

DAMP AND MOULD CHECKLIST



December 2023

Housing checklist to support identification of housing and clinical concerns related to mould and damp exposure

This resource has been developed through the collaboration of London's Public Health System partners; the Mayor of London, Association of Directors of Public Health (London), NHS England (London), Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, UK Health Security Agency.

Acknowledgements: Julie Billett, Shelley Aldred, Emer Forrest, Gladys Xavier, Georgie Herskovits, Christine Kirkpatrick, Philip Williams, Ian Diley, Nicky Brown, Lindsay-Jane Merrett, Emer O'Connell, Emma De Zoete, Josie Garrett, Sara Nelson, Anna Martinez, Jane Simmons, Rachel Knowles, Ingrid Barnes, Josephine Ozols-Riding, TechUK Damp and Mould Innovators Network, Association of London Environmental Health Practitioners, London Local Authority Chief Executives Group, London Directors of Housing and the Health and Housing Impact Network, UCL Centre for Access to Justice.

What is the London Damp & Mould Checklist?

This checklist resource is designed for use by **health and social care professionals** who visit residential properties as part of their management and care of patients. It provides a checklist and guidance to support the identification of internal damp and mould as well as people at risk of poor health due to damp and mould exposure in their home. Where concerns are identified this resource provides guidance on actions to take in the form of advice, signposting, and template letters to inform local authority housing teams, housing associations, landlords and health services of any concerns.

This is not intended as a tool for use beyond health and care professionals (e.g., landlords) owing to its focus on assessing clinical vulnerability alongside housing concerns. However, this checklist may also serve as a useful awareness raising tool amongst other frontline staff working in services beyond health and social care.

How to use the London Damp & Mould Checklist?

This London Damp and Housing Checklist is designed to support frontline health and social care professional in identifying and assessing clinical risks in the context of housing concerns relating to damp and mould.

The Checklist is divided into the following sections:

- Identifying housing concerns
- Assessing clinical vulnerability
- Taking action.



Section 1: IDENTIFICATION



SECTION ONE: IDENTIFYING HOUSING CONCERNS

Complete Q1-8 below to identify possible concerns related to mould, damp, and fuel poverty (see Appendix 1 for a factsheet and Appendix 3 for visual examples of concerns)

		YES	NO
Q1	Is there visible condensation on windows or surfaces in the house?		
Q2	Are there visible patches of damp or water damage on walls or ceilings?		
Q3	Is there any visible mould growth on windows or surfaces or a smell of damp?		
Q4	Has the householder reported known leaks inside the property, faulty pipes or guttering outside the property, bridged damp-proof course or visible structural/ facade defects?		
Q5	Do any of the bathrooms or kitchen lack a working extractor fan?		
Q6	Are there concerns about adequate ventilation in the property? For example: windows cannot be opened; windows do not have (operational) trickle vents; concerns about opening windows owing to high levels of outdoor air pollution, noise or for safety reasons.		
Q7	Have the residents raised issues about damp and mould with their landlord? (e.g., concerns have been ignored or the response to concerns is slow)		
Q8	Are there concerns about the adequacy and effectiveness of the heating system for the property? Are the occupants struggling to heat their home?		

Comments:

Section 2: ASSESSING CLINICAL VULNERABILITY



SECTION TWO: ASSESSING CLINICAL VULNERABILITY

If any housing concerns relating to damp and mould are identified in Section One, complete Section 2 below to identify any clinical concerns.

		YES	NO
Q9	Are any residents/ tenants at increased risk from damp and mould, due to the following:		
	Respiratory condition (Such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease COPD, cystic fibrosis, other chronic lung conditions)		
	Skin conditions (such as eczema)		
	Cardiovascular conditions (e.g., angina, heart failure)		
	Immunocompromised or have a weakened immune system (e.g., immunosuppressants or undergoing chemotherapy, had a transplant, taking medication that suppresses the immune system)		
	People living with a mental health condition		
	Pregnant women, their unborn babies and women who have recently given birth, who may have weakened immune systems		
	Children and young people up to age 16 years (whose organs are still developing and are therefore more likely to suffer from physical conditions such as respiratory problems)		
	Older people, aged 65+		
	People who are bedbound, housebound or have mobility problems making it more difficult for them to get out of a home with damp and mould and into fresh air		
Other.....			
Comments			
Q10	If your residents/ tenants are not at increased risk from damp and mould as listed in Q9, have they experienced any of the following in the last 6 months?		
	Repeated instances of coughing, wheezing or breathing difficulties or throat infections		
	Repeated instances of dry, itchy, cracked, or sore skin		
	Recurrent irritation of the eyes		
	Recurrent nasal congestion, runny nose or sneezing		
	Frequent worry about damp and mould impacting mental health		
Any A&E or hospital admissions due to breathing concerns or tightness of chest			
Comments			

Section 3: TAKING ACTION



SECTION THREE: TAKING ACTION

If concerns are identified in Section One and Section Two, see below for summary of recommended actions to be completed.

All individuals to receive a copy of the factsheet (see Appendix 1)

If any housing concerns are identified, but no clinical vulnerabilities or concerns, then complete the following actions:

- If damp and mould concerns identified (“YES” to any of Q1-Q8’) - complete actions in **Box A**.
- If fuel poverty concerns identified (“YES” to Q8) – complete actions in **Box B**.
- If answered no housing concerns identified (“NO” to Q1-Q8) – no further action to be taken.

If clinical concerns or risk factors are identified in addition to housing concerns, then complete the following actions:

- If “YES” to any of Q1-Q8 **AND** “YES” to any of Q9 or Q10, complete actions in **Box C**.

Box A: Actions for exposure to damp and mould without clinical vulnerabilities or concerns present

- 1. Signpost all individuals to the following resources:**
 - a. [NICE factsheet for professionals](#) on improving indoor air quality
 - b. [NHS patient guidance](#) on impact of mould and damp on health
 - c. Guidance from [Shelter \(England\)](#) and [Citizens Advice](#) on how to prevent damp and mould.
- 2. If individual is a social tenant, consider template Letter C (see Appendix 2) to the landlord** and signpost to the following resources:
 - a. National guidance on understanding and addressing damp and mould, which covers the responsibilities of social and private landlords
[Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 - b. Guidance from Citizens Advice on [responsibilities of social landlords and actions to take if damp is not addressed \(need to check this and replace with an alternative link if recommended by the national guidance\)](#)
- 3. If individual is a private tenant, consider template Letter C (see Appendix 2) to the landlord** and signpost to the following resources:
 - a. National guidance on understanding and addressing damp and mould, which covers the responsibilities of social and private landlords
[Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
 - b. If concerns about a private landlord, consider reporting them through the [GLA's rogue landlord process](#).
 - c. Guidance from [Citizens Advice](#) and [Shelter UK](#) and on responsibilities of private landlords to address damp/mould and [actions if landlord does not take action](#) (including template letters for the tenant to raise concerns).

Box B: Actions for fuel poverty concerns.

1. **Signpost all individuals to their local [Warmer Homes Advice service](#)** for further advice and to the following resources:
 - Citizens Advice guidance on [support for energy bills](#).
 - OFGEM summary of [schemes and grants related to fuel poverty](#).
 - Mayor of London's [Warmer Homes scheme](#) (periodic) for private tenants/owner occupier

Box C: Actions for exposure to damp and mould AND a clinical vulnerability or concerns present

1. **Signpost all individuals to the following resources:**
 - [NICE factsheet for professionals](#) on improving indoor air quality
 - [NHS patient guidance](#) on impact of mould and damp on health
 - Guidance from [Shelter \(England\)](#) and [Citizens Advice](#) on how to prevent damp and mould.
2. **If individual is a social tenant, then complete and send template Letter A and/or Letter C (see Appendix 2) to the local authority and landlord** and signpost to the following resources:
 - [National guidance](#) on understanding and addressing damp and mould, which covers the responsibilities of social and private landlords
 - Guidance from Citizens Advice on [responsibilities of social landlords and actions to take if damp is not addressed \(need to check this and replace with an alternative link if recommended by the national guidance\)](#)
3. **If individual is a private tenant, then complete and send template Letter B and/or Letter C (see Appendix 2) to the local authority and landlord** and signpost to the following resources:
 - [National guidance](#) on understanding and addressing damp and mould, which covers the responsibilities of social and private landlords
 - If concerns about a private landlord, consider reporting them through the [GLA's rogue landlord process](#).
4. Guidance from [Citizens Advice](#) and [Shelter \(England\)](#) and on responsibilities of private landlords to address damp/mould and [actions if landlord does not take action](#) (including template letters for the tenant to raise concerns
5. Health and care professionals should **follow their usual care pathways and protocols for the management of any clinical concerns and promote Making Every Contact Count using resources on [MECCLink](#)**
6. [Cold Weather Payment](#) giving support for individuals receiving certain benefits or Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI). A payment will be received if the average temperature in the household's area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below over 7 consecutive days.
7. [Warm Home Discount Scheme](#) is a one-off discount on electricity bills. The scheme reopened in October 2023.

APPENDIX 1 – FACT SHEET ON DAMP AND MOULD AND PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

Fact Sheet: Impact of damp and mould on health and actions you can take.

- Landlords have a legal responsibility to address damp and mould when reported to them and to ensure the underlying causes are addressed, such as structural or ventilation issues and defects.
- Tenants should not be blamed for damp and mould.
- It is unavoidable that everyday domestic tasks, such as cooking, bathing, washing and drying laundry will contribute to the production of indoor moisture.
- In some circumstances and where appropriate, small reasonable adjustments by tenants can help to reduce their damp and mould risk. However, it is essential that any tenant actions sit alongside – are not a substitute for – tackling the root causes of the issue (building deficiencies, inadequate ventilation, or low indoor air temperature).

How can damp and mould affect your health?

Mould is a common form of fungus that can grow indoors, particularly in damp, cold and poorly ventilated spaces. To grow, mould produces small airborne particles known as spores. When inhaled these spores can cause irritation, allergic reactions and breathing difficulties, particularly in those who are most vulnerable¹. Damp and mould primarily affect the airways and lungs, but they can also affect the eyes and skin. The respiratory effects of damp and mould can cause serious illness and, in the most severe cases, death.^{2 3}

Who is most at risk of poor health from being exposed to damp and mould?

Some people may be at increased risk of the health impacts of damp and mould exposure. This could be due to health-related or age-related vulnerabilities, or because they are less able to report and act on guidance relating to damp and mould, or simply because they are more likely to live in a home with damp and mould. These include babies and young children and older people, as well as those with respiratory conditions (such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)), cardiovascular disease, allergies, skin conditions (such as eczema) and those with weakened immune systems (for example those undergoing chemotherapy or who are immunocompromised).

What actions can you take to reduce damp and mould in the home?

- **Try to maintain good ventilation.**
 - Ensure extractor fans in the bathrooms and kitchen are working and are used whenever cooking or showering and for a period of time afterwards.
 - Regularly open windows and doors throughout the day, even for short periods, or partially open windows for longer periods, to improve ventilation and get rid of excess moisture. If your windows cannot open and there are not trickle vents, please ask your landlord to ensure the home is ventilated.
 - Keeping window trickle vents open
- **Try to reduce excess moisture and dampness;**
 - Where possible, try to dry any washing outside the home or in a well-ventilated room.
 - Wipe down any condensation that forms on windows each morning.
 - Ask your landlord to address any sources of water damage, both inside and outside the home.
 - Report leaks and damp where you detect it.

¹ [Can damp and mould affect my health? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk)

² [Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/damp-and-mould-understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-for-rented-housing-providers>

- **Tenants cannot be expected to reduce moisture levels if their home does not enable them to do so.** Landlords should work with tenants to understand how best to address the issue collaboratively.
- **Try to heat your home sufficiently.**
 - Landlords should ensure the property is heated effectively with functioning heating and that heating controls work.
 - Heating your home to a reasonable level of warmth can help prevent damp from forming. The UK government recommends heating rooms that are in use to a minimum of 18°C as spending time in a room below this temperature may be harmful to your health.

Where to go for further information:

- **Health concerns:** If you have any further concerns about how damp and mould are affecting your health, please discuss this with your GP or appropriate clinician.
- **Tenant and landlord responsibilities:** For further information on the responsibilities of tenants and private and social landlords (including complaints processes) please see the Citizens Advice page below or scan the QR code to the right:
 - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/damp-and-mould-understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-for-rented-housing-providers>
- **Support with heating your home:** If you are struggling to heat your home to a reasonable temperature, please contact your local [Warmer Homes Advice Service](#) for further advice. For the contact number for your borough, please see the page below or scan the QR code to the right: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-and-strategies/environment-and-climate-change/energy/warmer-homes-advice-service/warmer-homes-advice-service-your-borough>
- [National guidance](#) has been developed with a multidisciplinary group of experts in housing and health. Members of the government's expert [Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants](#) were also consulted. It makes sure that social and private sector landlords have a thorough understanding of their legal responsibilities, and of the serious health risks that damp and mould pose.
- You may wish to consider pursuing legal action if your landlord is not fixing the disrepair. You may be able to get legal aid to help you do this. To find a legal aid lawyer <https://find-legal-advice.justice.gov.uk/>
Check if you qualify for legal aid here: <https://www.gov.uk/check-legal-aid>.



APPENDIX 2 – TEMPLATE LETTERS

TEMPLATE LETTER A: LOCAL AUTHORITY REFERRAL - HOUSING CONCERNS IDENTIFIED FOR SOCIAL TENANT

[INSERT SENDER'S DETAILS / ADDRESS]

CC: [INSERT SIGNATURE AND DETAILS OF LOCAL DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH & GP]

Date:

Re: Concerns about mould and damp in residence (request for environmental health assessment for social tenant)

Dear colleagues (local authority social housing team),

Name of resident/s	DOB	Address	Housing association

Following a recent home visit to the above individual's residence, I have concerns about the presence of damp and mould in the property and the potential for a negative impact on their health. **I am writing to you to request that an environmental health assessment be completed for this property and that your team follow-up these concerns as appropriate to ensure these issues are addressed.**

I have attached a checklist completed with the individual which summarises the environmental issues identified as well as a completed brief health assessment. This has identified the following:

- The environmental assessment identified concerns relating to damp and/or mould (see section 1 of the enclosed checklist)
- The health assessment identified one or more individual living in the property who is at greater risk of negative health impacts from damp and mould exposure (see section 2 of the enclosed checklist).

Additional issues (for information only):

The following additional issues were identified, and I have signposted the household to further information:

- Fuel poverty (Delete as appropriate) Present/Not present

I have shared the attached factsheet with the patient and discussed ways they can reduce the risk of damp and mould in the property in the short-term.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME /POSITION / CONTACT DETAILS OF SENDER]

[ATTACH COMPLETED CHECKLIST AND FACTSHEET TO LETTER/EMAIL FOR INFORMATION]

[CC: INSERT GP NAME]

TEMPLATE LETTER B: LOCAL AUTHORITY REFERRAL - HOUSING CONCERNS IDENTIFIED FOR PRIVATE TENANT

[INSERT SENDER'S DETAILS / ADDRESS]

CC: [INSERT SIGNATURE AND DETAILS OF LOCAL DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH & GP]

Date:

Re: Concerns about mould and damp in residence (request for environmental health assessment for private tenant)

Dear colleagues (local authority private rental team),

Name	DOB	Address

Following a recent home visit to the above individual's residence, I have concerns about the presence of damp and mould in the property and the potential for a negative impact on their health. **I am writing to you to request that your team follow-up these concerns as appropriate to ensure these issues are addressed by the landlord.**

I have attached a checklist completed with the individual which summarises the environmental issues identified as well as a completed brief health assessment. This has identified the following:

- The environmental assessment identified concerns relating to damp and/or mould (see section 1 of the enclosed checklist)
- The health assessment identified one or more individual living in the property who is at greater risk of negative health impacts from damp and mould exposure (see section 2 of the enclosed checklist).

Additional issues (for information only):

The following additional issues were identified, and I have signposted the household to further information:

- Fuel poverty (Delete as appropriate) Present/Not present

I have shared the attached factsheet with the patient and discussed ways they can reduce the risk of damp and mould in the property in the short-term.

Yours sincerely,

[NAME / POSITION / CONTACT DETAILS OF SENDER]

[ATTACH COMPLETED CHECKLIST AND FACTSHEET TO LETTER/EMAIL FOR INFORMATION]

[CC: INSERT GP NAME]

TEMPLATE LETTER C: NOTIFYING LANDLORD OF HOUSING DISREPAIR/ DEFECTS

Dear

RE: (TENANT'S NAME AND ADDRESS OF PROPERTY)

I write regarding housing conditions at the above address.

Following a recent home visit to the above address/consultation with the tenant* I have concerns about the presence of damp and/or mould* in the property.

Housing Conditions

The following defects appear to exist at the property since **[insert date if known or indicate rough duration if known]** and the tenant has told you about them on **[insert date if applicable]**.

List of problems at the property **[delete or add to as needed – see section 1 of the checklist to complete this list]:**

- Visible condensation on windows and/or surfaces
- Visible patches of damp or water damage on walls and/or ceilings
- Visible mould growth on windows and/or surfaces
- Smell of damp
- Leaks inside property **[state where]**
- Faulty pipes or guttering outside property **[state where]**
- Visible structural or facade defects
- Bathroom(s) or Kitchen lack a working extractor fan
- Windows in **[state room(s)]** cannot be opened
- Windows in **[state room(s)]** do not have operational trickle vents
- Concerns about the adequacy and effectiveness of the heating system for the property
- **[insert other concern(s) as applicable]**

The defects at the property present a risk to the health and wellbeing of your tenants, including **[describe impact on health where applicable - see section 2 of the checklist]**.

Please arrange to inspect the property as soon as possible and arrange for remedial works to be carried out. Access will be available by contacting the tenant on **[insert contact number for tenant/patient]**. You should also inform the tenant of what remedial works you intend to undertake and the timescales for completion.

Your duty

In accordance with sections 9A, 10 and 11 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 and section 4 of the defective premises act 1972, you have a legal duty to:

- maintain the property in state that is fit for human habitation,
- rectify any defects,
- Take steps to ensure the tenant and their occupants would be reasonably safe from personal injury or from damage to their property caused by any defect(s).

Please respond to the tenant in 14 days to let them know what action you intend to take to remedy the issues and information about any compensation you will provide.

Yours faithfully,

[Name]

[Job Title]

* delete as appropriate

APPENDIX 3 – VISUAL EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE OF MOULD AND DAMP EXPOSURE IN HOMES

Examples of visible condensation on windows or surfaces:



Examples of visible mould in homes:



NOTE: If there is observable evidence of dampness in a building, such as visible mould, mould odour or water damage, including condensation, this is sufficient to indicate the need to remedy the issue to protect the health of tenants and prevent proliferation of the issue. These are just indicative images; even small areas of mould present a health risk.

The smell of mould without visible evidence of mould may indicate that there is mould behind a surface, such as on the back of wallpaper, panelling, ceiling tiles, the underside of carpets, behind pipes, furniture or inside heating and ventilation units.

Even if visible mould is not present, dampness alone can increase the risk of health problems.

Please refer to the national guidance for more information <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/damp-and-mould-understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-for-rented-housing-providers>

We welcome feedback from colleagues on this new tool and are committed to reviewing this document periodically. Please feel free to send comments to LondonDampandMould@dhsc.gov.uk