HM-POL-10 Damp and Mould Policy

Version	2	Developed by	Director of Property and Housing Services
Approval Date	18/11/2025	In Consultation With	Head of Property Services Health and Safety Manager
Classification Type - (Confidential, Restricted, Internal use only, None)			Internal Use Only

1. Purpose and Scope

This Policy sets out Framework's duties, standards, and operating procedures for preventing, investigating, and remedying damp and mould in all homes we own or manage. It defines required statutory timescales, risk-based prioritisation, resident communications, record keeping and assurance arrangements.

2. Policy Statement

Framework will provide dry, warm, healthy homes and will treat all damp and mould reports as potential health and safety risks. We will act promptly and proactively, comply with Awaab's Law and other legal duties, and never attribute blame to residents. Where building defects or installation failures are identified, Framework will take ownership of the remedy and address the root cause.

3. Legal and Regulatory Framework

This Policy supports compliance with (not exhaustive):

- Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 (Awaab's Law) — statutory response, inspection, and repair times.

- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.

- Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) under the Housing Act 2004.

- Regulator of Social Housing Safety and Quality Standard (2024) safe, well-maintained homes, competent staff, data-driven assurance.

- Building Regulations, Building Safety Act 2022 (where relevant to higher-risk buildings).

- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, Defective Premises Act 1972.

- Data Protection Act 2018 / UK GDPR (case records and vulnerability data).

- Complaint Handling Code (Housing Ombudsman).

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4. Definitions

• Damp: Excess moisture within the building fabric or indoor air resulting from penetrating damp, rising damp, plumbing leaks or condensation.

• Mould: Fungal growth that can occur on damp surfaces; a symptom of excess moisture, poor ventilation, or thermal bridging.

• Temporary Mitigation: Measures to reduce risk pending full repairs (e.g., mould wash, dehumidifiers, portable heating, extractor repair, ventilation boosts).

• Decant: Temporary move to alternative accommodation due to health risk, intrusive work, or prolonged remediation.

• Vulnerable household: Includes (not limited to) children under five, older people, pregnancy, residents with respiratory/cardiac conditions or immunocompromise, and other safeguarding concerns.
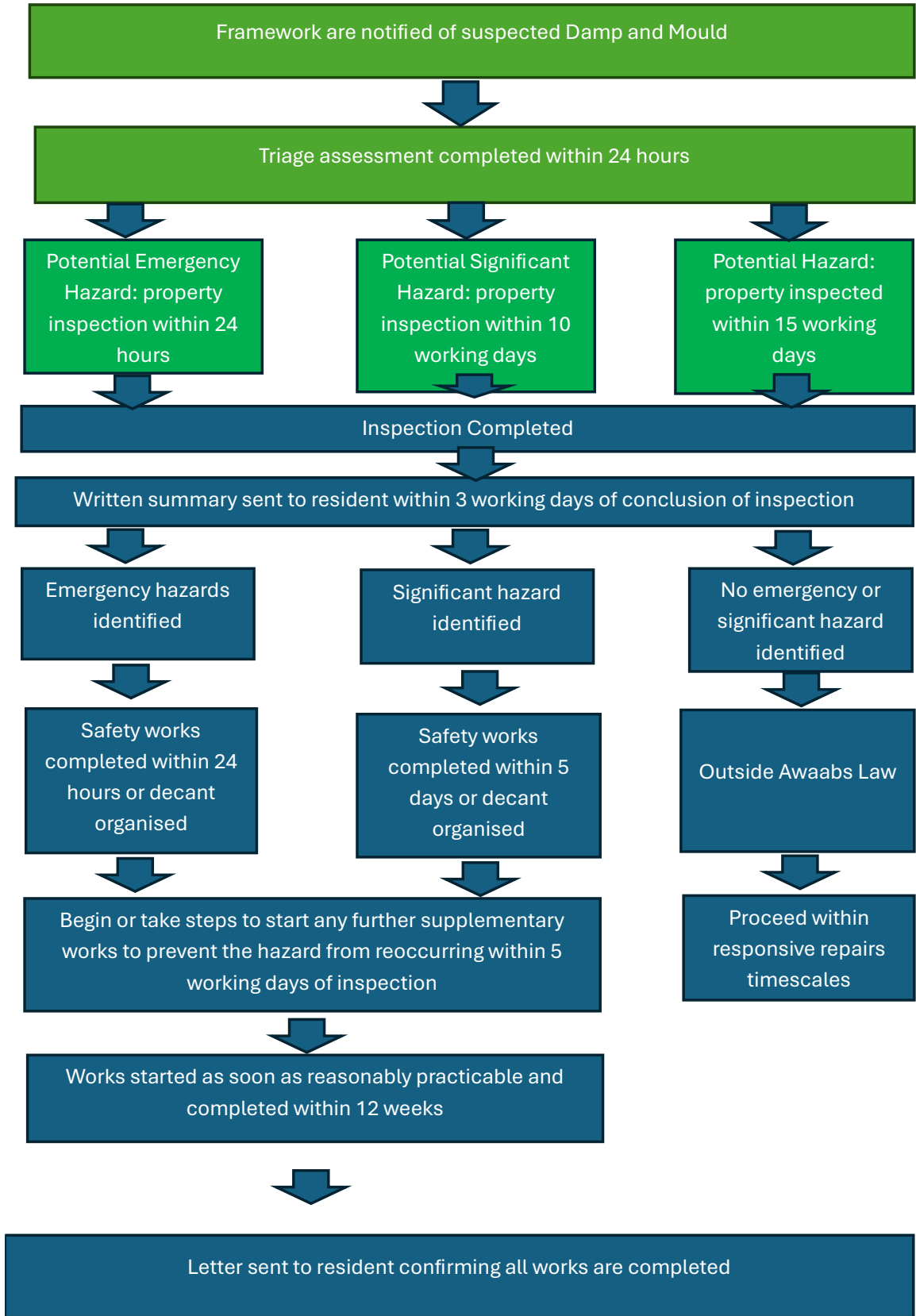
5. Principles

• Risk-first: Health risk and building risk drive the response.

• Proactive: Identify archetypes and components prone to damp/mould; prevent recurrence via planned works.

• Evidence-led: Diagnose the root cause, not the symptom; avoid misdiagnosis of rising/penetrating damp vs condensation.

• No-blame: Work collaboratively with residents; advice must be reasonable and affordable.

• Assurance: Accurate records, photographic evidence, and closure checks support compliance and learning.

6. Awaab's Law —

Statutory Timeframes and Communications Framework will meet or exceed the following mandatory stages for all reports relating to damp and mould:

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Framework are notified of suspected Damp and Mould
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Triage assessment completed within 24 hours
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Potential Emergency Hazard: property inspection within 24 hours	Potential Significant Hazard: property inspection within 10 working days	Potential Hazard: property inspected within 15 working days

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Inspection Completed
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        ▼
Written summary sent to resident within 3 working days of conclusion of inspection
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Emergency hazards identified	Significant hazard identified	No emergency or significant hazard identified
Safety works completed within 24 hours or decant organised	Safety works completed within 5 days or decant organised	Outside Awaabs Law
Begin or take steps to start any further supplementary works to prevent the hazard from reoccurring within 5 working days of inspection		Proceed within responsive repairs timescales
Works started as soon as reasonably practicable and completed within 12 weeks		

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Letter sent to resident confirming all works are completed
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7. Risk-Based Prioritisation and Safeguarding

• Automatic Urgent classification where: children <5 in household; pregnancy; known respiratory/cardiac illness; immunocompromise; severe visible mould; category 1 HHSRS hazard indications; or repeated leaks/failures.

• Where urgency is triggered, inspection may be brought forward, and temporary mitigation is provided immediately.

• Safeguarding concerns are referred through Framework's safeguarding processes and, where appropriate, to local partners.

8. Identifying Damp and Mould (Inspection and Diagnosis)

1. Initial Inspection: Competent staff use moisture meters/thermal imaging as appropriate; take photos; check ventilation, insulation, rainwater goods, DPC bridging, plumbing, thermal bridges.

2. Common Causes (not exhaustive): rain penetration; high ground levels; defective rainwater goods; plumbing leaks; bridged or missing DPC; cold bridging/insufficient insulation; failure of extract ventilation; salt contamination.

3. Misdiagnosis Risk: Rising/penetrating damp is often confused with condensation — where uncertain, seek specialist survey.

4. Data Capture: Findings, readings, photos, and provisional cause recorded to asset and repairs systems at time of visit.

9. Temporary Mitigation and Decant

Where full repairs cannot start immediately or risks are acute, Framework will provide proportionate temporary mitigation, which may include mould treatment, dehumidifiers, ventilation interventions, and portable heating. If living conditions present a significant health risk or the work is intrusive/prolonged, Framework will consider a temporary decant, with clear time limits and property care arrangements.

10. Repairs and Remediation Standards

• Works orders will address the root cause (e.g., fix leaks/defects, insulation/ventilation upgrades, thermal bridging remedies) and not rely on surface cleaning alone.

• Where condensation risk is inherent (e.g., fabric/thermal design), consider planned works (insulation, PIV/MVHR where suitable, window trickle upgrade, extractor upgrade with run-on/humidity sensing).

• Post-works, a case closure inspection confirms remedy effectiveness and records photos.

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11. Residents — Support and Collaborative Responsibilities

Framework will provide clear, practical advice on heating, ventilation and moisture control and offer additional support if fuel poverty or affordability is identified.

Residents are asked to:

• Report damp/mould promptly and allow access for inspection and work.

• Use extract fans, keep trickle vents open, and reduce excess indoor moisture where reasonable and affordable (e.g., lids on pans; doors closed when bathing).

• Tell us if health or vulnerability factors exist so we can prioritise.

12. When Recharging May Apply

The decision to recharge a resident will be considered where there is unmistakable evidence of deliberate damage or willful neglect outside normal usage and after a fair investigation. Any recharge decision requires approval from the Head of Property Services or above and written rationale.

13. Data, Records and Privacy

• Case records will include triage, inspection notes, photos, diagnosis, works orders, resident communications, mitigation, completion evidence, and lessons learned.

• Personal and health-related information used for prioritisation will be overseen under DPA 2018/UK GDPR and retained as per Framework's retention schedule.

• Data is used to identify risks and inform planned investment.

14. Competence and Training

Framework will ensure all relevant staff and contractors receive training on:

• Damp/mould diagnosis and HHSRS hazards.

• Awaab's Law timescales & communications.

• Safeguarding, vulnerability and fuel poverty support.

• Using meters/thermal cameras and recording evidence.

• Root-cause analysis and specifying effective remedies.

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15. Performance, KPIs and Assurance

We will monitor and report at least quarterly:

• Number of Emergency cases

• Number of Significant cases

• Number of emergency or significant hazards identified

• % cases completed within agreed timescale.

• Number of repeat cases within 12 months.

• % urgent cases meeting urgent targets (vulnerability pathway).

Assurance: Quarterly reports to Senior Leadership; annual Board assurance statement; trend analysis to inform planned works.

16. Complaints

Residents can complain via the website, housing/support teams, or advocacy. Complaints will be managed under Framework's Complaints Policy in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, with clear stage responses, learning capture, and escalation routes.

17. Roles and Responsibilities

• Property Services: Owns the process end-to-end, performance, and compliance

. • Repairs & Contractors: Diagnose, specify, deliver and evidence works.

• Housing/Support Teams: Report risks, enable access, identify vulnerability, support residents.

• Asset Management: Trend analysis, archetype risk, and planned programmes.

• Compliance/Governance: Monitor KPI delivery and statutory compliance.

18. Review

This Policy will be reviewed every three years or earlier if law, regulation, or Ombudsman guidance changes.