

Dampness & Condensation Management Policy

Version Number: 3.0

Effective From: February 2025

Applicable To: This policy applies to all properties Bernicia owns and manages.

Associated Documents:

The following resources support the Dampness & Condensation Management policy and Bernicia colleagues to deliver the policy. These can be found on the right of the Connect policy page:

- Dampness and Condensation Management Plan
- Repairs & Maintenance Policy
- Repairs & Maintenance Procedure
- Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy
- Housing Management Decant Policy
- Void Property (fit to let) Standard

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion: An ED&I Assessment was completed in February 2024. Please contact the Governance team if you require a copy.

Approved By: Customer Services Committee

Policy Author: Managing Director Property & Construction

Policy Owner: Executive Director, Assets and Growth

Next Review: February 2028

Reference Number: POL-0012

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1. Policy Scope

This policy explains how Bernicia's commitment to the management of dampness and condensation will be met. It is supported by the Dampness & Condensation Management Plan which provides detailed guidance and procedures. The scope of this policy includes all areas of the home and the various elements of dampness that may affect the home including but not limited to condensation, rising/bridging dampness, penetrating and mechanical defects. At the time of policy approval Bernicia owns and manages in the region of 13,000 tenanted properties

This policy follows from the Regulator of Social Housing requirements and the Housing Ombudsman's spotlight report on Damp and Mould in October 2021, directing Social Housing Landlords as to the expectations in the management of dampness and mould in tenanted properties.

The key objective of this policy is to describe how Bernicia will meet the required statutory, contractual, and regulatory requirements of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the provision of a home that is fit for Human Habitation where serious dampness poses a problem for tenants and the building itself. It will also cover how the Board, as Duty Holder, will receive assurance.

The Dampness & Condensation Management policy is in line with all relevant regulation and legislation including, but not limited to:

- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Regulator of Social Housing's (RSH) Home Standard.
- Home (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- Decent Homes Standard
- Awaab's Law

2. Policy Standards

Standard 1: Zero-tolerance approach to dampness and condensation interventions

We provide clear lines of responsibility for the management of dampness and condensation supported by written guidance in the Dampness and Condensation Management Plan. This ensures there is a clear and consistent process including front-line reporting, engagement, monitoring and control is in place to manage properties and tenant expectations where properties are affected by dampness and condensation.

Standard 2: Remedial Action

Bernicia undertake appropriate remedial action in a timely manner. Action will be taken where required to eradicate and/or reduce the effects of dampness and condensation down to a manageable level that no longer poses a risk or detrimental effect to the property or its tenants.

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Standard 3: Proactive use of data and trends

Bernicia proactively assess available data and trends for relevant information about property types, estates and geographical areas that are subject or prone to the effects of dampness and condensation and produce heat maps to clearly identify these.

We will review existing properties based on trends of affected properties and assess risk through a desk top review which will identify those properties at potential risk of dampness and condensation.

Where required we will effectively plan, and resource future stock investment works to estates and areas affected by significant issues of dampness and condensation where certain property types may have inherent defects associated to dampness and condensation.

Standard 3: Responsible Persons

Bernicia will appoint dedicated persons who will be the responsible persons for all cases of dampness as reported by our tenants and will act as the point of contact for all issues associated with dampness and condensation throughout the process of notification and remediation. This ensures the tenants voice is heard and captured and provides a key contact throughout.

Standard 4: Recording and actioning damp reports

We will effectively record and inform the relevant department of properties that are reported to have issues with dampness and or condensation via;

- A direct report by a tenant;
- As a result of property surveys (void/mutual exchange, stock condition or planned maintenance);
- Housing inspections or visits such as tenancy or responsive repair appointments;
- Notification by third parties

Where reported as above, a thorough examination and survey of the affected and associated areas within the internal and external boundaries of the property will be undertaken by an accredited and competent person to ascertain the level of defect.

Standard 5: Void & Mutual Exchange Properties

All properties, as standard, when they become void or during the process of a mutual exchange, and those subject to a physical stock condition survey will be subject to a recognised survey for dampness and condensation by an accredited and competent person.

No void property will be let, or a mutual exchange agreed without a survey having been undertaken and any significant works required to rectify the defect will be completed prior to the new tenancy or property exchange commencing. Where applicable minor defects/remedial damp works that can be completed once the tenant has moved in or , with the express agreement of the tenant, can be undertaken but this must be within a mutually agreed timescale set with the tenant.

Standard 6: Completion of works

The production of a report, schedule of works/work orders for the delivery of works will be produced and will be recorded within the property file/case notes within our CRM system.

All works undertaken and specifically any specialist works associated to the remedial treatment of structural dampness will use a recognised treatment and material specification in line with the British Standards Institute and Building research Establishments codes of practice or other recognised and approved codes of practice

All affected properties will be assigned a unique case reference via our CRM system and will be maintained incorporating any remedial actions and/or works and further examinations and surveys will be undertaken at set intervals via our aftercare processes to monitor the outcome of any remedial actions or works to determine the effectiveness of these and that the issues have been successfully concluded. The aftercare process will follow dedicated time intervals to check ongoing progress and satisfaction.

Standard 7: Contractor Competency

Bernicia has a responsibility to ensure that contractors are competent, and the following controls will operate to ensure competence can be demonstrated:

- Property surveys and associated remedial treatments for dampness and condensation will only be undertaken by those contractors who are trained and competent and hold a recognised accreditation for the delivery of such works. This will be done by the information collected via Bernicia's approved list and/or via the procurement process.
- All significant remedial works undertaken by contractors will be assessed during and after completion of the work to ensure compliance with recognised standards and specifications.
- An annual assessment of all contractor competencies or at the change of a contract/contractor or the introduction of new staff into their teams to ensure ongoing competence and delivery to specification and required quality standards.

Standard 8: Internal Competency

Colleagues involved with surveying of properties will be trained to a recognised standard in line with the British Standards Institute and will hold a recognised

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qualification e.g. Certified Surveyor of Timber and Dampness in Buildings (CSTDB) or Property Care Association Qualified Technician (PCAQT) or other recognised qualifications.

All other colleagues who enter a tenant's home as part of their normal day-to-day activities will be given awareness training to spot the signs of dampness and condensation and the route to reporting and recording this.

We will maintain a skills/training matrix to ensure that all staff undertaking key roles within the scope of this policy have appropriate training and that it is maintained with appropriate CPD, and updated refresher training where required.

Standard 9: Data

We will maintain an up-to-date database for the management of all properties affected by dampness and condensation including applicable trends and heat maps for future planning of remedial works.

For each relevant property record, we will maintain up to date data/case files via our CRM system confirming the status of the property along with all relevant records of works and surveys including recorded periods of intervention to check the ongoing status of the property in respect of the control of dampness and condensation.

Where a requirement exists, we will hold data and certification as defined within regulations or specifications in respect of training, contractors, materials, guarantees and warranties.

Standard 10: Customer Focus

Bernicia will ensure that a clear focus is directed towards properties and tenants where issues of dampness and condensation occur. Where reported or identified we will take the lead to investigate all issues thereby removing the onus on tenants to undertake remedial actions, particularly relative to issues of condensation.

We will evaluate what mitigation, and interventions can be put in place to support tenants to ensure we are undertaking all reasonable steps.

We will review and maintain information, materials and support provided to tenants to ensure that these are balanced, meaningful and are effective in helping tenants to avoid dampness, condensation, and mould growth in their home.

We will encourage customers, through the provision of publicity information, to allow access to carry out inspections, surveys and remedial works. We will ensure tenants have access to Bernicia's complaints and compensation policies where required.

Standard 11: Monitoring

A detailed performance management suite is defined within the Dampness and Condensation Management Plan and will be reported on a regular basis to appropriate Committees and/or Board.

Commentary will be provided for those properties where surveys and remedial actions have been provided together with the ongoing review of the success of those treatments.

Commentary will also be provided if any installations have outstanding overdue actions or are out of use. To provide additional context commentary will also include information on the proportion of activities within the reporting period that were undertaken before and after their due date.

The following assurance activity will be undertaken and reported in line with the Dampness and Condensation Management Plan:

- Internal audit.
- Non-negotiable Compliance Testing.
- Strategic review.

3. Definitions

Word/Phrase	Definition
Dampness	The presence of unwanted moisture that can affect the integrity of the building, the living standards of the occupants and the contents and objects that exist within the property and is the result of an intrusion of water from outside or from condensation or mechanical defects within the structure or a variable mixture of all types.

4. Version Control

Version Number	Effective Date	Amendment made by	Version approved by	Description of changes
V3.0	February 2025	Managing Director Property & Construction	Executive Director, Assets and Growth	Moved to new template, minor updates to content including adding Awaab's law and mutual exchange surveys.

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