



St Helens Borough Council - Damp and Mould Action Plan 2023/24

September 2023 Review

The Plan below provides an initial response to the Ministerial request for an Action Plan. Specific tasks have been reviewed

Identified Action	Objective	Specific Tasks	Outcome
Adopt a Category 2 threshold for damp and mould enforcement	Ensuring compliance with Ministerial Direction and enabling high level Band D & E Category 2 hazards to be addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team briefing and training to ensure compliance with revised threshold - Quality assurance / dip sampling of open cases to ensure compliance and test effectiveness of response - Expected rise in number of cases where action taken for relevant Category 2 hazards 	<p>Completed</p> <p>Ongoing management monitoring of Team with follow up enforcement under HA 2004, where applicable.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of Damp and mould cases including Cat 2's.</p>
Strengthen communication mechanisms for residents regarding issues of damp and mould re: reporting	Ensuring tenants are aware of services and support available if they are experiencing issues with damp and mould	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Update website - Team Briefings - Wider Council communications - Social media platforms - Engagement with third sector partners - Briefing for Elected Members - Highlighting all support initiatives available to tenants and landlords re: energy costs and insulation improvements 	<p>Completed, with ongoing review to ensure current Government guidance included.</p> <p>Portfolio Member briefing and Senior Management briefing.</p> <p>Information sent to landlords re</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote good practice measures for tenants and landlords re: reducing risks of damp and mould 	<p>energy/insulation initiatives and MEES, with links to council website/Government guidance.</p> <p>Guidance on causes of damp and mould provided to occupiers / service users.</p>
Landlord Engagement	Ensuring that there is targeted engagement with both private landlords and registered providers in the borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registered Provider Forum – January 2023 - Website / Social Media information to landlords - Explore support for targeted comms from Council Revenues & Benefits Services 	<p>Ongoing liaison with main registered providers in the borough including partnership. “Hot topic” meeting covering damp and mould.</p> <p>Provision of targeted information to Letting Agents regarding damp and mould, to share with their landlords.</p> <p>Provision of targeted information to licensed HMO landlords.</p> <p>Raise awareness of national Landlords Association events.</p>

<p>Strengthening recording systems / data analysis</p>	<p>Ensuring that the new IT system implemented in 2023 provides effective reporting tools to monitor prevalence of damp and mould</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific coding re: damp and mould to be embedded in new system - Bespoke reporting mechanisms from IT system - Interrogation of existing system with IT to ensure that all reporting available is maximised - Temporary data capture until new system is live in Autumn 2023 	<p>By 31 March 2024</p> <p>Recording of damp and mould in place on existing system and operational.</p>
<p>Understanding the scale of this hazard across the borough</p>	<p>Ensuring that the prevalence of damp and mould is understood alongside any challenges relating to specific property archetypes or housing conditions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commission a Stock Model Analysis for the borough in 2024 - Respond to data by requiring specific local data from registered providers on findings of their asset bases 	<p>Ongoing discussions with stock model service provider. Damp and mould analysis not yet available, but potential for inclusion within future stock model for 2024.</p>
<p>Review service standards and quality monitoring for the Housing Standards function</p>	<p>Ensure that the service is delivering a good quality and timely response to residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review service standards - Set baseline of reporting data - Review service demand and resource implications - Regular update reports to Senior Leadership 	<p>Completed, including prioritisation of damp and mould referrals within triage process. KPI's in place.</p> <p>Ongoing reviews of service demand.</p> <p>Senior Leadership Team briefed on publication of Damp and Mould guidance</p>

Proactive and preventative responses to damp and mould	Ensuring that timely action is taken, cases of high risk are addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions with stakeholders e.g. health, to identify targeted cohorts - Liaison with Housing Options service re: homelessness prevention - Alignment with wider housing retrofit programmes and health improvement programmes 	<p>Ongoing liaison with key stakeholders, including housing options, social services.</p> <p>Prioritisation of referrals from key partners.</p> <p>Information provided by the council's Affordable Warmth Unit regarding retrofit/improvement schemes available.</p>
Deterrent factor and community confidence	Ensure that action taken against non-compliant landlords is published to raise awareness and demonstrate effectiveness of enforcement against damp and mould	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong communications messages re: enforcement action taken - Reinforce responsibilities and consequences of non-compliance to sector 	<p>Ongoing action and communications with regards to damp and mould.</p> <p>All housing standards enforcement officers have completed training on damp and mould.</p>