

Help with damp and mould



What is condensation?

Moisture is in all homes by breathing, cooking and washing. In fact, the average home produces 21 pints of water vapour a day.

However, there is a limit to the amount of water vapour that air can contain. If there is too much, then condensation can form.

Condensation is most present in rooms with high moisture levels, such as the kitchen and bathrooms. It's typically seen as steam on windows and damp patches on walls and ceilings.

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Why is it a problem?

Small amounts of condensation can be found in most homes, and for the most part, is controllable. However, if the condensation isn't dealt with it can cause mould to grow. The development of mould can not only damage furniture, clothing and decorations within your home, but also worsen health conditions that affect your breathing, immune system and allergies.

What is mould?

Mould is a general term for any fungus that grows on food or damp building materials. It typically looks like a stain and comes in a range of colours. However, in some cases, mould may not be visible but cause a musty odour. Mould is a common issue, with almost a million UK households living with the problem, according to the English Housing Survey.

If allowed to grow, mould can contribute to poor indoor air quality and even worsen some health conditions. The NHS advice warns that people living in mouldy and damp homes are more likely to have respiratory problems and infections as well as suffering from asthma and allergies. Babies, children and older people are particularly vulnerable to these illnesses, while those with existing skin and respiratory conditions or a weakened immune system are also considered high-risk categories.

In fact, research from ITV found that the NHS spent a staggering £38m treating people for the effect of damp and mould in 2021.

Washing, cooking, air humidifiers, poor ventilation, condensation and leaks from outside all produce moisture in the home that mould needs to grow.





Dealing with mould

- It's best to wipe up and remove condensation regularly to avoid mould from growing. If mould has become an issue, you will need to remove it after you've taken steps to reduce the source of condensation.
- It's best to call us early so we can help tackle this as soon as possible. Whilst there are fungicidal washes available which are available from most supermarkets, hardware shops and DIY or decorators' suppliers, we understand that not everyone will be able to use them. If in doubt, let us know.
- Wash or dry clean as appropriate any clothes and shampoo carpets. Ensure everything is thoroughly dried afterwards.
- After treatment, the areas will need to be redecorated using a good fungicidal paint to prevent mould returning. If the staining is bad, a stain block paint may need to be used before proceeding. Seek the advice of your local paint supplier or decorator for further assistance.

What can be done?

If you think you have condensation in your home, here are some practical tips and guidance to help.



The key to achieving a condensation free home is to ensure there is a balance between three elements – heat, moisture and ventilation.

Kitchen

- Keep lids on your pans while cooking
- Ventilation — open your windows while cooking or washing clothes
- Keep internal kitchen door closed while cooking
- Ventilate your tumble dryer outside. If that's not possible, don't use it while cooking
- Use an extractor fan while cooking, washing clothes or washing dishes
- Don't let your kettle or pans boil for longer than necessary

Bathroom

- Heat the room before taking a bath or shower
- Close the door while showering
- Open the window after showering
- Pour an inch of cold water in the bath before adding the hot water
- Use an extractor fan to clear steam

General

- Keep your home as warm as you can — raising the temperature will prevent condensation from forming
- The Energy Saving Trust recommends heating your home to between 18 to 21 degrees Celsius during winter. The World Health Organisation (WHO) suggests 18 degrees is the ideal temperature for healthy people.
- Insulate — use draught excluders to eliminate cold air where possible
- Wipe down surfaces to stop mould from growing
- Keep furniture away from external walls and radiators
- Open windows where possible
- Don't block vents
- Dry your clothes outside where possible
- Don't overload your cupboards or wardrobes

What's our responsibility?

As a housing provider, we have a duty of care to all our residents. It's our responsibility to fix your damp or mould issue if it's caused by a repair problem within your property or the issue is affecting your health and safety.

For us to maintain our responsibilities it's important that you:

- Report any repairs needed to your home
- Report any changes in your health due to the issue
- Report any damage caused by the damp or mould

In turn, we will:

- Organise an inspection
- Carry out repairs within a reasonable time.

Some common examples of problems we must fix include:

- Leaking internal pipes
- Broken heating systems
- Missing roof tiles or faulty guttering
- Cracked walls or rotten window frames

If you need this leaflet translated into another language, large print or braille please call **01772 667 002**.

How you can help

Heating and ventilating your home is really important so that damp and mould doesn't build up.

If you're struggling to heat and ventilate your home, let us know so we can help. We also understand that some things are out of your control. For example, if you live in a flat with no outside space, it's unreasonable for us to expect you to dry clothes outside.

Have a look at the protective measures in the *'What can be done'* section.

If you are struggling with the impact of increasing costs, please get in touch. We are here to help.

For more information visit placesforpeople.co.uk/contact-us/

If you can't find an answer to your problem or if you have an emergency, or just need to speak to someone in our team, then please give our friendly Customer Service Team a call on **01772 667 002**.

When you call, please have your property reference number, house number or postcode ready.