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**Loreburn Group**

# **Damp & Mould Policy**

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<b>Policy</b>	<b>Damp &amp; Mould</b>					
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<b>Approved by</b>	<b>MC</b>		<b>LET</b>		<b>MT</b>	
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<b>Policy champion</b>	<b>Director of Operations</b>					

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## 1. Purpose of this Policy

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear position on how Loreburn will respond to and manage Damp and Mould so that it improves the health and wellbeing of its Tenants. The Reactive Repairs Policy and Procedure should be referred to for further information on repair timescales.

## 2. Aims of this Policy

- 2.1. Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to dampness and mould by being proactive in identifying issues and giving priority to investigating and solving problems when they arise.
- 2.2. Provide clear lines of responsibility for the management of damp and mould.
- 2.3. Tenants who report damp and mould in their properties are treated with respect and empathy and Loreburn will work in partnership with its Tenants to understand the underlying causes and to ensure that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- 2.4. Raise awareness and provide Tenants with access to comprehensive advice, information, and guidance on managing and controlling mould, damp, and condensation.
- 2.5. The process of reporting an issue of damp and mould is straightforward and easily accessible for Tenants.
- 2.6. Reports of damp and mould are responded to within the timescales stated in this policy and that vulnerable Tenants are attended as a matter of urgency, where necessary, so that damp and mould no longer pose a risk or detrimental effect to the Tenants or property.
- 2.7. Staff are trained on how to recognise, manage, and identify solutions to damp and mould and make the most of every visit to Loreburn properties to identify damp and mould issues.

- 2.8. Staff respond proactively when damp and mould is reported or identified rather than take a “not my department” approach.
- 2.9. Undertake effective investigations to establish the root cause of damp and mould issues and implement solutions and improvements accordingly.
- 2.10. Effective communication and consultation with Tenants regarding actions to resolve reports of damp and mould.
- 2.11. Effective internal communication between Loreburn teams and departments for damp and mould issues.
- 2.12. Retain information and data on damp and mould in a central area so that it is easily accessible for evaluation and scrutiny.
- 2.13. Use learnings from damp and mould cases to improve systems and processes and, ultimately, the service and homes provided to Tenants.
- 2.14. Assess repairs, maintenance, stock investment and Tenant contact data to identify trends to allow proactive management of damp and mould in Loreburn properties.

### 3. How we will achieve our aims and objectives

#### Receiving reports of damp and mould

- 3.1 Reports of damp and mould will be addressed within the following timescales:
  - **Initial report** of damp and mould – inspected within 10 working days (**Routine** Classification)
  - **Repeat report** of damp and mould – completed within 5 working days (**Urgent** Classification)
- 3.2 These timescales will commence as soon as the damp and mould inspection is put on Homemaster, the inspection should be put on as soon as reasonably practicable after the initial identification, or report to a Loreburn staff member.

- 3.3 Staff receiving reports of damp and mould must ascertain at time of reporting if there is **anyone vulnerable** in the property and, if so, escalate the inspection to be carried out within 5 working days (**Urgent** Classification).
- 3.4 Vulnerable Tenants include:
- Children under the age of 5 years old
  - Elderly people over 65 years of age
  - Existing respiratory illnesses
  - Skin problems
  - Weakened immune systems.
  - Physical disabilities or learning difficulties.
  - Mental health concerns
- 3.5 Any staff member who identifies or is advised of damp and mould issues in a Loreburn property must ensure the details are logged accurately and fully within the 'Add Contact' section on Homemaster's CRM, this will ensure the issue is inspected and actioned within the prescribed timescales above. The relevant Neighbourhood Officer should also be informed to ensure they are aware of the situation.
- 3.6 Damp and mould issues are logged on Homemaster's CRM section under a new contact. The contact type should be selected as 'Damp & Mould.' This then generates an email to all Officers within the Stock Investment and Development Team. The responsible Officer will then allocate this inspection to the relevant Officer to attend and inspect the property.
- 3.7 An initial visit carried out by the Officer allocated to the property to assess the area in question. The relevant works will then be instructed. Details and photographs are obtained at the initial visit.
- 3.8 An alert will be added to properties on Homemaster where there are damp and mould issues so that repeat reports can be identified easily, and staff are aware of the issue and can check on the status of the damp with the Tenant during calls or visits.
- 3.9 The attending Officer will follow up with the Tenant either via telephone call or a home visit after all required works have been completed, the timescale from the works being completed and the Officer following this up should not exceed 12 months.

- 3.10 Details of follow-ups and check-ins must be recorded in the Contact Log on Homemaster.
- 3.11 Damp and Mould property alert on Homemaster will only be removed at the end of the process when the damp or mould issue has been fully resolved with no further reports following the final inspection/phone call.

### **Training**

- 3.12 All staff are provided with Tenant service training when they join the organisation to provide them with the tools, they need to communicate with Tenants respectfully and with empathy. Performance is monitored by line managers through 121 meetings and if there are any concerns, refresher training is provided.
- 3.13 All staff are provided with training when they commence employment on the importance of responding to damp and mould issues and the need to build a positive relationship with the Tenant to resolve the situation. Refresher training is provided every 2 years.
- 3.14 We avoid using language that could be perceived as apportioning blame i.e. avoiding attributing dampness issues to 'lifestyle' and work supportively with the Tenant to eliminate situations which may compound the issues.
- 3.15 To provide guidance and raise awareness on damp and mould issues, Tenants are provided with information (see Procedural Guide and Resource Pack for more detailed information):
- At tenancy sign-up stage
  - When Tenant reports damp and mould issues
  - Annually through the Loreburn newsletter
  - During the annual Housing Visits to tenants
  - At all times on Loreburn's website
- 3.16 There are various methods available to Tenants to report damp and mould issues which is highlighted and encouraged in the guidance shared with Tenants:
- Telephone repairs line – 01387 321300.
  - Using the form on the Damp & Mould page on Loreburn website

- Email repairs@loreburn.org.uk
  - Report in person to Loreburn staff member during home visits
- 3.17 In-House Repairs, Development and Stock Investment staff are provided with training on how to recognise, manage, and identify solutions to damp and mould. Refresher training is provided every 2 years.
- 3.18 Training will form part of the Health & Safety Training programme.
- 3.19 Managers are responsible for ensuring their staff are fully trained and competent.

**Make every visit count.**

- 3.20 Staff who visit Tenants in their home must make the most of every visit to Loreburn properties and proactively check/ask if there are any damp and mould issues in the property.
- 3.21 Any damp issues found will be reported to via the Contact log on Homemaster's CRM.

**Investigation and property inspections**

- 3.22 Damp and mould issues will be investigated to establish the root cause so that solutions can be implemented to prevent recurrence (see Procedural Guide for more information).
- 3.23 Void properties will be assessed for damp. Damp and mould issues should be treated and resolved before reletting the property. The void assessment checklist will include steps like checking that extractor fans and check ventilation systems are working effectively as this will help to prevent the buildup of excess moisture in the property.
- 3.24 Where damp and mould are identified or reported in 40% or more properties within a scheme, further inspections will be conducted to the other properties in the scheme to establish if there is a specific property defect that is affecting the scheme. This may require a stock investment programme of works at the scheme to remedy defects. The Design Guide should also be reviewed to ensure the design of new properties and planned works does not result in the same defects.



### **Communicating with our Tenants**

- 3.25 We will liaise closely with Tenants during the process to ensure they are kept informed and are consulted at every step. The Neighbourhood Officer will be the key point of contact for communication with the Tenant and will work closely with the Officers inspecting the report of damp or mould to monitor the progress of the cases.
- 3.26 Tenants will be given information on the findings of surveys and inspections and the outcomes explained to ensure the Tenant understands why there are damp and mould issues. We will also provide the Tenant with information on the actions required to remedy any property defects.
- 3.27 We will liaise with the Tenant to arrange remedial works and ensure they are aware of the importance of providing access to carry out the works. This may involve decanting the Tenant until the property is safe for inhabitation.
- 3.28 Updates will be provided to Tenants on a regular basis during investigations and remedial works, frequency and timescales for updates will be agreed with tenants. All contacts with the Tenant must be recorded on the Contact Log on Homemaster using the damp and mould classification. Contacts will be audited quarterly and reported to the Health & Safety Executive Group.
- 3.29 Following completion of any works, the Tenant will be provided with information on how to contact Loreburn if there is a recurrence or any additional damp and mould issues.
- 3.30 The Tenant will also be given guidance and assistance on their responsibilities to help eliminate or reduce the risk of damp and mould where there is no evidence of property defects contributing to the issue. This may also include support in using their heating system, ventilating the property or in accessing funding/support to help with cost of living.
- 3.31 Tenants will also be advised of their responsibility to provide access to allow any remedial works to be carried out.
- 3.32 Internal communications between staff must not be shared with Tenants and external agencies, e.g. Emails threads and Teams messages.
- 3.33 All communications, must adhere to the Marketing & Communications Policy, including Appendix 2 – Internal Communications Framework for

communications shared between staff, and always be respectful and professional.

### **Record keeping**

- 3.34 All contacts and activities relating to damp and mould cases must be recorded in Homemaster Contact Log and classified as damp and mould to ensure the information is collated in one place so that any member of staff can easily see all the information and activities relating to the case.
- 3.35 Works orders will be logged with Repair Category Damp & Mould to allow tracking of any works relating to damp and mould.

### **Cross departmental working**

- 3.36 The relevant Neighbourhood Officer must be kept informed of damp and mould cases relating to their Tenants. Neighbourhood Officers must also ensure that they record any damp and mould issues on Homemaster's Contact Log in CRM as soon as it is reported or identified.

### **Being proactive**

- 3.37 Data, trends and learnings from damp and mould cases will be reported quarterly to the Health & Safety Executive Group.
- 3.38 The learnings will be used to proactively tackle damp and mould before it becomes an issue for Tenants.
- 3.39 Information from stock condition surveys will also be used to identify properties which may be susceptible to damp and mould and proactive action taken to prevent damp and mould before issues occur.
- 3.40 Where building issues have contributed to the development of damp and mould, neighbouring homes will be assessed to establish if they also have any issues which would contribute to, or have damp and mould and, if so, remedial action taken accordingly.

## **4. Complaints**

- 4.1 Loreburn has a commitment to valuing complaints and ensures the organisation benefits from feedback to identify areas for change or improvement.

- 4.2 Loreburn has a Complaints Policy which ensures there are robust and effective procedures in place for complaints to be effectively managed and acted upon.
- 4.3 Anyone dissatisfied with the outcome of their complaint having exhausted Loreburn’s complaints procedure has the right to refer the matter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

## 5. Responsibilities Chart

- 5.1 The chart below illustrates the responsibilities of all staff pertaining to this Policy:

<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>CEO</b>	<b>Directors</b>	<b>Heads of Service</b>	<b>Head of P&amp;C</b>	<b>Managers</b>	<b>All staff</b>
Ensure sufficient resources are available to tackle damp and mould in Loreburn properties	✓					
Ensure staff are provided with training on damp and mould and the associated risks.			✓			
Ensure staff are provided with training on recognising damp and mould, the causes and potential solutions.			✓			

<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>CEO</b>	<b>Directors</b>	<b>Heads of Service</b>	<b>Head of P&amp;C</b>	<b>Managers</b>	<b>All staff</b>
Promote communication and collaboration between departments.		✓				
Ensure Tenants are kept informed and consulted at all stages.			✓			✓
Ensure data relating to damp and mould issues is recorded and held in the appropriate location.			✓			✓
Analyse data and trends and implement proactive actions to prevent damp and mould before it occurs.			✓			
Review Design Guide to ensure any learnings from damp and mould cases are included.			✓			

## 6. Scottish Social Housing Charter – Performance Monitoring

6.1 The Scottish Social Housing Charter sets out the standards and outcomes that all Scottish social landlords should achieve when conducting their housing activities. These are used to monitor performance and to ensure Tenants are receiving a high standard of service.

6.2 There are four relevant charter outcomes, these are described below:

### **6.3 Equalities**

Social landlords should ensure every tenant and other Tenant has their individual needs recognised, is treated fairly and with respect, and receives fair access to housing and housing services. We can achieve this by prompt resolution of estate management complaints, and by offering solutions to meet the needs of our Tenants.

### **6.4 Communication**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other Tenants find it easy to communicate with their landlord and get information they need about their landlord, how and why it makes decisions and the services it provides. Loreburn HA can achieve this outcome by using a variety of methods of communication from face-to-face conversations to social media. Tenants should be able to have queries about the management of their neighbourhood answered promptly.

### **6.5 Participation**

Social landlords manage their businesses so that tenants and other Tenants find it easy to participate in and influence their landlord's decisions at a level they feel comfortable with. Loreburn HA will use the communication methods outlined above and look to our Tenant Engagement Strategy to engender a culture where Tenants can influence the management of their own neighbourhood.

### **6.6 Tenancy Sustainment and Support**

Tenants get the information they need on how to obtain support to remain in their home and ensure suitable support is available, including services provided directly by the landlord and by other organisations. We will offer advice and assistance to residents to help them maintain their tenancy by referring them to appropriate agencies or by organising support by us or other support services.

## 7. Measuring performance

- 7.1 Performance is monitored through Loreburn HA's Performance Management Framework using the Scottish Housing Regulator Annual Return Charter Indicators, House Mark and Loreburn HA's Strategic Performance Indicators and operational performance indicators.
- 7.2 Loreburn HA will consult Tenants, stakeholders, and other agencies to continually measure good practice.
- 7.3 The Policy will adhere to Loreburn HA's commitment to continuous improvement and value for money.
- 7.4 Damp and mould will be monitored quarterly through the Health & Safety Executive Group.

## 8. Policy Review

- 8.1 The Policy Champion is the Health & Safety Coordinator.
- 8.2 The Policy Champion is responsible for completing the Health and Safety Assessment and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Assessment Checklist appended to this policy.
- 8.3 This Policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner as required due to legislative or substantive change.

## 9. Appendices

- Resource Pack
- Appendix 1: Damp & Mould Process Homemaster
- Appendix 2: Letters Damp & Mould
- Appendix 3: D&M Process Map April 2024