community gateway

DAMP, MOULD AND CONDENSATION POLICY

REVIEW DATE: NOVEMBER 2028

1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 Community Gateway Association (CGA) is committed to ensuring that tenants' homes remain safe, secure, and well-maintained.

1.2 CGA recognises the serious impact that damp, mould, and condensation (DMC) can have on tenants' health and wellbeing. Addressing these issues promptly and preventing them wherever possible is a key organisational priority. CGA's goal is to eliminate damp and mould in our homes wherever possible.

1.3 CGA takes all reports of DMC seriously and recognises the potential health risks if these issues are left untreated, especially for vulnerable members of our community. These risks can include respiratory problems, weakened immune systems, and negative effects on mental health.

1.4 This policy has been developed to specifically address the problems associated with damp and mould highlighted in the Housing Ombudsman's report, 'Spotlight on Damp and Mould – It's not Lifestyle' and the subsequent requirements of Awaab's Law. CGA has adopted a zero-tolerance approach, proactively identifying and addressing issues, and responding quickly and thoroughly when reports of DMC related issues are received.

2.0 Scope of Policy

2.1 This DMC Policy outlines how CGA will prevent, identify, and respond to damp and mould issues within our homes. It sets out our approach to taking all reports seriously, investigating the cause, and our commitment to satisfactorily complete all repairs within agreed timescales and in accordance with Awaab's Law.

2.2 It explains how CGA will continue to raise awareness through accessible communication and practical advice, ensuring every tenant receives a timely and person-centred response to any concerns about DMC.

2.3 This Policy applies to:

- All tenants who rent their homes under a CGA tenancy agreement.
- All Leaseholders and shared owners where a property defect falls under CGA's responsibility within the terms of their lease.

2.4 Commercial premises are excluded from this policy.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1 The aim of this policy is to raise awareness of issues surrounding damp and mould in CGA's domestic properties and to set out CGA's zero-tolerance approach to addressing and resolving reports of damp and mould in its tenanted and leasehold properties.

3.2 CGA's key objectives are to:

- Proactively prevent damp and mould wherever possible.
- Identify and manage the causes of damp and mould effectively to protect tenants' health and wellbeing.
- Complete repairs to the required standard and within agreed time frames, in line with Awaab's Law.
- Deliver a responsive and person-centred service, ensuring tenants receive support that meets their individual needs.
- Raise awareness among tenants about damp and mould, ensuring they can report concerns easily and confidently.
- Provide clear, accessible information and practical support to help tenants prevent and manage DMC in their homes.
- Offer a range of convenient ways to report issues and ensure all reports are investigated and responded to promptly.
- Work collaboratively with tenants to resolve issues, reduce complaints, and prevent disrepair claims, addressing any concerns fairly and without delay.
- Treat all tenants with fairness, respect, empathy, and consistency in every stage of reporting, investigating, and resolving damp and mould issues.

4.0 Understanding Damp and Mould

4.1 Damp and mould can develop in a home when there is excess moisture in the air and an imbalance between heating, insulation and ventilation. This can occur when moisture from the air condenses on cold surfaces or when water enters from outside. If not addressed promptly, damp can affect tenants' health and comfort, as well as cause damage to their home.

4.2 Mould is a natural growth that appears on damp surfaces. It often appears as black, green, or white spots and often has a musty smell. Mould is most commonly linked to condensation or ongoing dampness.

4.3 Moisture is produced in every home through daily activities. If this moisture is not properly ventilated, it can lead to condensation and, over time, to damp and mould. CGA aims to help tenants understand how to manage ventilation and heating to reduce this risk.

4.4 Condensation happens when warm, moist air meets a cold surface (for example, a window or wall) and turns into water droplets.

4.5 Condensation can occur for a variety of reasons, including:

- Overcrowding, where there are more occupants (people and pets) than the home is designed to accommodate.
- Defective insulation, such as insulation that has become dislodged in lofts.
- Inadequate heating, where rooms are repeatedly below approximately 18–21°C.
- Excess moisture, for example, cooking without pan lids or drying clothes indoors without adequate ventilation.
- Lack of ventilation, for example, keeping windows closed, not using extractor fans, or placing furniture directly against external walls.

4.6 Damp can also occur when faults in the structure of a building allow water to enter from outside. The main types of structural damp are:

- Rising damp – when moisture travels up from the ground because the damp-proof barrier (known as the damp-proof course) is damaged or missing. It is usually identified by a 'tide mark' on walls, peeling paint, and sometimes a musty smell.
- Penetrating damp – when water enters through the walls, roof, or cracks in the building. It may show as dark patches or stains on internal walls or ceilings, blistered plaster, or rusting on nails and skirting boards.

4.7 Common causes of penetrating damp can include:

- Defective or damaged external components such as roofs, doors, or windows.
- Blocked or leaking gutters and downpipes.
- Leaking internal waste pipes or heating systems.
- Water entering through cracks, damaged brickwork, or poor design.
- Persistent flooding or water pooling around the property.

5.0 CGA's Responsibilities

5.1 All reports of damp and mould will be treated individually, with no assumptions being made about the cause.

5.2 Following a report, or becoming aware of damp or mould, CGA will investigate the cause and carry out any necessary repairs in accordance with the Tenancy Agreement and Repairing and Maintaining Your Homes Policy.

5.3 CGA will provide effective solutions based on the identified cause of the damp or mould and will ensure that all actions taken reflect the level of risk identified.

5.4 Where damp and mould is identified as posing a significant risk to the tenant's health or safety, CGA will manage the case in line with the requirements of Awaab's Law, as set out below.

CGA will:

- Investigate emergency hazards within 24 hours.
- Investigate significant hazards within 10 working days.
- Provide tenants with a written summary of the findings within 3 working days of the investigation being completed, unless all works have already been finished within this timeframe.
- Complete any required safety works within the following timescales:
    - Emergency hazards within 24 hours.
    - Significant hazards within 5 working days of the investigation being completed.

Where it is not possible to complete the required safety work within these timescales, CGA will take steps to reduce any risk to the tenant. This may include:

- Putting temporary safety measures in place.
- Arranging suitable alternative accommodation where needed; and
- Clearly explaining to the tenant why there is a delay.

CGA will make sure all required safety work starts as soon as possible, and within a maximum of 12 weeks from the end of the investigation.

5.6 CGA will keep tenants informed throughout the process. This includes explaining what we find, what actions we plan to take, and when repairs will be completed. Where required by law, tenants will receive a written summary of the investigation and findings.

5.7 CGA will undertake internal and external stock condition surveys at least once every five years, including assessment against the Housing Health and Safety Rating System to ensure homes are free from Category 1 and significant Category 2 hazards.

5.8 Where repairs are identified through proactive surveys carried out by CGA, these

will be raised and completed in line with our Repairing and Maintaining Your Home Policy.

5.9 CGA will work proactively to help tenants recognise, report, and prevent damp and mould. Information will be available on our website and printed leaflets can be provided on request. We will also make information available in various languages or accessible formats if needed.

5.10 CGA staff will receive training so that damp and mould issues can be identified and addressed quickly. This includes:

- Supporting staff to recognise and report issues effectively.
- Ensuring tenants are directed to appropriate support.
- Providing technical training for repairs and maintenance staff to assess and treat damp, mould, and condensation problems.

5.11 For severe or recurring DMC, CGA will carry out a more detailed survey to identify any underlying or wider causes. This may include checks of neighbouring properties or communal areas where necessary. CGA will arrange any required remedial works, using specialist contractors where appropriate, and keep tenants informed throughout, agreeing appointments in advance.

5.12 Initial risk assessments occur at the first report to prioritise response, considering tenant vulnerability or health concerns of the tenant or other household members. Our aim is to carry out an initial inspection or urgent remedial work as quickly as possible depending on the level of risk.

DMC Risk:	Timescales:	Attended By:
Emergency	24 Hours	Surveyor and Operative
Significant	10 Working Days	Surveyor
Low	20 Working Days	Operative
Negligible	20 Working Days	Operative

5.13 In cases where works required to address damp and mould are significant or disruptive, or where the tenant is vulnerable or at a higher risk of health impacts, CGA will work with the tenant to identify suitable alternative accommodation while the works are carried out. Where DMC is assessed as an emergency risk and cannot be made safe within 24 hours, CGA will also arrange alternative accommodation until the emergency hazard is resolved.

5.14 Where a DMC issue has been assessed as an emergency or significant risk, and we are unable to gain access to carry out essential repairs, we will take a proactive approach to engage with the tenant. If access still cannot be arranged, we may need to explore legal options to ensure the issue is resolved promptly and effectively.

5.15 Where the risk is categorised as an emergency or significant hazard, CGA will provide tenants with a named, central point of contact to support them through their DMC repair journey and will offer ongoing communication in a way that meets each tenant's individual needs.

5.16 Tenants are responsible for decorating inside their home and keeping it in good order. Some damp and mould repairs may affect the decoration of the home and where this happens, CGA will aim to make good following the repair or, where appropriate, may offer a decorating voucher. If CGA is unable to do this, tenants will be advised of the reasons why.

5.17 CGA will carry out post-inspections in line with the Post-Inspection Procedure to ensure that damp and mould repairs have been completed to a high standard. Cases categorised as emergency or significant will receive 100% post-inspections, while low or negligible cases will be reviewed through the routine repairs inspection programme. Any issues identified during these inspections will be addressed promptly, and tenants will be kept informed of the outcome.

5.18 CGA will continue to develop and deliver this policy, taking into account tenant feedback to ensure our services remain high-quality, responsive, and aligned with the needs of our tenants.

6.0 Tenant Responsibilities

6.1 The responsibilities of tenants are set out in their Tenancy Agreement and include:

- Reporting any repairs for which CGA are responsible for as soon as possible.
- Providing CGA or its approved contractors access to the property with at least 24 hours' prior notice, (except in emergencies where immediate access may be required), so that CGA can:
    - Inspect or survey the property, or an adjoining property, for any reason.
    - Carry out any repairs, servicing, treatment, modernisation, replacement improvement works, or safety inspections.
    - Address any other matter for which CGA is responsible, including checking property condition and understanding household circumstances.

6.2 In addition to the Tenancy Agreement, there are practical steps tenants can take to help prevent and reduce conditions that can lead to condensation, damp, and mould:

- Managing humidity and moisture levels, for example, covering pans when cooking, drying washing outdoors where possible, and keeping kitchen or bathroom doors closed when cooking or bathing.
- Heat rooms adequately, ideally maintaining a temperature between 18–21°C.
- Keep the home well ventilated, for example, opening windows when cooking or bathing, using extractor fans, keeping trickle vents open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- Inform CGA if household circumstances change, particularly if someone moves into the property.

6.3 CGA's trained technical staff will provide tailored advice for different areas of the home to reduce the risk of mould growth. Tenants are encouraged to follow this guidance for managing damp, mould, and condensation. CGA will also provide information on using heating and ventilation system efficiently.

6.4 Leaseholders and Shared Owners have different obligations for maintaining their homes and should refer to their individual leases. CGA will always guide and support where appropriate.

7.0 Reporting Damp, Mould & Condensation:

7.1 Tenants should report any concerns in relation to DMC promptly via:

- Telephone: 0800 953 0213 (option 1)
- Online: CGA's website at www.communitygateway.co.uk
- Email: repairs@communitygateway.co.uk
- In Person: CGA's Head Office at Harbour House

8.0 Complaints

8.1 We recognise that sometimes our standards may fall below those expected by both CGA and our tenants. When this happens, CGA welcomes complaints as an opportunity to continually improve our services.

8.2 If a tenant wishes to make a complaint about any of the services covered by this policy, they are encouraged to do so by using CGA's complaints process. Complaints can be made via:

- Online: CGA's website at www.communitygateway.co.uk
- Email: complaints@communitygateway.co.uk
- Telephone: 0800 953 0213 (option 6)
- In writing or in person: CGA's Head Office at Harbour House

8.3 We will learn from tenant feedback and complaints, to ensure we strengthen our approach when things go wrong.

8.4 A copy of our Complaints Policy can be found on our website or can be provided upon request.

9.0 Responsibilities

9.1 The CGA Board and Chief Executive will be responsible for ensuring the provision of adequate resources to enable full implementation of the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy and associated Procedure.

9.2 The Head of PropertyCare will be responsible for ensuring appropriate management arrangements and procedures are in place to deliver the aims of this Policy.

9.3 The Service Delivery Manager will be responsible for the operational delivery of this policy and associated procedure.

9.4 The Repairs Support Manager will be responsible for coordinating surveys, repairs, and tenant communication, and will ensure appointments are scheduled in accordance with time frames set out in this policy.

9.5 The Surveyors will be responsible for assessing the causes of damp and mould and specifying remedial works.

9.6 The Information and Assurance Manager will be responsible for providing management information for monitoring compliance against key performance indicators.

9.7 All CGA staff and its contractors have the responsibility for reporting damp and mould.

10. Monitoring Performance:

10.1 CGA will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through a suite of KPI's (Key Performance Indicators) to track DMC demand and the organisation's response.

The KPIs will be reported to Managers, Senior Management, the Executive Leadership Team and CGA's Board as part of ongoing performance monitoring.

10.2 Feedback on our performance is essential to continually improve our services. Tenant satisfaction will be measured through the TSM perception survey, repairs transactional surveys, safety checks, and complaints information, ensuring services meet tenants' needs.

10.3 CGA will analyse trends and patterns in complaints and utilise all available information to inform future service development plans. Both positive and negative feedback will be shared with service managers to embed a culture of continuous learning across all teams.

10.4 CGA monitors all damp, mould, and condensation cases to ensure work is completed on time. Cases requiring action are identified via the Total Mobile system dashboard and closely monitored by managers to ensure timely resolution, with escalation outcomes incorporated into ongoing performance monitoring and continuous improvement.

11.0 Equality & Diversity:

11.1 CGA recognises that it delivers services to communities with wide social diversity and is committed to providing equal opportunities and valuing diversity. CGA particularly recognises barriers some members of the community may face in accessing services designed to address damp and mould, and the potential health risks these barriers can create for tenants.

11.2 CGA and its approved contractors aim to treat all customers fairly, respectfully, and professionally, regardless of gender, race, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or marital status. To ensure tenants have clear information and equal access to services, information will be made available in a range of appropriate languages and formats. A range of reporting options will also be maintained to ensure all tenants can access our services.

11.3 This policy has been designed to be fully inclusive, regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs, or disability. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to inform the policy throughout the development phase and to ensure any negative impacts on minority groups are appropriately considered and mitigated.

12.0 Data Protection:

12.1 The tenancy provides the legal basis for processing of information aligned to this policy. The retention of information will be the length of the tenancy plus six years.

13.0 Policy Review:

13.1 This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, with a full review taking place every three years, to ensure that CGA complies with relevant legislation.

End

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