



**Tenant Voice**  
**Scrutiny Panel Report**  
**SUMMARY**

**Damp and Mould investigation  
through a customer's eyes**

**November 22**

## **Contents**

- 1. About the report**
- 2. Why we chose the project**
- 3. How Tenants were involved in the overall assessment of the process**
- 4. Feedback from Tenants Survey**
- 5. Summary of survey findings**
- 6. Recommendations action table**

### **1: About the Report**

The report aims to share the findings of the Scrutiny Panel and their assessment of how we tackle damp and mould repairs requests, complaints and issues raised by Customers.

The report will also include the recommendations from the panel in relation to their findings.

### **2: Why we chose the project**

The report was jointly commissioned between the Tenant Voice Panel and Berneslai Homes.

The Housing Ombudsman's recent Spotlight report into Damp and Mould, proved a timely insight into the problems faced by some customers when trying to rectify issues around damp and mould in their homes. Media coverage has proved that in some areas, problems exist, and customers are not been listened to.

We are aware that some Berneslai Homes properties do suffer from damp and mould, and rather than it being a lifestyle issue, the fabric of the building is a contributory factor. We wanted to explore this jointly through the eyes of the customers and take a deep dive into our policies, practices, and procedures to ensure we are tackling the problem in a customer centric way.

### **3: How tenants were involved in the overall assessment of the process**

Our Scrutiny panel members were involved in meetings throughout the process. It is to be noted that some of this project investigation was carried out during the pandemic so most of the engagement with panel members was completed digitally (Microsoft Teams.)

We held 11 meetings involving panel members and these were attended by 5 different panel members who together gave approximately 35hrs of their time supporting the process.

We also involved 204 customers by providing them with the opportunity to complete our damp and mould survey with questions collaborated by the Scrutiny Panel through the meetings with Berneslai Homes officers.

#### **4: Feedback from Tenant survey**

1. The survey was completed in Jan 22
2. 203 Tenants were consulted who had received damp and mould works in the last 4 months.
3. The survey was sent by SMS due to the higher response rate of this method of engagement
4. 24 surveys were completed with a response rate of 12%

#### **5: Summary of survey findings**

1. Nearly half of the respondents (45%) said that they read the information on our website before reporting it. 20% said 'no' and 25% didn't know that the information was on the website.
2. 62% felt it was an acceptable amount of time to wait for an inspection, while only 38% said it was an acceptable amount of time to wait for works to be carried out.
3. Only 39% stated that they received information about tackling damp and mould after the inspection or when works were carried out. None stated they received a leaflet.
4. Only 22% felt that they were kept up to date while they were waiting for works to be carried out.
5. 57% (13) said they had to make follow up calls with the progress of their repair.

## 6 Action Plan: Damp and Mould recommendations action table

Conclusion	Recommendation for improvement	Berneslai Homes response	Agreed actions	Lead officer	Timeframe
More Berneslai Homes staff could have the training and skill set to identify damp and mould issues in a property.	Compulsory training designed and delivered in house for property visiting staff. E.g., HMOs, Tenants 1 <sup>st</sup> Staff.	Berneslai Homes have trained Maintenance Surveyors via Professor Michael Parrett, an industry leading damp & mould RICS accredited expert. We are now procuring training for all front-line staff to enable them to proactively identify the signs of damp, mould & condensation in properties and be to signpost accordingly.	To explore the provision of formal training to staff  To develop a training plan to be shared with the TVP	<b>Maintenance Manager &amp; Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>  <b>Training and Development Co Ordinator</b>	Target Date April 2023
The information on the corporate website and the damp and mould info booklet we distribute to Tenants is not up to date in comparison to other ALMOS.	Produce a new booklet with the aim for a full distribution to all our properties.  Invest in a video which automatically plays for Tenants when they visit and land on the page. The video should be created using Images and animation as other ALMOs have done. This will ensure that it doesn't become as dated due to issues such as turnover of staff.  Include a new page in the book that clearly states the job priority timescales to explain to customers	Our new website is currently being produced in line with our communication strategy. This will go live in December 2022 and will see improved interactive content including videos	To continue to develop the new website  To explore the use of videos/best practice examples  To review the booklet with tenant representation  To explore with Executive Management Team the cost	<b>Maintenance Manager Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>  <b>Communications and Support Hub Manager,</b>	Target Date April 2023

	how repairs will be approached in terms of 'Levels of emergency'.		implications of distribution – preferred option to send to 100% of customers		
Lack of proactive reporting of issues relating to damp and mould.	<p>Encourage customers to report issues of damp and mould, via a targeted campaign, "Know the signs".</p> <p><b>Campaign title:</b></p> <p><b>#damp&amp;mouldweneedtobetold</b></p> <p>Design and deliver an annual diarised social media focused campaigns to continually encourage Tenants to report damp and mould. However, do not just focus this on fb followers as this figure only stands at 247. Utilise SMS, e-bulletin, twitter, and other platforms that we have. Could the campaign be included on the back of letters distributed to Tenants.</p>	<p>Our communications team have a damp, mould &amp; condensation campaign which is due to go live in December 2022</p> <p>In which we pro-actively encourage customers to report issues they may have and show how to identify the differences between damp, mould &amp; condensation, along with some really good tips and advice including signposting.</p>	<p>To liaise with Comms team to develop a social media campaign</p> <p>To explore the development of a Damp and Mould week, via social media, which is repeated on a rolling basis</p>	<p><b>Maintenance Manager, Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b></p> <p><b>Communications and Support Hub Manager</b></p>	Target Date April 2023
There are customers that have not reported a repair in the 12 months.	Be proactive. Do we have the capacity to target and inspect these properties just to check if there are any issues that could become major problems in the future?	<p>We will use every opportunity to proactively ask about damp, mould &amp; condensation.</p> <p>We will ensure every property has a physical visit in a 12-month period and will utilise the data we hold and analyse trends for</p>	<p>Set up a task and finish group involving HM function to look at how this can be approached.</p> <p>To also look at noncontacts within 12 months and not just the non reporting of repairs in order to identify any potential issues around vulnerability/repairs etc</p>	<p><b>Maintenance Manager Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b></p> <p><b>Performance and Business Development Manager</b></p>	Target Date April 2023

		targeted and priority inspections moving forward. Better training for all front-line staff will help us ask the important question and spot the signs.		<b>Mechanical and Electrical Compliance Manager</b>	
Lack of acknowledgement and empathy from some staff that damp, and mould may not be lifestyle issues, but may be due to the fabric of the building	Further inhouse mandatory training for staff to differentiate between the damp and mould. As staff, be "Curious", when it comes to lifestyle issues.  To carry out a mapping exercise into any trends in properties in a certain area or construction type that may be prone to damp issues.	We agree that no longer can we discuss lifestyle. Customers are all different and choose to live in different ways and it is up to us to work with them and find the solutions that reduce issues they may face. This will be in the form of insulation, ventilation and heating.	To be picked up as part of the training package  To use the systems we have in place to identify properties that are susceptible to damp and mould  To be curious, when properties are reporting damp and mould to look at adjoining dwellings too.	<b>Maintenance Manager, Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>	Target Date April 2023
A lack of clear communication and advice given to customers who are awaiting and damp & mould repair.	Review the approach taken in relation to communicating with customers.  Keep customers up to date with any repairs in a clear and timely manner, by the development of a communication schedule  IS there the option of automated messages for tenants awaiting damp and mould repairs that could have a timed send process e.g. 3 days, 1 wk. 10 days etc?	A new procedure has been introduced in November 2022 whereby all reports of damp, mould & condensation will be attended within 7 days which should irradiate the need for letters.  We continue to promote 'My Housing Online' in line with the launch of our new Repairs &	To review the process and involve TVP	<b>Maintenance Manager, Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>  <b>Performance and Business Development Manager</b>	Target Date April 2023

		<p>Maintenance system NEC in early 2023.</p> <p>The new system will have a tenant's portal where repairs can be reported and tracked in real-time, along with SMS &amp; Email updates being sent.</p>			
<p>Any education to Tenants regarding Damp and Mould issues in their property is delivered at the property once an issue has been reported or identified. Or Tenants are signposted to the information available on our website regarding tackling damp and mould, future issues etc</p>	<p>Design and deliver a Tenant training session that educates our Tenants regarding reducing the risk or occurrence of damp and mould in their property. Distribute new booklets, humidity meters and give them the knowledge and understanding to help themselves and their neighbours in their local communities. Provide links to the new video on the website. But we MUST keep a log of which tenants we have shared this information with (booklet/online link) so that we can keep a record of where information has been shared.</p> <p><b>Wates already do this.</b></p>	<p>Training for customers is currently being investigated further to follow front line staff training.</p> <p>New leaflets are to be co-produced with TVP as above. Hydrometers are already distributed and in stock. We intend to send these to every house along with a new leaflet once completed.</p> <p>The new website and campaign will offers lots of useful guidance</p>	<p>Explore tenant training package</p> <p>To produce a refreshed leaflet</p> <p>To explore the cost implications of sending the revised booklet to every home along with a Hydrometer.</p>	<p><b>Maintenance Manager, Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b></p> <p><b>Communications and Support Hub Manager</b></p>	<p>Target Date April 2023</p>
<p>A lack of customer insight</p>	<p>Produce a journey map to track the reporting of damp and mould through the eyes of a customer.</p> <p>Include this in the info booklet. Visual aid, including dates, etc.</p>	<p>Lots of journey maps have already been completed surrounding damp &amp; mould where we have got it wrong and service</p>	<p>No action. Journey maps have already been produced.</p> <p>Implement learning from journey maps</p>		<p>Ongoing Process via Service Improvements &amp; Promises Log following</p>

		improvements have been identified and implemented as a result	Implement service improvements as a result of complaints.		complaint resolutions.
Could we introduce a damp and mould repair 'aftercare package'?	A call back in 3,6,9 months to check in. This could reduce repeat calls/visits.	We are working with our Customer Insight Officer & Customer Services Team to pro-actively make contact with all customers that have had a repair carried out, complaint logged, or a disrepair claim within the past 12 months to ensure their issues are fully resolved. If this is not the case, a technical post inspection will be carried out to help us get to the root cause and find a resolution	To explore how post inspections can be carried out with limited resources	<b>Maintenance Manager</b> <b>Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>  <b>Customer Insight Officer</b>	Target Date April 2023
Look at neighbouring properties when aware of damp and mould issues.	If visiting BH Tenants with damp and mould issues in their property, could we check adjoining properties where we have extensive damp and mould repairs in an adjoining property.	Where we have major damp issues identified, we inspect neighbouring properties. As part of our data journey, we are trialling GIS Modelling which in brief will tell us the areas where we have issues and from this we can target inspections and future investment.	To continue to look at neighbouring properties when we are aware of issues with damp and mould	<b>Maintenance Manager</b> <b>Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>	Ongoing Process on a case by case basis.
Decanting for major works	Should decanting be considered early on and not at the point when customers complain. Tenants need receive information about a potential	Sometimes it can be hard to trace the root cause and small jobs	To follow the Decent policy	<b>Head of Repairs, Maintenance and Building</b>	Target Date December 2022



	<p>decant ASAP and should be offered a realistic and final deadline for the works to be completed so they are clear on the level of disturbance and understand timescales attached to their repair. We need to be able to evidence if a decant has been considered with a tenant and their specific repair.</p>	<p>have escalated resulted in a property decant and full tanking works being required.</p> <p>Every job is taken on its own individual circumstances and the professionals make their own decisions.</p> <p>We carry out many decants; we have a policy (currently under review)</p>	<p>Look at each job on an individual basis</p>	<p>Decant Policy currently being re-written and to be implemented with the teams</p> <p><b>Maintenance Manager</b></p> <p><b>Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b></p>	
<p>Don't close jobs for any reason especially 'no access'</p>	<p>We have a duty of care once we are aware of suspected damp to gain access to the property. The tenant may be vulnerable, which needs exploring. See the person not the property. Verification of work needed to be carried out needs to be shared with the Tenant.</p> <p>Some issues of a closed job could be to do with the fabric of the building, and this shouldn't be closed down until investigated.</p> <p>No damp or mould repairs should be closed if we are aware that these jobs haven't been done or inspected.</p>	<p>We fully agree with this. We are working with contract partners to ensure no job related to damp, mould or condensation is closed unless it has been inspected and remedied.</p> <p>Our new repairs &amp; maintenance system NEC will provide more options for us and make this easier to manage</p>	<p>To review the process of jobs being closed</p> <p>Explore the possibility of Quest Mould actioning this.</p>	<p><b>Head of Repairs, Maintenance and Building</b> (Contractual with BMBC)</p> <p><b>Maintenance Manager</b></p> <p><b>Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b></p>	<p>Target Date April 2023</p> <p>Target Date December 2022</p>
<p>Expectation of customers and</p>	<p>Is it reasonable to expect Tenants to open or keep open windows during winter months when drying clothes</p>	<p>We commit to working with customers and how</p>	<p>To educate customers around their responsibilities, to</p>	<p><b>Maintenance Manager</b></p>	<p>Ongoing Process via Maintenance</p>

unreasonable requests	indoors, especially during a fuel price crisis? Can we install solutions? Other options such as providing laundry vouchers.	they live in their homes ensuring insulation, ventilation & heating are adequate.	include in the leaflet review  To continue to fit extractor fans where practicable	<b>Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>  Factored into BHS Specification	Surveyor Inspections  Completed
Task & finish Damp & mould project delivery group	Group established including staff / scrutiny panel members involved in this report and any willing Tenants who have received a damp and mould repair.	We would welcome this.	To set up task and finish group of customers that have lived experience, that can feed into the overall approach to damp and mould	<b>Maintenance Manager</b>  <b>Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>	Target Date April 2023
Design and implement a bespoke 100% Damp and Mould survey	Survey to be sent to all tenants who receive a damp and mould repair. These outcomes can be monitored by the Task group and fed into their meetings for assessment and discussion.	We would welcome this trial. We will work with TVP & Customer Insight Officer to produce this..	To develop and trial a 100% survey	<b>Maintenance Manager</b>  <b>Senior Maintenance Surveyor</b>  <b>Customer Insight Officer</b> Meeting Scheduled 15 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2022	Target Date April 2023

