

Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Damp, mould, and condensation can arise in any home. We recognise that some homes may suffer with condensation or damp from time to time.
- 1.2. The presence of damp and condensation can result in the growth of mould and the potential for adverse health effects. We have established a proactive policy and framework, detailing our approach to diagnosis and to give residents clarity about how we intend to address these issues, where they arise.
- 1.3. There are several causes of damp. There are four main causes, and this is what we mean when we use these terms:
 - **External penetrating damp** - this is where water leaks through walls either through saturated brickwork, or through gaps in the structure. Examples include roof leaks, leaking guttering, leaking downpipe, chimney/window flashing/tray failing.
 - **Rising damp** - this is where there is capillary movement of moisture from the ground into the walls of buildings. It may result in structural damage up to a level of 3 feet to 1 metre. This may be caused by damp proof course failure/bridging which leaves a 'tide mark' staining on walls.
 - **Internal leak** - this is caused by internal services and water pipes leaking which may be associated with heating or hot/cold water supply. This could be leaks from kitchen/bathroom wastes, radiator valves or controls, and joints to pipework.
 - **Condensation/mould growth** - by this we mean moisture that forms on surfaces when water vapor meets a cold surface. This can be visible when condensation occurs on cold windows but can also be unseen on cold walls. It is usually caused by a build-up of moisture in a home and can lead to mould growth.

2. Aims

- 2.1 This policy aims to assist in the delivery of a damp and mould service that will :
 - Ensure that residents are treated in a fair and consistent way.
 - Comply with statutory requirements and good practice.
 - Focus on working in partnership with residents ensuring that a safe and healthy internal environment is provided.

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- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate damp, including managing and controlling condensation.
- Ensure that residents have access to and/or are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on managing and controlling damp and condensation.
- Maximise the available budgets and ensure that they are used effectively and efficiently to deal with damp and condensation problems.
- Ensure that the fabric of our properties are protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and condensation.

3. Objectives

- 3.1 This policy sets out a clear framework for A2Dominion to monitor, action and respond to reports of damp and condensation in our residents' homes and provides both proactive and reactive investigations.
- 3.2 We acknowledge our responsibilities contained in individual tenancy agreements and in legislation. These include:
- Maintaining the exterior of homes in good repair (such as drains, gutters, external pipes, and roofs);
 - Installations for the supply of water and sanitation; and
 - Keeping heating systems in good repair and working order.
- 3.3 Residents also have responsibilities outlined in their tenancy agreements to look after their home. Our approach is to work in partnership with residents and to provide and maintain dry, energy efficient homes.
- 3.4 A2Dominion has a clear process for reporting damp, mould, and condensation and for assessing and responding to these reports. Please refer to A2Dominion's website on how to report any issues. a2dominion.co.uk/damp
- 3.5 We will ensure that our residents are supported and have the guidance, advice, and assistance they need to prevent and actively manage condensation in their homes.
- 3.6 For the purposes of this policy, the words 'damp' and 'condensation' cover problems where issues with the conditions in the home are caused by a variety of problems including disrepair.
- 3.7 This policy relates to A2Dominion rented homes, communal areas, and emergency/temporary accommodation.
- 3.8 For residential leaseholders and shared owners, the responsibility will be determined by the nature of the lease or agreement that relates to their home Guidance on how to prevent damp/mould issues is accessible on our website: a2dominion.co.uk/damp
- 3.9 In general, this will mean that for leaseholders and shared owners they will be responsible for the internal condition of their home, and A2Dominion or a third party for the external and structural part of the home

4. A2Dominion responsibilities

4.1 **Once reported**, A2Dominion will investigate to determine the cause of damp, mould and condensation and carry out remedial repairs and actions in accordance with the tenancy agreement, including:

- Maintaining a resident's home to avoid penetrating and rising damp and carry out remedial action if these do occur.
- Undertaking reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation and damp, e.g. the installation of mechanical extractor fans, air vents and repairing existing insulation.
- Ensuring remedial works will only be carried out where it is reasonable and practical to do so. A2Dominion will consider the limitations of the current building's design and structure and will actively seek practical solutions.
- Ensuring remedial works for the treatment of damp, mould or condensation on void properties are undertaken before being let to new residents.
- Diagnosing the cause of damp correctly and delivering effective solutions based on dealing with the cause of the damp, not only the symptom.
- Promoting and providing general advice and guidance on how to manage damp and condensation.
- Providing support to residents whilst living in a property that has damp and mould
- Ensuring that the relevant staff are aware of and understand the delivery of the service that will meet the aims of this policy.
- Ensuring that staff (whether in house or our contractors) will have the required skills to diagnose and remedy damp and mould.
- Ensuring staff have the necessary equipment (such as damp meters) to assess cases.
- Ensure that staff receive appropriate training to develop a knowledge and understanding of the concerns surrounding damp and mould problems, including health repercussions, causes, and effective ways to address them.
- When A2Dominion is satisfied that, in partnership with the resident, all reasonable efforts in managing condensation and damp have been carried out and this has not been successful, we will visit the property and investigate the matter further.
- We will inform the resident of the findings of the investigations following the visit. This will include identifying the possible causes of damp, recommending effective solutions, all necessary remedial works, and the estimated timescales to complete the works.

4.2 A2Dominion will not be able to control condensation and damp where it is not our legal responsibility or it's unreasonable or impractical to do so (for example remedial action would be ineffective). This can include poor construction or design (not meeting current construction and living standards) for example:

- Cold bridging areas in the fabric of the building that cannot be eliminated.
- Non-habitable rooms, e.g. out buildings and sheds that have been converted, including linking buildings between the house and outbuilding and other add on structures.

- Unheated or uninsulated external toilets and storerooms.

4.4. A2Dominion will respond to a report of damp and condensation and complete any remedial works/measures within a reasonable timescale. The timescale will depend on the severity and urgency of the problem and on the complexity of the solution and the remedial works required.

4.5. If it is unsafe for the occupants to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary decant to an alternative property.

5. Damp and mould service level agreements

5.1 We set out below the typical actions that we undertake to log, investigate and address damp and mould. We are developing timelines and service standards for these and will update this policy when these have been agreed.

- Contact made for a clean down appointment: Contact: with customer to discuss issue and options, arrange inspection. Appointment for inspection or works.
- Contact made for an inspection appointment: Contact: with customer to discuss issue and options, arrange inspection. Appointment for inspection or works
- Appointment made for a clean down: cleaning and removing damp and mould and stains
- Remedial repairs following an inspection: for example, to remediate the damp and mould, for example, through fixing minor leaks and redecorating.
- Major repair following an inspection: for example, works to fix major leak (e.g roof)
- Major repair following remedial repair
- Referral to planned maintenance team: incorporating remedial works across all properties as part of planned maintenance.

6. Resident responsibilities

6.1 Reporting to A2Dominion evidence of rising and penetrating damp, and faulty equipment that will hamper the management and control of damp and condensation. Examples may include a faulty extract fan, the inability to open windows, lack of heating, etc.

6.2 Regularly checking for mould and signs of mould. Where the resident doesn't have the capability to do this A2Dominion will arrange to do this for them **on request**.

6.3 Allow access for inspections and for contractors to undertake inspections and remedial works.

6.4 Residents are asked to help A2Dominion by managing condensation and damp by reducing any potential conditions that may lead to issues by:

- Keeping the presence of moisture to a minimum e.g., covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outside, keeping the kitchen or bathroom door closed when cooking or bathing.

- Adequately heating rooms and keeping humidity between 40 - 60%. The average recommended temperatures should be maintained at around 20°C, bedrooms around 16 -19°C, corridors around 15 - 18°C
- Keeping the house well-ventilated e.g., opening windows when cooking and bathing, turning on and ensuring that the extractor fan is working if applicable, keeping trickle vents in windows open, and allowing air to circulate around furniture.
- If an inspection by A2Dominion shows that all reasonable measures are in place for the resident to adequately manage the condensation and damp, further advice and support will be given to the resident.

7. Leaseholders and shared ownership

7.1 Leaseholders and shared ownership residents shall manage and maintain their properties including damp and condensation in accordance with their lease agreement. A2Dominion does not carry out damp and condensation remedial works to leasehold properties unless covered by the lease.

8. Consultation

8.1 This policy has been prepared in consultation with teams across operational, governance and strategy functions and is being consulted with customers.

9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

9.1 A2Dominion Group, colleagues, partners, stakeholders, and contractors are committed to providing services, which are relevant and appropriate to the needs of people. We will treat others fairly and without discrimination.

9.2 We will ensure that all our services relating to this policy are accessible and available for all customers as set out in the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.

8.3. An Equality Impact Assessment has also been undertaken for this policy with no further changes or action needed.

10. Data Protection Statement

10.1 The protection of personal data is of great importance to A2Dominion Group and more than just a legal obligation.

10.2 A2Dominion Group and its affiliated organisations are registered as data controllers with the ICO. The registration numbers are as follows:

- A2Dominion Housing Group Limited: Z4843307
- A2Dominion Homes Limited: Z9799978
- A2Dominion South Limited: Z7835340
- A2Dominion Housing Options Limited: Z5412073
- A2Dominion Residential Limited: Z3391351
- A2Dominion Developments Limited: ZA103931
- Pyramid Plus London LLP: Z3594227
- Pyramid Plus South LLP: Z3594230

10.3 Our data protection policy and procedures are governed by the Data Protection Act 2018. We collect and process personal information in order to provide housing services and meet our contractual and legal obligations. All persons authorised to receive personal data are obliged to handle personal data in accordance with applicable laws and regulations at all times.

10.4 For information on how we collect, store, process and use customers' personal data, please visit our website on <https://www.a2dominiongroup.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy>

10.5 For employee related privacy statement, please contact our HR team at hrenquiries@a2dominion.co.uk

10.6 You can also contact the Data Protection Officer / Data Compliance team at governance@a2dominion.co.uk

11. Associated documents - include links to regulations or external documents

- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Decants Policy
- Disrepair Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Compensation Policy
- Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Voids Policy