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Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy

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Documentation Master Sheet

Amendments to this Document are Detailed Below

Version Number	Date Amended	Comments	Date Approved	Author	Approved By
01	1/12/2021	New Policy	07/04/22	Robert Panou	Tenant Panel
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INTRODUCTION

This policy aims to assist in the delivery of a damp and mould service that will be able to:

- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Comply with statutory requirements and good practice.
- Focus on working in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp including, managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Maximise the available budgets and ensure that they are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp and condensation problems.
- Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.

SCOPE OF POLICY

The scope of this policy covers how GCH and our tenants are able to jointly control, manage and eradicate damp and this includes:

- All GCH properties that are tenanted, including emergency / temporary accommodation.
- Identifying the types of damp: rising, penetrating and condensation damp, including internal leaks.
- Identifying GCH's responsibilities for dealing with damp and condensation.
- Identifying the tenants' responsibilities for dealing with damp and condensation.
- Offering guidance, advice and assistance throughout the process to all tenants living in GCH properties.
- Identifies situations where GCH will not be able to undertake works to rectify condensation damp

TYPES OF DAMP COVERED BY THIS POLICY

Rising Damp

The movement of moisture from the ground rising up through the structure of the building through capillary action.

Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks)

Water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure. The cause can be the result of, for example:

- Water ingress due to defective or poor original design / workmanship of the structure.
- Defective components for example roof coverings, external wall doors and windows.
- Defective or blocked rainwater gutters and pipes.
- Defective or leaking internal waste pipes, hot and cold water and heating systems.
- Flooding due to burst pipes.

Condensation Damp

Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air comes into contact with a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. This can take two main forms:

- Surface condensation arising when the inner surface of the structure is cooler than the room air.
- Condensation inside the structure (interstitial) where vapour pressure forces water vapour through porous materials (eg. walls), which then condenses when it reaches colder conditions within the structure.

The conditions that can increase the risk of condensation are:

- Inadequate ventilation eg. natural opening windows and trickle / background vents and mechanical extraction in bathrooms and kitchens.
- Inadequate heating g. undersized boilers and radiators, draught stripping.
- Inadequate thermal insulation. eg. Missing or defective wall and loft insulation.
- High humidity eg. presence of rising and penetrating damp.
- Poor building design and construction – specific cold areas (bridging) which are integral with the building construction.

Conditions that can lead to condensation are:

- Poor ventilation – not opening windows, blocking up vents not turning on extract fans, not allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Poor heating – not heating the house which can be a result of fuel poverty.
- Defective insulation –dislodged insulation in lofts.
- High humidity - not covering pans when cooking and drying laundry inside the house can contribute to this.
- Overcrowding.

Mould is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will only grow on damp surfaces. This is often noticeable and present in situations where condensation damp is present.

LEGAL AND REGULATORY EXPECTATIONS

GCH comply with relevant legislation and regulation, including:

- Housing Act 1985
- Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Landlord and Tenant Act Section 11 – Repairs and Maintenance
- Housing Act 2004 – Housing Health and Safety Rating
- Decent Homes Standard

Related Policies and Procedures

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Tenancy Agreement

SERVICE STANDARDS

We will investigate to determine the cause of damp and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with the tenancy agreement and repairs standard.

We will promote and provide general advice and guidance on how to manage damp and condensation. All residents reporting mould or damp will receive a copy of our latest guidance.

Initially, residents will be offered a mould wash, where this is found to be extensive and cannot be controlled by the tenant.

Under certain exceptional circumstances where the tenant is unable to carry out mould washes or redecoration GCH will provide support and assistance.

When we are satisfied that in partnership with the tenant all reasonable efforts in managing condensation damp have been carried out and this has not been successful, we will visit the property and investigate the matter further.

We will diagnose the cause of damp correctly and deliver effective solutions based on the ethos of dealing with the cause of the damp not just the symptom and wherever possible “fixing first time”.

We will inform the tenant of the findings of the investigations following a house visit. This will include identifying the possible causes of damp, recommending effective solutions and all necessary remedial works / actions / enhancements and the estimated timescales to complete the works /measures. This will be communicated to the tenant keeping them up to date with their enquiry through the process from inception to completion.

GCH will respond to a report of damp and condensation and complete any remedial works/measures within a reasonable timescale in accordance with the processes

and procedures. This will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem and on the complexity of the solution of the remedial works/actions required.

GCH is responsible for insulating the tenant's home in accordance with the Decent Homes Standard to help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.

GCH is responsible for maintaining a tenant's home to avoid penetrating and rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if these do occur.

GCH will undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation damp, for example installation of mechanical extract fans, fresh air vents, repairing existing insulation, etc.

Remedial works will only be carried out where it is reasonable and practical to do so. GCH will have regard to the constraints of the existing building design and structure and will take a pragmatic approach in finding appropriate solutions.

GCH will make good internal surfaces following any remedial work carried out ensuring that surfaces are prepared to a condition ready for the tenant to redecorate.

In some cases, remedial work may not be necessary. Additional support and advice will be provided to the tenant on managing and controlling the occurrences of condensation and damp. This includes recommendations on lifestyle changes and purchases

We will ensure that all relevant front-line staff have training and are aware of and understand the delivery of the service that will meet the aims of this policy.

We will ensure that only competent contractors will be employed to carry out any works and that the tenant's possessions are adequately protected during the works.

GCH will make reasonable attempts to access the property to inspect and carry out the works and if required implement our no access Policy and Procedure.

GCH will not be able to control condensation damp where it is unreasonable or impractical to do so or if any remedial action would be ineffective for example:

Poor construction / design (not meeting current construction and living standards) for example:

Non habitable rooms / For example:

1. Out –buildings / sheds that have been converted including linking buildings between the house and outbuilding and other add-on structures.
2. Unheated / uninsulated semi external storerooms.

Where Internal conditions within a home for example, overcrowding and excessive hoarding of personal belongs are having an effect on health and wellbeing of the occupants or are preventing inspections or remedial works being carried out, GCH



will provide support and assistance to review the tenant's options that may include moving to more appropriate alternative suitable accommodation.

Effective remedial action will not be possible in these instances until the situation(s) has been resolved.

If it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary decant to an alternative property. The tenant will be supported through this process to find suitable accommodation.

APPEALS

Any customer who is not satisfied with our approach in assessing and managing their damp and mould concerns can make a formal complaint.

If the customer is dissatisfied with actions and decisions made under this policy, it will be dealt with under our Customer Complaints Policy.

REVIEW

This policy will normally be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains fit for purpose, unless an earlier review is required due to regulatory, statutory, or other requirements.

Gloucester City Homes Limited

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