



Uttesford District Council

Preventing damp and mould in your home



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Causes of damp and mould

The top causes of damp and mould are:

- **Poor ventilation**
- **Leaking pipes and gutters**
- **Structural problems**
- **Cracked or missing roof tiles**
- **Poor insulation**
- **Poorly sealed window frames**
- **Condensation**
- **Too much household clutter**



It should be noted that these causes are often not mutually exclusive, and that some or all of the causes may be present in any particular case.

Condensation is the most common cause of damp and forms when warm, moist air comes into contact with a cold surface.

Left untreated, condensation can lead to mould growth on walls, ceilings, windows and furniture.

It is usually found in the corners of rooms and also occurs where there is poor circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially where they are pushed against external walls.

Rising damp occurs when a property doesn't have adequate damp proofing or there is a breach in the property's structure. It's caused by moisture rising up in walls. You can spot rising damp in your home by looking for tide marks or salt stains. This tends to rise around one metre from the ground.

Penetrating damp comes from issues on the exterior of a property, for example from its:

- **roof**
- **windows**
- **brickwork**
- **doors**
- **pointing**
- **Leaking rainwater pipe**

Water can build up inside walls and cause damp and mould growth if a property isn't kept in good repair.

Where does moisture in the home come from?



Our everyday activities add extra moisture to the air inside our homes.

To give you an idea of how much moisture can be produced each day, on the right are some examples.

As a landlord, we have a responsibility to fix the causes of damp and mould where it is a repair or defect, but we do ask our tenants to work with us in preventing the build-up of damp and mould by ventilating and heating homes.

Two people at home for 16 hours	Drying clothes indoors
	
3 Pints (1.7 litres)	9 Pints (5.1 litres)
A bath or shower	Cooking and boiling a kettle
	
2 Pints (1.1 litres)	6 Pints (3.4 litres)
Using a paraffin or bottled gas heater	Washing dishes
	
2 Pints (1.1 litres)	2 Pints (1.1 litres)
3 Pints (1.7 litres)	

What can you do to prevent damp and mould issues

Minimise moisture in the air

- Cover pans when cooking and switch on extractor fans
- Dry washing on a clothes rack in the bathroom and open the window or put extractor fans on and close the door
- Wipe condensation off windows and windowsills
- If possible, move furniture away from walls and radiators to allow air to flow between them
- Wipe down walls and tiles after showers and baths
- Keep steam from kettles away from underneath cupboards
- Keeping heating on a low temperature for longer periods - this will help to heat your home more evenly and efficiently than turning on heating in short, hot blasts
- Do not turn off extraction fans
- Avoid washing large loads of clothes which will need drying in the home, instead wash smaller loads to ensure air moisture is kept to a reasonable level for extraction fans to cope with



Improving ventilation and heating your home



- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when cooking and using the bath or shower, even if you have an extractor fan
- Open windows when using a tumble dryer and make sure the hose goes outside if possible
- Clean vents and extractor fans regularly and make sure they are not blocked by furniture
- If you have trickle vents on your window frames, make sure they are open
- Open windows for 5-10 minutes when getting up, to let fresh air in and let warm moisture out
- Try to keep your home properly heated to a temperature of at least 18 degrees Celsius. It helps to provide a low heat all day and also decreases bills if you maintain a steady temperature
- Avoid heaters that use bottled gas or paraffin as they produce lots of moisture and they are not allowed under your tenancy agreement

Dealing with damp and mould

For small and isolated areas of damp and mould, you can:

- treat them by wiping down affected areas with a fungicidal wash. Make sure you use a product that has a Health & Safety Executive (HSE) approval number
- Use a fungicidal paint or wallpaper paste after treatment
- Dry-clean clothes that have damp/mildew on them
- Shampoo carpets that have damp and mould on them

If there are several areas or larger areas of mould in a room, or the problem is re-occurring, contact us to arrange an inspection and we will;

- subject to access, we will inspect your property within five working days wherever possible
- arrange a fungicidal wash and identify any remedial works that need to take place to prevent mould from returning
- we will inform you what works are necessary and when they will be completed
- we will provide advice and guidance as appropriate

For more information, visit our website:

**[www.uttlesford.gov.uk/
dealing-with-damp-and-mould-in-your-home](http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/dealing-with-damp-and-mould-in-your-home)**



Contact us

We encourage our tenants to let us know of any issues with condensation/damp/mould as soon as possible - they will be given a high priority.

Email

repairs@uttlesfordnorse.co.uk

Telephone

01799 510510

Help and support

We're acutely aware the cost of living crisis is likely to make problems with damp and mould worse, as people struggle to heat their homes.

Visit our website if you need support to reduce your energy bills and energy consumption:

www.uttlesford.gov.uk/cost-of-living