

Damp and Other Hazards Policy (Awaab's Law)

Version Control						
Version	Date drafted	Date approved	Approved by	Date reviewed	Next review date	Owner
Final	12/03/2025	24/03/2025	Board	N/A	24/03/2026	Head of Property and Assets

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Westmoreland Supported Housing Ltd (WSHL) acknowledges and accepts responsibility under the Landlord and Tenant Act and associated legislation and guidance, to ensure all tenanted properties meet or exceed the requirements of what is considered to be a decent home, which includes a requirement to ensure there are no category 1 damp hazards.
- 1.2. In addition, as a result of the implementation of Awaab's Law, from October 2025 all social landlords will be required to address damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm to tenants within fixed timescales. From the same point in time, they will also have to address all emergency repairs (whether they relate to damp and mould or not), as soon as possible and within a timescale of no longer than 24 hours.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy outlines WSHL's commitment and procedures aimed at preventing damp, mould and other HHSRS issues in social housing and protecting tenant health to ensure compliance with Awaab's Law.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all properties managed by WSHL including communal areas.

4. Legal and Regulatory Responsibilities

- 4.1. There are 5 main legal standards that relate to damp and mould in rented homes:
 - The Housing Act 2004 – this states that properties must be free from hazards at the most dangerous 'category 1' level, as assessed using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
 - The Environmental Protection Act 1990 – this gives tenants and local councils powers to take legal action where homes contain a 'statutory nuisance', which includes where they are in such a state as to be prejudicial to health

- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, with new provisions added by the Homes (fitness for human habitation) Act 2018 – this requires that properties are free of hazards, including damp and mould, which are so serious that the dwelling is not reasonably suitable for occupation in that condition
- Decent Homes Standard – to meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS), social housing must be free from dangerous ‘category 1’ hazards. However, the DHS also states that social housing must be in a reasonable state of repair and provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. Either disrepair or inadequate thermal comfort, or both, may result in damp and mould
- Awaab’s Law – to be introduced in October 2025. To meet Awaab’s Law issues need to be investigated and resolved within fixed timescales and better communication with tenants is required throughout the repair process.

5. WSHL’s approach to preventing and identifying Damp and Mould

5.1. WSHL is dedicated to providing safe, healthy living environments for all tenants. In accordance with Awaab’s Law, we have proactive measures and controls in place to prevent and address damp and mould issues in our properties, which include:

5.2. Inspection and Maintenance

- **Routine Inspections:** WSHL conducts monthly Housing Officer visits to all properties. During these visits Housing Officers will liaise with the care provider, to identify potential damp and mould issues
- **Maintenance Requests:** WSHL will respond promptly to tenant reports of damp and mould. Initial make safe and triage work will be attended within 14 days

5.3. Tenant Responsibilities

- Tenants, with support from care providers, are required to report any signs of damp (including leaks) or mould immediately
- Tenants, with support from care providers, must use the ventilation and heating system provided in their homes to manage humidity, reducing the risk of condensation within their homes
- Tenants, with support from care providers, are to keep their home clean and free of unreasonable clutter, to ensure circulation of heat and air. This is necessary to prevent condensation occurring in stagnant areas

5.4. Preventative Measures

- **Ventilation:** WSHL will install and maintain proper ventilation systems in kitchens and bathrooms
- **Insulation:** WSHL will ensure all properties are adequately insulated to prevent condensation, where feasible
- **Leaks:** WSHL will ensure all leaks are repaired within appropriate timescales, allowing for sufficient drying periods
- **Education:** WSHL will provide tenants with information on preventing damp and mould, including proper ventilation, heating practices, biofilms and cleaning and reporting procedures

5.5. Remediation

- **Triage:** Upon receiving a report of damp or mould, WSHL will conduct an initial assessment to determine the cause and extent of the issue
- **Investigation:** WSHL will develop and implement a remediation plan within 14 days of the initial report. This may include repairs to leaks, improvements to ventilation, and mould removal.
- **Remediation:** WSHL will ensure delivery of the repairs needed within the timescales set out in WSHL's Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- **Review:** WSHL will conduct a review of the works completed to ensure the issue has been resolved and take additional actions if necessary

5.6. Communication

- **Reporting:** WSHL will maintain clear and accessible channels for tenants to report damp and mould issues
- **Updates:** WSHL will keep tenants informed of inspection schedules, findings, and remediation plans

5.7. Support

- WSHL will provide support to tenants affected by damp and mould, including temporary relocation if necessary

6. **WSHL's approach to remediating Emergency Hazards**

6.1. There will be circumstances where a resident reports a hazard in their home that warrants an emergency repair. Hazards that pose significant and imminent danger to residents will require faster action and will be treated as an emergency by WSHL.

6.2. WSHL's Repairs and Maintenance Policy includes details of hazards that are likely to meet the definition of emergency repairs. WSHL's target timeframe for remediating emergency repairs is 24 hours.

7. **Record Keeping and Monitoring**

7.1. WSHL will maintain detailed records of all inspections, reports, communications with customers and remediation actions related to damp, mould and other emergency hazards.

7.2. WSHL will ensure these records are accessible for review by the appropriate authorities to demonstrate compliance with Awaab's Law.

8. **Linked Documents**

8.1. This policy is linked to the following documents and should be read in conjunction:

- Repairs and Maintenance Policy

8.2. Operation of this policy will be supported by an internal Awaab's Law Procedure that provides a more detailed description of the processes to be followed by WSHL employees and contractors.

9. Policy review

9.1. This policy will be reviewed annually until the full scope of Awaab's Law has been implemented.