

Keeping those Damp & Mould Problems away Information for RESIDENTS

Produced by the Private Sector Housing Team

Is your home damp? Damp can cause mould on walls and furniture & make timber window frames rot. Dampness encourages growth of mould and mites, & can increase the risk of respiratory illness. Some damp is caused by condensation. This sheet explains how condensation forms and how you can keep it to a minimum, reducing the risk of dampness & mould growth.

What is condensation? There is always some moisture in the air, even if you cannot see it. When air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture & tiny drops of water appear. This is condensation. You notice it when you see your breath on a cold day, or when the mirror mists over when you have a shower.

Where does condensation occur? Mainly during cold weather but it does not leave a 'tidemark'. It appears on cold surfaces and in places where there is little movement of air. Look for it in corners, on or near windows, in or behind wardrobes and cupboards. It often forms on north-facing walls.

Is it condensation? Condensation is not the only cause of dampness. It can also come from:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows.
- Rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing, spilling from a blocked gutter, penetrating around window-frames, or leaking through a cracked pipe.
- Rising damp due to a defective damp-course or lack of damp course.
- If your home is newly built it may be damp because it is still drying out.
- If you do not think that the damp comes from any of these causes then it is probably condensation.

4 STEPS TO PREVENT CONDENSATION:

1. Produce less moisture

- Cover pans and do not leave kettles boiling;
- Avoid using paraffin and portable flueless bottled gas heaters as these put a lot of moisture into the air.
- Dry washing outdoors on a line, or put it in the bathroom with the door closed and the window open or fan on.
- Vent any tumble dryer on the outside, unless it is the self-condensing type.
- When running a bath run the cold water first to limit the steam produced.

2. Ventilate to remove moisture

- Ventilate without making draughts by keeping a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open when someone is in the room.

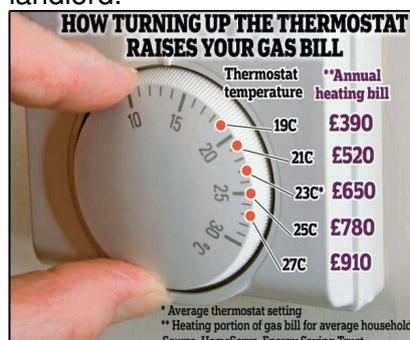
- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening the windows wider.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use, even if your kitchen or bathroom has an extractor fan.
- A door self-closer is advisable, as this helps prevent moisture reaching other rooms.
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes. Avoid putting too many things in them as this stops the air circulating.
- Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls.

3. Insulate, draught proof & heat your home

- Ask your landlord if your loft is Insulated, if not, ask if this is possible
- Ask your landlord if it would be possible to install cavity wall insulation as this would make your fuel bills lower and your home warmer.
- Comprehensive insulation & whole-house energy efficiency improvements can be paid for via the **GREEN DEAL**. Call your energy supplier or visit www.greendealorb.co.uk/consumersearch to see if the Green Deal is right for the property you live in (ask your landlord first).

4. Temperature Regulation

- Set temperatures between 18°C and 21°C.
- Use room thermostats and Thermostatic Radiator Valve (as pictured) to regulate room temperatures. If you do not have these request them from your landlord.



First steps against mould

- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash. Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets.
- After treatment, ask if your landlord can redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.