

Damp & Condensation Policy

1. Introduction

Technical Services with the support of Business Development have taken the recommendations from the Service Review and transferred it into a Damp and Condensation Policy. The policy also is to support the existing Repairs & Maintenance Policy.

This policy outlines Bolton At Home's approach to managing dampness, condensation and mould within our properties.

2. Purpose

The policy ensures that Bolton At Home customers who experience dampness, condensation and mould issues within their properties are treated in a fair and consistent way. For each reported instance the policy is to ensure that the correct remedial action is taken. The action is to include repairs, but may also include detailed guidance, advice or support from the visiting Bolton at Home Damp & Condensation Officer. Where required there will be recommendations for further referrals and support, e.g. further energy advice and Customer support.

3. Scope

The scope is to assist all Officers throughout Bolton At Home when dealing with dampness and condensation issues raised by our Customers, whether they are existing or new Customers.

4. Policy

- 4.1 The policy shall provide a simple, clear process and procedure to enable reports and of damp and condensation reported by Customers to be correctly assessed.

Each assessment will generate an appropriate response to the Customer. Additionally there will be an option for the Customer to request for a home visit appointment by a Bolton At Home Damp & Condensation Technical Officer to inspect the conditions reported and to establish possible causes. Once the diagnosis is completed the scope of what is required will be explained to the Customer. Due to the nature of conditions reported the visiting Officer may request additional appointments to help conclude the diagnosis of the condition reported.

Following the visit the Officer may need to raise remedial works to alleviate the conditions reported if supported through their own diagnosis. If the diagnosis indicates a lifestyle issue within the property then additional guidance and advice leaflets will be left for each Customer to read, also a free hygrometer will be provided to help the Customer understand, monitor and control the level of dampness (humidity) within their property.

In extreme circumstances where lifestyle issues are evident to the cause of condensation and mould Bolton At Home will arrange for the affected area to be treated. This will only be a one visit gesture, which would then need to be repeated by the Customer.

4.2 Policy as below:

BH Damp Policy

Bolton at Home is often contacted regarding the problems caused by damp, condensation and mould.

The following information will explain what you can expect if you contact Bolton at Home regarding damp or condensation and mould, and some simple steps that can be followed to minimise or remove the effects of condensation.

It is important to be able to tell the difference between damp caused by condensation and damp caused by other factors, such as penetrating damp and rising damp.

Penetrating dampness (repair problems)

Have you got a leak in the roof or gutter, rain water pipes or even leaking water pipes. Defects of this sort should be relatively straight forward to repair once they have been tracked down. The dampness may then take some time to dry out there will still be a yellowy brown or white mark left on the surface affected.

Rising Dampness

Rising damp is caused by the breakdown, deterioration or bridging of the damp proof course of the building at ground floor level. Moisture then rises up the walls to a maximum height of 1.00m.

As with penetrating damp it can be identified by a tide mark which can be yellowy brown or can be white and textured. This texture is caused by salts from the ground and the plaster being drawn through the wall with water.

Condensation

The effects of damp and mould can be a challenge particularly during the winter months and in most cases is one that needs to be managed by the Customer through the effective use of heating and ventilation.

Customers are responsible for making sure that the way they live their lives does not cause significant amounts of condensation that results in mould growth.

Condensation is caused by:

- Humidity of indoor air.
- Low temperature.
- Poor ventilation.

Bolton At Home have published information documents as a useful guides to the effects of condensation and what can be done to prevent it. The guide is issued upon sign up to a new home and when residents report damp issues to us. Also to help the Customer control and manage the levels of dampness and humidity within their property Bolton At Home will provide a free hygrometer to help understand humidity within their property.

Our Keep Warm for Less, damp & 'Your Home - Damp, Condensation and Mould' Leaflets can also be found on our website, for further information.

Damp and condensation process – what happens next?

Should you contact Bolton At Home to report an issue within your home involving damp or condensation, Bolton At Home will take the following steps to assist you:

When you contact our Customer Service Team, we will ask you a few questions to see if there are any basic repairs that are needed to eliminate the problem. For example, a leaking water pipe or leaking gutters.

If the issue is not related to a technical failure and cannot be resolved by the Customer Service Team, you can request a damp inspection for the problem you are reporting at your property. You can request a convenient appointment for the visit to your property. This will be arranged between you and the Bolton at Home Customer Service Team.

This damp inspection will be undertaken by a Bolton at Home Technical Officer to fully investigate the problem reported, including taking damp meter readings to the affected areas. At this visit we will endeavour to identify whether the issue is damp related (water penetrating through into your home or rising damp) or condensation related (see leaflet).

Should obvious causes of damp be identified, such as leaking gutters or overflows, the Bolton at Home Technical Officer will report these repairs to our Customer Service Team. An appointment will then be booked to complete the repairs within 21 days. Should the issue be readily identified as condensation based, your Bolton at Home Technical Officer will talk through with you the possible causes of this and the many solutions that are available. In most cases once these measures have been put in place for a few weeks, the issue will be significantly reduced or completely eliminated. If your Technical Officer is unable to diagnose the problem, a property surveyor will arrange a second visit.

In extreme circumstances where lifestyle issues are evidently the cause of condensation leading to mould growth on surfaces, Bolton At Home will arrange to treat the affected areas. This is usually a one visit gesture, which would then have to be repeated as necessary by the Customer.

Should building improvement works be identified such as heating or insulation improvements, your home will be put on a programme list to properly manage these works in the shortest practical time frame. If the problem is more serious, Bolton at Home will normally arrange for remedial works to be completed within a few weeks of this visit.

5. Equality analysis

An equality Impact Assessment has been completed, which has determined the policy is robust and evidence shows no potential for discrimination, and all appropriate opportunities to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations between groups are taken.

6. Legislation

Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (Section 11) and subsequent amendments
Housing Disrepair Protocol (Lord Justice Wolfe)
Defective Premises Act 1972 (Section 4) and subsequent amendments

7. Responsibility

The Damp & Condensation Management Team, within Customer and Place, will ensure this policy is successful, with staff having individual and collective responsibility to implement the policy.

8. Consultation

Consultation has been conducted through the previous Customer Committee groups. Customers appointed onto the service review for damp and Condensation. Also Bolton at Home Officers and Customers through the Damp & Condensation Special Interest Group.

9. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation

Internal performance figures are shared through the Damp & Condensation Special Interest Group and annual Service review meetings.

The policy will be reviewed every three years unless legislative changes dictate otherwise.

Date approved	11 January 2018
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