

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

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Purpose	<i>This policy explains how damp and mould issues in homes will be identified, investigated, and resolved. It sets out the commitment to act promptly, prioritise health and safety, and take preventative measures to reduce the risk of future problems. It also outlines the standards that will be applied and how residents will be kept informed throughout the process.</i>		

Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Scope	4
3. What is Damp, Mould and Condensation to Sandwell Council? .	4
4. Policy Statement	6
5. Development of Policy	13
6. Related Documents	13
7. Legal Framework.....	14
8. Equality and Diversity	Error! Bookmark not defined.
9. Monitoring and Review	16
10. Policy Document Version Control.....	16

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Sandwell Council is committed to making sure that all tenants and leaseholders live in homes that are warm, dry, safe, and free from damp, mould, and condensation. Everyone deserves a healthy living environment.
- 1.2 The Council recognises the serious impact damp and mould can have on health and wellbeing—especially for children, older adults, and vulnerable residents—and will act quickly to put things right when issues are identified.
- 1.3 In line with the requirements of Awaab’s Law and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), this policy sets out how the Council will prevent, investigate, and fix problems relating to damp and mould. Hazards identified during inspections will be dealt with promptly, and serious risks will be prioritised.
- 1.4 Our aim is to take full responsibility for identifying and resolving damp and mould without placing blame on residents. We want to build trust by delivering a service that is easy to access, fair, and effective.
- 1.5 We will treat all residents with respect, dignity, and fairness and ensure that our response to damp and mould reflects our commitment to safety, transparency, and service excellence.
- 1.6 This policy sets out the principles and standards the Council will follow to:
 - a) Act quickly on reports of damp and mould, inspecting homes and completing repairs within clear timeframes;
 - b) Maintain homes in line with legal and regulatory standards, including the Decent Homes Standard and HHSRS;
 - c) Deliver a consistent, high-quality service that puts residents first and aims to get things right the first time;
 - d) Invest in proactive maintenance and improvements that reduce the risk of damp and mould over time;
 - e) Engage with tenants and leaseholders to learn from their experiences, improve our service, and keep them informed throughout the process.

- 1.7 If you notice any signs of damp, mould or condensation in your home, we urge you to report it straight away so the Council can support you.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to all homes, buildings, and communal areas where Sandwell Council has responsibility for repair, maintenance, or inspection under tenancy, leasehold, or management agreements.
- 2.2 The policy covers the management and resolution of damp, mould, and condensation issues in all properties owned by Sandwell Council, including our own temporary accommodation stock.
- 2.3 Depending on whether a resident is a tenant or leaseholder, there may be differences in the responsibilities for identifying and addressing damp and mould within the home. This policy outlines what actions Sandwell Council will take and where residents may be responsible.
- 2.4 This policy applies to all Sandwell Council staff involved in housing services. This also applies to contractors and partners carrying out damp and mould works on the Council's behalf, who are expected to follow the standards and principles set out in this policy.
- 2.5 This policy supports the Council's wider commitment to delivering safe, well-maintained homes, and complements the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy, the Property Compliance Policy, and associated procedures.

3. What is Damp, Mould and Condensation to Sandwell Council?

- 3.1 At Sandwell Council, we define damp, mould, and condensation as moisture problems in the home that can damage the property and may affect the health and wellbeing of you and your household.
- 3.2 These issues can happen for different reasons, such as water getting in from outside, problems with plumbing, or moisture in the air

building up indoors. We take all reports seriously and treat damp and mould as a repair and safety issue.

3.3 Below are some simple explanations of what we mean:

- **Damp** is when there is unwanted moisture in your home. It can happen because of:
 - **Penetrating damp** – water coming in through walls, roofs, windows, or cracks.
 - **Rising damp** – moisture coming up from the ground into the walls or floors.
 - **Leaks** – from broken pipes, radiators, appliances, or internal plumbing.
 - **Insufficient air ventilation** – poor airflow causing moisture to build up inside, often leading to condensation and damp conditions.
- **Mould** is a type of fungus that grows in damp places. It could look like black, green, or white patches and can appear on walls, ceilings, tiles, windows, or furniture. Mould can cause breathing problems, especially for children, older people, or anyone with a respiratory health condition.
- **Condensation** happens when warm, moist air (like from cooking or showering) touches cold surfaces such as windows or walls. If condensation is not removed or managed properly, it could lead to mould.

3.4 If any of these issues appear in your home, please let us know as soon as possible. We will investigate the problem, explain what we are doing, and take action to fix it.

3.5 Damp and mould are also assessed using national housing safety standards, including the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and new rules under Awaab's Law. These rules help ensure all homes are kept safe, dry, and fit to live in. We are committed to meeting these standards for you.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 Sandwell Council's Responsibilities as a Landlord

Sandwell Council is responsible for:

- Investigating and addressing the causes of damp and mould in council-owned homes.
- Targeting the least efficient homes first, tailoring improvements to each property to help prevent and reduce damp and mould.
- Carrying out repairs to the structure of the property, including roofs, windows, doors, pipes and drains.
- Maintaining and improving heating, insulation, and ventilation systems to prevent damp conditions.
- Providing clear information and advice to tenants about how to prevent condensation and reduce the risk of mould growth.
- Treating reports of damp and mould as a priority and taking action in line with Awaab's Law timescales.
- Carrying out inspections and follow-up visits as required.
- Providing residents with updates and timeframes for remedial works.
- Making reasonable adjustments for vulnerable residents, where necessary.

4.2 Tenant Responsibilities

Tenants are expected to:

- Report signs of damp, mould, or water leaks to the Council as soon as they are noticed.
- Allow reasonable access to Council staff or contractors to carry out inspections, repairs or works.
- Use heating and ventilation systems provided in the home where possible to help reduce moisture levels.
- Follow any guidance provided by the Council about reducing condensation, such as ventilating rooms, including moving furniture away from walls, wiping condensation from windows and surfaces, and avoiding drying clothes indoors without adequate ventilation.

- Inform the Council if repairs are not completed or if the problem returns after treatment.
- Inform the Council if they or someone in the household has a health condition that may be affected by damp or mould.

Sandwell Council does not blame residents for the presence of damp or mould and will always seek to work in partnership with tenants to resolve the issue. However, where a tenant fails to allow access or refuses to engage, this may delay remedial works or lead to enforcement action in line with tenancy agreements.

4.3 **Leaseholder Responsibilities**

Leaseholders are expected to:

- Report signs of damp, mould, or water leaks to the Council or managing agent as soon as they are noticed.
- Allow reasonable access to Council staff, managing agents, or contractors to carry out inspections, repairs, or works, especially in communal areas or to the building's structure.
- Use heating and ventilation systems provided in the home where possible to help reduce moisture levels.
- Follow any guidance provided by the Council or managing agent about reducing condensation, such as ventilating rooms, moving furniture away from walls, wiping condensation from windows and surfaces, and avoiding drying clothes indoors without adequate ventilation.
- Inform the Council or managing agent if repairs are not completed or if the problem returns after treatment.
- Inform the Council if they or someone in the household has a health condition that may be affected by damp or mould.
- Recognise that the Council is responsible for repairing and maintaining communal areas and the building structure that may contribute to damp or mould, with costs recovered through service charges as set out in the lease.

Sandwell Council does not blame leaseholders for the presence of damp or mould and will always seek to work in partnership to resolve the issue. However, where a leaseholder fails to allow access or refuses to engage, this may delay remedial works or lead to enforcement action in line with the lease agreement.

4.4 Reporting Damp and Mould

Sandwell Council is here to help if you are experiencing damp, mould, or condensation in your home. These issues can affect your health and comfort, and we take them seriously.

If you notice any signs of damp or mould, please report it to us as soon as possible. We will arrange an inspection and carry out any necessary repairs.

We will also give advice to help stop the issue from coming back. Even if you are not sure what is causing the problem, we still want to hear from you. Our team can visit your home, assess the issue, and help to put things right.

How to Get in Touch

- **Online:** Use your MySandwell account any time.
- **Phone:** Call **0121 569 6000** (Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 8:00pm).
- **Emergency repairs:** Call **0800 844 112** outside office hours.

A short video on reporting repairs and a damp and mould guide are available on our [website](#).

4.5 Inspections

In some cases, the cause of damp, mould, or condensation may not be immediately clear. When this happens, Sandwell Council will arrange for an inspection to identify the source of the problem. Depending on the nature and complexity of the issue, inspections may be carried out by:

- Experienced professionals who will assess whether the issue relates to specific building components, such as leaks, ventilation faults, or structural elements.

- In complex or disputed cases, an external independent surveyor (such as a RICS-accredited professional) may be appointed to carry out a more specialist assessment where required.

The type of inspection will be determined based on the severity, persistence, or uncertainty surrounding the damp or mould issue. Sandwell Council will ensure that findings from all inspections are clearly communicated to the resident, along with any next steps or actions needed.

4.6 Repairs Process and Timescales

Sandwell Council has a dedicated team to handle reports of damp and mould quickly and efficiently.

There are two main ways a repair may be triggered:

- **By report:** A tenant, housing officer, operatives, contractor or any other individual informs us of a damp or mould issue.
- **By inspection:** when a hazard is detected through an inspection.

Once an issue is identified, we will arrange an inspection and take action based on the severity of the problem.

Adherence to Awaab's Law

Sandwell Council is committed to complying with the timescales set out in [Awaab's Law](#), ensuring that all reports and inspections of damp and mould are dealt with promptly and effectively. This includes prioritising the health and safety of tenants and leaseholders by responding to hazards without unnecessary delay and keeping tenants fully informed throughout the process.

We will provide clear written communication following inspections, schedule and complete repairs within the legally required timescales, and offer support services where additional needs are identified. Where urgent repairs cannot be completed promptly, we will consider suitable temporary accommodation to protect tenant wellbeing.

Our approach is designed to uphold tenant and leaseholder rights and comply fully with government requirements.

4.7 Supporting Tenants and Leaseholders with Additional Needs

Sandwell Council understands that some residents may need extra support when dealing with issues like damp and mould. We will use the information we hold to ensure our services are accessible and tailored to individual needs.

Where a tenant has a vulnerability or support need, we may take steps such as:

- Adjusting the way we contact or visit (e.g. knocking louder, waiting longer at the door).
- Working through a trusted contact or support worker if agreed.
- Offering extra guidance throughout the repairs process.

If we believe a tenant may need help maintaining their home or managing during repairs, we will offer referrals to support services, including those providing help with energy bills or housing-related advice. Further information can be found on the Sandwell Council [website](#).

If you're eligible, we may be able to help with improvements that make your home [warmer and more energy efficient](#).

4.8 Reasonable Adjustments

We will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that no resident is disadvantaged when reporting damp and mould or accessing our services. These adjustments may involve changes to how we work or how we communicate with you. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- We will provide information in appropriate alternative formats (e.g. large print).
- We will risk assess and re-prioritise works considering the vulnerabilities or individual needs of the household where identified.
- We will use plain language.
- This policy is published on our website, and residents can do the following:
 - Change colours, contrast levels and font size.
 - Zoom in up to 300% without text spilling off the screen.
 - Access the policy from a smart phone, tablet, laptop, or PC.

Customers can also request that we make any other reasonable adjustments in the following ways:

- in person
- in writing for example by email, by post, text
- by telephone
- by a family member when we have been given permission to do so; and or
- a member of staff may suggest for one to be made, when they are aware it will support the customer needs.

For more information, please refer to Sandwell's [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#).

ST*R Practice Model

Sandwell Council applies the ST*R practice model to its Damp and Mould Policy to make sure our approach is fair, inclusive, and focused on residents:

- **Strengths-Based** – We work with residents to use their knowledge of their homes and find practical, lasting solutions.
- **Trauma-Informed** – We understand that damp and mould can seriously affect health and wellbeing, and we respond with care and sensitivity.
- **Relationship-Based** – We build trust by keeping communication clear and supporting residents throughout the process.

This model helps us deliver services that are supportive, respectful, and responsive to individual needs.

4.9 Personal Possessions and Claims

Sandwell Council is not responsible for damage to personal belongings caused by damp or mould. However, we may consider a goodwill payment in line with our [Complaints Compensation Policy](#) on a case-by-case basis.

If a tenant believes damage occurred due to Council negligence, they can make a formal claim through our insurance scheme. Information

about this process is available on our website and upon request. We encourage tenants to seek their own contents insurance wherever possible.

Sandwell Council encourages tenants and leaseholders to have adequate contents insurance to protect their belongings, the Council usually cannot compensate for losses unless they are directly caused by our negligence or that of our contractors. Further information on arranging Home Contents Insurance can be found in the [Tenant Handbook](#).

4.10 Case Management of Complex Situations

In more serious or complex cases—such as those involving fuel poverty, overcrowding, extensive repairs, or vulnerable households—we will register the case for enhanced monitoring and support on our Damp Risk Register.

A dedicated group of officers from Repairs, Housing Management and Compliance will:

- Review cases as needed.
- Coordinate actions and oversee progress.
- Make decisions including:
 - Temporary rehousing (decanting)
 - Additional funding support
 - Direct offers to an alternative property where appropriate
 - Joint work with external agencies

Each case is treated individually and may involve case conferences or multi-agency input to ensure positive outcomes.

4.11 Complaints

Sandwell Council is committed to delivering a high-quality, responsive service. If a tenant or leaseholder is unhappy with any aspect of how we have handled a damp, mould or condensation issue, we encourage them to share their concerns with us.

Online: [Contact us online via MySandwell](#)

Email: customer_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Phone: 0121 569 7867

Write in: Customer Feedback Team, Sandwell Council, Roway Lane, Oldbury, B69 3ES.

We will always try to resolve concerns as quickly as possible. If this is not possible, the issue will be handled in line with our formal complaints procedure, starting with Stage 1 of the process.

Sandwell Council values all forms of resident feedback. We regularly monitor satisfaction with our repairs and housing services and review complaints to identify areas for improvement. Where appropriate, we consult with residents on changes to policies, service standards, and delivery processes to ensure they reflect tenant needs and expectations.

5. Development of Policy

- 5.1 Sandwell Council recognises the importance of clear and open communication in tackling damp, mould, and condensation in our homes. We are committed to providing a service that listens to residents and puts their experiences at the centre of how we work.
- 5.2 As part of this commitment, we plan to invite tenants and leaseholders to review and comment on this policy before it is finalised. We will provide opportunities for residents to give feedback both online and in person, so everyone has a chance to contribute in a way that works for them.
- 5.3 By involving residents in this way, we aim to ensure that the final version of the policy is shaped by the people it affects most—and that our approach truly reflects the needs and priorities of our communities.

6. Related Documents

- 6.1 The Damp, Mould and Condensation will align with our existing policies and strategies but will also influence and guide a range of supporting or inter-related policies and procedures.
- 6.2 This will ensure that the management of our assets is part of a wider approach to delivering high quality services and places for the benefit of our residents. The key documents that should be read in conjunction with this policy include:

- [Sandwell Council Plan 2024 – 2027](#)
- [Housing Revenue Account 30 Year Business Plan 2023 - 2053](#)
- [Housing Asset Management and Compliance Strategy 2025 - 2030](#)
- [Sandwell Housing Strategy 2023 – 2028](#)
- [Housing Repairs and Maintenance Policy](#)
- [Property Compliance Policy](#)
- [Tenant Handbook](#)
- [SMBC Tenancy Conditions](#)
- [Leaseholder Handbook](#)
- [Complaints Compensation Policy](#)
- [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#)

7. Legal Framework

- 7.1 Sandwell Council is committed to meeting all relevant legislation, regulations, and national standards that protect tenants and ensure homes are safe, healthy, and well-maintained.
- 7.2 This Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy supports our duty to act in line with recent changes to the law, including Awaab’s Law, and reflects our responsibility to provide homes that are fit to live in. We take these legal duties seriously and will act promptly to resolve any issues reported.
- 7.3 This policy helps us comply with the following key legislation and regulations:
- [Landlord and Tenant Act 1985](#)
 - [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\) – Housing Act 2004](#)
 - [Homes \(Fitness for Human Habitation\) Act 2018](#)
 - [Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 \(Awaab’s Law\)](#)
 - [Defective Premises Act 1972](#)
 - [Right to Repair Regulations 1994](#)
 - [Equality Act 2010](#)
 - [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#)
 - [Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations 2015 \(CDM Regulations\)](#)

- [Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards:](#)
 - [Safety and Quality Standard](#)
 - [Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard](#)

7.4 This policy will be reviewed regularly to make sure it reflects current law and best practice.

7.5 More detailed information about the laws that apply to our housing work can be found in the Council's [Property Compliance Policy](#).

7.6 This policy will be reviewed regularly to make sure it reflects current law and best practice. As part of this, we will continue to meet the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing, including:

- Providing a cost-effective and responsive service
- Balancing day-to-day repairs with planned maintenance and investment
- Meeting all health and safety requirements in our homes
- Aiming to resolve issues right the first time, wherever possible.

8. Equality and Diversity

8.1 Sandwell Council is committed to ensuring that all residents have equal and fair access to our services, including how we manage and respond to reports of damp, mould and condensation.

8.2 We understand that every household is different, and that some residents may need extra support. We will take individual needs into account throughout the process—from reporting a problem to completing repairs—and we will make reasonable adjustments wherever necessary.

8.3 Everyone will be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, regardless of their background, personal circumstances, or needs.

8.4 All Sandwell Council staff receive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training, helping us understand how to adapt our usual ways of working to support residents better. This training is mandatory and monitored by our Learning and Development Team. Our approach

also meets the requirements of the **Equality Act 2010** and is guided by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

9. Monitoring and Review

- 9.1 The policy will be reviewed every three years unless there are any changes or recommendations from the Regulator of Social Housing or Housing Ombudsman in which case it will be reviewed in line with these recommendations.

10. Policy Document Version Control

Version	Date	Description	Updated By	Approved By
0.1	29/07/2025	First draft of policy for review.	Louis Bebb	
0.2	08/08/2025	Second draft of the policy following Housing Service feedback.	Louis Bebb	