

Appendix C

Firstly, your approach to assessing the extent of damp and mould issues affecting your properties, including how you assess the prevalence of Category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards

The Council combines a number of methods to assess the extent of mould and damp in its homes, including existing stock condition data, gaining intelligence from historic repair requests/complaints/dis-repair cases/voids and by using intelligence gathered through previous improvement projects to those homes which have been more prone to damp and mould due to their construction.

The Council's repairs and maintenance joint venture partner was contracted to implement a stock condition survey of all Council housing assets within a five-year period and upload all data, including HHSRS ratings onto our asset management system SAM (a Northgate NEC product)

The Council has promoted the issue of damp and mould in its recent tenants' newsletter and is encouraging tenants to report their concerns, so that the Council can address the issue, but also add to its understanding of the prevalence of damp and mould hazards in its home. This information is also available on the Council's website.

Secondly, and in the context of that approach, your most recent assessment of the extent and damp and mould hazards in your homes, including the prevalence of category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards

In light of the tragic death of Awaab Ishak we have taken a number of immediate measures:

We have interrogated our stock condition data collected over the past five years with the aim of identifying the HHSRS ratings in relation to damp and mould. We have identified that we have records for 1073 properties out of our total stock of 2811 homes, collected between 2017 and 2021. We have noted that of the 1073 homes inspected, all have a HHSRS hazard band rating of J relating to damp and mould.

As part of our combined approach to assessing damp and mould, we have also carried out a deep-dive review of all repair requests (including where these have been received as formal complaints/dis-repair cases) since 2017. We have identified 600 cases. We have overlaid this information with the stock condition survey data and have found that some of the properties included in the list of 600 cases were among those 1073 for which we have stock condition data, whilst there is no current stock condition data for other properties on the list.

This has led us to conclude that the band 'J' rating cannot be relied upon, given that some of these homes were affected by damp and mould, as reported by tenants. At the present time we cannot say whether those 600 cases reported by tenants could be classified as either Category 1 or Category 2 damp and mould hazards.

The Council is in the process of carrying out a 'deep dive' of each of 600 reported cases, assessing the nature of the issue reported, actions taken previously to address them, the age and type of property and any known vulnerabilities of tenants living in those homes.

The third strand to our approach for assessing the prevalence of damp and mould is to re-assess homes which have historically suffered from damp and mould, largely as a result of their construction type. We will be re-assessing whether the previous interventions put in place have adequately addressed the problems.

Thirdly, given those findings, the action you are taking to remedy any issues and hazards, and ensure that your homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

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The Council has been recently engaging with the Regulator in relation to wider health and safety compliance issues and as part of this we are in the process of a comprehensive service review and improvement programme. This has involved an in-depth assessment of the performance of our joint venture partnership, including the quality of service provided and the level of control which the Council has over the maintenance of its housing stock.

One of our findings is that the joint venture has failed to deliver on its contractual obligations to carry out the agreed rolling programme of stock condition surveys. As a result, the Council has taken the decision to, and is in the process of commissioning a new stock condition survey for all council homes. This will commence in January 2023 with a target completion date of 31 March 2022. The Stock Condition surveys will identify whether homes meet the Decent Homes Standard, and this process will include a full HHSRS assessment. A system will be put into place whereby during the survey period, any urgent concerns (Cat 1 and Cat 2 hazards) identified by the stock condition surveyors will be immediately communicated directly to the Council, so that the Council can ensure urgent contractor visits, to investigate/carry out the works required. The Council will thereafter commission a rolling programme, to be agreed with the Stock Condition Survey provider.

As previously stated, the Council is reviewing all previous concerns raised by tenants in relation to damp and mould. Where actions have not been signed off as complete, a visit will be carried out as a matter of urgency.

More comprehensive information has been provided on the Council's website, to help tenants identify damp and mould, provide clear guidance and what steps they can take, and to encourage them to report concerns to the Council as soon as possible.

Key Council and JV staff have recently attended online damp and mould training courses. The Council is developing a new Damp and Mould Policy and procedures. The Policy will include the Council's approach to identifying, treating and properly recording damp and mould cases. The Council will also be adding damp and mould as another area of health of safety compliance, to be reported and monitored on a weekly basis.

Please tell us how you ensure that individual damp and mould cases are identified and dealt with promptly and effectively when raised by tenants and residents

The following process was introduced by the Council in November 2022:

1. The Customer Contact Team (CCT) receiving requests which cite damp and mould identify whether a repair (e.g., leak) or a damp and mould inspection is required
2. CCT will ask questions to determine the extent of the issues and any vulnerabilities, including whether there are children in the property.
3. Where an inspection visit is necessary, the aim is for this to take place within 5 days, depending on tenant availability and capacity. (Current demand is making this difficult to achieve and the Council is working with its JV partner to identify how additional resources can be brought in).
4. The 'Connect' repairs management system has been updated to create reporting tiles so that information can be captured and reported, with orders being tracked. Information is also exported to a spreadsheet, and this is reviewed at weekly meetings including senior management.
5. Damp and Mould be reported along with the other areas of H&S compliance.

