



Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy

Approved by SMT	26 September 2024
Approved by Committee/ Board	N/A
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Policy developed by	Head of Building Safety and Compliance
Consultation	Final Customer Scrutiny Group (July 2024), Previous customer scrutiny involvement from January 2022, DMC specialist consultant sign-off (Cornerstone), Internal sign off by in-house DMC, Assets, Repairs and Communities' Teams (Sep24)
Associated Documents	Damp, Mould and Condensation Procedure, Ventilation Procedure, Disrepair Policy, Disrepair Procedure, Compensation Policy, Decant Policy, Decant Procedure, Compliance Failed Access Referral Procedure

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Version Control

Version	Author	Date Published	Next Review	Comments
1.0		26 Sep 24	30 Sep 25	Update to existing procedure – tailored to internal delivery and Awaabs Law, this will be reviewed again when Awaabs secondary legislation is published.

Introduction

1. Purpose

1.1 This policy and associated procedure provide a framework for Connexus colleagues to deal effectively with reported damp, mould and condensation (DMC) issues reported by our customers. The procedure is aimed at ensuring customers get appropriate responses and information regarding the causes and control of damp, mould and condensation and Connexus carries out our duties in relation to the provision of a healthy and safe home.

- is responsive and customer-centric;
- produces regular learning outcomes;
- ensures that we fulfil our repairing obligations as a landlord;
- ensures an empathetic manner of communication to our customers;
- provides transparency to customers about their expectations of our performance; and
- aligns our policy and working practices to meet required legislation and sector good practice where applicable.

1.2 Connexus has positively adopted an approach of collective responsibility for the management and /or eradication of DMC. This is to ensure Connexus provide and maintain dry homes with adequate heating provision, which are structurally sound and safe for our customers. Also that the fabric of our homes is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from DMC.

1.3 Connexus operates a three-pronged approach to tackling DMC:

- Dealing with any repairs-related causes of DMC – such as roof leaks – and then treating any residual mould issues through ventilation and fungicidal-wash treatments. These works are largely delivered through our internal teams;
- Providing additional ventilation and mould treatment in cases of mould growth caused by condensation. This to also include referral to energy advice where lack of adequate heating is a contributing factor and the energy source is adequate and working correctly. Ventilation and mould works are largely delivered through our internal teams, although we do undertake to use competent external contractors where necessary and appropriate; and
- Identifying those homes which, due to structural issues / penetrating damp, need major investment works and / or are recommended for disposal as part

of our strategic approach. This will often involve the use of external specialists.

1.4 Underpinning all three prongs are:

- Considerations of the need to rehouse a customer, either temporarily or permanently due to personal or property circumstances;
- The need to implement any “failed access” processes in order to manage any reports of DMC in a proactive manner.

2. Scope

2.1 The policy is relevant to all Connexus colleagues, customers, contractors and other stakeholders who may work on, occupy, visit, or use our homes or who may be affected by our activities or services.

2.2 This policy should be used by all to ensure everyone understands the obligations placed upon Connexus to maintain a safe environment for customers and colleagues within the homes of each customer and within all communal areas of buildings and other properties owned and managed (offices, commercial shops, depots, etc.).

2.3 The Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy is to be read in conjunction with Connexus Damp and Condensation Procedure.

2.4 The policy applies to the whole of the Group. This means Connexus Homes Limited, (ultimate parent) and all of its subsidiaries.

3. Regulatory Standards and Legislation

3.1 The following Acts, Regulations and Guidance (list not exhaustive) are applicable to this policy: -

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Occupiers Liability Act 1984
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Decent Homes Standard 2000
- Equality Act 2010
- Housing Act 2004 Part 1 – Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- Buildings Regulation 2010 including Part F
- HCA Regulatory Framework – Safety and Quality Standard
- Housing Ombudsman spotlight report on damp, mould and condensation.
- Social Housing Regulation Act 2023
- Gov.Uk Guidance Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home.

3.2 We will also review and align this policy to Awaab’s law once guidance is finalised.

4. Key Outcomes

- 4.1 There are several factors that can lead to issues in a customer's home with damp or condensation, which can lead to mould growth. Most of these issues can be resolved with a combination of remedial work and providing customers with suitable guidance. Connexus will ensure an empathetic and proactive approach when our customers report instances of damp, mould and condensation within their homes.
- 4.2 We will actively encourage reporting of damp or mould cases. All colleagues will have an awareness of damp and mould issues and relevant, customer-facing colleagues will have awareness training to be able to report cases if they identify them while visiting a customer's home. Photographic evidence of the location of any mould will be collected to help identify the source of the issue.
- 4.3 Our approach to each damp, mould and condensation enquiry is to view each case individually and agree the most appropriate course of action. We will act with urgency when there are concerns raised about customer health and / or wellbeing and not await medical evidence or confirmation. We will adopt effective internal communication between teams to ensure that we are capturing, reviewing, and responding to all customer reports to ensure we can resolve them quickly and ensure we include follow up, aftercare and review.

5. Engagement with Customers

- 5.1 Connexus will ensure an empathetic and proactive approach when our customers report instances of damp, mould and condensation within their homes. We will ensure the communication and information that we provide is effective in helping customers avoid any condensation issues within their homes and effectively deals with repairs and structural issues causing DMC.
- 5.2 Connexus colleagues will keep our customers fully updated at every stage of their DMC issue including any recommendations from specialist contractors and timescales for works.
- 5.3 We will ensure that any remedies minimise any distress and inconvenience to the customer, whilst also recognising that each case is individual and should be considered on its own merits.
- 5.4 We will ensure that our colleagues, in-house delivery teams, contractors, and any specialists interact positively with our customers to share the outcomes of all surveys and inspections to help them understand the findings and be clear on next steps, including the timely inspection of homes after remedial work has been carried out. To ensure that the issue has been fixed and that damp and mould have not reappeared.
- 5.5 We will actively engage with and support our customers if they are experiencing issues such as fuel poverty. If this is identified as a contributing factor to mould growth, our colleagues will signpost customers to our third-party partners who can offer support. When a complex case is identified we may engage with external agencies such as Environmental Health or specialist consultants to assist in

resolving the issue.

- 5.6 We will actively use feedback from our customers to tackle, manage and improve our service delivery in this area and continue to work with our involved customer group and other interested customers on scrutinising our approach to DMC.

6. Key Roles and Responsibilities

- 6.1 Connexus Board will have overall governance responsibility for ensuring the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy is fully implemented to ensure full compliance with the regulatory standards, legislation, and approved codes of practice.
- 6.2 Senior Management Team (SMT) will formally approve this policy and review it every year (or sooner if there is a change in regulation, legislation, or codes of practice).
- 6.3 The Board will receive regular updates on the numbers of DMC issues reported and subsequent progress against performance, along with notification of any non-compliance or complaints issues which are identified. This will provide assurance that the policy is operating effectively. We will also carry out internal and external audits as appropriate as well as utilising the services of specialist consultants.
- 6.4 The Executive Director of Property has strategic responsibility for the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy and will oversee its implementation.
- 6.5 The Head of Building Safety and Compliance, alongside the Head of Asset Management and the Head of Repairs will be responsible for implementing the key outcomes of this policy.
- 6.6 SMT will receive reports in respect of performance against numbers received and numbers resolved. They will also be notified of any legal cases ongoing.
- 6.7 The communities and support services teams will provide key support to customers as necessary – including arranging temporary or permanent rehousing and signposting customers to energy advice agencies – as well as supporting colleagues and contractors in gaining access to properties where this proves difficult. They will also facilitate any legal processes necessary in cases of repeated failed access.
- 6.8 The Executive Director of Property will be responsible for ensuring the policy is reviewed every year, and will notify the Board, SMT and operational teams responsible for the delivery of the policy. The Executive Director of Property will ensure that any reviews take place before this policy expires.
- 6.9 The Executive Director of Property will ensure that this policy is available and distributed to all relevant colleagues, stakeholders and customers.

7. Training

- 7.1 Connexus will ensure that all colleagues have the appropriate training on Damp, Mould and Condensation and that colleagues undertaking electrical, heating and other specialist works are appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced.
- 7.2 Connexus will ensure that only suitably competent colleagues, specialists, contractors and suppliers are procured and appointed to undertake surveys, assessments, repairs or treatment works, including the installation of specialist equipment and / or the application of specialist materials.
- 7.3 Connexus will ensure that colleagues and contractors can identify and report early signs of DMC. We will identify and resolve any skills gaps to ensure our colleagues and contractors have appropriate expertise to accurately diagnose and respond to reports of DMC, including identification of complex cases at an early stage, and have a strategy for keeping customers informed at all stages.
- 7.4 The relevant contract management colleagues will check the relevant accreditations of any specialists and contractors engaged for carrying out damp and mould works. These checks will be undertaken as part of the procurement process and/or on an annual basis and evidenced appropriately. With formal contracts, regular performance reviews – at least annually – will be undertaken and acted upon accordingly including the implementation of improvement plans where necessary. Connexus will also serve improvement notices where applicable.
- 7.5 Connexus will ensure that any repairs, compliance and assets colleagues as well as any external contractors working for, or on behalf of the organisation have the relevant training required for their role. This will be managed via periodic assessments of training needs as well as through active contract management and will result in a programme of internal and/or external training.

8. Data and Performance Reporting

- 8.1 Information obtained from reports of DMC will be recorded and all remedial works actioned using appropriate systems.
- 8.2 Data collected will be analysed to ensure we take a proactive / preventative approach to DMC. Trends will also inform future planned investment programmes such as loft insulation or window replacement, overall dwelling ventilation to follow Part F of building regulations as well as, ensuring, for example, that undercuts on new / replacement doors are included as standard.
- 8.3 We will use data collected to identify trends in certain property types and will ensure our strategy for delivering net zero carbon homes considers and plans for how we can identify and respond to potential unintended consequences around damp and mould. We will use our stock condition data to understand the condition of our homes, including those which are more difficult to heat, and make necessary interventions to improve ventilation, energy efficiency and building deficiencies before damp and mould occur.

- 8.4 We will also use the learning from complaints and service failures and share the positive impact of changes made as a result, within Connexus and externally. Data systems should allow us to analyse complaints data effectively and identify themes, trends and learning opportunities.
- 8.5 As a minimum, the data we will collect and utilise will include:
- DMC cases reported, completed and outstanding in relation to:
 - Repairs jobs
 - Ventilation and / or mould-wash jobs
 - Structural or asset-component replacement jobs
 - End-to-end times to complete works broken down into the three strands above
 - Numbers of cases where DMC issues have returned following works. When this happens we will audit the works and any installations to ensure they were fitted correctly and are operating effectively and then assess for other root causes.
 - Customer feedback in relation to reports of DMC including “hot alerts” not addressed
 - Complaints raised where DMC concerns are involved
 - Costs of:
 - Internal DMC works
 - External contractor DMC works
- 8.5 KPI measures will be produced and provided by the Compliance Team to SMT on a monthly basis and at Board level on a quarterly basis.
- a. Legal Cases/Disrepair Claims
 - b. Compensation

9. Quality Assurance

- 9.1 The Executive Director of Property will arrange for an independent audit of the whole DMC approach at least once every two years. This audit will specifically test for compliance with the regulation, legislation and approved codes of practice and identify any non-compliance issues for correction.
- 9.2 In addition, on a case-by-case basis, Connexus will utilise the services of specialists to audit M&E and heating installations to ensure they are fit for purpose and have been fitted correctly.