

Southward Housing Co-operative

Damp & Mould Policy	: V1 Author: MM Date: 18 June 2026 Approved by Committee: 07 July 2026
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1. Introduction

Southward Housing Co-operative is committed to ensuring all homes are safe, healthy, and free from damp and mould. This policy sets out how the Co-op will **prevent, investigate, communicate, and remedy** damp and mould hazards in full compliance with:

- **Awaab's Law (Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) Regulations 2025)**
- **Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023**
- **Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 (Fitness for Human Habitation)**
- **Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**

The Co-op recognises that **damp and mould are not lifestyle issues** and will always treat them as potential hazards requiring prompt investigation and repair.

2. Scope & Definitions

2.1 Damp

Moisture affecting the property caused by:

- **Condensation**
- **Penetrating damp** (leaks, defective pointing, render, gutters, flashing)
- **Rising damp** (moisture from ground through walls/floors)

2.2 Mould

Microbial growth resulting from excess moisture, typically appearing as black, green, or white patches.

2.3 Affected Areas

Kitchens, bathrooms, external walls, window reveals, cupboards, lofts, and cold bridges.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Co-op Responsibilities

The Co-op will:

- Investigate all reports **within the statutory timeframes** set out in Awaab's Law.
- Diagnose root causes (ventilation, heating, building fabric, plumbing).
- Complete **Emergency Repairs** within 24 Hours
- Provide **interim safety measures** where needed (dehumidifiers, temporary heaters, safe mould wipe-down).
- Complete **safety repairs within 5 working days** of investigation.
- Begin **supplementary or complex works within 5 working days**, or within **12 weeks** for major works.
- Provide written updates to tenants at each stage.
- Offer **temporary accommodation** if the home cannot be made safe within the legal timeframe.
- Keep full records of all reports, inspections, communications, and works.

3.2 Tenant Responsibilities

Tenants must:

- Report damp or mould **as soon as it appears**.
- Allow access for inspections and repairs.
- Use ventilation systems provided (extractor fans, trickle vents).
- Follow any written guidance issued by the Co-op.

The Co-op will **never blame tenants** for damp or mould.

4. Awaab's Law: Mandatory Timeframes

The Co-op will meet or exceed the following statutory requirements:

4.1 Investigation

Complete investigation within 10 working days of receiving a report.

- Investigation includes visual inspection, moisture readings, ventilation checks, and HHSRS assessment.

4.2 Written Summary

Provide a **written summary within 3 working days** of completing the investigation.

This will include:

- Findings
- Identified hazards

- Required works
- Timeframes
- Interim safety measures

4.3 Safety Repairs

- Complete **all safety-critical repairs within 5 working days** of the investigation concluding.

4.4 Supplementary Works

- Begin supplementary works **within 5 working days** of completing safety works.
- For complex works (e.g., external fabric repairs, damp-proof course replacement), works must **begin within 12 weeks**.

4.5 Alternative Accommodation

If the Co-op cannot make the home safe within the legal timeframe, it will:

- Provide suitable temporary accommodation, or
- Assist the tenant to secure suitable temporary accommodation.

5. Inspection Programme

5.1 Proactive Inspections

- **Annual stock condition survey** including damp/mould checks.
- **Winter checks (Nov–Feb)** for homes with known risk factors.
- **Post-works verification** 4–8 weeks after repairs.

5.2 Triggered Inspections

Triggered by:

- Tenant reports
- Sensor data (where installed)
- Contractor feedback
- Committee concerns

6. Preventative Measures

6.1 Ventilation

- Maintain mechanical extraction (kitchens ≥ 60 l/s boost; bathrooms ≥ 30 l/s).
- Ensure trickle vents are operational.
- Consider Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) for recurring cases.

6.2 Thermal Improvements

- Insulate cold bridges and lofts.

- Install insulated plasterboard on problem walls.
- Draught-proofing where appropriate.

6.3 Moisture Management

- Maintain damp-proof courses and membranes.
- Repair pointing, render, gutters, downpipes, and roof coverings.
- Ensure overflow pipes discharge correctly.

6.4 Finishes

- Use vapour-permeable paints and mould-resistant sealants.
- Avoid vinyl wall coverings.

6.5 Plumbing Integrity

- Proactive checks for slow leaks.
- Prompt replacement of faulty sealant/grout.

7. Reporting & Communication

7.1 Reporting Routes

Tenants may report damp/mould via:

- Phone 07907 631 333
- Email admin@southwardhousing.co.uk
- Maintenance Request
- In person to the Maintenance Officer

7.2 Acknowledgement

The Co-op will acknowledge reports **within 1 working day**.

7.3 Vulnerable Tenants

Cases involving health vulnerabilities will be prioritised and may receive:

- Accelerated inspection
- Additional ventilation support
- Temporary dehumidifiers
- Assistance with temporary accommodation

8. Repair Categories

Repair category	Examples	Completion timescale
Emergency repairs	Severe water ingress, internal sewage overflow, or extensive mould posing an immediate health risk.	Within 24 hours
Safety repairs	Repairs needed to remove or reduce a damp or mould hazard, restoration of extraction in high-risk rooms, or leak isolation.	Within 5 working days of the investigation concluding.
Supplementary works	Insulation, external fabric repairs, internal reinstatement, or other follow-on works after safety repairs.	Begin within 5 working days of completing safety works.
Complex works	Damp-proof course replacement, major structural repairs, or larger works requiring planning, specialist contractors, or materials.	Begin within 12 weeks where works are complex or major.

Emergency (within 24 hours)

- Severe water ingress
- Internal sewage overflow
- Extensive mould posing immediate health risk

Safety Repairs (within 5 working days)

- Repairs required to remove or reduce a damp/mould hazard
- Restoration of extraction in high-risk rooms
- Leak isolation

Supplementary Works (within 5 working days of safety works)

- Insulation
- External fabric repairs
- Internal reinstatement

Complex Works (within 12 weeks)

- Damp-proof course replacement
- Major structural repairs

9. Remediation Procedure

9.1 Diagnostic Visit

Includes:

- Visual inspection

- Moisture meter readings
- Ventilation assessment
- Thermal bridging assessment
- HHSRS hazard scoring

9.2 Immediate Controls

- Safe mould wipe-down with approved biocide
- Temporary ventilation boost
- Portable dehumidifier
- Temporary weatherproofing
- Leak isolation

9.3 Root-Cause Repairs

- **Condensation:** ventilation upgrades, insulation, fan repairs, PIV
- **Penetrating damp:** gutters, downpipes, flashing, pointing, render, window seals
- **Rising damp:** DPC repair/replacement, moisture barriers

9.4 Reinstatement

- Replace damaged plasterboard/skirting
- Apply antifungal treatments
- Redecorate with vapour-permeable finishes

9.5 Follow-Up

- Reinspection within **4–8 weeks**
- Written confirmation of resolution

10. Monitoring, Data & KPIs

The Co-op will maintain a damp/mould register including:

- Date reported
- Inspection date
- Findings
- Works ordered
- Completion dates
- Costs
- Recurrence tracking

KPIs

- First inspection within **10 working days**
- Safety repairs completed within **5 working days**
- No recurrence within **6 months**
- 100% written summaries issued within **3 working days**

11. Access & Tenancy Conditions

Tenants must allow access for inspections and works with:

- **7 days' notice** for routine visits
- **48 hours' notice** for safety checks
- **Immediate access** for emergencies

Failure to provide access may delay resolution and may trigger tenancy enforcement procedures.

12. Complaints & Escalation

Tenants may raise concerns with:

1. Maintenance Officer
2. Maintenance Sub-Committee
3. Management Committee
4. Housing Ombudsman

The Co-op will handle complaints in line with the Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.