



# Rural Stirling

## Housing Association



Quality property  
management services

### GROUP DAMP & MOULD POLICY

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| <b>Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA</b><br><b>Registered as a Scottish Charity No. SC037849</b><br><b>Venachar Limited, Incorporated under the Companies Act (Company Number SC447415), Registered Office: Stirling Road, Doune, FK16 6AA</b> |   |
| <b>Policy Name</b>  | <b>Group Damp &amp; Mould Policy</b>      |
| <b>Policy Category</b>  | <b>Asset Management</b>                   |
| <b>Date Policy First Approved</b>   | <b>9 February 2023 (AMENDED MAY 2023)</b> |
| <b>Date Policy Reviewed</b>   | <b>N/A</b>                                |
| <b>Review Period</b>  | <b>3 years</b>                            |
| <b>Next Review Due</b>  | <b>February 2026</b>                      |
| <b>Equality Impact Assessment</b>   | <b>Attached</b>                           |

## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 Rural Stirling Group (RSG) wants to ensure that our tenants and communities have warm, safe, and healthy homes to live in. This is a basic right, which should be fulfilled.
- 1.2 Estimates in the UK are that between 10-50% of homes are affected by condensation and damp conditions. This is particularly prevalent in Social Housing and low-income communities, and, has been found to be caused by overcrowding, lack of appropriate heating, ventilation, and insulation, and also a lack of support and guidance from landlords.
- 1.3 A purposeful approach to the prevention, treatment and remediation of these issues will benefit our tenants and communities. Moving forward our tools will include better data and recording of condensation and damp with an action plan, improved reporting and identification of condensation and mould, an end-to-end tenant's service with better joined up advice, guidance, and support. This includes a better use of innovative technology prevention schemes.

## **2. Introduction and Objectives**

- 2.1 The RSG is committed to maintaining its homes to a high standard, which adds value to the home and surroundings. Maintaining high quality and secure homes can improve the lives of our tenants and achieve an elevated level of customer satisfaction.
- 2.2 This policy document has been written to ensure that wherever possible, tenants are not adversely affected by the causes of condensation, damp or mould and drives forward, an agenda of initiative-taking action to tackle and manage and report on the causes of the above.
- 2.3 This policy and associated procedures will consider recommendations made in a Housing Ombudsman Service Report – *Spotlight on: Damp and Mould – October 2021*. If any reports or guidance are issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator, then we will act accordingly to any recommendations and will update the Policy and Procedures accordingly.
- 2.4 Our stock profiles includes, 686 social rent and 11 shared ownership properties. 6 of these units are leased to our subsidiary Venachar and made available for Mid-Market Rent. Our stock consists of 208 units first built pre-2000, with the remainder of the stock built post-2000. There are only 6 units that were built pre-1990.
- 2.5 This Policy applies to the entire property portfolio under the control of the RSG and to all operations carried out under its control without exception.

### **3.0 Equality & Diversity Statement (Group Statement)**

- 3.1 We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently. In implementing this policy, we will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or any other grounds. Our commitment to equality and fairness will apply irrespective of factors such as age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or other personal attributes.

This policy and any other Rural Stirling Group (RSG) publication is available in other formats e.g., other languages, Braille, large print, audio.

### **4.0 SHR Regulatory Standards**

- 4.1 The SHR's regulatory framework sets out Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management to be achieved by all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs). The Board accepts that it is responsible for ensuring that the Association complies with these standards. The standards of direct relevance to this policy are noted below:

- *Standard 3 – The RSL managements its resources to ensure its financial wellbeing, while maintaining rents at a level that tenants can afford to pay.*
- *Standard 4 – The Governing Body bases its decisions on good quality information and advice and identifies and mitigates risks to the organisation's purpose.*

### **5.0 Relevant legislation**

- Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.
- Health and Safety at Work Act etc. 1974.
- Scottish Housing Quality standards (SHQS)
  - Meet the Tolerable Standards.
  - Be free from serious disrepair.
  - Be energy efficient.
  - Have modern facilities and services.
  - Be healthy, safe, and secure.
- Energy Efficiency Standards in Social Housing (EESH 1&2).

### **6.0 Policy Details**

- 6.1 Key points of the Policy and our approach to managing dampness, mould, and condensation.

The RSG will;

- Provide and maintain a comfortable, warm, and healthy home, free from damp, condensation, mould, or disrepair for our tenants.
- Ensure that tenants are treated in a fair and consistent way and to recognise that having a dampness or mould issue in a home can be distressing for our tenants and ensure we are supportive in our approach. We will provide information leaflets, provide information to tenants on our website and in Rural Matters.
- Not make assumptions about lifestyle and will investigate reports of damp and mould as fully as possible to determine the cause.
- Work in partnership with tenants to resolve and understand how to reduce condensation, damp, and mould issues.
- Establish a Damp and Mould register which will record any issues and actions taken and also hold all evidenced based actions, survey reports, outcomes etc.
- Report quarterly to the Board of Management on Damp and mould issues.
- Standardise property inspections and how we deal with damp and mould issues to ensure we have a robust and consistent approach.
- Undertake effective investigations and implement all reasonable remedial repair solutions and improvements to eradicate, damp, mould including, managing, and controlling condensation.
- Work in partnership with RSL's and others to share best practice ensure a robust approach to damp and mould issues.
- Ensure that the fabric of our homes is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from, or contributing to, damp and mould issues.
- Undertake responsive repairs to alleviate damp and mould issues as quickly and efficiently as possible to minimise damage to the fabric, fixtures, and fittings of the property.
- Enhance the understanding of our housing stock and the archetype of properties and components from the stock condition data, which have a higher likelihood to suffer from damp and mould.
- Plan resources to respond to anticipated higher demand of enquiries and required inspections and work in partnership with specialist companies for the provision of specialist survey reports. We will explore the benefits of using new technology such as linked environmental sensors that can be installed within reported problematic damp or mould homes and can be monitored online to better understand cause and solution.

- Provide all staff with awareness training and provide specialist training for roles where required. We will ensure all staff have the skills and necessary testing equipment required to identify and differentiate between signs of damp, condensation, mould and understand the causes and remedial action.
- Consider the issues of damp condensation and mould when designing investment programmes for example heating, ventilation, and insulation.
- Comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements, sector best practice and tenants' health and safety compliance.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The following Table 1 summarises responsibilities to ensure that those with the most appropriate daily operational functions can manage, supervise, and conduct condensation, damp, and mould related control measures as appropriate.

Table 1

| Designation             | Role Responsibility  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Board of Management     | <p>The Board of Management are collectively responsible for providing leadership and direction on Health and Safety matters.</p> <p>The Damp and Mould Policy will be approved by the Board of Management.</p>   |
| Chief Executive Officer | <p>The CEO will hold ultimate responsibility for the development and implementation of the Damp and Mould Policy.</p>  |
| Directors               | <p>The Directors hold delegated operational responsibility. Implementation and management of the policy and operational procedures for the management and control.</p> <p>Co-ordinate and deliver on the operational compliance with the Damp and Mould Policy and Procedures.</p> <p>Provision should also be made to ensure that all staff within RSHA are aware of who is responsible and ensure that provision is made for any training and development needs.</p> |

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| Director of Housing and Property Services | The Director of Housing and Property Services will act immediately on receiving reports of serious issues and escalate concerns to the CEO if necessary.   |
| Health and Safety Working Group           | The H&S Working Group will be responsible for periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the Damp and Mould Policy and Procedures.  |
| Employees                                 | All persons employed by RSG must be aware of the Damp and Mould Policy and Procedures, ensuring that any works provide as little disturbance to the tenants as possible and always ensure their health and safety. |

## 8. Damp and Mould Procedures

- 8.1 Damp and Mould Procedures have been prepared to ensure compliance with the RSG Damp and Mould Policy. These are set out within a separate document and issued to all staff.
- 8.2 The association will adopt a system of priority colour coding for condensation, damp, and mould issues within its properties. This will also be included within the damp and mould register and adopted procedures.

| Low Risk          | Medium Risk                    | High Risk             |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| No risk to health | Moderate/slight risk to health | Severe risk to health |

## 9. Related Documents.

- 9.1 This policy relates to the following documents:

- Reactive Repairs Policy

## 10. Review

- 10.1 We will review and update this policy every 3 years. More regular reviews will be considered where, for example, there is a need to respond to new legislation/policy or regulatory guidance.