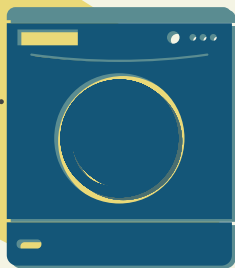


# Tackling MOULD AND DAMP together



Contact the council if you  
have any concerns about  
damp and mould



## *Advice for our residents*

Damp can cause mould growth on walls, furniture and even clothes. At its worst it can also cause wood to rot. Damp also encourages the development of dust mites, which along with mould growth, can increase the risk of respiratory illness.

Dampness in the home may be caused by a number of things, but most frequently it is caused by condensation. This leaflet explains how condensation forms and how to keep it to a minimum, therefore reducing the risk of dampness and subsequent mould growth.

This leaflet also tells you how to let us know if you have any concerns about damp and mould.

visit: [www.ashford.gov.uk/damp-and-mould](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/damp-and-mould)



**Ashford**  
Borough Council

## What is condensation?

Condensation is a type of dampness which occurs when air containing a lot of water vapour comes into contact with a cold surface. You see water vapour when you exhale on cold days and this is much the same thing.

Condensation occurs mostly during cold weather and appears in areas of your home where the air doesn't move about very much (for example in a spare bedroom rather than a hall or a lounge). You will find it on windows, some wall surfaces and in, or behind, cupboards or wardrobes.

There are three main causes of condensation:

- Moisture produced by everyday activities
- Not enough ventilation
- Cool temperatures

If moisture caused by condensation is allowed to build up it can lead to black mould growing on walls, ceilings, furniture and clothing and it is not necessarily caused by the property itself.



## But is it condensation?

Condensation is by far the most common cause of dampness in a home. However, not all damp is caused by condensation. It may require further investigation and could be due to the issues listed below. You should contact us if you have any concerns and as your landlord we will take a look.

### 1. Rising damp

This is caused by water rising from the ground into the home, often due to a defective damp proof course (DPC). This can also occur by bridging the damp proof course. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms, up to a height of one metre (1000mm). It will be seen all year round (usually as a 'tide mark' low down on the wall) but is more noticeable in winter.

### 2. Penetrating dampness

This type of dampness will only occur on external walls or ceilings. You will only see this if your guttering or down pipes are not working properly or faulty pointing, allowing water to pass from outside to the inside. This type of dampness is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch.

### 3. Defective plumbing

Leaks from water and waste pipes, especially in bathrooms and kitchens can happen. Leaks can affect internal and external walls and ceilings. The area looks and feels damp to the touch and remains damp whatever the weather is like outside. A quick examination of the water (and waste) pipes serving the kitchen and bathroom will usually find the problem.

## Steps you can take to reduce condensation:



### • Produce less moisture:

- Cover your pans when cooking
- Dry your clothes outdoors if you can. We appreciate this is not always possible. A sunny day will usually provide the conditions necessary to eventually dry your clothes.
- Vent tumble dryers to the outside if it has a vent pipe to do so.

### • Ventilate to remove moisture:

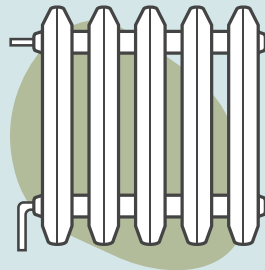
- Always try to ventilate or open a window when you are using the kitchen or bathroom. Closing internal doors will prevent moisture from spreading to other parts of your home. Continue to ventilate for about 20 minutes after a shower, a bath or cooking.
- Use extractor fans if possible, they are cheap to run (this can be just a few pence per day) and effective.
- Pull wardrobes and furniture away from walls and keep the tops of wardrobes clear, to allow air to circulate.
- Ventilate your bedroom by leaving a window slightly open at night or use 'trickle vents' if these are fitted to the windows.
- But be careful not to over-ventilate your home when it is cold as it will cause the temperature inside to drop and make condensation more likely. It could also increase your heating costs.

### • Wipe away excess moisture

- Wipe windows (and sills if you need to) every morning to remove condensation.

Keep your home warm:

- Warm air holds more moisture than cooler air. Heating one room to a high level and leaving other rooms cold can make condensation worse in the unheated homes.
- Heat your home at low levels for a long time rather than high levels for short periods as this will ensure that there are fewer cold surfaces in the home.
- Consider keeping the heating on low even when there is no one actually in it.
- Heat your home using the heating system provided by the council. **Portable gas and paraffin heaters are not allowed under the terms of your tenancy agreement** because of the increased risk of condensation and fire.
- Insulation and sensible draught proofing will help keep your home warm.



## What we will do about damp as your landlord:

- We will come and investigate the matter.
- If the damp is caused by an underlying repair issue we will arrange repairs to be done within a reasonable time.
- If damp is caused by condensation, we must repair anything that is causing the problem, for example a broken heating system or faulty extractor fan.

## Dealing with mould:

- o Prepare a bucket of warm soapy water using some mild detergent, such as washing up liquid and some cloths that can be thrown away after use. Carefully wipe down the mould with a soapy cloth. Take a dry cloth to wipe down and remove the moisture following the cleaning process. After this you should throw away the cloths. It is recommended that you sterilise the affected area with a suitable fungicidal wash (available from most DIY stores), which should prevent regrowth. Please follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- o Wash or dry clean materials and fabrics that are affected by mould. This will remove the mould, though it may not always remove the stain left by the mould.
- o Do not brush or vacuum clean mould if you suffer from respiratory problems as this can increase breathing difficulties.

## Further help and advice

- o If you are concerned about damp and mould in your home please email [damphelp@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:damphelp@ashford.gov.uk)
- o If you continue to have problems with condensation and mould, and you are not happy with how we have resolved your issue, you can log a formal complaint on the council's website at [www.ashford.gov.uk/contact-us/complaints/formal-complaints-procedure/](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/contact-us/complaints/formal-complaints-procedure/)



## Contact us

If you are concerned in any way about damp and mould in your home please visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/damp-and-mould](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/damp-and-mould)