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**Damp and Mould Policy**

**SER-POL-17a**

**Version 2**

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**Approved by: Parent Board**

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## Contents

1. Purpose and Objectives of the Policy
2. Scope
3. Background and Context
4. Policy Detail
5. Roles and Responsibilities
6. Customer Engagement and Communication
7. Performance Monitoring and Reporting
8. Equality and Diversity
9. Associated Policies and Procedures
10. Competence and Training
11. Data, Documentation and Systems
12. Policy Implementation and Review Data

## 1. Purpose and Objectives of the Policy

- 1.1 The safety and wellbeing of everyone who lives in homes owned or managed by Southway Housing Trust is our highest priority. This policy sets out how Southway will manage, prevent and respond to damp and mould to ensure homes remain safe, warm, healthy and fit to live in.
- 1.2 This policy confirms Southway's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould and to meeting all regulatory requirements, including Awaab's Law, to:
- Protect customers from harm, including emergency hazards
  - Ensure homes are free from damp and mould hazards
  - Treat all reports with urgency and seriousness
  - Show customers empathy and respect
- 1.3 Southway will comply fully with Awaab's Law by investigating and resolving hazards within required timeframes by and will:
- Investigate all reports of damp and mould
  - Identify and address underlying causes
  - Take prompt remedial action
  - Communicate clearly with customers at all stages
  - Prioritise households that require additional support or adjustments
  - Show customers empathy and respect

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy and accompanying procedures apply to:
- All homes and communal areas owned or managed by Southway
  - All tenures where Southway has repair obligations
  - All employees, contractors and partners acting on behalf of Southway
- 2.2 The policy covers:
- Damp, mould and condensation
  - Structural defects, ventilation and heating issues

## 3. Background Context

- 3.1 Damp and mould can have a significant impact on customers' physical and mental health, with links to respiratory conditions, worsening of existing

illnesses, and reduced wellbeing. Southway recognises that some customers are more vulnerable to these effects, particularly children, older people, and those with underlying health conditions. Sustained exposure can also contribute to stress and anxiety, making it essential that issues are addressed quickly and effectively.

3.2 Southway is committed to providing safe, healthy homes and takes a proactive, zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. The organisation recognises that such issues are not solely the result of customer behaviour, but can also arise from property condition, ventilation, design, and environmental factors. As such, all reports are taken seriously, with a focus on early intervention, clear communication, and effective resolution.

3.3 This policy reflects current regulatory requirements, sector expectations, and legislation including:

- Awaab's Law (Hazards in Social Housing Regulations 2025)
- Housing Ombudsman expectations
- Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Housing Act 2004 (HHSRS)
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Defective Premises Act 1972

3.4 Awaab's Law is being implemented in three phases:

Phase 1 – October 2025

- Applies to damp, mould and emergency hazards
- Mandatory timeframes introduced for investigation and repair

Phase 2 – October 2026

- Extends requirements to additional hazards including excess cold, pests and structural risks

Phase 3 – 2027 (TBC)

- Extends to all HHSRS hazards (excluding overcrowding)

3.5 Southway will ensure its services, systems and resources evolve to meet future requirements.

## 4. Policy Detail

4.1 Southway adopts a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould. All cases will be treated as potential risks to health, safety and wellbeing until proven otherwise.

Southway will:

- Take all reports seriously and respond with urgency
- Use property and customer data to identify and proactively manage risk
- Take full responsibility for diagnosing and resolving issues
- Work with customers to prevent recurrence
- Ensure no case becomes long-running without active intervention and escalation

4.2 Reporting and Identification

Southway will provide clear, accessible and responsive reporting routes and will:

- Enable customers to report damp and mould through multiple accessible channels
- Log all reports immediately and accurately
- Acknowledge all reports and confirm next steps
- Prioritise cases based on severity, vulnerability and potential health impacts
- Ensure customers are aware of available support services
- Proactively promote its damp and mould service to customers

4.3 Risk Categorisation and Prioritisation

All cases will be risk assessed to ensure an appropriate and proportionate response.

Categories include:

- Emergency Hazard – Immediate and significant risk to health or safety.  
Response - Inspect and make safe within 24 hours.
- Urgent Hazard – Significant risk requiring a rapid response.  
Response - Inspect within 7 days and commence remedial works promptly thereafter.
- Non-Urgent Hazard – Lower-level risk requiring planned intervention.  
Response - Inspect within 14 days.

Risk categorisation will take account of:

- Property condition
- Severity of damp and mould
- Household vulnerabilities, including children and health conditions
- Duration and history of the issue

For all hazards, Southway will:

- Clearly communicate expected timescales for both commencement and completion of works
- Monitor progress to ensure delays are identified and addressed promptly
- Prioritise completion where there is a risk to health or safety

#### 4.4 Inspection and Diagnosis (Right First Time)

Southway will adopt a right first time approach, focused on identifying and resolving the underlying cause of damp and mould.

Southway will:

- Inspect all cases within defined timescales
- Identify and evidence the root cause of damp and mould
- Avoid making assumptions about cause, including attributing issues to lifestyle without evidence
- Ensure consistency of diagnosis across colleagues and contractors
- Provide customers with a clear written explanation of the cause in plain language
- Temporary or cosmetic treatments will not be used as a substitute for resolving the underlying issue, except where required as part of an agreed interim safety plan.
- Ensure all contractors adhere to the same diagnostic standards and policy requirements.

#### 4.5 Every damp and mould case will be actively managed from first report through to resolution.

Southway will:

- Assign all reports to the Property Care Team responsible for the case from initial report to completion.
- Ensure clear accountability for progress, communication and outcomes
- Maintain a single, consistent approach across teams and contractors
- Take a proactive approach to case management to prevent delays or unnecessary repeat visits

Where a case is not progressing as expected, it will be escalated in line with Section (4.9.)

#### 4.6 Response Times and Customer Journey

Southway will meet all statutory and regulatory requirements, including Awaab's Law and provide clarity on the full customer journey.

In addition, Southway will:

- Clearly explain what will happen next, including expected timescales for inspection, works and completion
- Keep customers informed at every stage of the process
- Provide updates at agreed intervals, even where there is no material change

#### 4.7 Remedial Works (Effective Resolution)

Southway will ensure that all remedial works provide a sustainable and effective solution.

Southway will:

- Complete works that fully address the identified root cause
- Avoid repeat or ineffective interventions wherever possible
- Begin remedial works promptly following diagnosis
- Ensure that completed works provide a durable and effective resolution, with a focus on preventing recurrence and avoiding repeat interventions
- Temporary or cosmetic treatments will not be used as a substitute for resolving the underlying cause of damp and mould, except where required as part of an agreed interim safety measure.

Where complex or multi-stage works are required, Southway will provide a clear plan to customers, including sequencing and expected completion.

#### 4.8 Post-Work Assurance and Follow-Up

Southway will ensure that completed works have successfully resolved the issue.

Southway will:

- Carry out post-work inspections or validation checks where appropriate
- Confirm with customers that the issue has been resolved
- Monitor cases where there is a risk of recurrence
- Take further action promptly if issues reappear

Completion will only be confirmed when there is reasonable assurance that the damp and mould has been effectively resolved.

#### 4.9 Escalation and Early Intervention

Southway will take a proactive approach to escalation to prevent cases becoming long running or unresolved.

Escalation will be triggered where:

- The issue is not resolved within expected timescales
- Multiple visits or interventions have been required
- There is a risk to health, safety or wellbeing
- The customer expresses dissatisfaction or loss of confidence

- There is evidence of repeat or recurring damp and mould

Escalated cases will:

- Be subject to increased oversight
- Be reviewed to identify barriers to resolution
- Include senior or specialist input where required
- The aim of escalation is to resolve issues before formal complaints or legal action become necessary.

#### 4.10 Customer Support

Southway will provide appropriate support to customers throughout the process.

Southway will:

- Offer advice on managing damp and mould while works are pending
- Provide access to energy, heating and ventilation guidance
- Make reasonable adjustments for vulnerable customers
- Consider temporary accommodation or rehousing where necessary
- Work with customers in a supportive, non-judgemental way

#### 4.11 Access

Customers are required to provide access to enable inspection and repair.

Where access is not provided and there is a risk to health or safety, Southway will take reasonable and proportionate steps to secure access in line with its legal obligations

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Executive Director Homes and Communities is responsible for providing assurance to the Board and Chief Executive and ensuring compliance with legislation.

5.2 The Assistant Director Asset Management is responsible for implementation of this policy

5.3 All Employees are expected to identify and report issues and follow policy requirements

5.4 Customers are asked to work with us to report damp and mould issues promptly and provide access for inspection and repair

## 6. Customer Engagement and Communication

- 6.1 Effective communication with customers is vital to promote hazard awareness, safety and compliance.
- 6.2 Southway will:
- Communicate clearly and effectively with customers
  - Provide updates on actions and timescales
  - Offer accessible and inclusive information
  - Make reasonable adjustments where required
- 6.3 Southway will adopt minimum communication standards for damp and mould cases. This will include:
- Providing regular updates at agreed intervals, even where there is no change
  - Confirming key decisions, findings and next steps in writing
  - Clearly explaining the cause of damp and mould in plain, accessible language
  - Ensuring customers are not required to chase for information

## **7. Performance Monitoring and Reporting**

- 7.1 Performance will be reported on a regular basis to demonstrate effective management and monitoring of building safety activities and compliance with the Act and other relevant legislation.
- 7.2 Southway will:
- Monitor performance against key indicators
  - Track compliance with timeframes
  - Report regularly to senior management and Board
  - Use performance data to drive improvement
  - Maintain a clear and complete audit trail for all damp and mould cases to demonstrate compliance with Awaab's Law and associated regulatory requirements

## **8. Equality and Diversity**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed to ensure that all appropriate actions are put in place to support customers who have protected characteristics.
- 8.2 Southway will:
- Deliver services in a fair and inclusive way
  - Identify customers with additional needs and provide reasonable adjustments if required

- Ensure services are accessible and provide information in accessible formats and languages.
- Publish this policy on Southway's website.

## **9. Associated Policies and Procedures**

9.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Asset Management strategy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Responsive Repairs Policy
- Empty Homes Policy
- Complaints Handling Code

## **10. Competence and Training**

10.1 Southway will ensure all staff and contractors are appropriately trained and competent to deliver services under this policy.

## **11. Data, Documentation and Systems**

11.1 Southway will:

- Maintain accurate and complete records of all damp and mould cases
- Record inspections, diagnoses, decisions and actions taken
- Ensure systems support monitoring of timescales and outcomes
- Maintain records in a format that demonstrates compliance with Awaab's Law and regulatory requirements

## **12. Policy Implementation and Review**

12.1 To support this and ensure that this policy is kept up to date with any changes in guidance or legislation Southway will:

- Develop and maintain procedures to manage hazards and safety risks effectively.
- Regularly review and update this policy to reflect legislative changes and best practices.
- Arrange for an internal audit of damp and mould to be completed at least every three years.

<b>POLICY REVIEW HISTORY</b>	
<i>To be completed during each review</i>	
<b>Previous versions</b> (version number – approved by – approval date – title if different)  SER-POL-17a – Version 1.1  ADD HERE	
<b>Date of last EIA:</b>	June 2026
<b>Review lead by:</b>	Assistant Director Asset Management
<b>Main points or amendments made and reasons</b>	
<b>Next review due:</b>	<b>June 2029</b>
<b>Approval level:</b>	<b>Parent Board</b>