

Managing damp, condensation and preventing mould



**NEWARK &
SHERWOOD**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

As your landlord, Newark and Sherwood District Council wants to provide our tenants with a safe home to live in. This includes effectively and promptly resolving issues in your home which pose a danger to your health and wellbeing. Damp and mould can pose a significant danger if left untreated for long periods.

Damp and mould can be caused by many factors including leaks from the roof and guttering, failed seals on windows, broken extractor fans and inadequate ventilation. As your landlord we will always do our best to make sure your home is in a good state of repair and we will address any issues that may cause damp, mould or condensation.

We want you to know that we take this matter seriously and have already invested in:

- Improving our ability to diagnose problems in thermal insulation of your home using a thermal imaging camera
- Setting aside funds to improve insulation in homes identified with low insulation or significant cold spots
- Identifying problems in guttering and roofing in some blocks and fast tracking their complete renewal
- The use of fungal wash and anti-fungal paint in persistent areas of mould in habitable rooms

Working together we hope to tackle the issues we face with damp and mould. With this in mind we ask that you report any repairs needed and let us know of any issues with your home.

As condensation is one of the most common contributing factors of damp and mould, we have written the following guide to help you reduce possible condensation in your home.

What is condensation?

Condensation is the most common form of moisture in a tenant's property and is caused by water vapour or moisture from inside the home coming into contact with a colder surface such as a windowsill or wall. This moisture can come from everyday activities such as washing, bathing, cooking or even breathing in the home.

The water drops which occur as a result (condensation) may soak into the wallpaper, paintwork or plasterwork. In time, the affected moist areas then attract mould that grows on its surface.

Condensation usually occurs in the colder months whether it is wet or dry outside. It can be found in the corner of rooms, north facing walls, on or near windows and also in areas of poor circulation such as behind walls or beds or any furniture or belongings that are pushed up against an outside wall.



How much moisture do we produce?

Most homes will be affected by condensation at some point, but certain activities increase the likelihood of it forming on surfaces. Everyday activities like cooking, cleaning and bathing all add moisture to the air inside our homes.

The table below gives an idea of how much water could be added to your home in a day.

Activity	Extra moisture
Two people at home for 16 hours	1.5 litres
Taking a bath or shower	1 litre
Drying clothes indoors	4.5 litres
Cooking and using a kettle	3 litres
Washing up	1 litre
For all of these basic activities add	11 of extra moisture

Even breathing adds moisture to the air and if you have pets (dogs, cats etc.) or tropical pets (snakes, lizards etc.) this can increase occurrences also.

Ways to prevent condensation

While we as your landlord will be responsible for ensuring your home is in good repair, reasonably insulated and has an efficient and effective heating system, there are ways you can help prevent or limit the likelihood of condensation occurring.

Produce less moisture

- Dry clothes outside where possible and avoid using radiators to dry clothes – the vapour from the clothes turns into moisture in the air and is then circulated around the rooms. This then gathers on walls, windows and other fabrics which can then lead to mould
- Vent tumble dryers to the outside
- If clothes have to be dried indoors, use a clothes airer in a well-ventilated room; open a window, use a dehumidifier or turn on the extractor fan to reduce the spread of moisture
- When cooking use pan lids, don't overfill pans, don't leave kettles boiling and turn on the extractor fan
- Avoid using oil and portable gas bottle heaters as they produce large amounts of vapour (water)
- When bathing, put in cold water first then the hot – it will reduce the steam by 90% which leads to condensation



How to remove excess moisture

- Cleaning the condensation from windows and frames every day with a cloth will reduce the likelihood of black mould occurring - just opening the windows is not enough
- Wring out the cloth in the sink as opposed to putting it on the radiator as this will just put moisture back into the air

Turn your heating on

- Running your heating on low will prevent cold spots, dry out damp and reduce the chance of mould taking hold
- By introducing low level heating to keep the room at 18 degrees, the temperature of internal surfaces will rise - this will reduce cooling of any moisture-laden air and the amount of condensation
- Ideally, low level background heating should be continuous, as any short bursts of heat may not result in a suitable rise in surface temperatures
- Use the thermostatic valves on individual radiators to control the heating to individual rooms



Ventilation

- Air your property every day – opening a small window downstairs and one upstairs on opposite sides of the building will reduce condensation by ‘cross ventilating’ your property
- Open your bedroom curtains and / or windows for one hour every day to make sure that your property is well ventilated and allows the moisture which has built up overnight to escape
- Even when it is cold, moisture can gather in the home and by opening the windows, the moisture is allowed to escape
- Trickle vents are designed to provide air flow so make sure they are kept open at all times to ventilate the property – ensure that air bricks are not obstructed or covered
- Keep windowsills clear of clutter
- Keep doors closed and use the extractor fan when you are cooking, bathing or showering to prevent moisture escaping to other parts of the property – keep the doors closed for a short time afterwards.
- Contrary to popular belief, extractor fans are a cheap, efficient way to remove moisture – it costs about 20p per hour on average to run an extractor fan: <https://checkappliance.co.uk/how-much-do-extractor-fans-cost-to-run>
- Leave space between the back of furniture and the walls for cold air to circulate
- Avoid overfilling cupboards as this prevents air circulating

If mould does occur, wipe down or spray walls with anti mould spray or diluted bleach. Ensure that you follow instructions for safe use. Wash affected clothes and shampoo furnishings and carpets.

If you experience a continuing problem with mould in your home please contact our repairs team on **01636 650000**.

Condensation is not the only cause of moisture

Damp is caused by moisture that can get into your home in several ways:

- Rain can get in through leaking roofs, blocked or damaged guttering, leaky walls and poorly fitting doors and windows
- Leaks from plumbing faults, failed appliances and poorly sealed baths and showers can quickly build up, often where you can't see them
- Ground water can rise up through the walls and floor if the damp proof cause isn't working properly – this will leave a 'tide mark' about a metre above the floor

If you have rainwater getting in, or any internal leaks or signs of rising damp, then it is important to get the problem sorted out quickly. Any moisture from any of these potential repairs need to be reported to our repairs team as soon as possible.

Further resources on how to prevent damp and mould can be found at the following websites:

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/fixing-damp-and-condensation

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-common-problems/repairs-damp

Please report any mould or damp as soon as it is discovered to:

Castle House
5 Great North Road
Newark
NG24 1BY

Tel: 01636 650000

Email: housing@newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk

