

RSH - Assurance on addressing risks relating to damp and mould in tenants' homes

1. Please provide your registered provider code

- 00MR

2. Please provide your registered provider name

- Portsmouth City Council

3. Please detail your approach to assessing the extent of damp and mould issues affecting your properties, including how you assess the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards

As a social housing provider, we utilise our expertise to assess the priority of repairs that are needed in our tenants' homes. Where any health and safety issues are identified these will always be treated as a priority by PCC and our contractors. All repair requests are recorded on our repairs database to enable us to track and manage repairs in partnership with our contractors. Using this database, we can complete a key word search such as "damp/mould" to inform us of how many active repairs cases we have connected to damp and mould or how many reports of damp and mould we have had over a certain period.

This allows us to be able to identify trends in particular areas and deploy surveyors to inspect and assess if further investigation and/or remedial works are required. We also utilise our frontline staff and contractors to report issues on behalf of tenants if they identify individual issues or trends during their visits to tenants' homes. As a management team we also review complaints and disrepair claims to establish if there are any aspects of our repairs and maintenance service that need to be improved, including our response to damp and mould enquiries.

We undertake reviews of repairs data where damp and mould has been identified to inform the effectiveness of the Council's response to repair demands and highlight where future planned works maybe required to address ongoing issues.

We target analysis of the repairs data to identify those properties where the residents do not contact us frequently to report repairs and so condition surveys and tenancy visits are targeted to these properties to assess if there are any issues that we should be aware of, including damp and mould issues

Remote monitoring equipment (battery sensors) has been installed to a sample of property archetypes as part of a deep retrofit feasibility to measure Temperature (°C), Carbon Dioxide (CO2 ppm), Humidity (Relative Humidity %) and Volatile Organic Compounds (ppm) and to work with residents to better understand home

environments and how our residents and buildings interact. This monitoring will help the Council understand the work required to address issues raised and post completion monitoring will be undertaken to measure the effectiveness of the interventions undertaken.

4. In the context of the approach detailed in Q3, please provide details of your most recent assessment of the extent of damp and mould hazards in your homes, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards

- During the past 12 months there have been 371 surveyor visits to assess damp and mould issues as part of a repair request. Each case identified has been assessed by a surveyor and appropriate actions or repairs have been commenced or completed to rectify the situation for the residents concerned.
- Since 2021 there have been 10 stage one complaints received related to condensation and none have been escalated to stage two or escalated to the Ombudsman. There have been no disrepair claims and no record of paying out to any Council tenants regarding claims related to damp and/or mould or related to respiratory issues/ ill health.
- Our targeted stock condition surveys to pre-war acquired properties (dwellings purchased by the Council) has resulted in planned maintenance programmes being established to undertake a range of work to address defects including damp.
- The remote monitoring equipment work and data analysis to a targeted set of property types is ongoing over several heating seasons and no results are available at this time.
- Since September 2022 Council surveyors have referred 75+ residents to Leap and Switched On Portsmouth so that an Energy Advisor can advise on ways to maximise income and save energy, or provide assistance with the costs of heating
- Post occupation surveys and monitoring was undertaken at the Wilmcote House retrofit project. The project was the largest EnerPhit project in the UK to address poor heating levels, condensation, and mould issues. It demonstrated that the work undertaken has eliminated the original condensation and mould issues identified as well as creating a better affordable living environment requiring less heating demands.

5. Given the findings of the assessment outlined in Q4, please outline the actions you are taking to remedy any issues and hazards, and ensure that your homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

- Each case of damp and mould identified has been assessed by a surveyor and appropriate actions or repairs have been commenced or completed to rectify the situation for the tenant concerned.
- Planned maintenance programmes have been established to undertake a range of work to address defects including damp to pre-war acquired properties

- A damp and mould policy together with guidance for the teams is currently being refreshed and is planned to be published in the next six months to ensure that the Council are consistent regarding their approach and residents have visibility of what service to expect regarding damp and mould enquiries.
- Refresher training of all staff who undertake property visits is ongoing to ensure that they can correctly identify damp and mould issues and take the appropriate action.
- A retrofit feasibility is currently being undertaken to assess the viability of retrofitting properties technically and financially to achieve decarbonisation of the housing stock. A total of 29 sites have been chosen that include a mix of houses and blocks of flats as well as traditional and non-traditional construction representing a third of the housing stock type
- Staff and contractor core group briefings have been undertaken to refocus knowledge and understanding of damp and mould response to issues identified
- The Council asset management strategy and business plan is being reviewed by external consultants to identify strengths and weaknesses of the strategy and refresh the plans to address sector challenges

6. Please tell us how you ensure that individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with promptly and effectively when raised by tenants and residents

Damp and Mould enquiries from Residents

Typically, damp and mould demands are reported by residents themselves to the Council via the Repairs Support Team RST, although damp and mould may also be identified by Housing Management staff, surveyors, or contractors' staff during a property inspection, as part of the void process or during the course of another arranged property visit such as an unrelated repair or servicing appointment.

- Where a resident has reported damp or mould issues an appointment will be arranged for a Council surveyor to visit and inspect the property to assess and diagnose the cause of the issue.
- A repair request will be recorded on the Council repairs and maintenance database for all damp and mould enquiries raised, from which we are able to extract data to review damp and mould measures.
- The Council surveyor will inspect the property with the resident to investigate and assesses the damp and mould issue highlighted; they will diagnose the cause that may include taking relative humidity readings, temperature readings, check the effectiveness of the heating and ventilation as well as inspect for any other building defects that may contribute to the damp and mould issue highlighted.
- The Council does not differentiate category 1 and 2 hazards, the council surveyor will arrange for any further follow-on repair work to be undertaken by

contractors or specialists to address any building and /or heating issues identified and prevent further occurrences of damp and mould regardless of the category.

- The Council surveyor will use the opportunity to also provide advice to the resident to manage their property to prevent damp and mould, as well as take the opportunity to discuss Leap and the city council's Switched-on Portsmouth options for referral if required so that an Energy Advisor can advise on ways to maximise income and save energy, or provide assistance with the costs of heating

A follow-on appointment will be arranged with the resident by a Council surveyor to monitor the effectiveness of the repair/s undertaken and/or advice/guidance and appropriate further actions will be taken where necessary.

Referrals from staff and contractors

We make every tenant contact count, whether this is in person, by telephone, or in writing. All staff and contractors will observe and report any issues with the property during visits - this holistic approach includes safeguarding issues, hoarding, and any repair issues including damp and mould.

When properties are void or during the mutual exchange process, we check the condition of the property including the presence of mould, or the likelihood of it occurring.

When undertaking any planned maintenance project internal surveys will be undertaken to a sample of properties as part of the evaluation of the scheme, if damp and mould issues are identified then options will be assessed to incorporate measures to address the issues identified, this may include for example replacement windows or external wall insulation

Additional Information that can be added

As a local authority landlord, we work to ensure that all our tenants' homes are maintained to a good standard and that we respond appropriately to all repairs and concerns raised by our tenants. We aim to tailor repairs around the individuals needs and requests where possible. In doing this we are confident that we have a good understanding of where there may be any issues with damp and mould and have actions in place to rectify the situation.

We review information that we provide to residents and are currently updating a damp and mould advice leaflet that is provided to residents and the information will also be updated on the Council website.

We publish via social media and the switched-on Portsmouth website updates on how residents can deal with damp, mould, and condensation and where they can seek help and advice.

The manager of the surveying team assesses the surveying response to damp and mould enquiries and the surveying team meet regularly to discuss and feedback

Our approach is to make every visit and resident contact count, this means every team or contractor visiting a property having a view of both the household and the property to identify any damp and mould issue and forwarding any issues to the Repairs Support team so that a surveyor can visit.

7. Please provide the name of the person in your organisation that we can contact with further queries:

- Meredydd Hughes
- Sally Scattergood

8. Please provide the job title of the person provided in Q7.

- Assistant Director of Buildings
- Assistant Director of Housing

9. Please provide the email of the person provided in Q7.

- Meredydd.Hughes@portsmouthcc.gov.uk
- Sally.Scattergood@portsmouthcc.gov.uk

10. Please provide the phone number of the person provided in Q7.

- 07837 235329
- 07306 029237

11. Please confirm if you have uploaded additional document(s) to NROSH+

- I have NOT uploaded any additional documents to NROSH+

