

## Dampness & Condensation Management Policy

**Date written** June 2022

**Date(s) reviewed:** N/A

**Purpose:** The key objective of this policy is to describe how Bernicia will meet the required statutory, contractual and regulatory requirements of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the provision of a home that is fit for Human Habitation where serious dampness poses a problem for tenants and the building itself. It will also cover how the Board, as Duty Holder, will receive assurance.

**Scope:** The scope of this policy includes all areas of the home and the various elements of dampness that may affect the home including but not limited to condensation, rising/bridging dampness, penetrating and mechanical defects.

**Definitions:** Structural dampness within a property is the presence of unwanted moisture that can affect the integrity of the building, the living standards of the occupants and the contents and objects that exist within the property and is the result of an intrusion of water from outside or from condensation or mechanical defects within the structure or a variable mixture of all types.

**Associated documents:**

Dampness and Condensation Management Plan (draft)  
Repairs & Maintenance Policy  
Repairs & Maintenance Procedure  
Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy  
Housing Management Decant Policy  
Void Property (fit to let) Standard

**Date for review:** June 2025

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**Responsibility:** Executive Director People Homes and Communities and;  
Executive Director, Assets and Growth

## Policy

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the time of policy approval Bernicia owns and manages in the region of 13,000 tenanted properties.

This policy follows from the Regulator of Social Housing requirements and the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight report on Damp and Mould in October 2021, directing Social Housing Landlords as to the expectations in the management of dampness and mould in tenanted properties.

This policy explains how Bernicia's commitment to the management of dampness and condensation will be met. It is supported by the Dampness & Condensation Management Plan which provides detailed guidance and procedures.

### 2. Policy statements

- 2.1 The key objective of this policy is to describe how Bernicia will meet the required statutory, contractual and regulatory requirements of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the provision of a home that is fit for Human Habitation where serious dampness poses a problem for tenants and the building itself. It will also cover how the Board, as Duty Holder, will receive assurance.

The scope of this policy includes all areas of the home, the components within and the various elements of dampness that may affect the home including but not limited to condensation, rising/bridging dampness, penetrating and mechanical defects.

Bernicia will comply with all current and relevant legislation related to dampness and condensations as defined within in the following:

- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Home Standard.
- Home (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- Decent Homes Standard

- 2.2 In order to comply with regulatory standards and legal obligations, and to ensure the safety of our tenants, staff, contractors and visitors to their properties, Bernicia will:

## **Process**

- Adopt a zero tolerance approach to dampness and condensation interventions.
- Provide clear lines of responsibility for the management of dampness and condensation supported by written guidance in the Dampness and Condensation Management Plan.
- Ensure that a clear and consistent process including front-line reporting, engagement, monitoring and control is in place to manage properties and tenant expectations where properties are affected by dampness and condensation.
- Undertake appropriate remedial action in a timely manner where required to eradicate and or reduce the effects of dampness and condensation down to a manageable level that no longer poses a risk or detrimental effect to the property or its tenants.
- Proactively assess available data and trends for relevant information about property types, estates and geographical areas that are subject or prone to the effects of dampness and condensation and produce heat maps to clearly identify these.
- Where required effectively plan and resource future stock investment works to estates and areas affected by significant issues of dampness and condensation where certain property types may have inherent defects associated to dampness and condensation.

## **Delivery**

- Review existing properties and assess risk through a desk top review which will identify those properties at potential high risk of dampness and condensation.
- Bernicia will appoint a dedicated person(s) who will be the first point of contact and tenant representative for all issues associated with dampness and condensation. This ensures the tenants voice is heard and captured and provides a key contact throughout.
- Effectively record and inform the relevant department of properties that are reported to have issues with dampness and or condensation via;
  - A direct report by a tenant;
  - As a result of property surveys (void/mutual exchange, stock condition or planned maintenance);
  - Housing inspections or visits such as tenancy or responsive repair appointments;

- Notification by third parties
- Where reported as above, a thorough examination and survey of the property and the affected area will be undertaken by an accredited and competent person to ascertain the level of defect.
- All properties, as standard, when they become void will be subject to a recognised survey for dampness and condensation by an accredited and competent person supported by a percentage of property archetypes, included within the rolling programme of stock condition surveys, undergoing a similar assessment by an accredited and competent person.
- No void property will be let without a survey having been undertaken and any significant works required to rectify the defect will be completed prior to the new tenancy commencing. Minor defects that can be completed once the tenant has moved in, with the express agreement of the tenant, can be undertaken but this must be within a mutually agreed timescale set with the tenant.
- The production of a report, schedule of works and timescale for the delivery of works will be produced and will be recorded within the property file.
- All works undertaken and specifically any specialist works associated to the remedial treatment of structural dampness will use a recognised treatment and material specification in line with the British Standards Institute and Building research Establishments codes of practice.
- A register of affected properties will be maintained incorporating any remedial actions and/or works and further examinations and surveys will be undertaken at set intervals to monitor the outcome of any remedial actions or works to determine the effectiveness of these and that the issues have been successfully concluded. A further annual review and check in will be scheduled with tenants to check ongoing progress and satisfaction.

### **Contractors Competency**

Bernicia has a responsibility to ensure that contractors are competent, and the following controls will operate to ensure competence can be demonstrated:

- Property surveys and associated remedial treatments for dampness and condensation will only be undertaken by those contractors who are trained and competent and hold a recognised accreditation for the delivery of such works. This will be done by the information

collected via Bernicia's approved list and/or via the procurement process.

- All significant remedial works undertaken by contractors will be assessed during and after completion of the work to ensure compliance with recognised standards and specifications.
- Carry out an assessment of all contractor competencies annually or at the change of a contract/contractor or the introduction of new staff into their teams to ensure ongoing competence and delivery to specification and required quality standards.

### **Internal Competency**

- Colleagues involved with surveying of properties will be trained to a recognised standard in line with the British Standards Institute and will be qualified as a Certified Surveyor of Timber and Dampness in Buildings (CSTDB).
- All other colleagues who enter a tenants home as part of their normal day-to-day activities will be given awareness training to spot the signs of dampness and condensation and the route to recording and reporting this.
- Maintain a skills/training matrix to ensure that all staff undertaking key roles within the scope of this policy have appropriate training and that it is maintained with appropriate CPD and updated refresher training where required.
- Will operate a detailed competence framework of all external and internal resources as part of Dampness and Condensation Management Plan.

### **Data**

- Maintain an up to date Master Database of all properties affected by dampness and condensation including trends and heat maps for future planning remedial works.
- For each relevant property record, maintain up to date data confirming what the status of the property is along with all relevant records of works and surveys including recorded periods of intervention to check the ongoing status of the property in respect of the control of dampness and condensation.
- Where a requirement exists hold data and certification as defined within regulations or specifications in respect of training, contractors, materials, guarantees and warranties.

- Where a requirement does not exist hold appropriate evidence.

### **Assurance**

- Ensure that all persons involved with the management and treatment of dampness and condensation within Bernicia properties are properly trained and accredited.
- Carry out works-based assurance activity including checks on certification and post-inspection of onsite works to the level stated within the Dampness and Condensation Management Plan.
- Set a timetable for the review of the Dampness and Condensation Management Policy and the associated Management Plan.

### **Customer focus**

- Bernicia will ensure that a clear focus is directed towards properties and tenants where issues of dampness and condensation occur. We will take the lead to investigate all issues thereby removing the onus on tenants to undertake remedial actions, particularly relative to issues of condensation.
- We will evaluate what mitigation and interventions can be put in place to support tenants to ensure we are undertaking all reasonable steps.
- We will review and maintain information, materials and support provided to tenants to ensure that these are balanced, meaningful and are effective in helping tenants to avoid dampness, condensation and Mould growth in their home.
- We will ensure tenants have access to Bernicia's complaints and compensation policies where required.

### **Communication**

- Encourage customers, through the provision of publicity information, to allow access to carry out inspections, surveys and remedial works.

## **3. Responsibility for implementation**

- 3.1 The policy was implemented in October 2022 following Executive Team and Customer Services Committee approval and will be reviewed in line with the timetable set out within this policy.

Colleagues will be made aware of the policy via an agreed training programme. A copy of the policy will be available on Connect and will also be uploaded to the Bernicia website.

#### 4. Actioning the policy

- 4.1 The Executive Director People Homes and Communities and Executive Director, Assets and Growth will be responsible for the actioning of this policy.

#### 5. Monitoring the policy

- 5.1 A detailed performance management suite is defined within the Dampness and Condensation Management Plan.

Commentary will be provided for those properties where surveys and remedial actions have been provided together with the ongoing review of the success of those treatments.

Commentary will also be provided if any installations have outstanding overdue actions or are out of use. To provide additional context commentary will also include information on the proportion of activities within the reporting period that were undertaken before and after their due date.

The following assurance activity will be undertaken and reported in line with the Dampness and Condensation Management Plan:

- Internal audit.
- Non-negotiable Compliance Testing.
- Strategic review.

#### 6. Resources

- 6.1 Within existing resources and external partners

#### 7. Equality and Diversity

- 7.1 We believe all people should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race (including, nationality, ethnic or national origins), religion, belief or non-belief, sex, or sexuality or by association with someone with any of these characteristics or perception of having any of these characteristics

The Policy Planning Document (PPD) was undertaken in June 2022.

**Uncontrolled if printed – This may not be the latest version of the policy**

**All policies must be printed from Connect only – please make sure it is the latest version.**