



Damp and Mould

Fact Sheet

Damp and mould can seriously affect health. This fact sheet explains what you can do as a resident, what your landlord must do, and your legal rights under current UK law.



What is damp in buildings?

Damp refers to the build-up of excess moisture within a property.

If any part of your home's structure or internal lining

- is not dry to the touch
- has Mould growth or
- has a musty smell

You should report this to your landlord without immediately.



Three main categories of damp:

- ▶ **Penetrating damp** is caused by water entering a property through external defects and is typically found on external walls or ceilings, particularly in the case of roof leaks. It occurs when issues such as missing brickwork pointing, cracked rendering, or broken roof tiles allow rainwater to pass from the outside into the building. This type of damp usually presents as a clearly defined patch that becomes more noticeable after rainfall and feels damp to the touch.
- ▶ **Condensation** affects most homes at some point, but certain everyday activities such as cooking, washing, drying clothes indoors, and even breathing can significantly increase moisture levels. It occurs when warm, moisture-laden air meets colder surfaces like windows, tiled walls, or painted walls, causing water droplets to form. Condensation is most common during the colder months, regardless of whether the weather outside is wet or dry. It typically appears in corners, on north-facing walls, and in areas with poor air circulation.
- ▶ **Rising damp** is caused by moisture from the ground travelling upwards through the walls of a property. It only affects basements and ground floor rooms, typically rising no more than 12 to 24 inches above ground level. Common signs of rising damp include a low-level tide mark on walls and the appearance of white, powdery salts on affected surfaces. Unlike other types of damp, rising damp is present all year round but tends to be more noticeable during the winter months.



Rising Damp

Moisture rises from ground



Condensation

Vapour turns into liquid



Penetrating damp

Water moves through structure

How can you help minimise Condensation:

1



Use windows and extractor fans for ventilation.

- This is especially important after cooking, bathing, showering or drying clothes.
- Windows do not always need to be open – 5 minutes for every hour you're in a room is enough.
- Open your windows first thing in the morning to let out any excess moisture which has been accumulated during the night.

Additionally, by using;

- Open trickle vents on modern windows (often fitted at the top of the window to allow fresh air to circulate naturally in a room).
- Use the secure window latch for air to circulate while also keeping the window safely shut.

When humidity is high outside, we must use extractor fans too. Always use extractor fans while cooking, bathing or showering.

2



Check the ventilation systems in your house.

- All bathrooms, kitchens and other 'wet areas' should be fitted with mechanical extractors.
- Your surveyor will determine if the extractors are of the right size. You should always ensure that the extractors are working well and clean them regularly.
- If you use a tumble dryer, check that it is fitted with an external vent or condensate system.
- There may be air vents in the bedrooms, cupboard and walls. Do not block these as they allow fresh air to circulate and reduce condensation.

3



Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed and windows open when in use.

- When using the bathroom or kitchen, prevent moisture spreading to rest of the rooms in the house by shutting your doors.

4



Cover pots and pans where possible during cooking.

- Use lids on pots when cooking as this helps reduce steam and moisture in the air.

5



Heating your home adequately

- Keep your home well-ventilated and maintain internal heat levels between 18-21°C as cold rooms attract moisture and allow mould to grow.
- Note that temperatures under 18°C may impact health conditions.
- For those who may be struggling with fuel poverty, guidance states to 'heat the person, not the home' however, not heating your home adequately can contribute to condensation and Mould issues. If you can only heat yourself, remember your home still needs ventilation.
- Avoid extreme changes in temperature (e.g. turning heat up to maximum and then turning heat off completely). Doing this means your home will take longer to heat.

6



Regularly wipe up condensation

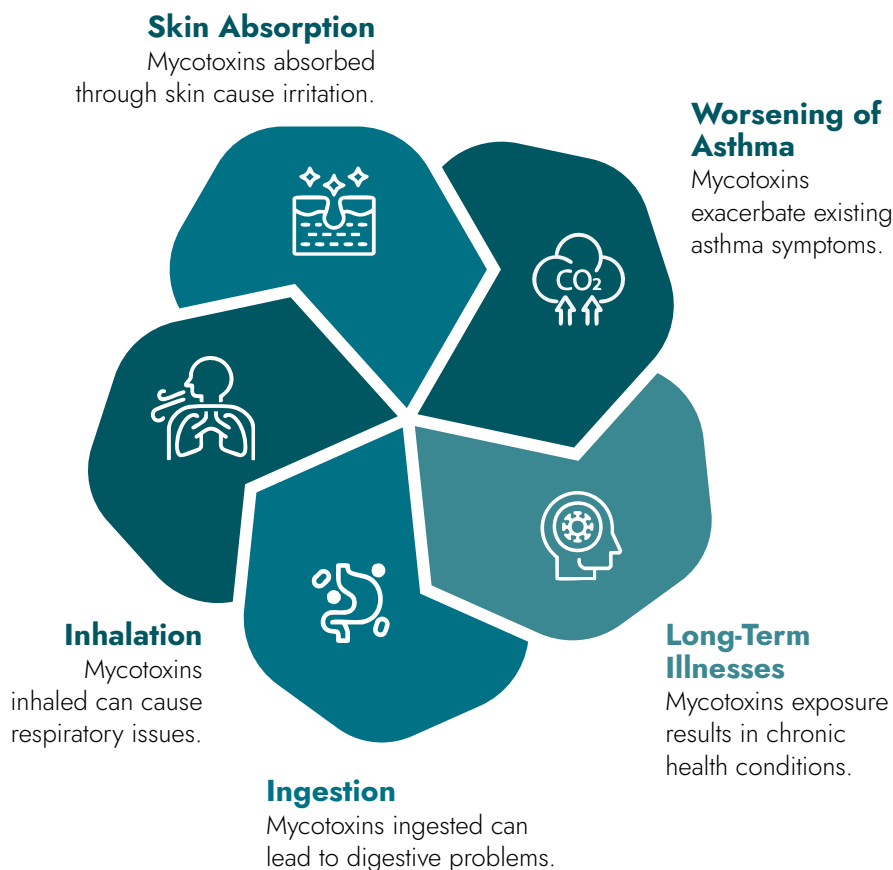
- Wipe off daily with a dry cloth or sponge from around cooler places, like windows and tiles areas.

What is Mould?

The term **Mould** describes fungi that thrive in damp conditions. There are thousands of different **Mould** species that can be found in the home, however the most dangerous are those that release mycotoxins.



Mycotoxins are extremely harmful poisons which can be inhaled, eaten or absorbed directly through the skin. These can lead to long term illnesses and can trigger current conditions to worsen such as asthma.



Types of mould:

- ▶ **Black Mould** – typically black or dark green in colour, often slimy or powdery. Commonly found in area with prolonged water damage or high humidity, such as damp walls ceilings or behind furniture.
- ▶ **Green Mould** – Greenish is colour, powdery or fuzzy in texture, often grows on damp walls, wallpaper or damp fabrics.
- ▶ **White Mould** – appears as a white fuzzy growth commonly found on organic materials like wood, paper or textiles in damp environments.
- ▶ **Alternaria** – initially dark green or black, maturing to brown or grey in colour, this thrives in damp areas like showers, bathrooms and kitchens.

How you can help minimise mould in your home

- ▶ It is essential to remove mould in your home properly and daily to reduce health risks. For hard surfaces use mould and mildew cleaning products (which are often more effective and safer than bleach) and leave them to dry completely.
- ▶ Be sure to wear protective clothing such as gloves, masks and goggles and always read the manufacturer's instructions. Keep doors shut so that spores don't spread and keep windows open for ventilation.
- ▶ For ongoing issues, always contact your landlord to investigate further.

How to handle mould in your home



Use Cleaning Products

Effective and safer than bleach for hard surfaces.



Wear Protective Gear

Ensures safety during cleaning.



Ensure Ventilation

Prevents spore spread.



Contact Landlord

Addresses ongoing issues.

Your responsibility as a resident

- ▶ Report leaks, broken extractor fans, heating problems, or damp and mould signs immediately.
- ▶ Tenancy agreements require residents to allow access for surveys, inspections, maintenance, and repairs.
- ▶ Not allowing access to your property can result in a breach of your tenancy agreement.
- ▶ Let us know if you have any health issues which could be aggravated by damp and mould.

Your rights

1



Right to a Safe and Healthy Home

- Under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), landlords must make sure homes are free from serious health hazards, including damp and mould.
- If damp and mould are severe enough to be classed as a Category 1 hazard, the landlord has a legal duty to act within strict timelines.

2



Right to Prompt Action (Awaab's Law)

- From October 2025, Awaab's Law requires social landlords to investigate reports of damp and mould within strict legal timeframes and to carry out repairs within set deadlines.
- Tenants no longer need to prove a health condition before action is taken — landlords must treat all reports at face value.

3



Right to a Home Fit for Habitation

- Under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, all rented homes must be kept in a condition fit for people to live in.
- If damp and mould make a property unfit, tenants can take their landlord to court, where the court can order repairs and compensation.

4



Right to Report Repairs Without Retaliation

- Tenants cannot be evicted or penalised simply for reporting damp and mould or requesting repairs (protection against “retaliatory eviction” under the Deregulation Act 2015). repairs and compensation.



Your Landlords obligations

► Investigate and Fix Damp and Mould Promptly (Awaab's Law)

- From October 2025, Awaab's Law sets strict timescales for social landlords:
 - Initial investigation of reported damp/Mould must begin within a set period.
 - Repairs and remedial works must be completed within a legal timeframe.
- Landlords must treat all reports seriously, without requiring medical evidence from tenants.

► Provide a Home Fit for Human Habitation

- Under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, all rented homes must be safe, healthy, and suitable to live in.
- Damp and Mould that affect health or comfort can make a property "unfit," and landlords must put it right.

► Maintain Repairs and Building Systems

- Landlords are responsible for repairs to:
 - The structure and exterior of the building (including roofs, walls, windows, doors).
 - Installations for heating, hot water, and ventilation.
- If defects (like leaks, broken extract fans, or heating faults) are contributing to damp and Mould, landlords must fix them

► You can read the damp and mould policies via Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council's websites:

Babergh

Mid Suffolk

From Damp to Habitable Home

Unfit Rented Home

Damp and mould present

Report Damp/Mould
Tenant reports damp and mould

Initial Investigation
Landlord investigates reported damp

Repairs and Remedial Works
Landlord completes necessary repairs

Fit Rented Home
Safe, healthy, and suitable

