

Damp Treatment Framework

2022 – 2025

Document control

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1.0	May 22	First version
2.0	Nov 22	Revision to reflect learning from recent cases
2.1	Dec 22	Revision to reflect peer input

1. Introduction

We aim to ensure an empathetic approach when our customers report instances of damp and mould within their homes. We aim to be proactive in identifying occurrences that have not been reported, with all customer facing teams being provided guidance on how to identify and report cases.

There are several factors that can lead to issues in a property with damp or mould growth. Most of these can be resolved with a combination of remedial work and by working closely with our customers to help reduce the conditions that enable it to reoccur.

This framework provides guidance on the approach we will take on identifying, reporting and taking action on cases of damp and mould.

2. Scope

The implementation and scope of this framework applies to:

Livv Housing Group	X
Livv Homes	X
Livv Maintenance	X
First Ark Social Investment (Operating as Livv Investment)	
All entities	

3. Compliance

The framework is in place to support:

Legislative Compliance, in particular Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985	X
Environmental Protection Act 1990	X
Decent Homes Standard 2000	X
Housing Act 2004	X
Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018	X
Best Practice	X

4. What is Damp & Mould?

Damp refers to an excess of moisture in a property. Excess moisture can cause the growth of mould on surfaces, such as walls and ceilings, window frames and tiles, and can spread to furniture and clothing.

There can be many causes of damp and mould growth. Condensation is the most common cause, but it can also be caused by problems with the property, including leaking pipes or gutters, damaged roof tiles, or rising or penetrating damp through brickwork.

All forms of damp and mould, however minor give rise to unsatisfactory living conditions and we will undertake any form of remedial work required to prevent the conditions in which it can continue to arise. We will also work with our customers to share advice and guidance on how they can prevent its recurrence, where this is due to condensation.

5. Identifying, Reporting and Treating Damp & Mould

Where a customer contacts us to report damp or mould, we will arrange an urgent 7 day appointment to investigate the case.

- If the customer reports damp or mould in one room and it is the first time they have reported it, we will send a trained operative. If the operative finds that there is a mould build up in the property, a mouldicide spray will be applied to the affected areas. If the operative identifies that additional remedial works are required, they will either raise a follow on visit for the works to be undertaken with a priority relevant to the works (but no greater than 28 days) or request a surveyor to attend within 7 days.
- If the customer advises they have previously reported the issue and have had it treated, or that it is present in more than one room, we will send a surveyor to investigate the cause and identify any remedial works that may be required. They will raise a follow on visit for the works to be undertaken with a priority relevant to the works (but no greater than 28 days).

In all cases, an advice leaflet will be given to the customer to inform them of how to identify damp and mould, its causes and how they can prevent the conditions that may result in it recurring. A courtesy call will be carried out to our customer approximately 30 days later to find out if damp or mould has returned.

Any colleague that identifies conditions that are deemed to be hazardous to a customers health, or where the impact on the customer of undertaking works in their home is such that they may require to be temporarily relocated, they will escalate the issue immediately. Escalation will be made by raising with their immediate line manager who will liaise with the Customer Insight team and will use the 'Prioritisation Framework for Housing Moves' to make a decision on relocation within 24hrs of escalation. If concerns are raised at a weekend, the escalation will be via the Manager on duty. Options ranging from temporary accommodation while the work to the home is complete, through to a permanent relocation will be considered and discussed with our customer.

If any colleague considers that a customers reporting of damp and mould represents a level of dissatisfaction or distress that would constitute a formal complaint, even where the customer has not requested a formal complaint to be made, a complaint should be raised in line with the Policy – Complaints and Compliments.

5.1 Proactive Identification of cases:

Our colleagues are our eyes and ears in our customer's homes. If any member of our team identifies damp and mould in a customer's home that has not been reported, we expect them to proactively raise this. They should immediately raise a repair or survey request in line with the guidance outlined above. If the issue has been reported and they feel it has not been prioritised appropriately, they should raise a 'Concern' relating to the Property. This will then be escalated to the relevant manager to take appropriate action.

Cases of damp and mould may be identified through a stock condition survey undertaking a Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS) assessment. Where this is reported, the Manager Assets will immediately prioritise the relevant actions in line with this framework. Records of all HHSRS outcomes will be recorded and reported in line with regulatory requirements.

All appropriate customer facing teams will have access to a Power BI – Damp Dashboard and all line managers will ensure appropriate training on its use has been provided. The dashboard will provide intelligence to enable the effective monitoring of damp and mould cases and ensure an awareness of where cases are present prior to engaging with a customer.

The Manager Assets, will ensure there is oversight in place to monitor damp and mould cases and using the Power BI - Damp Dashboard will look to identify hot spots and trends in cases being reported. Where trends are identified, a plan will be developed to proactively contact customers within the hot spot areas to identify if there may be further cases of unreported damp and mould in customers' homes. The findings will then be actioned in line with the above guidance.

Where a surveyor visits a home to assess the extent of damp and mould, they can request the installation of remote damp monitoring equipment to monitor the conditions in the home. This equipment will monitor conditions such as temperature and humidity in the room being monitored. This aims to ensure that the action taken will remedy the issue of damp and mould and that the conditions within the home will not lead to its return.

The Manager Assets, will ensure there is oversight in place to monitor the reporting received from each home with remote monitoring equipment installed and take any appropriate action from the findings. If the conditions are assessed to be compatible with the ongoing prevention of damp and mould, a request to remove the monitoring equipment will be made (not normally less than 30 days from installation). A courtesy call will be made to the customer approximately 30 days after removal of the monitoring equipment to ensure the damp and mould has not returned. All actions and customer contact records will be recorded on the Orchard system.

5.2 Empty Homes

When a property becomes empty, prior to refurbishment works, a damp & mould asset survey will be carried out. This will be to ensure that risks of future damp and mould reports are mitigated before a new customer moves into the property. The survey template can be found in the document store on the intranet.

The Performance Manager – Empty Homes will ensure all records of surveys are retained along with empty homes works records and actions identified from the survey are undertaken within the scope of empty homes work and are completed prior to re-letting.

5.3 No Access

In the event of a failed access attempt for damp and mould associated repairs, we will continue to engage with customers to ensure the necessary agreed resolutions are completed. The Manager – Responsive Repairs will ensure no less than three attempts to gain access to undertake works are made with evidence retained of each attempt. If they fail to gain access, the case will be passed to the Property Access team to engage with the customer and gain access for the works.

5.4 Disrepair Claims

In the event that there is an active legal claim from a customer, we will regardless, continue to progress the completion of any works identified as a result of damp and mould (or any property repair) at the earliest opportunity, in line with the guidance outlined above.

5.5 Additional customer support

If any colleague identifies a concern that a customer may need additional support or as a result of conditions in the home may be vulnerable, they should raise a ‘Concern’ relating to the customer. This will then be escalated to the relevant team to identify what support can be provided.

6. Framework Outcomes

The aim of this framework is to establish an empathetic and proactive approach to reports of damp & mould that produces regular learning outcomes and ensures that our customers are safe and well in their homes.

We also need to ensure that we fulfil our repairing obligations as a landlord and do so in a timely manner relevant to each individual case, with the customers safety and comfort at the heart of all decisions.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Director Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To ensure there are adequate resources in place to fulfil our duties as a landlord.• To report on compliance with our statutory and regulatory obligations relating to damp and mould to the Executive Directors Team and the common Board as appropriate.
Director of Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operational implementation of the policy• The ongoing delivery and monitoring of its objectives
Head of Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operational oversight of delivery of framework commitments.
Managers (as defined in framework)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible for operational delivery of the commitments assigned within the framework
All colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To maintain an awareness of the objectives of the framework and to report and / or escalate issues relating to damp and mould as defined in the framework