

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

Introduction

This policy sets out the approach Ipswich Borough Council (IBC) takes to ensure that damp, mould, and condensation within IBC properties are treated seriously and dealt with swiftly and effectively.

IBC want all tenants to enjoy living in homes that are safe and well maintained. This is why IBC developed the Ipswich Standard, an enhancement on the Government's Decent Homes Standard.

IBC recognises that the presence of damp and mould in homes has potential physical and mental health implications to our tenants.

This policy sets out the scope and context, explains what damp and mould is and the common causes. It explains how IBC will deal with a report of damp and mould by a tenant and/or leaseholder and explains how IBC is working on other identification measures and how this policy will be monitored going forward.

Objectives

This policy has several aims:

- To take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould.
- To raise awareness of landlord and tenant responsibilities on damp and mould.
- To provide and maintain dry, warm, and healthy homes for all tenants and reduce the number of homes with damp and mould.
- To ensure repairs to alleviate damp are carried out as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise damage to the structure, fixtures, and fittings of the property.
- To consider other tenancy management related actions that may assist in the resolution of damp and mould, such as providing advice or support on positive behaviours, cluttered homes and fuel poverty and considering severe cases of over occupation.
- To ensure the fabric of properties are protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould.
- To work in partnership with tenants to resolve the issues of damp and mould in their homes. This will include providing tenants with information, materials, and support to prevent and help them reduce condensation in their homes.
- To reduce the number of complaints and disrepair claims regarding damp and mould.
- To ensure the service provided is accessible to all so everyone can easily report damp and mould.
- To ensure all tenants are treated in a fair, respectful, empathetic, and consistent way.

Scope

This policy relates to:

- All IBC housing staff
- IBC instructed Contractors
- IBC tenants
- IBC leaseholder

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

In developing this policy, regard has been given to:

IBC Corporate Plan
Ipswich Standard for IBC Homes
IBC Asset Management Strategy
IBC Tenancy Agreement
IBC Leaseholder Agreement
IBC Complaints Policy
Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
Housing Act 1985
Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating)
Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 S11 Repairs and Maintenance
Awaab's Law - 2025

What is damp, mould and condensation?

Condensation occurs when the moisture in the air gets cooler and tiny water droplets appear on surfaces. If left untreated, mould will begin to grow.

Causes of condensation, that can lead to damp and mould, can include:

- Excess humidity – for example, pans do not have lids on when cooking and drying washing inside the property without adequate ventilation
- Ventilation – for example, windows are not opened, trickle vents are closed, extractor fans are not used, furniture is placed too close to external walls
- Inadequate heating
- Defective insulation – for example, dislodged insulation in lofts
- Overcrowding
- Cluttered homes
- Fuel poverty

Mould is a natural organic compound that develops in damp conditions and will grow on damp surfaces. This is often noticeable and present where condensation is present.

Damp occurs when a fault in the building's basic structure lets in water from outside, penetrating damp or due to the inadequacy of construction methods that may lead to rising damp.

Living in damp and mouldy conditions can affect both the physical and mental health of the entire household. IBC understands this and the aim of this policy is to mitigate the risk of tenants having to suffer distress caused by living in a damp and mouldy property.

Contributory factors to damp and mould

Over occupation of property can contribute to condensation issues leading to damp and mould, due to the excess moisture that may be generated in a small space.

IBC allocates housing using Gateway to Home choice where property is allocated appropriately using a priority system based on housing need. IBC will make every reasonable endeavour, wherever practically possible, to ensure that tenants are adequately housed. In extreme circumstances, changes to a tenant housing needs priority may be considered or a tenant may be re-housed into more appropriate accommodation.

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

IBC will also support tenants wherever possible, and this may include assistance with fuel poverty or tackling cluttered homes, both of which may contribute to poor housing conditions, leading to damp and mould. Furthermore, by promoting awareness of damp and mould and of positive behaviours to manage damp and mould in the home environment.

In extreme cases, IBC may act, where a tenant persistently refuses or disregards reasonable advice that is provided to assist with tackling damp and mould.

IBCs approach to damp and mould

- Tenants should report damp & mould through the Customer Contact Centre, directly with an agent (or by any other means, such as via their Local Ward Councillor)
- The Customer Contact Centre advisors will make a direct customer appointment with the tenant for a surveyor to attend their property.
- The caretaking team will be dispatched (if required) to remove any mould normally within 72 hours. This will remove the immediate hazard.
- A surveyor receives his appointments through a handheld device and will attend the property and complete a mould/housing defect report. If needed, damp probes will be left in the property to measure humidity levels.
- Following the inspection, the surveyor will discuss with the tenant the following:
 - If IBC can make improvements to the property to assist in the resolution of the damp and mould.
 - Provide detailed information to assist tenants to understand how damp and mould arises.
 - Discuss what steps the tenant can take to stop damp and mould from re-appearing.
- Resolving damp and mould is not just a matter of cleaning it off, redecorating and carrying out some work in a property. It is also about assessing the condition of the property, where a tenant may need more support from their landlord, such as hoarding (cluttered homes) or over-occupation and for these contributory factors to also be considered.

Repairs

Possible repairs to mitigate damp and mould may include:

- Improving the insulation, e.g., increasing the loft insulation to the IBC standard
- Identifying “cold bridging” and insulating appropriately
- Ensuring trickle vents and extractor fans are fully operational
- Renewing extractor fans when appropriate
- Installing Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) systems
- Cleaning, treating mould followed by redecoration
- Fixing any water ingress from blocked downpipes or gutters
- Treating any rising damp
- In extreme cases, installing new damp proof courses
- Ensuring there are no leaks caused by the plumbing of the property
- Ensuring the heating system is fit for purpose
- Removing any inappropriate DIY improvements that contribute negatively
- Glazing repairs

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

Awaab's Law

Ipswich Borough Council recognises the importance of maintaining safe environments for its tenants which we are closely monitoring to ensure full compliance with all statutory requirements and for the safety and protection of tenants within their homes.

Following our Government consultation on Awaab's Law, the first phase of legislation has now been announced and will come into effect on October 27, 2025, which will focus on damp and mould hazards, and all emergency hazards, in social housing in England.

This initial phase primarily addresses damp and mould hazards, along with all types of emergency hazards. Social landlords will be required to investigate potential hazards, provide written summaries of findings, and take action within strict timeframes.

This phase requires all social landlords to:

- Identify if a hazard is an emergency or significant
- Make safe emergency hazards within 24 hours
- Investigate potential significant hazards within **10 working days**
- Provide a written summary to tenant within **3 working days** from concluding the investigation
- Take appropriate action within **5 working days** for hazards presenting a significant risk to health or safety

For emergency hazards, Landlords must:

- Act as soon as reasonably practicable and within 24 hours

The following actions are the Key Elements from phase 1 of Awaab's Law:

Damp and Mould:

Landlords must investigate potential damp and mould hazards within 10 working days

Emergency Hazards

Landlords must respond to emergency hazards within 24 hours.

Written Summary:

A written summary of findings must be provided to the tenant within three working days of concluding the investigation.

Action on Significant Risks:

If a hazard presents a significant risk, landlords must take appropriate action (including temporary measures and repairs) within five working days

Alternative Accommodation:

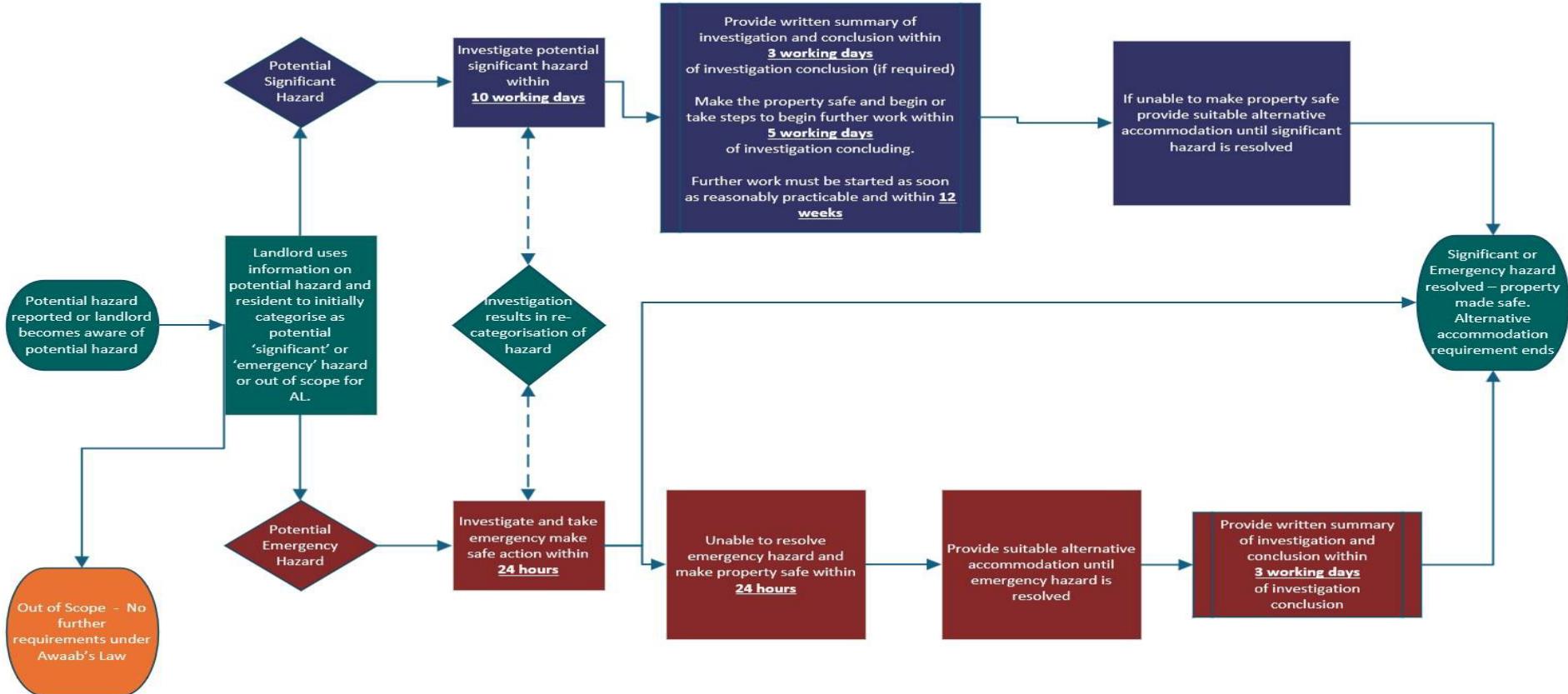
If the property cannot be made safe within the required timeframe, landlords must offer and pay for suitable alternative accommodation

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

The following flow chart demonstrates Ipswich Borough Council's process for dealing with all phase 1 requirement under Awaab's Law 2025:

Diagram 1 - Awaab's Law Process Flow

*Note : Does not include, renewed and further
Investigation timeframes*



Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

The damp and mould policy has been developed to ensure that all requirements under Awaab's Law have been set out and details on how we aim to deliver the specific timeframes and priority requirements embedded within the accompanying procedure. This will ensure tenants are protected from hazards such as damp and mould and that the council complies with the renewed legal obligations and will continue to ensure the policy compiles with the release of any further legislation.

The Government has further indicated that in 2026 it will bring forward further secondary legislation which will extend to a wider range of hazards to include:

- Excess cold and excess heat
- Falls
- Structural collapse
- Fire
- Electrical faults
- Explosions
- Hygiene hazards.

The Government has further announced that remaining hazards under the Housing Health, Safety Rating System (29 hazards) will be implemented during 2027, awaiting further announcement. Ipswich Borough Council is fully committed to implementing all legislative requirements, brought forward and will ensure that our Damp, Mould and Condensation, Awaab's Law Policy is continually reviewed and updated to ensure we are fully compliant with the requirement.

Ipswich Borough Council will adopt all further phases of Awaab's Law at the appropriate time in 2026 and 2027.

It is to note, the Council, has also recently let a contract, to complete HHSRS surveys to 100% of its homes over the next 18 months and this has commenced in July 2025. The HHSRS survey includes rating the risk of 29 hazards within the home, so greatly aligns and will be used in conjunction with any intelligence gathered implementing the requirements of Awaab's Law.

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

Examples of damp, mould, and condensation



Water vapour in the air will condense on cold surfaces.

Condensation can form on the glass in windows during cold weather, as it is one of the coldest surfaces in the house.

If this occurs, it is important to wipe the condensation off with a cloth otherwise it will lead to mould forming on the frames.

You may need to do this every day, sometimes more than once, during the colder weather.

If the condensation is not wiped off, then it will lead to mould forming on the window frames, as seen in this picture.

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25



Condensation forms on cold surfaces, such as on reveals around windows. This is often the case in houses with solid walls.

Heating the house to a constant temperature will keep the walls warm and will help to stop condensation.

Background ventilation by keeping trickle vents open or rapid ventilation by opening windows will help to remove the humid air.

Other causes may be a failure to the vertical DPC.

Radiators would normally be installed below windows because it helps to circulate air in a room. As warm air rises in front of the windows, it cools and the air moves downwards. This movement is called convection.

A Surveyor will look to see if a radiator can be fitted in situations like this.

To maintain the air movement, it is important to keep large items of furniture away from the walls.

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25



This is an example of an isolated patch of mould. This is very typical of where furniture is stored close to a wall and prevents air circulation.

Keep furniture and other belongings away from walls, particularly in and around corners.

Other causes may relate to dampness in a wall for example from a leaking pipe buried in a wall or a leaking downpipe, which will need further investigation.



Rising Damp: The tenant must contact IBC as soon as possible.

Rising damp is different to dampness caused by condensation. The woodwork will swell, and the paintwork will peel or flake.

This indicates a problem with the damp-proof course (DPC). In some cases, it may be due to the ground level outside being too high.

A DPC would typically be 150mm above the outside ground level. If it is less, then the damp can breach the DPC and cause rising damp.

Complex cases

Some cases of damp or mould will be more complex. This may be because the cause of the damp or mould is more difficult to diagnose, that the treatment to remedy and prevent is more complicated or that the household circumstances (e.g., overcrowding, fuel poverty) creates a need for more ongoing treatment. IBC will identify a complex case at the earliest opportunity.

Staff from relevant IBC teams and other organisations (as required) will work together to prepare a plan, with a clear focus upon communication with the tenant by appointing a named liaison officer.

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

The tenant has a right to complain if the tenant feels that any aspect of the service they receive is lacking. Tenants can complain to IBC by completing the online complaints form or in writing. Tenants also have the right to complain to the Housing Ombudsman.

What happens when a leaseholder reports damp and/or mould?

Leaseholders have a duty to report damp and mould issues to IBC (where they identify damp and mould is visible).

As a landlord of leaseholders, IBC has a duty to deal with issues that are caused by and affect the fabric of the building. The Leasehold Agreement sets out when issues are the responsibility of IBC and when issues are the responsibility of the leaseholder.

Reports of damp and mould made by leaseholders will be managed in the same way as described above for tenants. Leaseholders can engage with the various tenant engagement groups, tenant reps etc., should they wish to become involved in shaping services.

Other ways IBC can identify potential damp and mould

IBC will ensure that all housing staff whose role include property visits receive specific damp and mould training so that early signs of damp and mould can be identified.

IBC will build upon existing record keeping procedures so that those properties that may have a higher likelihood of experiencing damp and mould have the potential to be identified and inspected, if deemed appropriate. A property may be more prone to developing damp and mould due to its age or geographical location, for example.

IBC will seek to ensure ICT systems are linked so that property factors and household circumstances (such as overcrowding) are known.

IBC has developed mould and damp leaflets which act as a visual guide for all tenants and staff to aid with the identification of damp and mould and to also aid with understanding the severity of the damp and mould. In addition, IBC when deemed appropriate, will show tenants a video explaining about how damp and mould can occur. This will assist with initial reporting of damp and mould and triaging reports.

IBC will review the current information supplied to tenants regarding damp and mould identification and treatment to ensure it is understandable and available easily. The Tenants Times (published on a regular basis) may be used as a platform to highlight damp and mould. This may include a 'what to do if you have damp, mould or condensation' reminder or with a specialised focused damp, mould, and condensation issue.

IBC will hold regular learning sessions with relevant staff in which IBC case studies and national case studies will be used to further enhance staff knowledge and best practice.

IBC will inspect for damp and mould when a property is void before it is re-let to a new tenant.

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy 2024/25

Monitoring

IBC will monitor this policy on an ongoing basis to ensure the aims and objectives are met. The policy will be underpinned by an Action Plan which will be regularly monitored to ensure progress is made. Regular staff learning sessions will take place to embed education and best practice. Repair reports and formal complaints made using IBC complaints procedures will be analysed to provide learning opportunities and to develop a robust data set concerning damp and mould specifically. Tenant Engagement groups will be involved in the further development and monitoring of the policy.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Council and tenant groups, unless legislation states otherwise.

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