

This policy sets out how Amplus will process and resolve issues with damp, mould and condensation reported or identified within its customers' homes and communal areas.

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy

Document management

Directorate	Operations
Policy sponsor	Chief Operations Officer
Policy owner	Director of Property Operations
Policy author	Director of Property Operations

Review process

Approval route	Directors Team – Executive Leadership Team – Audit and Risk Committee – Board
Approved by	Executive Leadership Team
Approval date	04 December 2024
Effective	17 December 2024
Review Frequency	Annual
Review date	04 December 2025
Version number	1.0

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Part 2

Overview

Policy statement

This policy supports Amplius's values and is a commitment to improving lives and supporting colleagues by:

- Taking a proactive approach across all areas of our business to ensure issues of damp and mould are not seen as acceptable, and we will offer support to our customers to ensure that any issues are resolved satisfactorily and quickly.
- Adopting a three-stage process, work will continue to address and improve methods by which damp and mould can be identified within our properties to 'find our silent customers'. The management of our cases will revolve around customer, building and usage with our options for remediation being the output. The final stage will be assurance including inspection of completed works, validating the impact of the works, annual re-inspection and recording any changes in the usage to ensure that customers are able to use their homes as they choose.

This policy is a Day 1 provision for Amplius as a newly established company, it is subject to review as we develop and review our policies over the next 18 months.

Scope

The term Amplius incorporates all member companies and subsidiaries.

The policy applies to:

- All Amplius employees and suppliers' action on or behalf of Amplius customers

The policy does not form part of any colleague's contract of employment and the policy may be amended at any time.

Part 3

Policy details

Amplius's Approach to Damp Mould and Condensation

Amplius will achieve and maintain effective management systems and will comply with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements as defined in this policy.

In implementing this policy, our objectives will be to:

- Work in partnership with our customers to ensure that their homes provide safe and healthy environments for them to live in.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. We will take a proactive approach across all areas of our business to ensure that issues of this nature are not seen as acceptable. We will support our customers to ensure that any issues are resolved satisfactorily.
- Ensure that customers have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive support, advice, and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Be supportive and responsive to customer vulnerabilities to ensure all customer needs, regardless of protected characteristics, are considered and addressed and solutions are agreed upon with customers.
- Ensure that our staff receive training to properly diagnose and respond to reports of damp and mould, understand the causes and remedies, and understand the effects that damp and mould can have on the health of our customers, both physically and mentally.
- Always comply with all current legal responsibilities and codes of good practice.

Customer First

Amplius will work across all departments to manage and seek to eradicate dampness and mould, while ensuring solutions meet the customer's needs by:

- Inspecting all reports of damp and mould to ensure we have fully understood the impact of the issue on the customer.
- Ensuring detailed records are kept when reports of damp and mould are made to reduce repeat visits.
- Assessing risk to determine each customer's specific experience. Risk ratings will be measured, taking into account not just the property but also the customer's circumstances and possible vulnerabilities.
- Amplius will ensure it meets the current regulations (e.g., Housing Health and Safety Rating System, Decent Homes standards etc.)
- We will ensure that surveys to establish the presence of damp and mould are carried out by skilled and well-trained officers that understand our homes and how they are used.
- Where extensive works may be required, we will consider the individual circumstances of the household, including any vulnerabilities, and whether it is appropriate to move resident(s) out of their home at an early stage.

Reducing risk of damp and mould in our homes

Amplus will seek to reduce the risk of damp and mould experienced in homes by:

- Understanding the property types that are most likely to experience damp and mould and put in place appropriate plans as well as enhanced tenancy management to reduce the risk of occurrence.
- Proactively reviewing all Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) energy ratings of D and below for our properties to identify those at risk of damp, mould and condensation.
- Using our data to review, prioritise and target those properties at highest risk, as well as identify any damp, mould and condensation.

Prioritising our response

Amplus will risk assess individual cases aligning with the HHSRS (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) assessment criteria, classes of harm, likelihood and outcome. The below matrix simplifies the risk categories and assumes that damp and mould is treated as high harm or outcome.

Extreme/severe 4	<p>Response: raise emergency order, triage with follow-up surveyor appointment within 14 days. Discuss the potential for decant with relevant Heads of Service if the risk cannot be reduced or mitigated to an acceptable level.</p> <p>Description: Extensive damp and mould in multiple habitable areas, highly vulnerable residents, very young and elderly with chronic and or vulnerability factors.</p>
Severe/serious 3	<p>Response: raise urgent order and book engineer to attend within seven calendar days, triage with follow up surveyor appointment within 14 days.</p> <p>Description: multiple areas of extensive damp and/or mould growth in areas of bedrooms, living rooms, bathroom mould growth, or dampness highly visible on surfaces, levels of vulnerability present, young and elderly residents with known vulnerabilities that exacerbate risk.</p>
Serious/moderate 2	<p>Response: raise routine repair and book engineer to attend within 28 calendar day timescale, triage with follow up surveyor appointment within 14 days.</p> <p>Description: multiple areas of damp and identified but limited in area and location, (e.g., under stair cupboard i.e., non-habitable space.) May be some low level of customer risk factor such as very young or elderly but no specific vulnerabilities</p>
Moderate/low 1	<p>Response: monitor only</p> <p>Description: little to no risk minor damp or mould around windows no identified in vulnerability matrix, to be monitored via tenancy health check form for any member of staff visiting the property.</p>

In the event that works are complex and cannot be completed within the appropriate time scales, and the property cannot be made safe, Amplus will decant the customer into suitable alternative accommodation.

Time scales

Following on from the risk assessment and the severity classification the below timescales will apply.

Amplius seeks to inspect all cases of damp and mould within 7 working days where appropriate works cannot be established.

Score	Classification	Response
4	Emergency order raised	24 hours
3	Urgent order raised	7 days
2	Routine order raised	28 days
1	Monitor & tenancy health check	Monitor/contact if no contact in 12 months

Equality, diversity and inclusion

It is expected that some groups may be more impacted by the effects of damp and mould than others on the basis of increased vulnerability, including older people, babies and children, and those with some disabilities and long-term conditions including respiratory problems, asthma, and compromised immune systems. The policy is expected to positively impact these groups due to the provisions for advice and support that are included and the provision of exceptions due to exceptional circumstances/consideration of vulnerabilities in deciding upon an appropriate course of action.

Tenants with a disability may be unable to resolve damp and mould problems themselves and may need assistance to help with causes This will be mitigated by quick evaluation and resolution of any problems which may occur.

Additional needs (addressing vulnerabilities)

Amplius recognises that, for various reasons, some of our customers and service users may be vulnerable. Policies, therefore, will take account of the recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman and Regulatory recommendations on vulnerabilities. Amplius will take a proactive approach when making a decision relating to a customer or service user and where practicable, tailor and adapt our services to suit the needs of customers and support vulnerable people.

The most at risk customers are the very young and elderly (HHSRS vulnerable age group under 14 years of age). Further consideration needs to be given where there are vulnerability factors in terms of damp and mould, this relates to known medical vulnerabilities such as asthma, allergies, chronic conditions and learning difficulties, where self-management present added complexities.

* For dwellings where rooms are occupied for both living and sleeping, such as bedsits and small flats in multi-occupied buildings, then the presence of dampness may be more significant as occupants can be expected to spend a greater proportion of time exposed. This can be compounded if the room is also used for cooking. (The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005)

Summary of local variations

No variations of this policy are required.

Part 4

Compliance and administration

Legal and regulatory compliance

This policy fully complies with Amplius's legal and regulatory obligations.

- Regulator of Social Housing Homes Standard
- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for human Habitation) Act 2018
- The Charter for Social Housing Residents
- Social Housing White Paper
- Housing Ombudsman Report October 2021
- The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005
- The Decent Homes Standard

This list is not exhaustive, and policy authors will undertake thorough research and/or seek professional advice to ensure that Amplius meets its obligations and complies with the current and relevant legislation and regulations.

Evaluation, review and performance monitoring

This policy will be reviewed on a Annual basis to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. A policy review may also be required earlier, in response to internal or external changes for example changes in legislation. Prompt and effective action will be taken where improvements are identified.

The effectiveness of this policy will be assessed by key metrics including how many outstanding cases of damp and mould Amplius has at any specific time. This will be presented to the relevant committees quarterly to provide assurance. A particular focus on the effectiveness of this policy will be each annual re-inspection of cases. Internal or external changes alongside customer feedback incorporating Tenant Satisfaction Measures, Consumer Standards and Codes of Practice.

Related policies

- Safeguarding Adults and Children Policy

Part 5

Appendices

A. Associated documents – Internal procedural documents, colleague use only

No current associated documents.

Part 6

Changelog

Amended date	Summary of changes	Version №