

Damp and Mould Toolkit

Background

The Co-op has a damp and mould policy that received a positive audit by H&S Compliance in July 2025. However, since that date it has become clear that damp and mould presents a greater risk for landlords than we realised at that time.

This toolkit has been developed to assist the Co-op in having a more robust approach to this risk by being more proactive, improving knowledge and awareness amongst staff and tenants and adding to the tools we can deploy to deal with damp and mould where it arises. It is also essential that every action we take is recorded.

Being Proactive

It is no longer sufficient only to respond effectively to complaints made by tenants of mould in their home. Landlords are now expected to take a more proactive approach. It is important that our approach is realistic [ie we can deliver what we say we will do] and is kept under review [eg as case law develops, we may take a more rigorous approach in forcing access]. We will do the following:

- Any time a member of staff visits a house we will ask the tenant if they have any dampness/mould. The response will be recorded. If tenant advises that there is mould, the member of staff will take photos and record these on the register. If the member of staff is a member of the maintenance team they will assess what action is required. If not, it will be referred to a member of the maintenance team,
- To ensure a more systematic approach, we will send a text to every tenant once a year asking if they have any damp/mould. If they say they have, we will ask them to provide a photo if possible. All replies will be reviewed by the maintenance assistant and passed to the Senior Caretaker or Maintenance Officer/Manager to inspect depending on the severity of the damp/mould. Where no photo has been provided the Senior Caretaker will inspect. To manage the workload, the text will be sent on a monthly basis to each phase starting in October each year when the Senior Caretaker has more time to carry out this task.
- To increase our capacity to enable us to adopt a more proactive approach the Senior Caretaker will receive training and a Level 3 Qualification.

Increasing Knowledge and Awareness

Dealing effectively with condensation and dampness requires that we increase and maintain the knowledge and awareness of both tenants and staff. We will do this in the following ways:

Tenants

- Upload Property Care Association video from YouTube by end of March 2026 and create a 'damp and mould' section on our website,
- Article in Spring 2026 newsletter with a further article every autumn
- Issue a revised pack on causes of condensation to every new tenant from June 2026,
- Leaflet on causes of condensation, need for ventilation and how to use each type of fan we provide to every tenant by September 2026,

Staff

- Training video and update re changes to policy for all staff by end April 2026 and an annual refresher,
- Training and qualification for Senior Caretaker

Increasing the tools and capacity

These changes to our approach will require that we have greater capacity and more tools to deal with the issue – particularly with the more complex cases.

- Where a complaint is received without evidence of severity, the Senior Caretaker will carry out initial visit. He is authorised to provide advice to tenant and to instruct work by the caretaking team [cleaning mould, providing gel dehumidifier, cleaning fan, insulated wallpaper]. Also authorised to request visit by contractor to apply insulated paint.
- More complex cases to be handled by Maintenance Officer/Manager who will be authorised to instruct replacement fan, installation of environmental sensors, dry lining and other structural repairs and make referrals to and liaise with our partner, also authorised to appoint Sanondaf to carry out a 3 stage treatment [fogging to kill the mould],
- We will appoint an expert partner by end of June 2026 to support us in dealing with individual cases and in ensuring our approach reflects best practice
- We will set up a budget heading for damp and mould work for 2026/27,
- We will explore by end of June 2026 feasibility of carrying out thermal imaging on all our houses to help identify any issue with failed cavity wall insulation or cold bridging.

Escalation Process

- Co-op is made aware of an issue by tenant reporting or an officer identifying,
- Based on evidence available – Senior Caretaker or Maintenance Officer/Manager visits,
- Senior Caretaker Visits and either orders work, provides advice or reports to Maintenance Officer/Manager with email sent to tenant confirming action taken by the Co-op and action to be taken by tenant
- If Senior Caretaker doesn't refer, he revisits in 6 weeks to establish if issue has been resolved, if not then he refers to Maintenance Officer/Manager,
- Maintenance Officer/Manager assesses and arranges appropriate action [repairs, referral to partner etc] with email sent to tenant confirming action taken by the Co-op and action to be taken by tenant
- Maintenance Officer/Manager reinspect 6 weeks after action completed
- If issue not resolved, then partner specialist instructed to carry out an independent review and recommend action
- All actions recorded on register which will be monitored by Maintenance Assistant to ensure actions are followed up.