

Policy

Title: Damp, Mould & Condensation Policy

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Approved by: Calico Homes Board

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This document relates to:



Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy outlines how we deal with instances of damp, mould and condensation in our customers' homes.
- 1.2 The policy describes how we provide guidance and support to customers to help them manage condensation and reduce the possibility of damp and mould occurring in their home, and how we respond to it when it does occur.
- 1.3 The policy also describes how we will provide our customers with a high-quality customer experience and tailor our support to their individual needs. We want customers to feel safe, listened to, and for them to live in good quality homes.

2 Context

- 2.1 The Policy outlines our response to damp, mould and condensation in all our owned and managed homes. The service is delivered using a combination of our in-house teams, Ring Stones and external contractors.
- 2.2 The Regulator of Social Housing sets consumer standards in five areas, with the Safety and Quality Standard setting expectations for registered providers of social housing to provide tenants with quality accommodation and a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service.
- 2.3 Alongside the Regulator, the Housing Ombudsman Service has also issued a "Spotlight on Damp & Mould" setting out the approach they expect social landlords to take when dealing with any complaints about this area. In response we have a commitment to:
 - Take all reports of damp, mould and condensation seriously.
 - Identify the cause of damp, mould and condensation quickly following contact from customers.
 - Provide advice, guidance and support to customers around managing condensation.
 - Have a clear process to treat cases of damp and mould in customers' homes quickly.

- Plan works in an informed way to improve the quality of homes.
- Share information with our customers on how we are responding to issues of damp, mould and condensation.

3 Policy Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- To manage the causes of damp, mould and condensation in an effective way.
- To deliver high standards of customer experience.
- To ensure customers get a service which is suitable for their needs.
- To make sure all our homes are kept to a high standard and that our customers live in safety, comfort and warmth.
- To provide guidance and support to customers to make sure that customers can recognise and are able to easily report cases of damp, mould and condensation.
- To ensure colleagues are trained and skilled to be able to identify cases of damp, mould and condensation along with understanding the causes and remedies.
- To be open with customers and listen to them through customer feedback and involvement.
- To communicate with customers clearly.
- To meet the standards set out in our tenancy agreements.
- To provide value for money.
- To provide good governance and oversight, including regular reporting to our Executive Team and Board.

The policy supports delivery of the Calico Homes vision and strategic objectives as set out below.

The Calico Homes Vision

“Going one step further with customers and local communities to provide affordable, safe and quality homes and personalised services; supporting customers to live their best lives in challenging times.”

The Calico Homes objectives:

- To provide safe and well-maintained homes through investment in existing and new properties.
- To support customers to sustain tenancies.
- To provide good quality and personalised repairs, customer and neighbourhood services.
- To develop trusting relationships and to empower customers and communities to take the lead on the things that matter most.
- To strengthen the business so it is strong, well-governed, environmentally friendly and provides value for money customers.
- To create a place where people want to work now and in the future.

4.0 Scope of the DMC Policy

- 4.1 This Policy covers the majority of all our owned or managed homes and is dependent on the relevant individual legal agreement. The service is delivered using a combination of our colleagues and external contractors for:
- General needs homes
 - Supported or specialist housing
 - Care and extra care homes
 - Shared ownership (see below)
 - Leaseholders (see below)
- 4.2 In the instance of shared ownership and leasehold properties, where the lease stipulates that we have responsibility for the fabric of the building or common areas, we will work with homeowners to address any issues in relation to damp, mould and condensation that are related to these obligations, with the costs being met through the service charge for the building.

5. Types of Damp

- 5.1 Condensation occurs when moisture in warm air meets a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. Factors increasing condensation can include lack of ventilation, inadequate heating, poor insulation, structural issues and high humidity. High levels of condensation can create an environment that enables mould to grow.
- 5.2 Rising damp is the movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building. Rising damp can be caused by missing or faulty damp proof course.
- 5.3 Penetrating damp occurs when water passes through the external structure of the building causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structures. The cause of penetrating damp is often linked to structural issues, faulty guttering, defective brickwork or windows, or problems with roofing. Penetrating damp can also be caused by internal leaks.

6. Calico Homes response to damp, mould and condensation

- 6.1 We understand that condensation, damp and subsequently mould can present a health risk for our customers, and we treat these instances as a priority. We follow a condensation, damp and mould process to make sure we take the correct action for identifying the causes of condensation, damp and mould in a timely manner and to undertake any remedial actions to protect the safety of our customers.

- 6.2 Our approach to treating damp, mould and condensation may include repairs to customers' homes, major remedial works to help their homes perform more efficiently, reducing the build-up of moisture in the property and/or support through technical advice and guidance.
- 6.3 In cases where significant works are required or where there are concerns about a customer's health and wellbeing, we may consider a temporary move or permanent transfer, in accordance with our Allocations Policy. We will be clear about the outcome of damp inspections in their home and if works are needed, we will tell customers what will happen next, and when it will happen.
- 6.4 We may also provide detailed guidance, advice and support to help them treat condensation and keep damp and mould away. If we feel this would benefit customers, we can refer our customers to other organisations for additional support.
- 6.5 We aim to respond to reports of damp, mould and condensation and undertake a property inspection within 10 working days. We aim to complete any associated remedial works within 20 working days, with work starting within 7 working days. However, where we identify a potential hazard to customers health, we will prioritise both the inspection and any associated works.
- 6.6 Similarly where it is identified that the issue requires significant remedial works that may take longer than 20 working days (i.e. installation of a damp proof course) we will work with our customers to minimise disruption and provide temporary alternative accommodation where necessary.
- 6.7 We also take a pro-active approach to addressing issues around damp, mould and condensation in our homes. This approach includes:
- Routine property condition surveys including technical assessments of the causes of damp and mould.
 - Installation of modern mechanical ventilation when replacing bathrooms and kitchens to reduce moisture build-up.
 - Ventilation fitted as standard in our window replacement programmes to reduce moisture build-up.

7. Reporting Damp and Mould

- 7.1 There are lots of ways customers can report issues with damp, mould and condensation, including:
- Online on the Customer Portal
 - Via our Customer Experience Team on 01282 686 300 or call into our office on Croft Street in Burnley
 - Email us at contact@calicohomes.org.uk
 - Telling us in person when we visit their home or neighbourhood

- 7.2 We will arrange an appointment for as soon as possible, at a time that suits the customer and meets their individual needs. We offer full day, morning, or afternoon time slots and can take the school run into account. An appointment to assess the cause of the damp, mould and condensation will usually be needed before any remedial works or actions can be scheduled.

8. How Calico Homes will deal with reports of DMC

- 8.1 To ensure opportunities are not missed, all reports of damp, mould and condensation will be dealt with on an individual basis with no assumptions being made about the cause.
- 8.2 We will treat our customers as individuals, with different needs and work together to address issues and concerns around damp, mould and condensation.
- 8.3 We will investigate to determine the cause of damp, mould and condensation and carry out repairs where needed. We will implement any necessary actions in accordance with the tenancy agreement/lease and the Responsive Repairs Policy.
- 8.4 We will keep our customers informed about any investigation findings, including being clear about the possible causes of damp, mould or condensation, any recommended solutions, necessary remedial works and the estimated timescales to complete any work.
- 8.5 For planned works, we will take a risk-based approach, using the knowledge we hold about homes of concern to inform our programme going forward. We will learn from customer feedback and complaints, to ensure we strengthen our approach when things go wrong.
- 8.6 We will promote and provide general guidance such as keeping homes warm and well ventilated, particularly during cold periods, and share advice on how to manage damp, mould and reduce condensation with customers.
- 8.7 If it is unsafe for the customer to remain in a property while works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made in line with our Allocations Policy and Decant Policy and procedures.

9 Training

- 9.1 We are committed to ensuring our colleagues are fully trained and well skilled. This includes general and specialist training for those involved in identifying and resolving damp, mould and condensation.
- 9.2 Our trained team will diagnose the cause of damp, mould and condensation and deliver effective solutions based on cause, not just the symptom.

10. Access to your Home

- 10.1 We take health and wellbeing seriously and expect our customers to allow access to properties so that we can resolve issues that pose a risk to them. Whilst we recognise that our properties are our customers' homes, it is important that customers allow our colleagues and contractors to access their properties for inspections and to fix problems with damp, mould and condensation.
- 10.2 If we are unable to access a home to carry out works, we will implement our No Access Policy and Procedures.

11. Performance Reporting

- 11.1 We measure our response times for damp and mould requests and report this performance to both our customers and our Executive team and our Board along with the following:

Disrepair

- Number of Disrepair Cases (Financial Year):
 - Total cases (denied/accepted liability).
 - Total active cases.
 - Number of cases in litigation (issued at court).
- Performance Metrics:
 - Average resolution time for disrepair cases.
 - Cost analysis (legal fees, compensation, repair costs).
- Narrative Context:
 - Key learnings from disrepair cases, identifying root causes (e.g., trends in complaint types or building locations).

Damp, Mould, and Condensation (DMC Focus Area)

- Cases and Outcomes:
 - Total number of DMC cases (resolved and unresolved).
 - Total number of inspections (completed and issued).
 - Timeliness of inspections (in line with Awaab's law).
 - Repairs:
 - Number of repairs resulting from inspections.
 - Percentage of repairs completed within timescales.
 - Narrative Context:
 - Satisfaction scores related to DMC complaints.
 - Highlighted trends or high-risk areas needing focused intervention.
- 11.2 Customers are at the heart of our service. The quality of our services will be assessed through tenant satisfaction measures which include repairs, safety checks, and complaints information. This is in line with the expectations set out by the Regulator of Social Housing in their Consumer Standards.

12. Roles and Responsibilities for this Policy

- 12.1 The Board has overall responsibility for the policy and ensuring full compliance with legislation and regulatory standards. The Board will formally approve this policy and ensure it is reviewed every two years, or sooner if there is any change in legislation or regulation.
- 12.2 The Board will be provided with regular updates on DMC performance to receive assurance that we are effectively delivering the policy.
- 12.3 The Homes SLT will receive monthly performance reports in respect of damp, mould and condensation to ensure compliance. Any non-compliance issues identified will be escalated to the Group Leadership Team.
- 12.4 The Director of Maintenance & Compliance has strategic responsibility for the management of DMC activities and ensuring compliance with this policy is maintained.
- 12.5 The Property Manager has operational responsibility for the management of DMC works and will be responsible for overseeing their completion within agreed timescales.

13. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 13.1 We are committed to making sure our services are accessible and clear to everyone. We will treat everyone with dignity, respect and fairness. We will take customer needs and circumstances into account and provide additional support where needed.
- 13.2 We will consider the needs of the customer when prioritising repairs, especially those who are more vulnerable or at greater risk. We ensure our colleagues are clear, well trained and supported to deliver. Our surveying team have received technical damp, mould, and condensation training, as well as training focused on being present and adapting to customer needs and preferences. Colleagues will seek to understand first and then ask questions to learn more and check understanding.
- 13.3 We can offer support to customers who are experiencing difficulties managing the cost of living, through our Tenancy Sustainment Team. We can also support customers to access community support if needed.

14. Related Legislation, Strategies, Policies and Procedures

- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (sect 11)
- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- RSH Consumer Standards
- The Humanitarian Offer – Calico Group Customer Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- DMC Policy

- Building Safety Strategy
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Lettings Policy
- Rechargeable Repairs Policy
- Complaints Policy and Procedures
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Gas and Heating Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Reasonable Adjustments Policy
- Tenancy/License/Lease agreements
- Employee Code of Conduct