

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING SERVICES

DAMP, MOULD & CONDENSATION IN YOUR HOME

A GUIDE FOR TENANTS



**TENANT
APPROVED**

VERSION 1

Tamworth
Borough Council

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At a glance:

Condensation

Condensation happens when warm, moist air touches a cold surface, like a window or a cold wall.

The moisture in the air turns into tiny water droplets. If this happens a lot, the surfaces stay damp.



Damp

Damp is unwanted moisture that gets into a building.

It can come from things like leaks, rising water from the ground, or rain getting in through walls or roofs. Damp makes surfaces wet and can damage plaster, paint, and wood.



Mould

Mould is a fungus that grows in damp places.

It looks like fuzzy or patchy spots – often black or green – and usually appears where moisture has been sitting for a while. Together damp and mould can cause smells and health problems, especially for people with breathing issues.



Our responsibility

We are responsible for fixing damp and mould when caused by problems with the building. This includes issues like leaks, cracks in the wall, poor ventilation, faulty heating, or anything structural that leads to damp or mould.

We must inspect the problem properly, find out what's causing it, and carry out repairs to make your home safe.

You should still heat and open windows to let air flow through your home where possible, but we are responsible for dealing with any damp and mould caused by the building itself.

Your responsibility

You are expected to look after your home in normal, everyday ways to help reduce moisture and stop mould from building up.

This includes:

- Heating and ventilating your home, such as opening windows or using extractor fans, and lids on pans when cooking to reduce condensation.
- Keeping your home reasonably clean and tidy, and reporting any problems early before they get worse.
- Carrying out minor, everyday tasks, like wiping away condensation, drying small patches of moisture, and not blocking vents.

- Reporting damp or mould to us quickly so repairs can be arranged, please tell us rather than ignore the issue.

While you should do what you reasonably can to manage moisture, you are not responsible for fixing damp or mould caused by building problems, leaks, or faulty ventilation or heating—that is our responsibility.

How to report it

Call our repairs number. It is available 24hrs a day seven days a week:
0800 183 0044

You can report it online:

www.tamworth.gov.uk/council-tenants-hub/repairs/council-housing-repairs

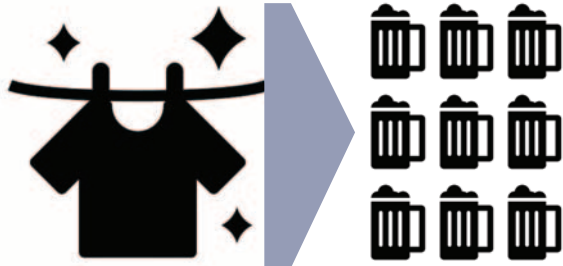
You can report it in person at our main reception in Marmion house:

Tamworth Borough Council, Marmion House, Lichfield Street, B79 7BZ - front desk open **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday: 10am - 2pm. Thursday: 2pm - 6pm** (closed on national bank holidays).

Did you know?

Everyday activities can cause moisture to build up in your home.

Drying clothes indoors
Produces **nine** pints of water.



Cooking and boiling kettles
Produces **six** pints of water.



Having a bath or a shower
Produces **two** pints of water.



Washing clothes
Produces **one** pint of water.



Washing dishes
Produces **two** pints of water.



Two people at home all day
Produces **three** pints of water.



Based on typical daily activities, the average home can create around **23 pints** of water every single day!

Condensation

Condensation happens when warm, moist air hits a cold surface and turns into tiny water droplets, because warm air can hold much more moisture than cold air.

How do I know it's condensation?

You can usually tell its condensation if you see...

Water droplets on windows, mirrors, or cold walls – especially in the mornings.



Damp patches that dry out during the day, or come back after cooking, bathing, or drying clothes indoors.



Mould appearing in corners, behind furniture, on cold surfaces where air does not circulate well.



Other forms of dampness such as rising damp or leaks will leave a 'tidemark'. Condensation does not leave this.



Areas where condensation is most common:

- Rooms where a lot of steam is created, such as kitchens and bathrooms.
- Outside walls, in unheated rooms, corners of rooms, behind furniture.
- Cold surfaces such as mirrors, windows and window frames.
- In wardrobes and cupboards.

When you see condensation, wipe it away with a dry cloth. This helps stop surfaces staying damp which prevents mould from growing.

Top tips to prevent and reduce condensation

Heating: Keeping your home warm. Aim to keep your home between 18 and 21 degrees.

Loft: For safety reasons and to avoid blocking ventilation you should not access or store items in your loft.

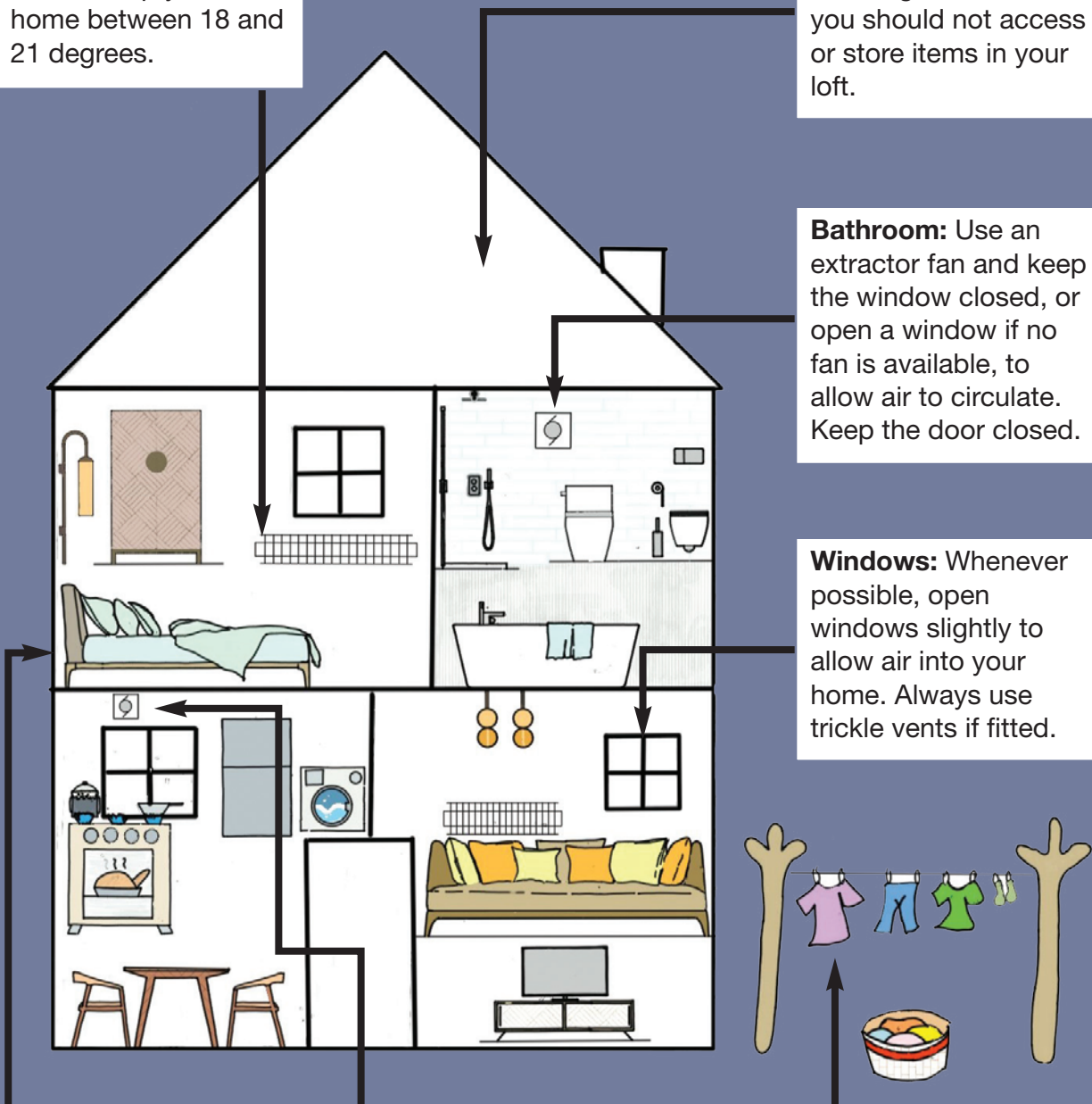
Bathroom: Use an extractor fan and keep the window closed, or open a window if no fan is available, to allow air to circulate. Keep the door closed.

Windows: Whenever possible, open windows slightly to allow air into your home. Always use trickle vents if fitted.

Furniture: Leave a gap between furniture and outside walls. Avoid putting mattresses directly on the floor or against walls.

Kitchen: When cooking keep the kitchen door closed and windows open. Put lids on pans and turn on any extractor fans.

Drying clothes: Whenever possible dry your clothes outside. Do not dry your clothes on radiators, use a clothes rack in a room with the door closed and the windows opened.



Damp

Damp is usually caused by too much moisture in the home, from condensation, leaks, water getting in from outside, poor ventilation, or issues with the damp proof course.

How do I know it's damp?

You can usually tell it's damp if there is;

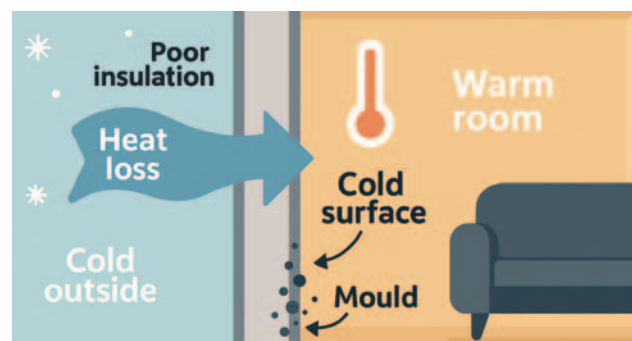
- Peeling or bubbling paint or wallpaper
- Cold or wet patches on walls or ceilings
- Rooms feel cold and difficult to heat
- A musty or earthy smell that doesn't go away
- Staining or discolouration – often yellow or brown
- Mould starting to grow



The most common causes of damp:

- Condensation
- Penetrating damp
- Rising damp
- Poor ventilation
- Leaks
- Poor insulation

Why poor insulation creates mould



How does poor insulation cause damp?

Cold walls, cold spots and poorly insulated homes increase condensation which can cause damp, especially in winter.

Rising damp

Why it happens

- The barrier in the wall that stops water rising (called a damp proof course) is missing or not working.



What you'll see

- Tide marks on walls, salts on the surface, damaged plaster at the bottom of walls.



Where it appears

- Bottom of ground floor walls, usually up to 1 metre high.



When it happens

- Happens when moisture from the ground rises past the damp-proof course.



Penetrating damp

Why it happens

- Rain getting in through things like cracked walls, broken gutters, or leaks.



What you'll see

- Wet patches, mould or staining anywhere water is getting in; often worse after rain.



Where it appears

- External walls, ceilings, around windows, or near leaks.



When it happens

- Can happen during or soon after rain, or when a leak appears.



Mould

Mould grows when your home stays damp, usually because of condensation, leaks, poor ventilation, or a lot of moisture in the air and the warm indoor temperatures and surfaces give it what it needs to grow and spread.

What does mould need to grow?

Mould needs **moisture**
– from leaks, damp, condensation or high humidity



Mould needs **food**
– Such as wallpaper, paint, fabric, wood



Mould needs **warmth***
– mould can grow at almost any temperature but it grows best between 15 °C and 26 °C



Mould needs **oxygen** – like most living organisms it needs oxygen to survive



***Just because warmth helps mould grow doesn't mean your home should be cold!**

Putting the heating on helps prevent mould because warm air holds more moisture than cold air, which means less condensation forms on cold walls and windows. When there's less condensation, surfaces stay drier and mould has a harder time growing. If your heating is not working, contact Repairs on 0800 183 0044 as soon as possible. If you are worried about the cost of running your heating, contact your Housing Officer on 01827 709709 for help.

Treating mould

Small patches of mould (up to the size of an A4 sheet of paper) caused by condensation, such as mould around bath seals or small amounts on windows, can be cleaned by you as soon as you notice them.

- Use a household mould spray or treatment.
- Open windows while cleaning so fumes and moisture can escape.
- Never mix bleach with other cleaners, especially ammonia.



If you have serious mould, or mould that keeps coming back, please report it to us so we can treat the problem and help prevent it from returning. If you're unsure whether the mould is serious, please contact us for advice. See page 3 for details on how to report mould.

Protect yourself while cleaning mould by wearing:

- Gloves.
- Goggles.
- Face mask – that covers the nose and mouth.
- Protective clothing or old clothes that can be washed at a high temperature afterwards.



Do Not:

- **Paint over mould** – Painting over mould traps moisture and will make it return. Clean and fully dry the surface before repainting.
- **Brush or dry-vacuum mould** – this releases spores into the air.
- **Touch mould with bare hands** – Always wear gloves. Mould can irritate the skin and spread easily.
- **Keep porous items that are heavily mouldy** – Things like carpets, ceiling tiles, cardboard, and some fabrics often can't be properly cleaned and may need to be thrown away.

Awaab's Law

Awaab's Law is named after Awaab Ishak, a two-year-old who died in 2020 after being exposed to mould in social housing. His death showed serious failings in how housing hazards were dealt with.

The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 introduced Awaab's Law. It requires landlords to act quickly to fix health and safety risks in their homes.

Although it was prompted by damp and mould, the law covers other serious hazards too, including:

- Heating and electrical faults
- Structural problems
- Sanitation and hygiene risks

A quick guide to the new legal timeframes and responsibilities landlords must follow under Awaab's Law in relation to damp and mould

Emergency hazards
(e.g. unsafe electrics, no heating in winter).

Investigated and made safe within 24 hours.



Significant hazards.

Investigated within 10 working days and made safe within five working days.



Tenants will get a written summary, this will detail what we found, what we plan to do and a timeline for any repairs.

Within three working days of the investigation finishing.



Further work must begin as soon as possible, or within five working days.



Preventative work must start within 12 weeks.



Tenant vulnerabilities (children, disabilities, etc.) must always be considered – this means if someone in your home is considered more vulnerable it may be necessary to carry out works quicker than the timescales require.



If a home cannot be made safe in time, temporary accommodation (decanting) will be offered.



Routine damp and mould will be treated within our standard repairs timeline.

Comments, compliments & complaints

We provide many council services in Tamworth and we welcome your feedback. It helps us improve.

Comments and compliments

If you have a suggestion or want to say we've done something well, use the comments, compliments and complaints form on our website.

Complaints

A complaint is when you're unhappy with our service, actions, or lack of action.

You can complain by:

- Filling in the form on **MyTamworth**
- Calling **01827 709709**
- Emailing **complaints@tamworth.gov.uk**
- Writing to **Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, B79 7BZ**
- Visiting our reception at **Marmion House**
- Asking any member of staff for help

We can also accept complaints from someone else on your behalf if they have your permission.

What happens next?

Stage 1: We acknowledge your complaint within **five working days** and aim to reply within **10 working days**.

Stage 2: If you're not happy, ask for a review within **one month**. We aim to reply within **20 working days**.

If you're still not satisfied, we'll tell you whether to contact the **Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman** or the **Housing Ombudsman**.

If you require this information in another format or language, please call 01827 709709 or email: enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk

www.tamworth.gov.uk

Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire B79 7BZ. Tel: 01827 709709

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