



Exeter
City Council



Council Housing
& Development
Services

Exeter City Council Housing Services

Damp and Mould Policy 2025-2030

1.0 Full Policy Review at Executive Committee 23/09/2025	
1.1 Policy revision 27/07/2026	Policy revised to incorporate Awaab's Law requirements.

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1. Introduction & Purpose

- 1.1 The Housing Assets Team responsible for the repairs and maintenance of council housing in Exeter have taken the recommendations from the Regulator for Social Housing, the Housing Ombudsman, other national peer housing providers & recommendations from our Tenants' Voice Group and created this Damp and Condensation Policy & associated procedure which supports the existing Repairs & Maintenance Policy.
- 1.2 This Policy & associated operational procedure outlines Exeter City Council's approach to managing damp and mould within its homes.
- 1.3 This Policy has been updated to reflect the requirements as set out in Awaab's Law. 5

2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 The safety and wellbeing of our tenants & their household is our top priority
- 2.2 We are committed to providing our tenants with homes that are safe, dry, and warm. We aim to protect the fabric of our buildings by preventing deterioration caused by damp and mould.
- 2.3 To help us achieve this, we have developed a damp and mould policy which outlines our approach, how we communicate with tenants & our responsibilities for delivering this service. Our operational procedure sets out our approach to diagnosis & what actions will be taken depending on the severity of the issue & tenant vulnerabilities
- 2.4 This Policy ensures that Exeter City's Council (ECC) Council Housing tenants who experience dampness and mould issues within their homes are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- 2.5 It is recognised that there has, in the past been an over reliance on the term 'lifestyle' to explain incidences of damp and mould, this policy follows the recommendations in the Housing Ombudsman's 'Spotlight on: Damp and Mould'¹ and its 'Zero Tolerance approach' towards damp and mould'.
- 2.6 In accordance with Awaab's Law which came into effect on 27 October 2025, we will investigate any potential emergency & significant hazards and undertake relevant safety work as soon as reasonably practicable & within the timescales set out under legislation.
- 2.7 We understand that some homes are more difficult for our tenants to heat, either due to their age and design, hence their energy efficiency or cost of living pressures, and that this can make damp and mould more likely to occur, these households will also be supplied with information about partner organisations who can offer support.

2.8 Having an increased understanding of the condition of our properties through stock condition surveys and a focus on the fabric of a building will enable us to adopt a preventative approach to dealing with damp and mould, making the necessary interventions to ventilation, energy efficiency and building deficiencies before damp and mould occur.

2.9 We will ensure, if damp and mould is identified that the correct remedial action is taken, this can include repairs, but may also include detailed guidance, advice or support from the visiting Exeter City Council officer or contractor.

2.10 Where required and appropriate we will consider what support, referrals or signposting will be given to tenants to help tenants to understand what they can do to reduce damp and mould.

2.11 We will ensure that staff and contractors are aware of the significant health risks associated with damp and mould, the need to address the underlying causes of the issue and not just treat visible mould, are aware of any processes associated with reporting and addressing damp and mould, and understand the importance of being sensitive to tenants' circumstances and vulnerabilities building relationships with tenants, ensuring that tenants feel encouraged to report damp and mould⁴

2.10 There is a clear understanding running through this policy that damp and mould are not caused by ECC tenants and together with partnership or support referrals, issues such as excessive hoarding which could reduce ventilation can be mitigated and resolved to achieve a positive outcome.

2.11 The Assets Team take responsibility for resolving issues reported and ensuring the improvement of access to complaints, including Housing Disrepair claims, and to learn from them.

3. What is damp & mould?

3.1 Damp and moisture in the home can cause wet patches, staining and peeling walls. This can lead to mould forming, which often looks like black, white, or green patches. The cause of damp can be through several factors such as a leak or condensation and if left untreated can be detrimental to health and wellbeing. ²

4. Legal Duties & Statutory Requirements

We are legally bound by various pieces of legislation including the following:

- Awaab's Law
- The Housing Act 2005
- The Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002
- The Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2010
- Gas safety (installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006
- Building Regulations 2010
- Commonhold and Leasehold reform Act 2002
- Defective premises Act 1972
- Public Health Act 1961
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

5. Main Objectives

5.1 The Priorities from the Housing Strategy 2023-2027 are:

- 1: Enhancing Resident Experience
- 2: Providing the Right Homes in the Right Places
- 3: Providing Value for Money Services
- 4: Supporting our residents
- 5: Ensuring the Safety of our Homes and Residents

5.2 This Policy covers many of these priorities, but specifically priorities 1, 4 and 5. It is the aim to provide an excellent housing service whilst maximising the budget for repairs and improvements in Council owned properties by completing repairs within timescales and to a high-quality standard. It is important to maximise the energy efficiency of these properties and ensure that they are in a safe condition.

6. Action – Damp & Mould :

6.1 Following the introduction of Awaab's Law in October 2025, Damp & Mould is categorised into the following -

6.2 An emergency hazard is one that poses 'an imminent and significant risk of harm' to the health or safety of the occupier in the home. An 'imminent and significant risk of harm' is defined in the regulations as 'a risk of harm to the occupier's health or safety that a reasonable lessor with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe within 24 hours'.

What is a 'hazard' and what should happen?	Emergency Hazard	Significant Damp and Mould Hazard
What is it?	An emergency hazard is something in your home that needs to be fixed right away because it is causing or could cause serious harm to your health or safety - or the health or safety of anyone living with you.	A significant hazard is something in your home that could or is already causing serious harm to your health or safety - or the health or safety of anyone living with you. Right now, Awaab's Law focuses on significant hazards caused by damp or mould
Detailed description	Under Awaab's Law, a hazard is considered an 'emergency' if: - it could be an immediate risk to your health and safety or the health and safety of anyone who lives with you - this means we as a responsible landlord would see it as urgent and take action to fix it within 24 hours based	Under Awaab's Law, a hazard due to damp or mould is considered a 'significant' hazard if: - it could be a risk to your health or safety - this means we as a responsible landlord would see it as urgent and take action to fix it quickly (though not within 24 hours) based on what they know and

What is a 'hazard' and what should happen?	Emergency Hazard	Significant Damp and Mould Hazard
	on what they know or what you tell them about your situation.	what you tell them about your situation.
Investigations	We must investigate within 24 hours	We must investigate within 10 working days
Making your home safe	We must make your home safe within 24 hours of the landlord finding out about the hazard.	We must make your home safe within 5 working days of the investigation concluding.
Further works	When the investigation has finished, we must begin or make plans for the work to begin within 5 working days . All work must start within 12 weeks at the latest .	When the investigation has finished, we must begin or make plans for the work to begin within 5 working days . All work must start within 12 weeks at the latest .
Written summary	Where further work is required a written summary must be provided within 3 working days of the investigation concluding.	Within 3 working days after the investigation concludes.
Examples of hazards	- gas or carbon monoxide leaks - broken boilers - no water supply at all - dangerous electrical problems (like exposed wires) - major leaks - broken external doors or windows that make your home unsafe - very serious damp or mould	- any damp and mould can be a risk to you and the physical health of any one who lives with you. It affects the airways and lungs, but also your eyes and skin - damp and mould can also affect your mental health, for example worrying about the health impacts or unpleasant living

What is a 'hazard' and what should happen?	Emergency Hazard	Significant Damp and Mould Hazard
	- major structural problems	conditions - everyone can be at risk to the health impacts of damp and mould, but you might be at greater risk if you have a certain health condition - further guidance on the <u>risks of damp and mould is available</u>

However we find out about a hazard, the countdown for investigations starts as soon as we are aware of it.

6.3 Exeter City Council or its appointed contractor will undertake an emergency investigation if we consider there are reasonable grounds that there is an emergency hazard affecting the home. The investigation will confirm whether or not there is an emergency hazard and if possible, will identify the required work to make a property safe and prevent the hazard from recurring.

6.4 Under Awaab's Law there are 4 key types of investigations: -

Type of Investigation	Description
Emergency Investigations	If there might be an emergency, we must start an emergency investigation within 24 hours . The investigation should confirm if there's an emergency hazard and what urgent repairs are needed to make your home safe.
Standard Investigations	If there might be a significant hazard, we must start a standard investigation within 10 working days . This should confirm it's a hazard, and to identify any repairs needed. If the investigation finds

Type of Investigation	Description
	the hazard is an emergency, the faster emergency timeframes will apply.
Renewed Investigations	If we investigate a hazard remotely and the tenant doesn't feel that was enough, they can ask for an in-person inspection . We must carry out a new investigation in person within 10 working days of the request
Further Investigations	Sometimes, we might not know right away what's causing a serious issue like damp or mould. If we find that more work is needed to fix a hazard properly, we must carry out further checks. For example, we might need to arrange a structural survey. While we investigate, we still have to take steps to keep the tenant safe, by treating visible mould or providing a dehumidifier for example.

6.5 In some cases, one of our officers may be able to investigate, but in other situations we might need to bring in a specialist to do a more in-depth investigation.

6.6 What happens after the investigation -

- Repairs begin: If a hazard presents a significant risk, we will begin repair work within 5 working days of the investigation concluding.
- Temporary measures: If immediate permanent repairs are not possible, we will take temporary measures to make the home safe.
- Alternative accommodation: If the home cannot be made safe within the set timescales, we will arrange suitable alternative accommodation until the repairs are completed.

6.7 Written Summaries -

The written summary should include, whether or not the investigation identified a significant or emergency hazard, and what the hazard is;

If action is required under the Regulations, the summary for a significant hazard will specify: -

- What that action is; and
- A target timeframe for beginning and completing that action.

If no action is required, the written summary for a significant hazard must specify: -

- That there is no action required under the Regulations; and
- The reasons why there is no action required under the Regulations.

Written summaries can be provided electronically, delivered personally to the tenant, left at their home or sent by first class post (or equivalent).

6.8 Decants

There may be cases where we are unable to resolve the damp and or mould hazard within the required timescales for an emergency or significant hazard. We will consider either temporary or permanent decant in line with our Decant procedure.

Should tenants decline being moved from their homes, even if temporarily we will seek written confirmation that they wish to make their own arrangements.

We will ensure that where tenants refuse a temporary or permanent move, we will make them aware of the risks of staying in their home.

We may also choose to install damp & mould sensors in our tenants' homes to provide alerts to Exeter City Council & our tenants.

6.9 Tenant Vulnerabilities & Reasonable Adjustments

We will ensure that we take account of all protected characteristics, including religion, beliefs and disability. We will make reasonable adjustments when scheduling appointments to accommodate tenants' needs and ensure that carers or family members can be present where required

We will prioritise cases where the household has vulnerabilities (e.g., children, elderly or those with health conditions like asthma or respiratory issues). We will ensure that we work closely with tenants to understand their & their households specific needs.

We will ensure that our service is fully accessible & will use advocates, interpreters & translation services where appropriate.

6.10 No Access

Where access to undertake work or inspections is refused by tenants, this will be appropriately documented and where necessary we will use legal action to gain access, following our No Access Policy & associated procedure.

6.11 Following Works

Where work has been completed, we will ensure that photographic evidence is taken.

Where we have received a report of damp & mould, we will contact tenants after 3 months to ensure that the damp & mould has not returned.

- We will proactively make contact and visit homes that are of identified archetype, overcrowded, reporting repeated mould or damp service requests or have not engaged with our services for some time.
- We will carry out works to void properties to rectify any identified mould and take measures to prevent future occurrences

6.12 Tenant Feedback

We will measure tenant satisfaction & feedback to ensure a continuous improvement of our service for tenants.

We will work with the Repairs & Procurement tenant group to continually review the service.

6.13 Training

We will ensure our Housing staff have all had training on Awaab's Law & Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) identification.

We will further ensure that our surveyors & specialist contractors are appropriately trained in damp & mould & HHSRS.

We will continue to review training needs in line with changes to legislation.

6.14 Void Properties

Where there has been a history of damp & mould we will investigate the cause & ensure that works are carried out during the void period.

6.15 Damp & Mould Monitoring

Where there has been a history of damp & mould we may fit environmental sensors to assist us in identifying root causes.

We will use our stock condition data & our damp & mould information to inform programmes of planned or cyclical works.

7. Tenant Responsibilities

7.1 Tenants are asked to report any damp & mould issues as soon as possible.

7.2 Allow our surveyors or appointed contractors access to assess, make safe & carry out remedial works

7.3 Follow any advice given to them on damp & mould by Exeter City Council or our appointed contractors

7.4 Adequately heat/ventilate their home

7.5 Ensure that fuses are not removed from fans or positive input ventilation units.

7.6 Ensure the property is used in a tenant like manner.

8. Financial Hardship

We understand that financial hardship can impact on tenants' ability to heat their homes & we will ensure that where this is recognised we will provide support through our recognised partners.

9. Obligations to leaseholders

9.1 Most leasehold properties exist because a flat in one of the ECC owned blocks has been purchased under the Right to Buy Scheme.

9.2 Unlike tenants, repairs responsibilities to leaseholders generally rest only in the maintenance of communal structures and services, and for this maintenance a recharge is made-a proportion of the cost to leaseholders as a service charge.

9.3 Any reports of damp and mould will be investigated with the leaseholder to establish if the cause of the reported issue is the fabric of the building.

9.4 If the cause is determined to be the leaseholder responsibility, officers will signpost to appropriate specialist contractor that can carry out a survey for them.

9.5 The contractor will provide a report of recommended works to them and the leaseholder can then carry out the works at their cost if they wish to do so.

10. Performance Monitoring and Review

10.1 To ensure the maintenance of high service standards, Exeter City Council will where possible benchmark against other providers using Housemark.

10.2 To ensure compliance with the Policy monthly reports will be provided to SMB & key performance data which will be reported to the Council Housing & Development Advisory Board (CHADAB) and to the Tenants' Voice group:

- Number reported cases
- Trends over the past year
- Compliance with Awaab's Law

10.3 Information about mould and damp has been presented to the Tenants' Voice group and the CHADAB and this policy will be reviewed by this group and they will be consulted as legislation changes and when it is to be updated.

Other Documents linked to this Policy

Exeter City Council Housing Strategy 2023

Asset Management Plan

Vulnerabilities Policy

Tenants' handbook

Damp and Condensation Leaflet

Damp & Mould & Awaab's Law Procedure

Responsive Repairs Procedure

Decant Procedure

Compensation Policy

Service Standards

No Access Policy

References

1. [Spotlight on: Damp and mould | Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
2. [Damp and mould - Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
3. [Follow up: Spotlight on damp and mould | Housing Ombudsman \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
4. [Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)
5. [Awaab's Law: Guidance for social landlords - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk)