

At Guinness we have a strong focus on addressing damp and mould wherever it occurs. Over the past 12-18 months we have continued to strengthen our approach to damp and mould:

- **We provided our Board with a self-assessment against the 26 recommendations contained in the Housing Ombudsman's October 2021 Spotlight Report on Damp & Mould.** Of the Housing Ombudsman's 26 recommendations, 20 were things we already did as a matter of good practice. Where we identified that improvements could be made, against the remaining six recommendations, we incorporated these into an action plan that we have been delivering against.
- **In consultation with tenants, we developed a new Damp and Mould Policy.** This Policy emphasises the importance of treating residents with empathy and respect, and our commitment to dealing with the causes and symptoms of damp and mould promptly and effectively.
- **We have carried out detailed data analysis to identify any particular property types or locations where damp and mould is more prevalent.** This analysis has suggested some limited patterns or trends – however generally the issue tends to be at an individual property level.
- **We have provided guidance to residents on minimising condensation in the home – as this is the leading cause of damp and mould.** This includes a comprehensive leaflet for residents as well as coverage in our Winter 2022 Resident Magazine (due to be posted imminently). We also provide advice on our website on dealing with damp and mould, and how we can help.
- **We have updated our training materials and guidance for our operational teams.**
- **We have introduced functionality on our CRM system** so that our local teams can make rapid reports about the condition of homes at every visit, alerting us to issues which may not have been reported by the resident.
- **We have been piloting the use of smart home technology** to identify damp, mould and condensation so that we can proactively contact residents as soon as we see indications of excessive moisture in the home.
- **We know there is a link between damp, mould and condensation and issues of fuel poverty.** Our Customer Support Team advises many thousands of our residents each year and helps them secure benefits and other financial support that they are entitled to (last year over 12,000 residents secured £9.2m in additional income). We also support people directly through our own Hardship Fund which assists with the cost of food, fuel and furniture. We provide cost of living guidance on our website and have three Energy Advice Officers to support residents.
- **Where cases of damp and mould (or any other repair need) are subject to disrepair claims,** we continue to try and gain access to the resident's home to carry out the necessary work irrespective of the status of any legal claim. Where we believe there is a threat to health or life and the resident is not granting access, we will seek an injunction to gain access.
- **We continue to invest significant amounts in the repair and maintenance of our existing homes.** Our investment specifications and our specifications for new homes are designed to minimise the risk of damp and mould, for example through improved heating and ventilation systems.

Additional action we are taking now:

- To reassure residents following the Coroner's verdict on the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, we are contacting everyone who has reported damp and mould in their home to reconfirm or bring forward appointments to address the issue, according to their preferences and any health concerns. We are confirming the health status of all household members to ensure our records are current and we are not at risk of overlooking any vulnerabilities.
- We are reviewing all disrepair claims that cite damp and mould to ensure that we have not been prevented from or delayed in gaining access to the home, and we are writing to claimant's solicitors to request that they do not advise their clients – our residents – to withhold or delay access.

We are, and remain, absolutely committed to ensuring that all our residents live in safe and warm homes, which are in a good state of repair, and that our residents are supported through the challenges associated with the current economic climate.