

	Damp and Mould
Policy statement	Damp and mould are recognised as significant hazards to health and wellbeing. This policy sets out our commitment to identifying, addressing, and preventing damp and mould in residents' homes in a timely and effective manner. We are committed to ensuring that: - Residents have clear, accessible channels to report damp and mould concerns. - All reports are taken seriously and responded to promptly. - Investigations are carried out swiftly, and appropriate remedial action is taken to remove hazards and prevent recurrence. - The underlying causes of damp and mould are assessed and treated, not just the symptoms. - Residents are provided with clear information about the causes of damp and mould, how to reduce the risk, and what support they can expect from us. - We proactively identify damp and mould through staff and contractor visits, not solely relying on resident reports. We will act to remove immediate hazards regardless of the cause and ensure that homes are made safe and healthy. This policy and its associated procedures ensure compliance with all relevant statutory, regulatory, and government requirements, including but not limited to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and Awaab's Law.
Objective	This policy is designed to ensure that we - provide residents and staff with a clear understanding of how we will deal with damp and mould in homes - provide homes that are in a good condition and meet our standards for residents to occupy them free from hazards to health, including strategic measures to assess and improve stock condition to prevent damp and mould from occurring - manage and fix identified cases of damp and mould promptly and effectively to minimise or remove health hazards to occupiers, and - prevent, as far as we can, the recurrence of the causes of damp and mould after it has been treated.
Scope	This policy applies to all rented homes, and to the structure and communal areas of blocks for which Paradigm has repairing responsibility, including where these are occupied by shared owners or leaseholders. The policy only applies to shared ownership or other leasehold homes to the extent indicated in the specific section for that category of home.
Policy	<u>Definitions</u> Damp is the build-up of moisture in a property, which may affect the building itself, home furnishings or belongings in the home, and can lead to the growth of mould. Damp can occur for a variety of reasons, including: - condensation damp (moisture generated in the home condenses on colder parts of the building), - penetrating damp (water getting into the home from outside, e.g. defects in walls, roofs, windows), - traumatic damp (e.g. leaking or burst water pipes, overflowing bath), or - rising damp (due to damp rising from the ground where it is in contact with the building).

Condensation damp

Condensation damp happens when moisture generated inside the home cools and condenses onto colder parts of the buildings (for example window frames, corners and low points on walls behind sofas or wardrobes). This is the most common form of damp

Emergency Hazard is a hazard that poses an imminent and significant risk of harm to the health or safety of the tenant or other household member, and in this case, could include prevalent damp or mould that is having a material impact on a tenant's health, for example their ability to breathe

Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) – this is a government system which is used by local authority officials when they inspect homes to assess and score hazards to the people living in them. The scoring system is prescribed in Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005 and is set out in the statutory HHSRS Operating Guidance for local authorities.

Mould is fungus, of which there are a number of types, which grows in environments where there is moisture. Where there are conditions of damp they may grow on the surfaces of the home and on clothes and fabrics. It can cause adverse health effects and damage to buildings.

Significant Hazard is a hazard that poses a significant risk of harm to the health or safety of a tenant or other household member, and which Paradigm, taking account of the hazard and information about the household, would take steps to make safe urgently, but not within 24 hours.

Vulnerability – by this we mean, in relation to this policy, residents who have characteristics that mean they are less able to cope with situations where damp and mould is likely to have an impact on their health. These will often be health or age-related vulnerabilities, but they may also be due to their ability to report or deal with damp and mould.

1. Following the evidence

- a. Damp and mould can take different forms, have different causes. Therefore different solutions will be needed according to each home and the specific causes we identify.
- b. Problems with the structure of a property are to do with one or more of the design, construction or maintenance of the home
- c. Our assessment and monitoring will focus on understanding which issue or issues is causing the problem so that the correct fix is applied to remove the damp and mould, and to prevent its recurrence

2. Prevention

- a. We will provide information to residents through a range of communications about the causes of damp and mould, and how to reduce or remove the risks of it occurring. Information will be available on our website, and we will provide information, including how to access support, when we meet residents in their homes if it is relevant to them.
- b. We will provide residents, including new shared owners, with information about damp and mould when they move into a property.
- c. We will use the opportunity of routine inspections, including stock condition surveys, surveys to assess energy efficiency and thermal performance, and void inspections to identify issues which indicate a significant risk of damp or mould and to resolve these or plan for mitigation.
- d. We will use the information from managing damp and mould cases to identify common issues and patterns of the risk of damp and mould in the homes we own.

3. Reporting and treating damp and mould

- a. We will encourage residents to contact us to tell us if they have damp or mould in their home or block, even if they are unsure, or if the problem does not appear to be serious, so that we can check and take action if we need to.
- b. Residents can contact us to report damp or mould by phone or email or online through our customer portal, or in person to any Paradigm member of staff.
- c. When we receive a report of damp or mould we will check the circumstances of the resident and members of their household to understand whether they are at a higher risk of harm from damp and mould due to a vulnerability. This will include confirming

- whether information we hold is correct and asking the resident about relevant circumstances of household members which might indicate vulnerability.
- d. We will carry out a prompt review of the reported damp or mould to assess its severity and possible causes, including information or photos from residents where these are available.
 - e. We will assess the initial report to us, and the resident's circumstances. Where these indicate that the severity of the damp or mould presents a significant and imminent risk of harm to the health of the resident or other members of their household (an emergency hazard) we will undertake an emergency investigation within 24 hours of the report, or we may proceed straight to repair or make safe the emergency hazard as soon as reasonably practicable if the initial report warrants this without the need for a further separate investigation.
 - f. We may propose to undertake an emergency investigation remotely provided that the resident is able to assist with this. A remote investigation will usually be in the form of a video call, examining photos or similar. We will arrange an in-person investigation where the resident requests this or cannot assist with a remote investigation.
 - g. Where the emergency investigation confirms that there is an emergency hazard, we will undertake works to repair the emergency hazard, or to make it safe within 24 hours of the initial report. Where repairs may take longer to reduce or remove the emergency hazard, we will offer alternative accommodation.
 - h. Where our initial assessment is that the severity does not present an emergency hazard, we will carry out a standard investigation within 10 working days.
 - i. We may propose to undertake this standard investigation remotely. The same provisions apply as in para 3f) above.
 - j. We will provide residents with a report on this investigation within 3 working days of carrying it out, which will include a description of the problem and whether it is a significant or emergency hazard, what works are proposed and the timescales for carrying these out. In some cases, further investigations may be required to understand the cause of the damp or mould and specify appropriate works. This will be explained in the report of the standard investigation findings.
 - k. Where a standard investigation finds that the hazard is an emergency hazard, the works will be undertaken within 24 hours to make the hazard safe in the same way as when an emergency investigation is undertaken
 - l. Where the investigation does not find a significant or emergency hazard, the report on the survey will say this and explain the reasons for that finding. It will also explain what repairs will be undertaken, if any, and whether further monitoring or other measures are proposed.
 - m. For incidents of damp or mould which are a significant risk but not an emergency, we will start repairs within 5 working days of issuing the investigation report, whether as full repair or interim measure. We will undertake an interim measure if the issue requires further investigation to identify the underlying causes, or it will take longer than 5 working days to commission and begin a full repair.
 - n. Residents may request an in-person investigation instead of a remote investigation. Where we have already carried out a remote investigation, the timescale for an in-person investigation and subsequent repairs, as set out in this section, will start from the day of the request for the in-person investigation.

4. Tackling causes

- a. In addition to the prevention measures described above, we will monitor the effectiveness of the repairs we carry out to treat damp and mould.
- b. We will make follow up calls following repairs within 6 weeks to check whether they have been effective. We may carry out a follow up investigation. The purpose is to check whether the reported damp and mould has been fixed, including in cases where we need to verify that all underlying causes of damp and mould have been identified.
- c. Where damp and mould has not been eliminated or has recurred, we will undertake further investigations and repairs taking account of the previous findings and remedial actions.
- d. We may use remote monitoring devices for temperature and humidity in cases where this will help us to better understand what conditions are present that may be contributing to the presence of damp and mould, including where it is recurring.

5. Working with residents

- a. Our priority is to keep our residents safe by removing damp and mould when it is identified, including where it occurs in the structure or communal areas of blocks for which Paradigm is responsible.
- b. We will work in partnership with our residents to listen and understand their individual concerns and issues. Where we know that residents are at an increased risk from damp and mould, due to health or age-related vulnerabilities, we will provide additional support and prioritise their case.
- c. Where we find damp or mould, or it is reported to us, we will work with residents to assess and make repairs in the most effective and prompt way, so that we remove and prevent its incidence and recurrence. We will always aim to remove the immediate risk through a repair or treatment which is appropriate and effective for the problem.
- d. We will use ways of gathering information such as photos, video-calling or similar, when damp or mould is reported, to assist with our initial investigation. We will do this in consultation with the resident.
- e. Where we need to visit a resident's home to do a damp and mould investigation and carry out repairs, we will work with them to find convenient dates and times within the timescales set out above for carrying out investigations and repairs. We will follow a process through which residents are contacted through multiple channels if necessary, including written correspondence, telephone calls, and, where appropriate, in-person visits, to arrange suitable inspection times.
- f. We will clearly communicate to residents the processes for dealing with damp and mould in their homes, information about investigation findings, and information about the scope and timing of our proposed repairs. We will provide reports on the investigations that we undertake in response to customer reports to us of damp and mould within 3 working days of carrying out the investigation.
- g. We will confirm to customers in writing where we have either been unable to contact them to make arrangements for investigations and repairs, or we have been unable to carry out investigations or repairs for which we have agreed appointments with our residents.
- h. If these attempts are unsuccessful, further follow-up communications are scheduled, and additional support may be offered to overcome any barriers to entry, ensuring every opportunity is provided for inspection and resolution.
- i. Where we have taken these measures and are still unable to access the home, or where we think it is necessary to manage serious or imminent risks or hazards to the health and safety of the resident or members of their household, or residents in neighbouring properties, we will use legal powers available to us to secure access.
- j. We will only offer alternative accommodation either where it is necessary because of an emergency hazard which cannot immediately be made safe, or where the severity of the damp and mould is high and there is an immediate risk to residents, or where it will take a significant time to complete repairs, or due to the scale of disruption or hazards caused by extensive works.
- k. The process for a temporary move will be managed with the resident by a Customer and Neighbourhood Officer.
- l. Where there are no repairs or improvements that can be identified to resolve a damp or mould problem – we will support residents to address any practical issues so that normal domestic activities do not create damp or support mould growth. This may include providing or signposting to other types of support in accordance with our Customer Support policy. Where we do this, we work to understand why these issues exist, and provide support to address them, not to allocate blame to residents or avoid our responsibility for making repairs to the home.

6. Appeals and complaints

- a. Where we plan to or have carried out remote inspections as part of our investigations, a resident can request an in-person inspection instead and there will be no penalty for this, although it will restart the timetable for carrying out investigations and carrying out repairs. They can do this through any of the routes in section 3a) to 3c) above.

	b. If a resident is unhappy with the way in which we have managed their report of damp or mould, including the conclusions of investigations, or our interactions with them for carrying out investigations or repairs, they can make a complaint using our normal complaint process. 7. Shared owners and leaseholders a. Residents who are shared owners or leaseholders are responsible for the maintenance and repair of their homes. This policy does not change the terms of their lease or increase or extend Paradigm's repairing responsibilities, including in relation to damp and mould. b. For this category of residents, Paradigm may have repairing responsibility for the structure of parts of the property. This will usually be the structural elements of blocks of flats. The precise scope of this will depend on the lease. Where damp or mould occurs in homes where this applies, and the cause arises from defects in the structure for which Paradigm are responsible, these can be reported using the options set out in paras 3a)-3e). c. Shared ownership homes will have the benefit of a warranty for an initial period following completion of the home. Where damp or mould is present and this is due to a defect covered by the warranty, shared owners and leaseholders can report this/make a claim under the warranty, for which remedial work is subject to the scope and terms of that warranty. d. Section 42 of the Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 (Awaab's Law) does not apply to shared owners and leaseholders. Where provisions of this policy are designed to ensure compliance with Awaab's Law, they will not be applicable for shared owners and leaseholders. 8. Training a. We will ensure that our staff are trained in relation to the requirements of this policy and have skills and knowledge about damp and mould relevant to their role. b. Where we employ contractors or consultants in relation to activities to manage damp and mould, they will be required to meet the requirements of this policy, including the provision of training. We will assess whether they have the relevant skills, competence and experience as a condition of their appointment and retention. 9. Our operational approach a. We will design and operate systems and processes to ensure that we carry out these policy commitments consistently and efficiently, and that we can monitor and report on our activities accurately. b. We will allocate the responsibilities for managing and delivering the activities which are necessary to achieve the policy objectives. c. We will provide information to residents about the damp and mould they have reported, our investigations and findings, and the work that we will undertake to fix causes of damp and mould. We will also provide residents with information about how to make a complaint or appeal where they are dissatisfied with our performance. We will ensure accurate record keeping on our systems as the basis for maintaining a complete record of relevant events and information in relation to each resident. d. Where homes are in blocks where the freehold is owned by a third party, they will usually retain the responsibility for repair of the structure of the building, and reserve rights of access to the structure. We will work with freeholders and their managing agents to document and agree how these commitments will be managed in co-operation with them under the terms of any lease agreement between us. In these cases, the provisions of Awaab's Law in relation to investigations, provision of information and timescales for repairs may not apply.
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Our practical commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in this policy is essential for its effective operation and meeting the requirements of Awaab's Law. We maintain relevant data within the terms of our privacy agreement with residents to help us accurately assess their circumstances to assess whether there are significant risks to them arising from damp and mould. This includes information about vulnerabilities of residents or members of their

	household that they have disclosed to us. When they report damp or mould, we will check the accuracy of this information and ask about any changes or other information relevant to the risk which damp and mould presents to them. We will develop communication materials in a variety of formats to provide information about damp and mould and how to report it. We will do this in accessible formats and have facilities to support communication and engagement with residents who do not have English as a first language. We will collate and monitor information from damp and mould reports to understand whether there are particular groups that are more at risk from damp and mould in their homes, and whether the service we provide meets their needs and provides sustainable repairs or treatment of mould. We use this information to review and improve the effectiveness of this service in meeting diverse needs.
Performance monitoring, reporting and assurance	Each reported incident will be managed on our system as a case to ensure a complete record of activity and documentation for that incident. We will monitor and review use of this case management system to verify the following - Cases will be raised as soon as the incident of damp or mould is reported - Closure of cases will be at Team Manager level only - Periodic review of a sample of damp and mould cases by Assistant Director (Repairs and Estates Delivery) - Emergency incidents will be routinely checked for HHSRS hazards to ensure that we correctly report these in addition to specific damp and mould case monitoring and reporting - Scheduling and documenting follow up calls or investigations and linking these to the original report even where a case may have been closed We will monitor and report on open cases to ensure that investigation, determination of outcome and provision of investigation findings to residents is being done within specified timescales, and we are monitoring open cases to check where these are outside the specified timescales for completing investigations or repairs. This will include specific monitoring of completion within specified timescales for emergency and significant hazards. The arrangements include - Assistant Director (Repairs and Estates Delivery) monitoring operational performance and providing dashboard reporting at Executive Board - Asset Management cross reference all open emergency damp and mould incidents with HHSRS reporting Assistant Director (Asset Performance) will schedule periodic monitoring and reporting of - Patterns of damp and mould incidence for location/property type prone to damp and mould - Seasonal or other patterns of damp and mould incidence - Characteristics of residents reporting damp and mould for groups which may be vulnerable, including for recurrence of damp and mould - Resident satisfaction with this function We will use learning insights from damp and mould cases and complaints to gather information about service failures to continually enhance our service for residents. As part of this policy, we aim to understand any inequalities related to access, experience, and/or support, and adapt processes to reduce those impacts.
Roles and Responsibility	Executive Director (Property) is the senior accountable person for this policy Assistant Director (Repairs and Estates Delivery) is the policy owner and is responsible for ensuring that the operational arrangements set out here are effectively managed and meet the requirements of this policy. The Head of Reactive Repairs is responsible for the day-to-day management of cases, ensuring that procedures are consistent with this policy, that cases are managed in accordance with procedure, and for accurate reporting and monitoring of damp and mould repairs.

Cross References	Legislation and regulation • Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 • Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, section 11 • Housing Act 2004 (provisions relating to Housing Health and Safety Rating System) • Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 • Regulator for Social Housing standards, with particular reference to Safety and Quality Standard and Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard Paradigm policies • Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy • Corporate Health and Safety policy • Remedies and Compensation policy • Tenancy Management policy • Complaints policy • Responsive Maintenance policy
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Policy Owner	Adam Dannatt, Assistant Director – Repairs and Estates Delivery
Prepared by	Andrew Dench, Assistant Director – Property Strategy
Approved by	Amalgamated Board
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This section is where you would include any updates that have been made since the policy was originally approved and launched, and you would also include the dates for the approvals of these updates.			
Date	Version	Approved By	Details of Amendments
25 September 2025	1.4	Executive Board	Versions prior to 1.3 were draft documents prepared in the course of resident and colleague engagement. This version is the version approved by Amalgamated Board with subsequent revisions as minuted in the Board decision on 31 July 2025

See amendment section below

