

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Policy has been developed to give a consistent and informed approach to ensuring that Tenants live in warm, safe, and comfortable homes. Damp, mould and condensation are issues which can have a serious impact on the health and well-being of our tenants, and cause damage to homes.
- 1.2 SBHA is committed to a proactive, zero-tolerance approach to damp, mould and condensation. This will be achieved by developing and implementing processes to prevent, assess, reporting on, and give advice and take actions to support tenants experiencing damp, mould and condensation.
- 1.3 Damp, mould and condensation can occur in a range of circumstances, types, size, age and location of properties. More information on causes, prevention and repair can be found on our website and in our damp and mould leaflets.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to contribute to the efficient and effective management of SBHA's properties.
- 2.2 **SBHA will seek to ensure that Tenants live in warm, safe, comfortable homes by:**
- Providing dry, warm, healthy, and safe homes which are free from any hazards.
  - Providing a supportive, empathetic, informed response when concerns about damp, mould and condensation are reported.
  - Developing our people to be able identify the signs and causes of damp, mould, and condensation and how these can be remedied.
  - Carrying out appropriate investigation to identify the cause of damp, mould, or condensation.
  - Ensuring the Officer inspecting and addressing any issues provides clear and frequent communication about any actions that are required, providing a direct point of contact for the Tenant.
  - Working in partnership with contractors and tenants to identify the cause of these issues and providing support to tenants to make positive changes to reduce moisture levels.
  - Carrying out any remedial works required as quickly and efficiently as possible.
  - Protecting homes from deterioration and damage resulting from, or contributing to damp, mould and condensation.
  - Monitoring to identify which properties are more at risk of moisture issues and take responsive or preventative action as required.
  - Using asset and Tenant insight to design our investment programmes.
  - Making use of technology to help tenants to understand and manage their homes and to understand the cause and solution to moisture issues.
  
  - Where required provide/in partnership provide a range of wraparound services designed to support Tenants in their homes to prevent damp and mould.

### **3.0 RELATED POLICIES & GUIDANCE**

3.1 This policy should be considered along with the following:

- Repairs and Maintenance Standards
- Estate Management Policy
- Customer Service Standards
- Asbestos Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Wellbeing Framework
- Decant & Home Loss Policy
- SFHA Guidance – Putting Safety First

### **4.0 LEGISLATION**

4.1 This Policy has been developed to ensure compliance with the following legislation and regulatory requirements:

- Housing Scotland Act 2014
- Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS)
- Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing (EESH)

### **5.0 REPORTING PROCESS**

5.1 Tenants should report any concerns about damp, mould and condensation at an early stage to prevent serious problems developing.

5.2 Tenants reporting concerns about damp, mould and condensation will be treated with empathy and respect taking account of tenants' circumstances, ethnicity, vulnerability etc.

5.3 Regular contact by the Officer inspecting and dealing with any issues will be made to keep Tenants informed of progress until the matter is resolved.

5.4 SBHA team members and contractors will report any signs of damp, mould and condensation if this is seen within any home during the course of their visit and advise the Tenant that they are reporting the issue so an assessment can be made to address any issues which are causing the damp/mould. This will be done in a manner which does not leave the Tenant feeling blamed for any issues identified.

5.5 SBHA may ask for further information about the tenants' circumstances and details of the issues causing concern when reports are made in order to determine the most appropriate response.

### **6.0 TRAINING**

6.1 Our people and contractors will be provided with training to:

- Provide advice and support to Tenants who report damp, mould, and condensation in their homes.
- Identify the cause and arrange works to resolve matters.
- Provide access to support and resources for tenants to make positive changes in their homes to reduce moisture levels.

## **7.0 INVESTIGATION AND ACTION**

- 7.1 An Officer will visit to inspect the cause of the damp, mould or condensation in the tenant's home. In some cases, a specialist contractor may be required to help identify the cause and suggest works to resolve matters.
- 7.2 Tenants will be advised how SBHA and tenants can work together to improve the situation e.g. offering advice on reducing moisture levels and basic energy efficiency advice where appropriate, with more complex cases being referred to SBHA's Warm & Well Co-ordinator for further advice and assistance.
- 7.3 Where works are required, we aim to carry these out in line with repairing timescales, however major works may be required to be programmed. It may not always be possible for tenants to remain in their home while works are carried out and, if required, appropriate decant arrangements should be discussed with the tenant where this situation arises. Works will be carried out irrespective of any dispute or claim raised by the tenant in relation to the damp and/or mould. Where works are required and the Tenant repeatedly denies reasonable access for the works to be carried out, SBHA may give the Tenant 24 hours of a controlled gain entry to undertake the works. The Tenant may be re-charged the costs of the controlled gain entry.
- 7.4 Tenants will receive updates on the outcome of the inspection and regular updates on how and when works will be carried out. It is the responsibility of the Officer carrying out the inspection to ensure communication with the Tenant.
- 7.5 A follow-up inspection will be arranged to assess whether action taken has been effective within 3 months of the work being completed. If the works are found not to be effective further works will be considered and post inspections will continue every 3 months until the issue is resolved.
- 7.6 All empty homes will undergo a damp inspection as part of the empty homes process and any resulting works completed prior to let.

## **8.0 PREVENTATIVE WORKS**

- 8.1 SBHA will take action to identify homes that have, or may be at risk of developing, problems with damp and mould. We will use information about our homes and tenants to help us understand risks in relation to damp and mould.
- 8.2 SBHA will develop and deliver a programme of inspections and cyclical works to carry out repairs and maintenance which could contribute to preventing damp, mould and condensation from arising.

## **9.0 INSIGHT AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 9.1 Information from our complaints, responsive, cyclical, and planned repairs and maintenance activities will be used to identify trends where particular property types or areas are experiencing moisture related issues. This information will be used to ensure that improvement works such as replacement heating, windows and doors are designed to keep homes safe and dry. Any lessons learned from complaints and/or complaint themes will be used to consider changes to policy, procedures, and approach.
- 9.2 There is a range of information and technology available to help prevent and assess

problems with damp, mould and condensation. SBHA may make use of this to address damp and mould in our homes to keep them free from disrepair and support tenants to understand how to make positive changes. The use of smart technology will be considered which can be used to monitor temperature and humidity levels remotely to identify where and when issues occur so pro-active action can be taken to prevent or resolve issues.

- 9.3 Damp meters will be used during inspections to identify the extent and location of moisture. Other equipment such as thermal imaging cameras can be used to assist with diagnosis of problems and remedies where deemed appropriate.

## 10.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Director of Property Services** will make sure that there is a robust policy, procedure, and framework in place to fulfil SBHA's responsibility as a landlord.
- **Assets Planning Lead** is responsible for identifying types of properties at increased risk of damp and mould and determine programmes of work required to pro-actively prevent damp and mould and ensuring stock surveys report on any issues as part of SHQS.
- **Head of Programme and Delivery** will ensure that policy and procedures are implemented and that team members are provided with appropriate training to carry out their duties in respect of damp and mould and provide assurance that the approach taken is being followed and is effective.
- **Repairs & Maintenance Manager** will manage the monitoring, delivery, management, and reporting of works to resolve damp and mould issues identified.
- **Property Officers** will provide a professional and courteous service ensuring that the cause of damp, mould and condensation are fully investigated and followed up to conclusion and tenants are kept informed of timescales and progress.
- **Solutions Team** will act as a first point of contact for reporting ensuring relevant information is provided to officers and initial advice and information is provided to Tenants.
- **All Team Members and Contractors** will notify the solutions team of any damp and mould issues they see in homes during their visits.

## 11.0 REVIEW

- 11.1 This Policy will be reviewed initially after 1 year due to it being a new policy and then every 3 years thereafter or when there is a significant change in legislation.