

Landlord Factsheet No 1

Damp and Mould Growth

As the landlord of a private rented property, you will probably receive a number of enquiries from your tenants. This fact sheet is designed to help you answer enquiries regarding DAMP, MOULD GROWTH and EXCESS CONDENSATION.

Description of the Hazard

This fact sheet covers the threats to health associated with mould and fungal growths that result from dampness and high humidity. In some cases, these airborne allergens can trigger allergic symptoms such as rhinitis, conjunctivitis, eczema, cough and wheeze. For a sensitised person, repeated exposure can lead to asthma. 1 in 8 children and 1 in 13 adults suffer with asthma in the UK. In addition to the health implications, damp and mould growth can also cause:



- timber window frames to rot
- damage to plaster, wallpaper and painted surfaces
- damage to tenants property

Causes of Damp and Mould Growth

Moisture production is influenced by the design, construction, disrepair and on occupant density and activity.

In our experience, the majority of enquiries regarding damp and mould growth are related to a condensation problem within the property.

Condensation occurs mainly in cold weather, whether it is raining or it is dry, it does not leave a tell-tale tidemark. It will appear on cold surfaces, such as windows, tiled areas, toilet cisterns, and areas of the dwelling where there is a lack of ventilation, and little movement of air. It often becomes a problem when mould growth appears. Black mould and mildew can

grow on almost any surface including wood, silicone, tiles, floor coverings, paint and paper. When this happens a tenant will usually contact their landlord, or their local authority.

What you can do

Landlords can:

Provide suitable ventilation to the property, especially in bathrooms and kitchens. Ensure that windows in those rooms can be opened, and where possible, provide extractor fans in these rooms.

Ensure that your tenants understand how to use fans and open the windows. Ensure that existing air vents are not blocked, or decorated over, and that trickle vents on windows and doors work correctly.

Ensure your property has suitable cavity wall and loft insulation to reduce the number of cold surfaces where condensation can form. Older properties may require more work in providing additional insulation.

Provide safe and suitable heating in your property with timer and temperature controls and ensure that tenants understand how to use the heating system in your property. Landlords can also ensure that damp is not being caused by leaking central heating or waste pipes, defective rainwater goods, drains, toilets or a failed damp proof course or rendering. It is also advisable to ensure that the structure of the property is in a sound and watertight condition.

Advise your tenants to produce less moisture by applying some simple, cost-effective measures to their lifestyles. Wipe away excess moisture from windows and windowsills and wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator to prevent the removed moisture evaporating back into the atmosphere.

- Dry clothes outdoors where possible; if using a tumble dryer, ensure it is a condensing unit or vented to outside.
- Cook with pan lids on and open kitchen windows or use the extractor fan when cooking.
- Open windows or use the extractor fan when bathing and showering.
- Avoid using bottled gas or paraffin heaters in your property as these can produce up to 4 pints of moisture in 8 hours.