



# **SAXON WEALD**

## **CONDENSATION AND DAMP POLICY**

**First Approved: May 2015**

**Author: Ian Bamforth**

**Last Revision: May 2018**

**Next Review: May 2021**

### **1.0 Introduction and aim**

- 1.1 Issues with condensation and damp have become more prevalent recently and research has shown that in the UK up to 50% of homes may be affected by damp<sup>1</sup>. As homes have become more energy efficient with the installation of cavity wall insulation, double glazing and loft insulation, they have become less breathable and moisture has less opportunity to escape.
- 1.2 To our residents, condensation can become a very real problem and there is often a misunderstanding of the causes and, therefore, possible solutions available. There can be a misconception that there is a constructional defect with the home, which is not usually the case.
- 1.3 The aim of this policy is to explain how Saxon Weald will deal with condensation and damp issues within residents' homes and provides guidance to residents and staff alike.
- 1.4 The introduction of this policy will ensure a consistent approach to the management of the issue across all areas of Saxon Weald and help to provide a more holistic approach to the management of our stock and the health and well-being of our tenants.

### **2.0 Definitions**

- 2.1 Condensation – water that forms on surfaces when water vapour comes into contact with a cold surface.

---

<sup>1</sup> Source: World Health Organisation (Europe), WHO Guidelines for Indoor Air Quality – Dampness and Mould

- 2.2 Penetrating damp – Where water leaks through walls either through saturated brickwork, or through gaps in the structure.
- 2.3 Rising damp – capillary movement of moisture from the ground into the walls of buildings. It may result in structural damage up to a level of three feet.

### **3.0 Background**

#### Legal requirements:

3.1 Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 – Section 11 of this act makes landlords responsible for:

- Maintaining the structure and exterior of the property in good repair, including drains, gutters and external pipes;
- Keeping installations for the supply of water, gas, electricity and sanitation in good repair and proper working order;
- Keeping installations for space heating and water heating in good repair and proper working order.

#### Good practice:

3.2 We will regularly seek best practice from organisations that deliver damp and mould services and adopt any good practices which will help us tackle this issue.

#### Regulatory standards

3.3 Saxon Weald has a duty to ensure that all homes meet a minimum standard of decency, known as the Decent Homes standard. Homes should, as a minimum:

- be free of health and safety hazards;
- be in a reasonable state of repair;
- have reasonably modern kitchens, bathrooms and boilers;
- be reasonably insulated.

### **4.0 Policy**

4.1 The key principles of this policy are:

- To ensure we provide and maintain dry and healthy homes for our residents;
- To ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould, and;
- To make sure that our residents have the information they need to actively manage condensation in their homes.

4.2 We will achieve these aims by:

- Ensuring that staff understand the causes and possible remedies of condensation, damp and mould through an effective training and awareness programme;
- Understanding our stock and the types of properties that are likely to suffer from damp and mould;
- Implementing effective asset management programmes that improve the thermal comfort of our homes;
- Providing information to residents that help them manage condensation in their homes in a range of different formats;
- Being proactive in investing in preventative services.

#### Saxon Weald's responsibilities

- 4.3 Saxon Weald is responsible for improving the energy efficiency of homes, in accordance with the Decent Homes standard. This will help reduce the likelihood of condensation occurring.
- 4.4 We are further responsible for maintaining residents' homes to avoid penetrating or rising damp and for carrying out remedial action if this occurs.
- 4.5 We will liaise with external agencies regarding enquiries, including environmental health and local authorities.
- 4.6 We will ensure that all staff involved in the implementation of this policy are trained to identify the differences between condensation and damp, ensuring a consistent approach is taken.

#### Resident responsibilities

- 4.7 Residents have a responsibility to manage condensation in their homes.
- 4.8 Condensation is caused by activities such as cooking, bathing and drying clothes in the house.
- 4.9 Prevention methods include the effective and consistent use of heating within the home, use of extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom, and using additional ventilation to reduce amounts of moisture in the air.
- 4.10 Saxon Weald will support residents to reduce the amount of condensation they produce and give advice to combat the risk of mould growth.

### **5.0 Implementation**

- 5.1 The solutions available depend on a number of issues including the construction of the property, the existing ventilation and the type of heating. In responding to resident issues we will:
  - Provide advice to the resident on effective measures to reduce condensation within the home. This may take the form of an information leaflet, on-line advice and information, or a conversation with a building surveyor.
  - If symptoms persist and further action is required, a full inspection by a building surveyor will be carried out to assess if additional action is required.
  - In extreme cases, an independent survey may be commissioned.
- 5.2 Possible outcomes may include:
  - Treatment of existing mould affected areas and, in very serious cases, a redecoration treatment may be required to eradicate the mould and then use of an anti-fungal paint to prevent reoccurrence.

- The installation of humidity controlled fans (including changing existing fans) in kitchens and bathrooms to reduce airborne moisture at source.
- The installation of a Whole House Positive Input Ventilation system which ensures that fresh air is constantly pushed into a property to change the air every few hours and stop the formation of condensation in the first place.
- Should the issue be caused by a structural problem with the property, then remedial work will be identified and commissioned.

## **6.0 Value for Money**

- 6.1 Providing advice and support to residents on how to manage condensation in their home is an effective solution.
- 6.2 Following the Condensation and Damp process will ensure that Saxon Weald deals with persistent issues and protects Saxon Weald's assets, as well as providing residents with better living conditions.
- 6.3 Staff will be trained to understand the differences between penetrating damp and condensation that can cause mould growth. This will lead to earlier intervention and lower costs.

## **7.0 Monitoring and review**

- 7.1 This policy will be reviewed every three years in accordance with our review timetable or in the interim period if any major legislative or regulatory changes require it.

## **8.0 Equality and diversity**

- 8.1 Saxon Weald aims to achieve equality of opportunity in relation to the services we provide as a landlord and as an employer. This means that no person or group seeking housing, jobs or contracts with us will be treated less favourably because of their or their partner's, family's, friend's or associated person's protected characteristics. In law, protected characteristics specifically cover: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. In addition to these, Saxon Weald will not treat anybody less favourably for any reason which causes a person to be treated with injustice.

<b>Version</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>1.0</b>	N/A – new document	Simon Farmer	May 2015
<b>2.0</b>	Revision and update 6.2	Ian Bamforth	May 2018