Dampness & Mould Policy

1. Introduction

Ore Valley Housing Association (OVHA) is committed to maintaining its homes to a high standard which adds value to the homes and their surroundings. Maintaining high quality, secure homes can improve the lives of our customers and achieve high levels of customer satisfaction. Our homes give people the space and security to create meaningful lives and the foundation to build the best possible life.

This policy has been written to ensure that wherever possible, residents are not adversely affected by the causes of damp and mould and drives forward an agenda of proactive action to tackle/manage the causes of damp and mould

2. Aims

- Comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements and with best practice relating to the provision of this service.
- Comply with the requirements of the Investigation and Commencement of Repair (Scotland) Regulations 2026 ("Awaab's Law") and all associated Scottish Government guidance.
- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way.
- Ensure that tenants have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Ensure all reports of damp and mould are treated as a potential health and safety risk and are investigated promptly and compassionately without attributing blame to tenants
- Take responsibility when investigating cases of damp and mould. We will not prejudge the cause of the damp and will investigate on a case-by-case basis.
- Prioritise households containing children, older people, disabled persons, those with respiratory conditions and other vulnerable residents
- Resolve cases of damp and mould in a timely and effective manner in partnership with the tenant.

3. Principles

The key points of this policy are the following:

- Focus on working in partnership with customers ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.
- Make the most effective use of available resources to prevent, manage and resolve damp and mould issues, ensuring that tenant health, safety and wellbeing remain the primary consideration.
- Through timely intervention, effective remediation and compliance with legal and regulatory obligations, OVHA will seek to prevent issues from escalating and maintain safe, healthy homes for all tenants.
- Ensure that the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.
- Enhance the living conditions of our tenants.
- Enhance the service provided to tenants in managing this area of work.
- Enhance the understanding of our stock in relation to damp and mould and have proactive programmes for managing this issue.

4. Investigation and Response Timescales

Ore Valley Housing Association will:

- Ensure reports of damp and mould are investigated by a competent person within 10 working days of becoming aware of the issue.
- Provide the tenant with a written summary of the investigation findings within 3 working days of the investigation being completed.
- Where substantial damp or mould is identified, commence any necessary repair work within 5 working days of the investigation concluding.
- OVHA will ensure that repairs required to address damp and mould are completed as quickly as reasonably practicable and that the property is restored to a condition that is substantially free from damp and mould. Where the required works fall within statutory repair timescales, OVHA will seek to complete them within 20 working days of identifying the necessary remedial action, unless there are exceptional circumstances beyond our control.
- Exceptional circumstances may include the need for specialist surveys, complex diagnostic investigations, extensive remedial works, adverse weather conditions, contractor or material supply issues, or where tenant access cannot be obtained despite reasonable efforts.
- Where repair completion within 20 working days is not possible, OVHA will keep tenants informed of the reasons for the delay, the actions being taken, and the revised timescales for completion. Interim measures will be considered where necessary to mitigate risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of occupants, particularly where vulnerable households are affected.
- OVHA will monitor and record any delays to ensure that repairs are progressed at the earliest opportunity and that tenants experience the minimum possible disruption.

5. Tenant Centred Approach

OVHA adopts a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and is committed to taking all reports seriously, responding promptly and treating tenants fairly and with respect. We will not make assumptions that damp, mould or condensation are the result of tenant lifestyle choices. Instead, we will undertake a thorough assessment of each case, considering potential building defects, ventilation performance, heating systems, insulation standards, environmental factors and any other relevant contributing issues

Every case will be assessed on its individual merits, with decisions based on evidence rather than assumptions. We are committed to maintaining open, honest and effective communication with tenants throughout the investigation and resolution process, ensuring they are kept informed of findings, actions and timescales. Where support is required, we will work collaboratively with tenants to identify practical solutions while ensuring their health, safety and wellbeing remain at the centre of our approach

6. Risk Assessment and Vulnerability

Upon receiving a report of damp and mould, OVHA will undertake a documented risk assessment to identify any actual or potential risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of household members. Particular consideration will be given to residents who may be more vulnerable to the effects of damp and mould, including:

- Children and young people
- Older people
- Pregnant women
- People with asthma, respiratory conditions or other chronic health issues
- Disabled persons
- Individuals with compromised immune systems
- Households experiencing fuel poverty or financial hardship that may affect their ability to adequately heat and ventilate their home

Where vulnerabilities are identified, cases will be prioritised according to the level of risk and urgency. OVHA will maintain clear records of risk assessments, decisions and actions taken to ensure an appropriate and proportionate response.

Where a significant health or safety risk is identified, OVHA will consider and implement appropriate interim measures, which may include accelerated inspections and repairs, the provision of temporary heating, dehumidification equipment, specialist cleaning services, or temporary accommodation where necessary.

OVHA will work proactively with tenants and relevant support agencies to identify and address any underlying factors contributing to damp and mould, ensuring that vulnerable households receive timely support and that risks are reviewed throughout the investigation and resolution process.

7. Record Keeping

OVHA will maintain comprehensive records of:

- Reports received
- Inspections and investigations undertaken
- Assessment findings
- Communications with tenants
- Repair orders and completion dates
- Any exceptional circumstances affecting compliance with statutory timescales
- Clear responsibility for individual cases and follow-up checks to confirm that repairs have addressed the underlying cause.

Records will be retained in accordance with the Association's record management procedures and may be used for performance monitoring and reporting purposes.

8. Monitoring and Reporting

Performance relating to damp and mould cases will be monitored by the Senior Management Team and reported to the Governing Body as appropriate. Monitoring will include:

- The option to install environmental sensors to record, monitor and report on environmental data results
- Keeping a record of property types and occupancy to identify trends and then use that information to identify early intervention strategies where there may be an increased risk of damp and mould.
- Introduce quarterly performance reporting to the Governing Body, including statutory compliance, outstanding cases and recurring problems
- Number of cases reported
- Compliance with Awaab's Law timescales
- Average time taken to resolve cases
- Repeat cases
- Complaints and learning outcomes

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Ore Valley Housing Association is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work. We aim to ensure that our services are accessible, fair and responsive to the needs of all customers, employees, board members and stakeholders.

We recognise and value the diversity of the communities we serve and are committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment or victimisation on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other personal characteristic

Where vulnerabilities are identified, OVHA will assess any additional support needs and take appropriate action to ensure that tenants are not disadvantaged during the reporting, investigation and resolution process. This may include prioritising cases based on risk, providing regular updates, coordinating with relevant support agencies and implementing interim measures to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of occupants.

10.Linked policies

- Maintenance Policy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Complaints Handling Procedure
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Tenant Participation Strategy
- Record Retention Policy

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner following changes to legislation, Scottish Government guidance, Scottish Housing Regulator requirements, SPSO good practice guidance, or operational learning arising from damp and mould cases.

An earlier review will also be undertaken following any significant damp and mould incident, serious complaint, service failure, Ombudsman determination, regulatory intervention, legal judgement, or where performance monitoring identifies recurring issues or areas for improvement.

Any policy review resulting from a significant incident or service failure will consider whether changes are required to procedures, staff training, communication arrangements, risk assessment processes, contractor management or governance oversight to prevent recurrence and improve outcomes for tenants

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