

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

This short survey is designed to capture a detailed outline of your organisation's approach to assessing, recording, monitoring and remedying damp and mould issues affecting your properties.

You should provide detailed responses to all questions, and these should be supported with recent data, if data are not available, you should note this in your response.

Please do not provide data or information by which individual tenants or properties could be identified.

If you wish to provide more information than this form allows, please upload additional documents as regulatory documents via NROSH+ (<https://nroshplus.regulatorofsocialhousing.org.uk/>). You should select the category 'Other Documents' and provide a description. If you are a local authority, please upload your additional documents as a supporting document to your LADR survey, providing a suitable description. You must also confirm in Q11 of this survey whether documents have been uploaded to NROSH+.

We will review all the information provided in the survey and documents and may request further information if necessary.

Should you identify that your homes do not meet the relevant standards, you should self-refer immediately.

For information on how the regulator processes and protects your personal data please see our privacy notice available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/regulator-of-social-housing-privacy-notice>

Required

1. Please provide your registered provider code

00BG

2. Please provide your registered provider name

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

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

Stock Condition Surveys

We carry out stock condition surveys (SCS) on a 5-year cycle and this incorporates all external and communal areas of buildings and 20% internal surveys on a block-by-block basis. This programme was conducted by an external independent surveying company and cases of damp and /or mould were categorised as cat 1 or cat 2 in line with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The last external survey was completed in 2020 and 20% of internal surveys (c2,200 properties) were completed in 2019.

The SCS also identifies any failing elements of blocks such as roofs and rainwater and foul water drainage that could cause damp and mould and allows such blocks to be included in investment and repair programmes. Similarly, if the internal surveys identify a high occurrence of damp and mould in a block then investigations will be undertaken.

Day to day repairs response

In between Stock Condition Surveys THH has clear data gathering and response mechanisms to reports of damp and mould. This is provided through:

- Reported responsive repairs
- Disrepair claims
- Complaints and Members Enquiries
- Staff visits across service (e.g., annual gas safety checks)

(See response to Q6)

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.

The SCS programme completed in 2019 reported one category 1 and 157 category 2 mould and damp cases.

Any category 1 hazards identified by stock condition survey undergo a full assessment to determine the severity (A-C). There are no current category 1 hazards due to damp or mould as per the last Local Authority Housing Data (LAHS) submission in July 2022.

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

Category 1 case

Serious damp was caused by a leak from an adjacent property. Works were completed promptly to resolve the problem and there has been no reoccurrence.

Cat 2 cases

Of the 157 category 2 cases the large majority were low level damp and mould issues.

Works were undertaken at 41 of the properties to address damp or mould issues.

Of the other 116 category 2 findings picked up in the internal inspections a desktop survey found that none had a live damp or mould related case awaiting works.

To assure ourselves that no continuing problem or reoccurrence of damp or mould is present at these properties calls have been made to these tenants and visits arranged to inspect for any works that may be required.

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

We use Northgate NEC repairs database to capture all reported repairs and iCase works for all reported complaints and Members Enquiries.

Our Housing Service Centre (contact centre) staff are trained to ask diagnostic questions and raise an inspection or works order, depending on the level of information provided and whether pre-inspection is required.

Reported cases of damp and mould all receive an internal inspection of the property for investigation and diagnosis of repair requirement definitions within our day-to-day repairs process. Response times default to a maximum of 20 days although when an urgent case is identified response is within seven days.

Repair responses are broadly categorised according to need into the following:

(a) Early intervention 3-stage treatment

This is a standard process used to treat most basic damp, mould and condensation spores and includes a mould wash, specialist damp treatment, then sealant paint.

(b) Higher level intervention

Referrals to our specialist damp contractors for additional interventions to (a) above, such as

increased ventilation, installation of fans or applying thermal boarding.

(c) Associated works

Follow on works such as plastering, additional painting and tiling works.

Our technical officers and contractors work through the various phases from initial assessment, and early interventions, to more specialist or technical interventions (e.g., thermal boarding or installation of additional vents or fans) and other associated works (see Q3).

Repairs Inspectors carry out joint assessments where required, as well as post-inspecting a proportion of works. The level of intervention applied takes into account factors such as previous treatments, as well as identifying and eliminating any other underlying repair issues, such as leaks.

All works orders are monitored through a series of automated reporting, which forms part of our standard contract management. Overdue orders are flagged up through a similar process, so that intervention can be taken to, for example, facilitate access or pick up on vulnerabilities through referrals to colleagues.

In recent years, we have adopted an “End to End Leaks Process” to ensure that all reported leaks are successfully addressed including remedial works to ameliorate any resulting damage, including mould.

Alongside the repairs undertaken, advice and guidance is provided to residents about how they can best use their sources of heating, ventilation and air circulation, as well as advice on reducing steam and condensation from bathrooms, kitchens and drying clothes.

The prevention and treatment of damp and mould is clearly the responsibility of the landlord, however, alongside the repairs undertaken, advice is given to residents about how they can best use their sources of heating ventilation and air circulation. The Housing Ombudsman intervention on damp and mould earlier in the year highlighted the need to improve communication with residents. Therefore, THH have augmented previous advice on prevention of DMC to tenants with six videos that provide tips for residents that will help mitigate the occurrence of damp and mould.

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

Ann Otesanya

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

Interim Chief Executive, Tower Hamlets Homes

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

ann.otesanya@thh.org.uk

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

0207 364 2848

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

- I have uploaded additional document(s) to NROSH+
- I have NOT uploaded any additional documents to NROSH+