



Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy

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Prepared By:

Document Owner(s)	Organisation Role
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Manual Version Control:

Version	Date	Author	Change Description
1.0	April 2023	Richard Walker	New Policy
1.1	May 2023	Richard Walker	Updated reference to HOS as per Board request
1.2 & 1.3	Oct 2024	Joe Day / Martin Crowther	Updated to include reference to Awaab's Law at 2.3 and 3.1.vi Updated owner to include Martin Crowther

			Reference to Awaab's Law proposed timescales in 4.3, 4.4 & 4.5
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1.0 Policy Statement

- 1.1 Pickering and Ferens Homes (PFH) has a responsibility to ensure that all our properties are safe, functional and maintained to a high standard. PFH is committed to safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of everybody living, working or visiting our buildings, and to protecting our property.
- 1.2 PFH will provide habitable accommodation that is free from damp, mould and excessive condensation. Our approach will be one of zero tolerance with frequent communication with residents experiencing Damp, Mould or Condensation (DMC), including aftercare checks to ensure any DMC issues have been resolved. This policy sets out the approach to preventing and managing DMC within our housing stock, and is based on the recommendations and self-assessment produced by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

2.0 Aim & Purpose of Policy

- 2.1 The aim of this Policy is to ensure the effective inspection, maintenance and management of properties to prevent and manage instances of DMC.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all properties where PFH has a responsibility for management and maintenance.
- 2.3 PFH acknowledge and complies with all relevant legal requirements in social housing and that PFH are focused on delivering and improvement of living conditions in the stock portfolio, and focus on prevention of tragic outcomes such as Awaab Ishak.

3.0 Requirements

- 3.1 The following legislation and regulations places a responsibility on PFH to ensure the safety of its residents in relation to DMC:
 - i. Decent Homes Standard
 - ii. The Homes (Fit for Human Habitation) Act 2018
 - iii. The Landlord and Tenant Act (1985) (amended by above)
 - iv. Housing Health & Rating System (HHSRS)
 - v. Social Housing (Regulation) Bill (including subsequent amendments such as Awaab's Law)

4.0 Delivery

- 4.1 We will keep accurate records on our housing management system, which will include the initial reports, ongoing communications and how we will resolve the issue.

- 4.2 We will make it easy for reports of DMC to be reported to us, including in person, telephone, email, PFH Connect and develop access via our online portal.
- 4.3 Where we receive reports of condensation, we will undertake an initial assessment with the resident to determine if preventative measures can be implemented. We will provide advice in writing within 14 calendar days and undertake proactive follow-up calls within 4 weeks to determine if the issue has been resolved. Our written advice will meet the requirements set out in 'Awaab's Law'.
- 4.4 Where we receive reports of DMC that remains unresolved after initial preventative advice, we will in the first instance attend the resident's home to wash down the mould, identify and remedy repairs and issue advice if relevant. This will be commenced within 7 calendar days of the report if a medical professional believes there is a risk to the residents' health (no proof of this will be required), and completed as per our timescales set out within our Repairs and Maintenance Policy, otherwise our standard timescales will apply. We will provide written advice within 2 working days of our investigation concluding, which will meet the requirements set out in 'Awaab's Law'. Written responses will not delay emergency action being undertaken as necessary. If, for reasons of case complexity, we are unable to set out full details of the works required, we will set out the immediate steps in writing and include when the resident can expect the full schedule of works.
- 4.4.1 Instances of prevalent damp and mould that is impacting upon the resident's ability to breathe will be treated as an emergency repair, and made safe, or alternative arrangements put in place within 24 hours.
- 4.4.2 If we are unable to respond to DMC cases in the specified timescales, we will offer the resident the opportunity to be temporarily rehoused at our expense, whilst we resolve the matter.
- 4.5 We and our contractors will take all reasonable steps to access a property with reported DMC in order to investigate and remedy the situation, this includes:
- At least three attempts to contact the resident (or appointed representative)
 - Accommodating resident requirements for suitable timeslots
 - Leaving a notice stating that an access attempt was made if we were unable to access the property as agreed, including next steps for contact
 - We will keep accurate records of contact and access attempts
 - Where necessary and in emergency situation, we will access with suited keys or obtain a legal injunction to enter

- 4.6 We will identify and deal with reports or comments relating to damp and mould when these are received via other routes. This may be via our feedback and engagement mechanisms. We will proactively 'find our silence' by targeting asset surveys at properties where access and interactions have been limited and asking contractors to raise any concerns of DMC when on unrelated visits. We will proactively engage with residents who have not used PFH services within the past 12 months.
- 4.7 We will have a data driven, risk-based approach to identifying cases of DMC. We will review the data of live and previous cases of DMC to identify trends so we can proactively target these homes with sustainability works and residents with advice.
- 4.8 Where we suspect there may be problems in neighbouring or similar homes, we will investigate this and undertake appropriate action.
- 4.9 Where DMC may be linked to a residents' living conditions, we will support the resident to address this. As well as practical measures and advice, we will also, where applicable, offer financial support for energy costs, other agencies, or via our hardship fund. With the residents' agreement, we will undertake weekly monitoring for a period of 4 weeks to support and ensure the DMC issues are resolved.
- 4.10 Where a resident and their family are overcrowded in their home, we will support them in finding alternative, more suitable accommodation. This may involve working with some of our local authority partners.
- 4.11 When a resident is mutual exchanging into a home or moving into a property following a void, we will ensure they're free from DMC. We will achieve this by inspecting all properties prior to a tenant moving in and rectifying issues when we find them.
- 4.12 Where we have knowledge of buildings which may be susceptible to DMC, or for those homes we identify for disposal or regeneration, we will ensure these do not fall into disrepair. We will do this through visits to these homes as part of our stock condition program and home visits.
- 4.13 Where we don't have the skills or expertise to deal with this, we will use one of our specialist contractors to undertake an intrusive damp survey and produce a schedule of works. Where necessary we will source independent specialist support.
- 4.14 We know some changes to building, such as external wall insulation can cause damp in some homes. We will consider this when designing our net zero carbon

works into the future, so we do not cause future problems when undertaking these works.

- 4.15 Where appropriate, we will move a resident into another home to undertake works required. When doing this, we will consider their individual circumstances and offer support where this is required.
- 4.16 Throughout the life of a case, we will remain in regular contact with the resident.
- 4.17 We will post inspect cases where specific works have been undertaken, including all HHSRS cases. Once a case has been resolved, we will contact the resident after 1 and 3 months, to ensure no reoccurrence of damp or mould has taken place.
 - 4.17.1 As DMC is often associated with seasonal changes, we will aim to contact all residents who have experienced DMC, 12 months after the original report, to ensure the issue hasn't returned.
- 4.18 We will have a variety of material, including advice and tips on how to prevent this available on our website; and we will post updates on our social media platforms and bi-annual newsletter. We will increase this late summer/early autumn, before temperatures start to drop, and further problems occur.
- 4.19 We will explore, and where appropriate, use technology in our residents' homes to help support us in delivering this policy.

5.0 Our Commitment to Equalities

- 5.1 PFH seeks to ensure that their actions do not lead to unlawful discrimination. Deliberate acts of discrimination, including victimisation, harassment, instruction or pressure to discriminate, will result in disciplinary actions and/or termination of contracts with external agents.
- 5.2 We can provide access to interpreters for minority languages including sign language, and we can arrange written material in large print, Braille and first languages where necessary.
- 5.3 PFH will aim to ensure that no individual or group is treated less favourably on the grounds of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation. We aim to recognise the needs of individuals and treat each person through the complaints process with dignity and respect.

- 5.4 We will consider the individual needs of residents who may require additional support and make reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010 and in accordance with our EDI Policy.
- 5.5 We will work with our contractors to ensure that any resident who feels uncomfortable with male only operatives, either can opt to have a female operative, or a female accompanying the operative.

6.0 Performance Monitoring & Reporting

- 6.1 There is a robust procedure in place for monitoring compliance with the DMC Policy.
- 6.2 Key performance indicator (KPI) measurements are in place, regularly reviewed and reported to senior management, other relevant staff, resident committees and the Board. This includes the number of work orders raised pertaining to DMC, HHSRS Category 1 and 2 cases and a narrative regarding any risk exposure since the previous report, potential risk exposure and corrective action planned
- 6.3 Service standards have been codesigned and agreed with residents, these will be communicated to residents, adhered to and reported against
- 6.4 All DMC cases are reported to the Home Services Director on a monthly basis, including status, details a narrative. This is reviewed collectively by managers at the Home Services Directorate meeting.
- 6.5 PFH will report DMC performance to the Residents Health and safety Forum, which launched in 2023.

7.0 Responsibilities within this Policy

PFH Board, Chief Executive & Leadership Team

The Board, Chief Executive and SLT have ultimate accountability in ensuring the policy is delivered and will approve any major amendments or revisions of PFH's Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy.

Home Services Director

Responsibility for implementation of the Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy falls to the Home Services Director.

Property & Compliance Manager – Responsible Person

The Damp, Mould & Condensation procedure will be managed by the Property & Compliance Manager. Ensure that the procedure is being followed by all staff within PFH.

Undertake regular reviews of the Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy, ensuring compliance with current legislation and regulatory requirements.

Competent Contractors

Responsible for the operational delivery of works to prevent and address instances of damp, mould or condensation.