



Damp & Mould Procedure

1. Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to implement a consistent approach for surveyors to follow when completing inspections for damp and mould, ensuring we identify all possible causes at the first visit where possible.

2. Key objectives

- Resolve the problem and eradicate any property defects quickly
- Prevent multiple attendances for reports of damp and mould at the same property
- Identify design defects
- Support and work with our customers on how their living activities contribute towards damp and mould
- Prevent and future proof Selwood Housing against disrepair claims for damp and mould

3. Our objectives

Look at the design, construction type of the building

Investigations may begin with a detailed survey and a desk study to collate historic and background information on the building, reviewing any previous reports or repairs in relation to damp and mould. The dwelling should be considered on its own merit, from when it was designed and built, through changes that have taken place to its present function, which include how the customer is using the property. Each material or component that makes up a building has its own characteristics and requirements, which can lead to different kinds of failure. These must be investigated by the Property Surveyor and carefully considered to assist diagnose problems and develop appropriate remedial repairs to ensure the building meets the requirement for what it was designed for.



Investigate and work with the customer on how they are using and living in the property

As part of the initial investigations the property surveyor needs to assess the dwelling which includes discussions with the customer on how they are using the property, how many people live at the property and how they control moisture and ventilation on a day-to-day basis. Selwood Housing see an increase in damp and mould inspections during the winter months which can be contributed to the amount of moisture in the inside air (humidity) which is often higher.

With the increase in activities that are undertaken by the customer, such as leaving windows closed and drying clothes indoors, these all contribute to generating more moisture, which makes condensation more prevalent in the colder months. The Property Surveyor will be able to investigate and work with the customer to identify all the potential domestic routine activities that are occurring which may identify that the damp and mould is due to lack of understanding of the customer opposed to a property defect.

Undertake a systematic and consistent property inspection

To ascertain the true cause of the damp, moisture ingress or mould issue, the property surveyor will need to undertake a thorough and detailed investigation. Initially the property surveyor will have obtained any important history regarding previous or present issues. The purpose of the inspection will be to undertake a detailed assessment of the property exterior, interior and assess either a selection of rooms where a partial survey is required or to undertake a detailed and thorough inspection of every room in line with the damp and mould matrix document.

On occasions the customer may not be available in normal working hours. The surveyor may need to adjust their working pattern to try and facilitate the inspection within reasonable working hours, however on occasions when the customer is unable to facilitate the inspection the customer may wish for a family member to be present. In these circumstances the surveyor is to hold a telephone call with the customer prior to their attendance to get a clear understanding of the issues. They also may wish to get an email detailing the issues from the customer prior to their attendance.



In order to ascertain the extent of deterioration, defects and structure issues externally, and therefore to understand where moisture has been entering or penetrating the property, the property surveyor will need to complete one of two survey options in line with the damp and mould procedure.

Option one: When damp and mould is isolated to individual rooms with no historic reports or complaints of the same issue a standard survey by the Repairs and Maintenance team will be required (isolated to bedroom ceilings, around window frames, single bathroom or single kitchen)

Option two: When there is a case of either historic or ongoing complaints relating to damp and mould a thorough inspection by the damp and mould surveyor will be required.

The main purpose of the inspection is to confirm:

- Are there any major functional defects (i.e. are systems and major appliances operating under normal conditions)?
- Are there any major material defects (i.e. holes in wall, damages or cracks with the fireplaces or foundation, sagging ceiling materials, signs of moisture intrusion)?
- Are there any health and safety concerns (i.e. missing smoke detectors, trip hazards, microbial growth or mold, loose stair railings)?

At the end of the inspection the property surveyor should talk through the findings following the inspection of the property to explain and summarize each issue that the inspection identified and what actions will follow. The surveyor is to offer the customer a copy of the report which can be sent via post or email once completed if required.

The property surveyor will then conclude their report using the relevant documents (Damp and damp and mould inspection form). Works will be raised to the relevant contractors to undertake any remedial works.

The property surveyor will then save the documents to Selwood Housing data base (QL and F/drive). Alerts will then be added to the system to



confirm a damp and mould survey has been completed detailing the level of risk associated with the damp and mould (low, medium, high).

Once works are completed the property surveyor will need to post inspect a percentage of repairs to ensure that these works have been completed in line with the stated specification and to confirm the level of workmanship is acceptable.

When no works have been identified and the property surveyor has identified that the cause of the damp and mould is due to domestic routine activities, they will be required to work with and support the customer on the areas that are contributing towards the damp and mould. This will also be recorded on Selwood Housing database for future guidance and use. If the customer continues to report damp and mould the property surveyor will have the option to appoint a damp specialist to have the property data logged (see appoint specialist contractor)

Engage and support our customers on how to reduce the chances of damp and mould occurring within the property

Once the Property Surveyor rules out any defects contributing towards damp and mould within the property it is essential that time is taken to explain and support our customer on the best methods to control the buildup of moisture within the internal living space.

Guidance and support should be given to the customer on the best practice to control heating and ventilation on a regular basis. It would be beneficial at this stage for the property surveyor to install individual humidistat and temperature gauge which will help the customer understand what the internal conditions are daily as a control measure to allow the customer to start to alter their domestic routine activities to improve the environment within the home.

If the property surveyor identifies that the customer is suffering from any of the following conditions which may be attributing to the ongoing damp and mould, they will engage the Tenancy Sustainment Team and Neighbourhood Manager so they can give the customer further specialist assistance.

- Mental Health Issues – Customers who suffer from mental health issues will need further support to ensure they are aware of all



- external agencies that can assist. They may also require a slightly different approach from the Tenancy Sustainment Team to make sure they are supported to continue to maintain their home.
- Fuel Poverty – Customers who are unable to afford gas and electric will be at higher risk of suffering from damp and mould as the heating and extraction components will not be in operation. The teams can work with the customer to ensure they are aware of all the correct funding that maybe available to them to ensure they have the funds to use their gas and electric. The teams can also engage with Property Services to see if the customer is eligible for a fuel switch.
 - Overcrowding – When a property is overcrowded this will cause an increase in moisture being produced within the property. To assist the customer Neighbourhood Services will be able to give guidance and support to the customer to ensure they are aware that they are able to apply for moving through Homes for Wiltshire. The Neighbourhood Manager will also be able to engage any external specialist services through Wiltshire Council if any Safe Guarding or specialist support is needed.
 - Cost of living increases and energy prices - Due to increase in energy bills, it's not going to be just customers who are on low incomes but also those on mid incomes that will be affected. Referrals to Citizens Advice Bureau may need to be recommended to look for any further financial funding or debt advice to support the customer.
 - Mobility or disability – On occasions the customer maybe suffering from a disability or mobility issue which is restricting them from opening windows, placing washing outside, reaching extractor fans etc and if Selwood Housing are unable to make reasonable adjustments its essential the surveyor either gives advice on referrals to Occupational Health or social services. If there are complex issues around the property suitability the surveyor can refer to neighbourhood manager.

The key aim when engaging other teams of external agencies is to ensure that the right people are engaged and supporting the customer to ensure that they are aware of the correct funding and support is available on an ongoing basis to try and improve their quality of life within their home.



The Property Surveyor will also be able to engage a specialist damp contractor to install Data Loggers to monitor the internal environment over a period. Once this data is captured the Property Surveyor will arrange to meet with the customer and talk through the test results, where they can show them the physical graphs and data collected. This will allow the Surveyor to support the customer on any trends that maybe identified with a view to try and get improvement.

The Property Surveyor will set a calendar reminder to follow up with the customer at a timescale agreed by both parties to ensure a follow up inspection is arranged to continue to monitor the situation and support the customer to try and resolve the issue.

Appoint specialist companies to assist

On some occasions there will be the requirement to appoint a specialist damp company to carry out an independent and specialist survey. The Property surveyor will need to ascertain when the appointment of a specialist is required.

The first part of the procedure will be for the Property surveyor to undertake a detailed and thorough inspection of the property. A specialist may be appointed under the following circumstances

- Once thorough inspection completed, and all works completed as specified but damp and mould re-occur
- If the dwelling requires specialist tests or reports that the property surveyor is unable to undertake
- If the property surveyor identifies defects with the dwelling that requires specialist works that fall outside of the scope of our internal repairs team
- If customer continues to report damp and mould on a regular basis and there is a suspicion that domestic routine activities is a contributing factor. Damp specialist will be appointed to data log the property

The Property Surveyor may choose to have additional mechanical extraction installed within the property if the customer is experiencing issues related to overcrowding, however this will be to mitigate the issues and try and improve the customers quality of living.



The property surveyor will be responsible for reviewing any reports following a specialist attendance and feeding back any further information to the customer whether that is for further education and working with the customer to try and achieve improvements due to no defects being apparent or to update the customer that defects are apparent, and works are required.

4. Roles of other teams

Customer support:

Customer support will be responsible for taking the initial telephone calls and requests from the customers when initially logging reports of damp and mould.

Customer Support will follow their process and use the "Selwood Housing Scripting Tool" the initial on the telephone call from the customer using the specific damp and mould script. Once level of issues identified customer support are to log their call details on QL and book appointment in the area surveyors calendar as per their current process.

During the scripting process if the Customer Support identify fuel poverty, overcrowding or other issues that may be contributing towards the damp and mould they will either signpost the customer to other agencies for support while they are waiting for a Property Surveyor Inspection.

3rd party contractors completing the works:

All contractors completing the works must follow the specifications set out by the property surveyor. If for any reasons works are not possible as set out in the works specification the contractor are to contact the property surveyor to obtain further guidance.

The contractors is to take post work photos to supply to the property surveyor for further evidence to detail works completed in line with the specification.

For 3rd party contractor's works are to be booked and raised in line with the Minor Works procedure.



When the damp and mould issues have been identified as a reoccurring issue the Property Surveyor is to carry out a Post Inspection on completion of works. This is to check all workmanship has been completed satisfactory and in line with the specification.