

COMPANY NAME:

Hillcrest Homes

POLICY NUMBER:

AM02

POLICY TITLE:

Dampness, Mould & Condensation Policy

This document can be produced in different formats, for example, in larger print or audio-format, and in other languages, as appropriate. We promote equality through seeking to eliminate unlawful and unfair treatment on the ground of any protected characteristic, as appropriate.

## Underpinning and Supporting Documents

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This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

### Other Policies:

- AM31 – Property Maintenance Policy
- F01 Financial Regulations
- G18 Records Management Policy
- G17 Procurement Policy
- G27 Health and Safety Policy
- H05 Voids Policy
- Tackling Poverty Together Strategy

### Legislation:

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014
- Right to Repair - Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- The Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and the Scottish Government's Repairing Standard
- Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing (ESSH)
- The Repairing Standard: Statutory Guidance for Private Landlords

### Best Practice:

- Guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR): The SHR has issued specific guidance on managing damp and mould,



emphasising the importance of proactive measures and timely responses to reported issues.

- Joint Briefing on Damp and Mould: Published by leading housing organizations like ALACHO, CIH Scotland, SFHA, and SHR, this briefing provides best practices for tackling damp and mould in social housing
- The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023: Awaab's Law. Although Awaab's Law directly applies to England, its principles and the proactive measures it promotes are universally applicable, emphasising the importance of swift, effective responses to housing complaints and prioritising tenant health.

## 1. Policy Statement

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The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear statement of Hillcrest's intent to proactively address the risks of damp, mould and condensation (DMC) in domestic and commercial buildings owned or managed by Hillcrest. Our goal is to ensure our tenants have safe, warm, and dry homes.

The policy will demonstrate how Hillcrest will make every effort to minimise any risk to the health and safety of our tenants and their families from DMC.

Hillcrest are committed to helping our tenants. We will provide knowledgeable and realistic advice to our tenants to help them reduce the risk of DMC forming. We will also clearly diagnose any DMC issues reported to us and instruct suitable remedial works that will eliminate the issue. This policy also ensures that Hillcrest meets all legal, contractual, regulatory, and statutory obligations.

This policy outlines the current position; however, it is the intention of Hillcrest to review and amend this policy every five years or sooner if there is a change in statutory legislation, and/or guidance and Hillcrest's DMC procedure.

## 2. Principles

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To achieve these aims Hillcrest will:

- We will treat all tenants fairly and consistently, considering their individual circumstances. Our advice will be suitable and tailored to meet our tenants' needs.
- Communicate effectively with our tenants in relation to the delivery of our responsive repairs service and enable them to communicate effectively with us.
- We will work in partnership with tenants ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is maintained.
- Inform tenants and others of their responsibilities and any pertinent information using all relevant publications.
- We will ensure that tenants have access to and are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on preventing, managing and controlling DMC.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable repair solutions and improvements to eliminate DMC including, managing, and controlling condensation that meets the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS).
- We will use new technology and innovation to support our investigative plans and future decision-making.
- We will comply with all statutory, regulatory, and contractual requirements and follow good practice.
- We will use our budgets effectively to address DMC issues.

- Maintain our Dampness Register in Hillcrests QL property database where we will record all reports of dampness and mould, record the outcome of the inspection, including any remedial works issued or requests for specialised preservation contractors.
- We will implement new data quality and insight measures to assist with informing us of the possible risks to our properties so that we can undertake proactive measures to eliminate damp, mould, and condensation before it becomes a problem for our tenants.
- Ensure that the fabric of our properties is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from DMC.
- Respond to all reports of damp and condensation and complete any repair works/measures in line with our Property Maintenance Policy, complying with all legislation. This will be dependent on the severity and urgency of the problem, the complexity of the solution and the repair works/actions required.
- We will ensure that we do access properties to inspect and carry out necessary works.
- We will follow up on any damp and mould repair work as per our Property Maintenance Policy.
- We will engage suitably qualified consultants to assist us in remedying severe and recurring cases of DMC.
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of those persons who will be involved in DMC.
- Ensure that there are adequate resources available to successfully implement the policy, including sufficient time to allow staff to achieve, maintain and, where applicable, enhance their competency.
- Have appropriate procedures in place to ensure the aims of this policy are implemented.
- Ensure that Hillcrest's Policy and Procedures are communicated to the workforce, our tenants, and all other relevant parties.
- Report regularly to the Operations Sub-Committee on performance, costs, trends and other relevant issues.

#### Definitions:

- Rising Damp - The movement of moisture from the ground rising through the structure of the building through capillary action.
- Penetrating Damp (including internal leaks) - Water penetrating the external structure of the building or internal leaks causing damp, rot and damage to internal surfaces and structure.
- Condensation Damp - Condensation occurs when moisture held in warm air meets a cold surface and then condenses producing water droplets. The conditions that may increase the risk of condensation are:

- Lack of ventilation within the property.
- Inadequate heating.
- Inadequate loft insulation.
- High humidity.

### 3. Responsibilities

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#### **Committee and Board Members**

- The Operations Sub-committee has responsibility for providing leadership and direction in relation to DMC and for approving and reviewing the policy to ensure that fair and equitable processes are being followed.

#### **Executive Leadership Team**

- The Deputy Chief Executive will hold ultimate responsibility for the development and implementation of the DMC Policy.
- The Director of Finance and Property retains the overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and for ensuring that this policy and its procedures are resourced adequately and reviewed as appropriate.

#### **Head of Asset Management**

- Holds delegated operational responsibility for the implementation and management of the policy and operational procedures for the management and control.
- Co-Ordinate and deliver on the operational compliance with the DMC Procedures.
- Will ensure that the requirements of the policy are communicated to all relevant staff and tenants and must reinforce such communication on a regular basis.
- Will create and implement a training program for all HH and HE staff who provide DMC services and advice, ensuring there are sufficient resources to deliver this training.

#### **Head of Maintenance**

- Will ensure that the Operations team and Trade Operatives have the knowledge and training to effectively complete repairs.
- Will ensure that any work orders raised in relation to DMC are carried out as instructed, in a timely manner and completed in a professional manner
- Will ensure that access is achieved by trades staff for jobs relating to DMC.
- Will ensure this policy and related procedures are followed.

#### **Head of Housing and Enterprises**

- Will ensure that the housing teams react and report issues of DMC in accordance with policies and procedures.
- Will ensure this policy and related procedures are followed.

### **Contracts Manager**

- Will ensure that the reactive repairs services are delivered safely and effectively, and audit works carried out in accordance with agreed procedures.
- Will ensure this policy and related procedures are followed.
- Will ensure that Property Officers have the resources, skills, training, and authority to manage and deliver DMC services effectively.
- Will ensure that DMC cases are accurately recorded in the QL database and provide quarterly reports. We will also keep improving our recording and reporting processes.

### **Tenant Services Manager**

- Will ensure this policy and related procedures are followed. ensure that Energy Advisers have the resources, skills and training to respond to DMC cases and advise tenants appropriately.
- Will co-ordinate any awareness raising campaigns around DMC in partnership with other departments.
- Will ensure this policy and related procedures are followed.

### **Sustainability Manager**

- Will annually report to the Sustainability Reporting Standard (SRS) for Social Housing which includes performance on tackling both fuel poverty & hazardous substances including damp and mould cases.
- Ensuring DMC cases are considered in our Retrofit Plans.
- Will support Hillcrest in all aspects of DMC.

### **Senior Health and Safety Advisor**

- Are responsible for auditing and ensuring compliance with legislation.
- Will periodically review the effectiveness of the DMC Policy and Procedures.
- Will act immediately if any serious deficiencies are identified and escalating concerns to the CEO.
- Will support Hillcrest in all aspects of DMC.

### **All Employees**

- All persons employed by Hillcrest, must be aware of the DMC Policy and Procedures.
- Must forward any communication received directly or indirectly from tenants on DMC as a referral contact to Customer Service Team within 24 working hours.
- Must promote advice services that can assist tenants with DMC such as Hillcrest Energy Advice Team HEAT and the Financial Wellbeing Team and make referrals where appropriate.

### **Tenants**

- Tenants must immediately report any repairs, including signs of rising and

penetrating damp (see definitions in part 4) and faulty equipment that affects humidity and moisture management in the home (e.g., faulty extractor fans, windows that can't open, heating system failures).

- Once a repair is reported, tenants are responsible for:
  - Allowing access for inspections and remedial work.
  - Following advice and support if an inspection shows that reasonable measures are in place to control condensation and mould.

## 4. Complaints

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We aim to provide a first-class service, but it is possible that tenants or other customers may not be satisfied by the outcome of this procedure, or any appeal made. Anyone who is affected by the implementation of Hillcrest's policies and procedures can make a complaint, this would include a member of the public who could have access to or be affected by our services. Complaints can be made in person at any of our offices, by phone, in writing, email or by using our complaints form.

### Document Governance and Management

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