

Damp & Mould

Policy

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| Lead Officer | Director of Operations |  | Next Review | September 2026 |

1 Introduction

1.1 This policy outlines Arches housing zero tolerance approach to damp and mould within its homes. This does not mean zero cases; it means that we will work hard to proactively identify, diagnose, prevent and respond to damp and mould within our homes.

1.2 There are many root causes that lead to damp and mould within our homes, some examples include rising damp, penetrating damp and leaks from water pipes.

1.3 We recognise that this has the potential to have an impact on our customers and their family’s physical and mental health.

1.4 Exposure to damp and mould can exacerbate and negatively impact those prone to respiratory problems such as asthma, allergies and other respiratory illnesses.

1.5 These health problems can have a significant impact on our customers, particularly those who are vulnerable such as children, the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

1.6 Living with damp and mould can also impact a customer’s mental health and well-being as well as the customer’s quality of life and enjoyment of their home. This policy reflects Arches Housing’s commitment to proactively manage damp and mould in its homes.

2 Legislative and Legal Requirements

2.1 The Policy is aligned with the Regulatory Standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, specifically: - The Safety and Quality Standard, Registered providers shall: ensure that customers’ homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Governments Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.

2.2 The policy is also aligned to the follow legislation:

* Housing Act 2004 Part 1 – Housing Condition
* Housing Act 2004 - Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)
* Decent Homes Standard
* The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018

3 Policy Statement

3.1 Arches Housing defines damp and mould as:

Damp – Excessive moisture in a property

Mould – Microscopic fungus that grows in dark places

3.2 This policy has been developed in line with the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report on Damp and Mould (2021) and the Housing Ombudsman Special Report on Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (2023).

3.3 We will treat every complaint of damp and mould in a person centred way, showing empathy and understanding at all times.

3.5 We will ensure that our customers are aware of how to report any problems with damp and mould, and what to expect when it is reported.

3.5 We set clear targets for inspecting and treating damp and mould and we will prioritise those households with children or vulnerable adults.

3.6 We will investigate 100% of all reports of damp and mould (including any active disrepair cases), using a formal hazard assessment when making our decisions and prioritising works, see section 4 of this policy.

3.7 We will inform customers of the findings of the investigation at the time of the visit, including identifying the possible causes of damp and recommending effective solutions. All necessary remedial works and the estimated timescales to complete the works will be communicated to the customer.

3.8 All homes identified with damp or mould will be investigated to identify the root cause(s), ensuring suitable and sufficient control measures are put in place to prevent damp and mould re-occurring. This assessment will take into account the severity of the damp and/or mould ensuring any work required is given the appropriate priority. This affects all cases opened after 1st April 2024.

3.9 We will maintain accurate records for each home, ensuring that records for all inspections and work planned and completed are recorded on our information systems.

3.10 Customers will be given comprehensive advice and guidance, via leaflets, conversations and information on the association’s website. This will be tailored to all groups and individuals, fully taking their personal circumstances into account on how to prevent damp and mould in a variety of formats and languages.

3.11 We will undertake any repairs identified that could be contributing to damp and mould forming such as leaks, structural issues or unblocking gutters. This may also include more permanent measures such as installing additional ventilation or insulation where necessary.

3.12 Where the damp and mould identified is severe, either because of the severity in the home or because of complex health needs of people living in the property, it may be necessary on occasion to arrange a temporary move. This is to allow for extensive remedial work to be completed or to keep the occupants safe. In very extreme cases we may approve a permanent move to another mutually acceptable property.

3.13 We will take all reasonable steps to plan and carry out remedial works that are required with our customers, but if access if refused, we will consider taking appropriate action. This may include legal action, to ensure we can access the property and take action to remedy issues.

3.14 After we have completed any repairs to remedy damp and mould, we will contact customers via email, telephone or visit at intervals agreed with them to ensure that the initial treatment has been successful. If the initial works have been unsuccessful to treat the issue then we will explore further works.

3.15 Where a tenant disputes our assessment of the root cause of damp and mould and would like Arches to secure a second opinion, we will do so and communicate the outcome and recommendations of the survey to the customer.

3.16 We will ensure there is adequate ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens prior to reletting a property. When damp and mould is found in an empty home, we will ensure that it is treated as part of the reletting process.

3.17 We will provide awareness training to all our staff on damp and mould, refreshed annually.

3.18 We will ensure that relevant information about our customers and our homes is recorded and used to make decisions about where to target our resources to prevent the occurrence of damp and mould.

3.19 We will use our data to ensure we understand the stock archetypes that are likely to suffer from damp and mould and the individual components in our homes which may fail and cause damp and mould and ensure plans are in place to repair or replace these in a timely way.

3.20 We will undertake a management review of all P1 cases weekly and a 20% sample of cases monthly (including all P1 cases) to ensure a consistent approach is being applied to the management of damp and mould cases.

4. Risk Assessing Cases of Damp and Mould

4.1 The association will assess the urgency for response and strategy for remediation on the basis of risk. We will prioritise cases on the following basis:

P1 High Risk Severe Damp or Mould and/or Household Members with complex health conditions or vulnerabilities. We will survey a P1 case within three working days.

P2 Medium Risk Localised/Moderate Damp and Mould and/or Household Members with complex health conditions or vulnerabilities. We will survey a P2 case within ten working days.

P3 Low Risk Minor Damp with one or less household members with complex health or vulnerabilities. We will survey a P3 case within ten working days.

Below is the associations risk assessment matrix to support categorisation of risk, which assesses severity of damp and mould and the impact on household members with health or vulnerabilities:



5. Organisation Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Chief Executive

The Chief Executive, and ultimately the Board, have overall responsibility for the Damp and Mould Policy. The Chief Executive of Arches Housing is the overall ‘Responsible Person’ for ensuring that all home safety matters are implemented.

5.2 Director of Operations

The Director of Operations is responsible for the implementation of this policy and associated procedures and is responsible for reporting performance to the Board.

5.3 Head of Asset Operations

The Head of Asset Operations, who with the support of the Asset Team, is the operational lead for the day to day running and implementation of the Damp and Mould Policy.

6. Employees

6.1 All Employees, irrespective of their position shall:

* Identify and report damp repairs as part of their daily duties
* Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of other persons who may be adversely affected by damp repairs and faults, including members of the public, tenants, visitors and contractors
* Co-operate as appropriate with other staff and agencies to ensure compliance with this policy and all other legal requirements
* Report any concerns that they may have in relation to the management of the repairs service or this policy to the Operations Director or Chief Executive

7. Review

7.1 This Policy shall be reviewed and updated by the Director of Operations annually.

8. Governance and Assurance

8.1 The Director of Operations will review the number of damp and mould cases monthly, including volumes and priority bandings and other relevant qualitative and quantitative information. They will also review all P1 cases weekly.

8.2 The following information will be provided to the Board and or its committees at scheduled intervals:

* Number of occupied homes with an identified Cat 1 HHSRS Damp and Mould Hazard present
* % of homes occupied where Damp, Mould and Condensation identified
* Number of high risk cases (P1)
* Number of damp cases over six months old by categorisation

8.3 Independent external assurance will be sought periodically as required in line with the association’s assurance framework to ensure compliance with Arches legal and regulatory responsibility in relation to the management of cases of damp and mould no less than every 3 years.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 All involved will recognise their ethical and a legal duty to advance equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination on the grounds of, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership.

10. Publicising this Policy

10.1 The Damp and Mould Policy will be publicised on the Arches Website.