

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy

Pinnacle Group



1. Introduction

This policy sets out how Pinnacle Group will meet the requirements of the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England, including its obligations under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008. We are committed to meeting all relevant legal and regulatory requirements designed to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of residents in their homes. This includes compliance with Awaab's Law and its phased implementation, ensuring that hazards are identified, investigated, and remedied within the prescribed timescales. We will continue to adapt our policies, processes and resources to meet both the current requirements and future phases of Awaab's Law, supporting the provision of safe, healthy and well-maintained homes for our residents.

2. Aims and Objectives

We are committed to providing safe, high-quality homes where residents can thrive. This policy explains how we will meet that commitment.

This policy sets out how we will prevent and deal with damp, mould and condensation. It explains how we will identify problems early, assess their causes, take appropriate action, keep residents informed and check that the work has been effective, in line with Awaab's Law.

This policy applies to all homes owned and managed by Pinnacle. However, Pinnacle may not have a landlord duty of care for damp, mould and condensation in homes owned by clients, leaseholders or shared owners.

3. Damp, mould and condensation

Damp happens when there is too much moisture in a home. There are three common types of damp:

- Condensation – the most common type of damp. It forms when moisture in the air touches a cold surface, such as a wall or window. Poor ventilation, heating or insulation can make it worse, especially in winter.
- Penetrating damp – caused by water coming through an outside wall or the roof. It can also be caused by a leak or plumbing problem inside the home.
- Rising damp – happens when moisture from the ground moves up through brick or concrete. It is most common on the ground floor of older homes.

Mould — damp can cause mould on walls and furniture, mildew on clothes and other fabrics, and wooden window frames to rot. Mould often looks like small black spots and may have an unpleasant smell.

4. Proactively seeking cases of damp, mould and condensation

We will proactively seek to identify instances of damp, mould and condensation as follows:

- We will provide information to residents about damp, mould and condensation and encourage them to report any evidence of rising and penetrating damp (see definitions) and faulty equipment that will affect the management of humidity and moisture in the home (faulty extract fan, unable to open

windows, heating system failure etc to their Property Manager and or our Repairs and Maintenance Department.

- Our Property Managers will proactively raise any potential issues related to damp, mould and condensation when attending properties, irrespective of whether a resident has made a formal communication relating to the issue.
- Where we are aware that a home is suffering from damp and mould, neighbouring properties will be visited, if possible, to discover whether they are also suffering from similar problems.

5. Action

When a report of damp, mould and/or condensation is received we will take the following action as required by Awaab's Law.

- Investigate any potential emergency hazards and, if the investigation confirms emergency hazards, undertake relevant safety work as soon as reasonably practicable, both within 24 hours of becoming aware of them.
- Investigate any potential significant hazards within 10 working days of becoming aware of them
- Produce a written summary of investigation findings and provide this to the named resident within 3 working days of the conclusion of the investigation
- Undertake relevant safety work within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant hazard
- Begin, or take steps to begin, any further required works within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, if the investigation identifies a significant or emergency hazard. If steps cannot be taken to begin work in 5 working days this must be done as soon as possible, and work must be physically started within 12 weeks
- Proactively confirm that completed damp and mould works have been effective through resident engagement and in person inspections (where relevant) prioritising higher value, complex or emergency hazards taking the time of year into consideration.
- Secure the provision of suitable alternative accommodation for the household, at our expense and in line with our Decant Policy, if relevant safety work cannot be completed within specified timeframes
- Keep the named resident updated throughout the process and provide information on how to keep safe

6. What residents can do to minimise damp, mould, and condensation.

Everyday activities such as cooking, cleaning, bathing and drying clothes add moisture to the air. This can cause condensation and may contribute to mould. Damp and mould can also be caused by leaks, problems with the building, poor heating, poor insulation or inadequate ventilation.

We will give residents the information in Appendix A. It explains practical steps they can take to reduce damp, mould and condensation.

We will consider each report separately. We understand that some residents may not be able to follow all the advice. For example, they may not be able to afford to heat every room or may need to dry clothes indoors.

We will not assume that a resident has caused damp or mould. We will look into the cause and complete any work that is our responsibility. If a resident needs extra advice or support, we will discuss the available options with them and, where appropriate, work with the relevant local authority.

7. Monitoring & quality control

We will monitor implementation of this policy using the following measures:

Performance Reported	Reviewed by	Frequency
Number of damp, mould and condensation work raised	Operational Team	Weekly
Percentage of works completed within timescale	Head of Operations	Weekly/Monthly
Stage 1 & 2 complaints received relating to damp, mould and condensation	Operational Team and Head of Assets	Weekly/Monthly Annually
Complaints referred to the Housing Ombudsman relating to damp, mould and condensation	Operational Team and Head of Assets	Weekly/Monthly Annually
Active disrepair cases relating to damp, mould and condensation	Head of Assets /Commercial Director/Board	Monthly/Annually
Number of damp, mould and condensation work raised	Operational Team	Weekly

8. Policy implementation & responsibilities

Our Board of Directors retains overall accountability for the policy.

Pinnacle will conduct periodic visual inspections and non-face to face resident engagement on the condition of damp, mould and condensation found within a property, to ensure identified issues are rectified and are not reoccurring. The frequency of this visit will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

9. Damp, Mould, and Condensation Register

We will compile, maintain and utilise in internal decision making to prevent future issues, a database of properties where damp, mould and condensation have been recorded together with all pertinent information relating to the issues raised, property archetype and status of resolution.

10. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually unless legislation, business or sector developments require otherwise to ensure that it continues to meet the stated objectives and take account of good practice developments.

Appendix A – Damp, mould and condensation information

Damp happens when there is too much moisture in a home. There are three common types of damp:

- **Condensation** – the most common type of damp. It forms when moisture in the air touches a cold surface, such as a wall or window. Poor ventilation, heating or insulation can make it worse, especially in winter.
- **Penetrating damp** – caused by water coming through an outside wall or the roof. It can also be caused by a leak or plumbing problem inside the home.
- **Rising damp** – happens when moisture from the ground moves up through brick or concrete. It is most common on the ground floor of older homes.

Mould – damp can cause mould on walls and furniture, mildew on clothes and other fabrics, and wooden window frames to rot. Mould often looks like small black spots and may have an unpleasant smell.

Action that can be taken to minimise the potential for damp, mould and condensation.

Produce less moisture

Moisture in the home can lead to or exacerbate damp and mould. Where there is a potential problem with damp and mould, the following may reduce the amount of moisture produced:

- Keeping the kitchen door shut and leave the windows open and/or extractor fan on when cooking.
- Opening the bathroom window and/or keeping the extractor fan on when taking a shower or bath
- Hanging washing outside if possible. Avoid drying washing on radiators. If you need to dry clothes indoors, open the window and close the door of the room where clothes are drying so that moisture can escape outside rather than circulate around your home.
- Not overcrowding your home, the more people and pets living in your home means that more moisture will be produced.
- Wiping the windows each morning with a dry cloth if you wake up to condensation. Once you have done this, open the window slightly for an hour maximum.

Ventilation

If your home has poor ventilation there is an increased chance of moisture building up in the air, which can lead to mould and damp forming. The following can help to improve ventilation:

- Keeping trickle vents in windows open. They are designed to ventilate your home without causing draughts.
- Keep a small gap between large pieces of furniture and the walls to allow airflow, and where possible placing wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.
- Don't over-ventilate your home by leaving windows open in cold weather for long periods as your walls will lose all the heat stored in them. Only open the windows for a short period at a time so that any moisture is able to escape.

Heat your home

If you can, trying to keep your home properly heated. It usually helps to have a low background temperature of between 18-21 degrees.

- Having a medium-to-low level of heat throughout the house will help to control condensation. Heating one room to a high level and leaving other rooms cold makes condensation worse in the unheated rooms.
- Not putting your heating on for short periods of time (one hour or less) as the air will absorb moisture quicker than the walls can warm up. When the heating is turned off, the air will cool quickly and condensation will be formed cooling the walls further.

Remove mould growth

It is easier and more cost effective to clean mould when it first appears.

- A combination of different methods, such as using paints that resist mould growth, may be necessary to address the problem.
- You must always follow the instructions on product label. This will include application, ventilation, protective clothing, and action to take in the event of an accident.
- If you are in any doubt or the mould keeps returning, please seek professional advice either from your Property Manager, our Repairs and Maintenance Team or a mould specialist contractor.