

Damp and Mould improvement and action plan 2018

Community Select Committee recommendations (January 2017) and Executive Member responses (March 2017) - included in items 1-10

Ref	Issue	Recommendation	Action plan	Planned Timescales	Progress	action by
1	Consultation	Community Select Committee (CSC) recommendations (January 2017) to be presented to the Portfolio Holder and Strategic Director (community) for comment by March 2017.	Receive Executive responses on behalf of the Executive Portfolio Holders for Housing, Health and Older People. Responses are incorporated in the following action plan			
2	Staff engagement	All officers require sufficient knowledge on the causes and remedies relating damp and mould ensure appropriate responses are given to the tenants	<p>A training programme shall be devised. Neil Wilson Prior will publish the training schedule. Training shall be rolled out by end of March 2017</p> <p>Training for new staff to be carried out as part of the induction and also consider wider awareness / training across Housing. Review training needs and prepare plan</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Sep-18</p>	<p>Training of the original damp and mould team has been carried out. Training and awareness continues during the regular team meetings where experiences, knowledge solutions etc. are discussed and shared by the team. The introduction of REAL conversations with staff provides the opportunity to discuss damp and mould issues and challenges and training and improvement needs.</p> <p>Briefing of new staff is carried out that includes highlighting the actions contained in this improvement plan and the individuals responsibilities and actions necessary for this plan to be implemented. Training needs are identified during the REAL conversations process carried out during the year</p>	AS

		Officers must demonstrate a sympathetic approach to reported problems	Develop and agree corporate script that officers can use during the initial contact / site visit. Highlight approach to be embedded in the team meetings	June - Aug 2018	Through initial training and review meetings carried out during the set up of the new team, all are now fully aware of how they should conduct themselves in a sympathetic way when visiting our tenants. This is further reviewed during team meetings and will be monitored through tenants satisfaction / feedback (to be set up) and complaints process. The corporate script is still to be developed.	AS
		Ensure that the Tenant Feedback includes issues surrounding damp and mould.	Consider the best way of capturing and recording this information as part of the Housing Management Transformation programme. (Outcome to be feed back to the CSC in the Autumn 2017 update). Look at the possibilities of capturing information through the Big Knock 2 and MRC contract customer satisfaction	Oct 2018 - Ongoing	The Autumn 2017 feedback was not carried out. This is still to be organised.	AS/Greta.G
		Briefing new starters	During the induction process	June - Oct 2018	Ongoing	HR/AS
3	Data gathering	Gather information from tenants on current and historic cases of Damp and Mould for analysis and recording the stock condition data	Develop the customer portal to enable customers to report damp and mould issues	Completed	Website page available for reporting damp and mould problems.	
			Further develop and refine Web page to ensure that it is kept up to date (incl GDPR)	June - Oct 2018	Ongoing	RO
			Organise an Annual (?) event inviting customers to come along and meet the technical officers to discuss their individual cases. Review ways to engage customers through other open days	Ongoing	Review required	Greta.G
			The rent charge notification will be used to encourage feedback (Commence third week in February 2017)		This has not been actioned	
			Develop a form for the website that will allow customers to easily provide this information - complete by the end of February	Completed	Website page available for reporting damp and mould problems. Also see item 3 above	

			Recording historic and current cases of damp and mould.	Ongoing	All historic and current damp and mould initial enquiry and compliant cases are captured on a tracker spreadsheet. This is a live documents that is constantly kept up to date.	MHo
			Use Northgate to capture damp and mould for recording data	01/07/2018 Dec2018	Northgate is currently used to record details of damp and mould and associated repair works orders. Following an initial review Northgate system will require software development and upgrades if other Damp and mould data is to be recorded. Further investigation required.	MHo
4	Communication	Publish how tenants can mitigate the effects of damp and mould in their properties and made aware of the procedures that are in place	The damp and condensation strategy will be published by the end of February 2017		Outcomes of the strategy incorporated in this action plan	
			Review Draft strategy to ensure that is current and up to date	01/08/2018 Jan 19	To be carried out. Also consider review of policies / procedures	AS/AC
			Produce transparent procedures	Jun-18	Process map produced - see attached	AS/RO
			Use of data loggers to review lifestyles and how properties are used.	Ongoing	Data loggers are currently being deployed on a case by case basis	KO.MHa.R O
			Produce new education and literature package for tenants	Completed	Website includes pamphlet "how to avoid condensation and mould in your home" This information is also issued to tenants when an enquiry is received (site visit and initial letter).	
			Develop website to allow presentation of strategy guidance and online reporting	Completed	Online reporting of damp and mould issues is in place and included on the councils website	

	Sharing of findings and action plans with the tenants. Ensure that problems are recorded and the process of repair is confirmed at the initial / first visit this identifies the cause rather than the symptom	To be included in the newly refined procedures	Oct-18	In line with the new procedures/process map (see attached), tenants will be issued with a letter outlining the findings and what actions the council will be carrying out, and what the tenants can carry out to assist in reducing the conditions that can lead to condensation . It is proposed that this will be included in a standard formatted letter issued to the tenant following the initial visit. Notifying tenants has commenced but his now needs to be cemented in line with the process. Review of the existing resources is now required to ensure that this is sufficient ensuring that the process can be fully implemented.	RO / Mho
	Initial site visit shall also include a consultation session with the resident	To be included in the newly refined procedures	Ongoing	Surveyors consult with the tenants wherever possible explaining the cause and solutions proposed. If necessary and the tenant is not aware the "how to avoid condensation and mould in your home" pamphlet is left with the tenant.	KO.MHa.R O
		Currently carried out. Review to ensure that there is a consistent approach	Nov-18	Review success of the consultation.	RO
	Inform all residents that are known to be in "Back Log"	Write to tenants informing them that they will be seen (giving timescales) but to inform us if the issues are still present	Jun-18	Surveyor dedicated to deal with the Back log Cases and has now contacted all tenants (with exception of 23 requiring a visit)	MHo / Mha
	Produce procedure for dealing with back log	In addition to notifying backlog tenants the standard procedure will then apply	Jun-18		
	Dealing with lack of response from tenants to book appointment and/ or allowing access to carry out initial inspection	Leave call back card / letter. If no response after 2 attempts write to the tenant enquiry of status of the original enquiry and the lack of response will mean the need to close the original enquiry	Nov - Dec 18	Card / letter issued, however there is now a backlog to chase. Review resources required to administer this process	AS/RO
4A	Informing new tenants	Include damp and mould literature in new tenants introduction packages	Sep-18	This is now included in all future new tenants packs	Tenancy

5	Timescales	An agreed timeframe shall be put in place for responding to reports of damp and mould. 3 weeks for the initial inspection and 6 moth target for the resolution of the issue	This will be included in the procedures and identified on the project tracker	In Place	Tracker updated to include timescales and target dates	Mho
			Flagging mechanism shall be put in place	In Place	The tracker identifies if these target dates are not met. These cases are reviewed at the team meetings	Mho
6	Resources	Appropriate levels of resources are allocated to invest in repairs to alleviate cases of damp and mould	Adequate budget to be included in the HRA.	Ongoing / Dec 2018	In an effort to try and resolve the cause of the problem first time we have identified that there has been an increase in the number of cases requiring more comprehensive improvements to resolve complex and significant issues putting pressure on the budget. This needs to be reviewed to assess the proposed budget required to deal with these issued and to be monitored ongoing	AC/RO
			Adequate staff resources required to deliver the agreed process	Nov-18	Review the staff required to ensure that the is sufficient level of management resource to implement and drive the actions outlined and deliver continued improvements. Also to ensure sufficient adequate and support staff	AS
		Blocks that are known to suffer form defects shall be specifically identified and worked on	This will be picked up during the Major refurbishment contract (MRC) This is being factored in when advising tenants of the programmed works that will be carried out to alleviate the problem.	Ongoing	Discussions between the MRC and D&M Teams are ongoing	All. MK

7	Procedures	Problems are recorded stating the process of repair following the first visit. Dealing with the cause rather than the symptom	To be incorporated in the process/procedure		Following every initial site visit the Surveyors record their findings and the actions required to rectify the cause of the problem. This includes identifying any actions the tenant may also be able to undertake to assist in resolving the problem and help reduce the conditions that will help minimise the conditions that may lead to damp and condensation. This data is included on the tracker. It is the intention that the data will be contained in a report format and will be issued to the tenant following the initial visit.	
8	Priority / severity classification	Establish a tangible system identifying the severity of each case and therefore the priority of the response		Completed	The priority / severity of each case is established at the initial visit / inspection (within 3 weeks of the enquiry) and recorded on the "live tracker". This is monitored at the weekly meetings to consider the actions and procurement options that are required to meet the priority rating. There is currently a 6 month target date set to resolve the enquiry / issue.	Surveyors
			Appropriate timescales linked to the priority / severity of the case	Nov-18	We are looking to develop the priority classification to see if this target completion date can be reduced depending on the priority rating.	AS
			Links in with Northgate To be in place by end of January 2017?	Mar-19	The development of Northgate to capture this and other data relating to improving Damp and Mould monitoring and management arrangements needs to be carried out.	AS/Mho
			Link with initial enquiry	Dec-18	Consider whether severity / priority can be established at first point of enquiry at CSC. Review script	AS

9	Referencing	Each compliant shall have a unique number referencing system to avoid follow up complaints being logged and to avoid repeat explanation of the case / issue	To include on the Tracker	Completed	All Damp, mould and condensation enquiries are entered onto a live Tracker and each enquiry is assigned a unique reference number, this is cross referenced to any complaint cases Yoursay ref number. This keeps track of all enquires and complaint's providing progress updates if requested from customers / tenants and minimising any duplication of enquiries.	Mho / BO're
			Northgate developed to record the complaint and cross referenced through Yoursay	Mar-19	The development of Northgate to capture this and other data relating to improving Damp and Mould monitoring and management arrangements needs to be carried out.	AS / Mho
			Portfolio Holder and AD to meet on a regular basis to go through customer complaints.	Ongoing		
10	Health and safety	Recognition of the impact damp and mould may have on people with respiratory conditions particularly the young and the elderly.	To be considered as part of the planned forthcoming Housing Allocation Policy review (Requested relocation by the tenant - damp cause will still require resolving)	Ongoing	There is a priority / severity rating system in place that recognises the impact of damp and mould on people with respiratory problems, the young and elderly. This will be refined to consider how the timescales can be differ for high priority cases.	Tenancy
			Independent medical advisor will be asked to comment and will advise setting the priority of the case	Mar-19	Investigate how Medical advisor can be put in place	AS
11	Relying on a limited number of suitable contractors able to undertake the volume of work, causing delays in completing works leading to customer dissatisfaction. Currently a small list of local contractors quoting for works now at risk of contravening Contract standing orders due to the aggregated amount of orders placed.	Seek suitable additional competent contractors	Procure a new framework agreement (local) to undertake repair works for damp and mould. This can also be extended to other housing repairs for example Aids and Adaptation. Check if existing frameworks already exist (Scape)	Jan-19	Initial discussions held with Framework provider to deliver repairs and maintenance work. Discussion to be held with R&V team to consider their ability / capacity to carry out this type of work in the future.	AS/AC
			Use existing compliance contract to deliver repairs.	Completed	This was implemented but unfortunately the contractor did not perform as expected. This work was assigned to an alternative contractor(s)	

			Identify competent local contractors from the "constructionline" list	01/06/2018 - ongoing	Contractors identified from list. Additional contractors now appointed and carrying out works, however capacity still an issue to deliver the volume of work. Ongoing investigations to seek new suitable contractors	AS/AC
12	Improving contractor performance	Seek suitable additional competent contractors	As above		As above	
		Provide the contractor with clear instructions and the requirements necessary for delivering the works	Issue contractor with appropriately detailed specification (at tender and / order stage) outlining the requirements for the works, including timescales. Ensure that the contractor issues a "construction phase plan" before commencing works on site	01/06/2018 - Nov 18	This is partially in place requiring full implementation asap	RO
			Instruct contractor to notify D&M team when timescales have been agreed with the Customer	Jun-18	This is partially in place requiring full implementation asap. Weekly progress updates requested from Contractors.	KO/Mha/RO
			Produce Contractors protocol for dealing with Customers	Jan-19	To be included in the new framework contract	AS/AC
		Ensure contractor is provided with access to carry out work	Review process for dealing with tenant not providing access following confirm appointment	Jan-19	To be reviewed	AS/AC
13	Monitoring progress - Tracker not being kept up to date	Ensure that the tracker is up to date reflecting current process	Refine the tracker to include current process for both backlog and new enquiries, and assign officer to take ownership for the management and ensure this is updated	Completed	Additional resource Technical support officer now in place, and tracker operational	MHo
14	Dealing with Backlog enquiries	Currently approximately 750 backlog of enquires - 550 are live cases at various stage of completion and 175 cases dating back to 25th January 2018 that have not received any response / initial visit requiring urgent attention	Review current backlog list and write to all tenants explaining current situation and target date when they will be seen. Enquire whether the problem still exists	Jul-18	One Surveyor assigned to visit / contact all back log cases, this is now completed.	Mho
			Additional resource required to assist with current backlog		Commencing 29/5/18	RO
			Identify reason for the enquiry and refer to R&V as necessary. Meet with R&V to discuss	Aug-18	Initial meeting held 23/5/18. Good close working relationship with R&V resulting in improved resolution of enquiries and coordination relating to damp and mould and repair works	D&M, R&V

			Based on resolving 10-15 cases per week this will take 4 months to resolve	Completed	Surveyor (Mike) currently dealing with the backlog cases. Additional support required to reduce the backlog quicker?	MH, RO
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15	Dealing with large number of complaints	Identify source of the complaints to target these areas with a view on reducing the number received	Check records identifying any similar complaints. Then review process to try and reduce reason for the compliant	Jul-18		MHo/Ro
			Refer compliant to R&V if solely disrepair. This is to be agreed with R&V	Aug-18	Agreed, complaints received that require R&V input is referred directly to R&V to resolve	AS
			Involve R&V if damp and mould is a consequence of a disrepair	Aug-18	Meeting held with R&V 23/5/18. Complaints that refer to damp and mould and are as a consequence of a disrepair are forwarded to R&V	
		Ensure that complaints are dealt with comprehensively at the earliest stages and within the timescales	Ensure that the tracker is up to date and information from Northgate is available	Ongoing		MHo
			Officer to be assigned and take ownership of the complaint . Currently covered by Principal Building Surveyor until permanent Officer identified to take on this role	Nov-18	Additional resource appointed commenced 29/5/18. However this is being reviewed to ensure that the level of management required to deal with complaints is in place. Currently now covered by the Principal Building Surveyor	AS/AC/
			Review to ascertain the main causes of the complaints received. The team responsible for the main cause of the compliant shall take ownership . Where necessary forward onto the responsible person / department to respond giving any details relating to D&M. Inform yoursay and the customer?	Sep-18	Appropriate team to deal with a take responsibility for the complaint.	AS/AC/RO/ Mho
16	Dealing with new enquiries	New Enquiries shall be dealt in accordance with the agreed processes, meeting the agreed timescales	Officer to be assigned	Ongoing	The new process was implemented in May 18 and all new enquiries assigned to one of the Surveyors (currently on long term sickness) now temporarily assigned to the Senior Surveyor	KO
			Identify reason for the enquiry and refer to R&V as necessary.		In place	
			Respond to initial enquiry within 3 weeks	In Place - Ongoing	In place and timescales achieved.	Mho

			Discuss with CSC the possibility of providing initial advice on damp and mould (Booklet) and to call back if problem persists. At this point this will become a formal enquiry	Jun-18	New script developed with CSC and currently in place	AC, RO, Mho
			Produce checklist / report to ensure all information is collected at the initial site visit and confirmed with the customer.	01/08/2018 - Nov 18		RO
			Produce new process flow chart	Jun-18	Completed. Ongoing refinement as required	AS
		CSC Informing customers and directing enquiries to the correct team(s)	Work with CSC developing a script and obtaining important key information from customers to help deal with the enquiry. R&V involved in the discussions		Meeting held with CSC 1/6/18 and new script is in place	Mho/AC/AS
		R&V involvement	Damp and Mould surveyor initial visit identifies work required by R&V. Where works are solely R&V then ownership passes to R&V to manage and complete works		This is in place and working well. Regular update meetings held between R&V and D&M	RO
		Repeat enquiries from tenants for similar and reoccurring problems (e.g. cleaning mould)	Identify and focus on dealing with the cause and not just the symptom.	Jul-18	There is now a focus to deal with the cause of the problem and not just the symptom.	All
17	Customer communication	Ensure the customers are kept informed during the process	Follow the new process. communication and response to the customer now introduced at stages - a) receipt of enquiry b) identifying action taken following initial visit - c) confirming start date - d) at completion	Dec-18	Trail process now in place. Formal communication via letter etc. to be implemented asap, subject to review of the resources required to undertake this part of the process	
			Provide report to the tenant confirming the works / actions that will be carried out. This will be issued with the second letter (to be produced)	Dec-18	Report framework in place and applied to all new cases. Formal template to be developed for issuing to customer / tenant - see above	RO
			Customer kept up to date with timescales either via stage letters, email or telephone. New process to be implemented	Dec-18	Part of the new process, - Wherever possible tenants are advised of timescales, issuing stage letters to be fully implemented - see above	AS,Mho
18	Close working with R&V	Close working relationship required between D&M and R&V teams	Meeting arranged		Meeting held with R&V team on 23/5/18. Ongoing regular meetings are now in place	AS

		Many of the damp problems are the result of outstanding repairs. Many occasions the repair is not reported until damp and mould occurs	Proposal that R&V carry out the making good (resulting damp) following a repair, for example repair damaged/damp ceiling that was the result of a roof leak.	Aug-18	Agreed with R&V.	AS
			Enquires / complaints received that include repair items shall be referred to R&V for action	Jun-18	Agreed and now in place	AS
19	Managing cases	Assigned surveyor shall take responsibility for the works from inception to completion	Provide details to the technical support officer so appointments can be made and project details are recorded		In Place	Mho, KO,Mha,RO
			Surveyor shall record the works agreed with the tenant. Produce report template	01/06/2018 - Dec 18	Use of formal report template to be implemented	AC/Mho, RO
			Surveyor shall ensure that the customer has been made aware of the start and finish dates . In the majority of cases the start dates are arranged between the contractor and customer. The Surveyor must ensure that this essential information is re-laid back to the D&M team (Technical support) .	01/07/2018 Dec 18	Further investigation required that this is working and fully in place	RO
			Surveyor to check works on site and at completion. This is currently limited due to the high level of resources required to carry out checks on all properties. A 10% audit check plus any works requiring special attention will be carried out.	Dec-18	The target is all works are checked on site and at completion.	Surv. Mho
			Send letter to customer at completion of the works including satisfaction survey (Produce satisfaction form)	01/08/2018 Dec 18	Trial process now in place. Formal communication via letter etc. to be implemented asap, subject to review of the resources required to undertake this part of the process	RO
		Damp and Mould staff briefings	Arrange during regular project team meetings	Ongoing	Regular weekly meetings are now in place	All
		Obtaining property repair history / inspections	Gather data from Northgate and R&V	Ongoing	This is carried out	Mho