



Policy Name:	Damp & Mould Policy
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Policy Custodian:	Director of Housing
Policy Champion: (if applicable)	Rent & Service Charge Manager

This document also relates to the following St Basil's policies, procedures and guidelines:

- Health & Safety Policy
- Lettable Standard
- Internal Transfers Guidelines

Consultation Framework:

Consultation has taken place with the following parties

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Champion	02.01.2024 – 15.02.2024
Senior Leadership Team	15.02.2024 Approved
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DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

Policy Statement

St Basil's has a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and will proactively inspect its properties to ensure they meet the required quality and safety standards. Wherever damp and/or mould are found, St Basil's staff will identify the cause and raise the most appropriate repair and/or further investigation. No Young Person will ever be blamed for a damp or mould issue in their property and staff will work with our Young People to help them manage moisture in their homes more effectively wherever it is appropriate to do so.

Scope of Policy

The policy applies to all St Basil's employees, contractors, volunteers and Young People.

Definitions

Building Owner – the organisation who is responsible for the building, communal areas and grounds at a site where St Basil's provides support or housing management services.

Partners – organisations relevant to the eradication of damp and mould problems such as specialist contractors and the Private Sector Homes Team within the relevant local authority.

Young People / Young Person – tenants or licensees living in properties where St Basil's is the landlord or where St Basil's manages the property on behalf of another organisation.

Legislation and Guidance

The following legislation has been considered in the development of this policy:

- a. The Decent Homes Standard
- b. Landlord and Tenant Act (1985)
- c. Housing Act (2004) – Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- d. Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018

The following standards and guidance have been considered in the development of this policy:

- a. The Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Consumer Standards
- b. The RSH's Home Standard

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

St Basil's treats all Young People in a fair and non-discriminatory way in accordance with its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy. St Basil's aims to ensure that its policies and procedures do not create an unfair disadvantage for anyone and has carried out an internal Equalities Impact Assessment for this policy.

Roles and Responsibilities

Managers will ensure this policy is promoted, understood and implemented by all relevant employees ensuring consideration is given to any implications arising from policy decisions.

Communication

The policy will be communicated to all St Basil's employees via its intranet platform – Workplace. The policy will be produced in other formats to aid accessibility if required.

Responsibility

The Director of Housing is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented and monitored.

Continuous Renewal Clause

The policy and procedure will be reviewed every 3 years to ensure it remains compliant with relevant legislation, current best practice, and statutory frameworks. If required, the policy and procedure will be reviewed more frequently in the event:

- it becomes ineffective
- there are substantial changes in practice

- recommendations are made by our auditors
- changes are required by law

Disclaimer

This document can only be considered valid when viewed on the St Basil's intranet/Shared Drive. If this document has been printed or saved to another location, you must check that the version number on your copy matches that of the document online. Hard copies of this document are considered uncontrolled - please refer to the St Basil's Intranet for latest version.

DAMP AND MOULD PROCEDURE

1. Identifying Damp & Mould

1.1 There are four different types of damp which require different responses to resolve. All types of damp must be identified quickly with appropriate remedial action taken to prevent any negative impacts on health or damage to the building.

Condensation

1.2 Air can hold different amounts of water vapour at different temperatures (holding capacity). Cold air has a lower holding capacity and warm air a higher holding capacity. Whenever holding capacity is exceeded, the water vapour held in the air condenses and forms a liquid.

1.3 The holding capacity of air at different temperatures is measured using relative humidity. At 0% relative humidity the air holds no moisture and humans, plants and animals cannot survive. At 100% relative humidity, the air cannot hold any more water vapour and so condensation forms. 100% relative humidity is also referred to as the Dew Point.

1.4 When the Dew Point is reached, condensation can form on the surface of internal finishes which is known as surface condensation. Condensation can also form between elements of the building fabric, such as within cavity walls, floor voids or roof voids, which is known as interstitial condensation.

1.5 The way a building manages moisture will depend on its age, construction type and location. Generally, a healthy building requires a level of relative humidity within the range 40%-65% to ensure living conditions are pleasant for the occupants.

1.6 Water vapour inside a property is produced by everyday activities such as preparing/cooking food, boiling the kettle and bathing. Each person, animal or plant within a property also produces water vapour.

1.7 Moisture can be managed by increasing the air temperature to increase its holding capacity or increasing surface temperatures. Background and purge ventilation should also be used to shed moist air, particularly after activities which produce a lot of water vapour such as bathing, cooking or when clothes are dried inside.

1.8 For damp and mould to occur in a home as a result of condensation, the relative humidity must regularly exceed the acceptable range for the property. Causes and contributory factors could include:

- a. Inadequate or defective mechanical ventilation (bathroom & kitchen extractor fans etc.)
- b. Inadequate or defective heating
- c. Poorly installed insulation resulting in thermal bridges (differences in temperature across a wall surface or between different but contiguous components of a building such as a wall and a window)
- d. Sealing vapour permeable materials, such as brick, with vapour impermeable materials such as paints or renders
- e. Over crowding
- f. Placing furniture or other items against cold external walls
- g. Under usage of heating and/or ventilation
- h. Sealing or blocking passive ventilation such as air bricks or window trickle vents

1.9 Signs of damp and mould caused by condensation are:

- a. Black mould spores on plaster, window trims or fabrics (mould will only grow on clean water; therefore, mould growth is a major indicator that the problem is condensation rather than another type of damp)
- b. Damp patches on walls

- c. Peeling wallpaper
- d. Flaking paint

Penetrating Damp

1.10 Is found on external walls or ceilings and is caused by water ingress as a result of a defect in the external fabric of the building.

1.11 Causes of penetrating damp are:

- a. Defective or damaged roofing finishes such as missing roof slates, broken ridge tiles or defective flashing
- b. Missing or broken pointing
- c. Damaged brick work
- d. Blocked rainwater goods causing surface water to overflow onto brickwork
- e. Improperly sealed windows, doors or external penetrations such as soil vent pipes or boiler flues.

1.12 Signs of penetrating damp are:

- a. Dark patches/water staining on ceilings or at the top of external walls
- b. Dark patches/water staining around windows or external penetrations
- c. Drips and puddles
- d. Wet and crumbling plaster

Rising Damp

1.13 Rising damp is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. Usually this would be stopped by the damp proof course (DPC) but if this is breached or defective, water may pass into the brickwork and then into the property. Some older properties may have been built without a DPC.

1.14 Rising damp will only impact basements and ground floor rooms. It will be present throughout the year but will be more noticeable in winter. Usually rising damp will impact walls and internal finishes up to 1.5m above the ground level but it can be higher in some instances.

1.15 Causes of rising damp are:

- a. Debris in the cavity wall or subfloor void resulting in a breach of the DPC
- b. External ground levels being raised above the DPC
- c. External render overlapping the DPC
- d. External structures abutting a property breaching the DPC
- e. Vegetation breaching the DPC

1.16 Signs of rising damp are:

- a. Tide marks on walls
- b. Dark patches on walls that can be damp to touch
- c. White salt stains low down on walls
- d. Lifting wallpaper
- e. Discoloured, bubbled or crumbling plaster/brickwork
- f. Decaying timber such as floorboards, skirting boards and floor joists

Traumatic Damp

1.17 Occurs as a result of internal leaks from defective plumbing, drainage or hot water systems. Traumatic damp also includes flooding from outside the property.

1.18 Causes of traumatic damp are:

- a. Flooding
- b. Burst water pipes
- c. Leaking foul water drainage
- d. Improperly sealed showers and sinks

1.19 Signs of traumatic damp are:

- a. Dark patches/water staining on ceilings or walls
- b. Drips and puddles
- c. Wet and crumbling plaster

2. Health Risks

- 2.1 Buildings which retain too much or too little moisture can have a negative impact on their occupants' health as well as causing the building to deteriorate.
- 2.2 The presence of excess moisture in a home can lead to mould growth along with the production of allergens, irritants, spores and other toxins which negatively impact health. If left untreated, damp and mould can cause or exacerbate serious physical and mental illnesses and, in extreme cases, can lead to death.
- 2.3 Everyone is vulnerable to the health impacts of damp and mould but the very young, the very old and those with respiratory conditions or weakened immune systems are at greater risk. The following groups are deemed to be the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of damp and mould:
- a. **Those with respiratory conditions** such as Asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Rhinitis, Bronchitis and Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis.
 - b. **Those with weakened immune systems** which could occur as a result conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, Arthritis or Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, Type 1 Diabetes, HIV and Aids, Cancer and those who have had a transplant.
 - c. **Those who are pregnant or who have recently given birth**
 - d. **Babies and young children**
 - e. **The elderly**
 - f. **Those suffering from mental health conditions**
 - g. **Those who are housebound, bedbound or who have mobility problem**

3. Dealing with Damp & Mould

At Risks Groups

- 3.1 Where a Young Person has a serious damp & mould problem in their property and they are in one of the risk groups set out in section 2, St Basil's will expedite the delivery of a solution to solve the problem or offer an alternative property.

Inspections & Repair Reporting

- 3.2 St Basil's supported housing properties are inspected on a monthly basis by frontline staff. Our stepping stone properties will be inspected every 6 months.
- 3.3 Young people can report mould and damp issues to the staff based at their site, to the staff on a nearby site, by email or over the phone.

Properties where St Basil's Holds the Repairing Responsibility

- 3.4 At sign up, St Basil's Young People will be provided with a leaflet, in either electronic or paper form, depending on the Young Person's preference, which will explain how to:
- a. report mould and damp issues
 - b. complain if they do not feel a mould and damp issue has been addressed appropriately
 - c. manage moisture in their property
 - d. use the heating in their property
 - e. use the active and passive ventilation in their property.
- 3.5 If any mould or damp is identified during an inspection or is raised by a Young Person, the following steps will be taken within the specified timescales by frontline staff.

ID	Action	Timescale (Calendar Days)
a.	Photos will be taken of the damp/mould issue showing its location and the severity of the problem	Within 1 day of becoming aware of the issue
b.	The inspection report will be filed and a copy sent to Property Services	Within 1 day of the inspection
c.	A repair request will be raised on St Basil's Housing Management System	Within 1 day of the inspection
d.	Post works monitoring	Monthly for two months following works completion

3.6 Property Services will take the following actions once in receipt of a damp/mould repair request.

ID	Action	Timescale (Calendar Days)
a.	Review the photos and inspection report before completing an inspection of the property via property services or a specialist contractor	Within 10 days from receipt of the repair request
b.	Provide the Young Person with a short summary of the investigation findings, a schedule of any short term works and a schedule of any long term works along with relevant timescales	Within 2 days of the property inspection
c.	Raise the required repair or further specialist surveys	Within 2 days of the property inspection
d.	Repairs start on site	Within 7 days of the summary being issued to the Young Person
e.	Repairs completion	As soon as is reasonably practicable for the repair type

Properties where St Basil's does not hold the Repairing Responsibility

3.7 At sign up, Young People will be provided with their landlord's guidance on managing damp and mould. If no guidance is available for the landlord, a St Basil's leaflet, in either electronic or paper form, depending on the Young Person's preference, will be provided which will explain how to:

- a. report mould and damp issues
- b. complain if they do not feel a mould and damp issue has been addressed appropriately
- c. manage moisture in their property
- d. use the heating in their property
- e. use the active and passive ventilation in their property.

3.8 If any mould or damp is identified during an inspection or is raised by a Young Person, the following steps will be taken within the specified timescales.

ID	Action	Timescale (Working Days)
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a.	Photos will be taken of the damp/mould issue showing its location and the severity of the problem	Within 1 day of becoming aware of the issue
b.	The inspection report will be filed, and a copy sent to Property Services	Within 1 day of the inspection
c.	The repair will be reported to the Landlord	Within 1 day of the inspection
d.	A repair will be logged on St Basil's housing management system under the landlord category	Within 1 day of the inspection

3.9 St Basil's staff will then work with the landlord to ensure the repair is resolved according to their timescales.

4. **Reporting**

4.1 Reporting on mould and damp issues will be produced monthly in arrears and will be reported to St Basil's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on a monthly basis and the Service Development and Delivery Committee (SDDC) each quarter.