



We're Listening

An in-depth scrutiny review of damp and mould

Who are QuIP and what do we do?

We're a group of customers that together form the Quality and Improvement Panel, QuIP for short. We provide a scrutiny and assurance role, working alongside Livv's Board, through the Customer Services Committee. This means we can tell Livv, from a customer perspective, what they're doing well and where they need to improve. We also hold Livv accountable for the decisions and actions they take, and provide influence and recommendations to improve services.

Each year we complete a programme of in-depth reviews. We choose what we focus on by using performance data, risk information and feedback from surveys such as the Tenant Satisfaction Measures. Put simply - we concentrate on what's important to Livv customers.

Our in-depth reviews are an opportunity for us to dig deeper. We take a detailed look at services, collect evidence about how they work, and where needed, we 'commission' further engagement work to understand more about what Livv customers think about the service. We then present our findings and evidence-based recommendations, together with Livv's response and agreed actions directly to the Board, (through the Customer Services Committee). The Committee is kept updated about the progress of the agreed actions at its quarterly meetings.

Why did we choose this area?

This review followed the publication of the Housing Ombudsman's 'Spotlight on Damp and Mould: It's not a lifestyle' report. The Housing Ombudsman's report made two recommendations that specifically detailed working alongside customers:

- *together with residents, landlords should review the information, materials and support provided to residents to ensure that these strike the right tone and are effective in helping residents to avoid damp and mould in their properties*
- *landlords should review, alongside residents, their initial response to reports of damp and mould to ensure they avoid automatically apportioning blame or using language that leaves residents feeling blamed.*

We used these recommendations to form the focus of our review.

What did we do?

Before we started, we wanted to understand more about damp and mould. We attended a Housing Ombudsman's webinar on damp and mould and a member of Livv's Assets Team provided a presentation telling us about the different types and causes of damp and mould.

We spoke to a range of customer-facing staff to understand what they would do and say if damp and mould was reported to them. Contact Centre, Housing and Livv Maintenance staff took part.

We heard from the Director of Assets who provided us with information about Livv's Damp Treatment Framework and Damp and Mould Dashboard.

We reviewed the damp and mould leaflet.

We wanted to hear from customers who had recently experienced damp and mould. So, we worked with Livv to commission independent research company, TLF to find out more. Their survey gave us up-to-date information and insight about overall satisfaction with the service that also covered:

- listening to concerns
- logging issues
- how quickly someone was sent out
- taking ownership
- whether customers felt like Livv cared.

What did we find?



- We found no evidence that initial responses to reports of damp and mould placed blame or used language that would leave customers feeling blamed
- Livv staff recognised the significance of damp and mould and would take action to ensure that appropriate action was undertaken
- Livv staff had received training on what to do in the event that damp and mould is reported to them. We also noted that following the release of the coroner's report on the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, that further guidance and briefing sessions had been rolled out to all customer facing staff
- customers were given appropriate advice when inspections are undertaken in their home
- Livv have robust processes in place to inspect, monitor and review damp and mould in customers' homes.



- Some parts of the damp and mould leaflet could be improved by using clearer language and better use of imagery
- in some instances there had been initial and successful damp and mould treatment, but later customers had needed to report damp and mould in other areas of their homes
- following an inspection, customers were not always kept updated and informed about what would happen and that this problem occurred most when contractors were involved.

What did we recommend and what happened?

In May 2023 we presented a report to the Customer Services Committee. The report detailed our findings and recommendations.

We agreed six actions which would help improve the approach to supporting customers who may experience damp and mould in their homes.

The actions have now been completed and included:

- that when inspections of damp are reported in an area of our customers' homes, surveyors should inspect the remainder of the property, providing a 'whole house' approach
- improvements in the use of language and visuals in the damp and mould leaflet
- introduction of a new repairs system that provides text notifications about appointments
- undertaking regular quality audits with Livv contractors.

Thank you

We'd like to thank all the customers who took part in this research and everyone at Livv who provided us with information and support to complete our review.

