitable temporary accommodation for the residents if the works required cannot be completed within a reasonable timeframe or there is a significant risk, Tenants will be supported with the move,
* St Albans District Council will inform tenants of the findings of the investigation including the cause of damp and necessary remedial works required and any other effective solutions to mitigate the cause of damp,
* Provide and publish on the Council’s website and newsletters, general advice on dealing with damp and mould within a property, During the actual site visit to assess the situation provide any further advice on measures that can be taken to reduce the mould and damp,
* To keep the tenant updated with their query on damp and mould in their property from inception to completion,
* Ensure that staff have sufficient training and equipment to effectively determine the cause of damp where practicable and provide reasonable solutions and/or remedial actions,
* Where required, engage with specialists to undertake detailed surveys of the property and provide advice and recommendations to rectify any causes of damp,
* Ensure competent contractors are employed to undertake remedial works to rectify root cause/s,
* Where internal conditions within a property, for example overcrowding, are having an Impact the Council will provide support and assistance to review tenant’s options that may include registering on the Council’s housing register if not already,
* Through the Council’s energy efficiency and decarbonisation work programmes, target and improve the thermal efficiency of any poorly insulated homes to ensure the associated heating system is working as effectively as practicable,
* Explore and use new technologies, for example Goldeni, to monitor humidity levels in properties and evaluate the results, identifying solutions for those properties,
* Carry out regular stock condition surveys to identify mould and damp within the council’s housing stock and use that data to inform works required within the capital investment program and energy works,
* Undertake follow up visits by a surveyor, after works have been completed, where necessary. This is to check that the measures have been effective in resolving the issues of damp and mould in the property and to determine whether any further measures are required,

Tenant and Leaseholder responsibilities

* Report any concerns of mould, condensation, or damp to St Albans City and District Council via the appropriate methods, (repairs line 01727 819256, digitally [Stalbansrepairs@morgansindall.com](mailto:Stalbansrepairs@morgansindall.com))
* Keep moisture within a room to a minimum by using ventilation methods within the property, (mechanical and non-mechanical extraction, window ventilation)
* Adequately heat rooms, ideally between 18 and 21 Degrees Celsius. Where tenants may find this difficult due to energy costs, support tenants to ensure that they are receiving all the benefits and support they are entitled to,
* Keep the property well ventilated via the provisions supplied within the property including windows and extractor fans,
* Follow advice and guidance supplied by the Council,
* Allow access for inspections and remedial works to rectify causes of damp and/or mould,
* Manage, where practicable, condensation within the property by; not drying clothes on radiators, opening windows where possible, using extractor fans provided ensuring vents are not blocked and that they are open,

**Review**

The policy will be reviewed yearly or earlier if:

* There is any change to legislation
* There is a change to the council’s strategy or policies

**Links**

For further information on roles and responsibilities please consult

* Tenancy handbook
* Tenancy agreement
* Leasehold agreement
* Homes fit for habitation act
* Building safety bill
* Awaab’s Law