Dampness and Mould Procedure

1. Introduction

1.1 Key to this process is the acknowledgement that there is a requirement within the Housing Association sector to ensure all of cases of damp, mould and condensation are managed effectively. This process will create a consistent approach to addressing cases of damp, mould and condensation through to resolution.

2. Aims and Objectives

2.1 Ensure our properties are maintained to a high standard through the delivery of efficient and effective repair and maintenance services.

2.2 Provide clear lines of responsibility within Hanover for the management of dampness and mould related issues.

2.3 Comply with legal duties, regulatory requirements and good practice standards.

2.4 Establish a clear, accessible process to enable customers to report dampness and mould issues.

2.5 Develop a focussed approach to the prevention, treatment and resolution of dampness and mould with better data and improved reporting and identification.

2.6 Provide assurance that measures are in place to identify, manage and mitigate risks associated with dampness and mould.

2.7 Provide guidance, advice, and assistance throughout the process to all customers living in our properties and ensure that customers are treated in a fair, consistent and supportive way.

2.8 Ensure that Hanover's Dampness and Mould Policy is being consistently applied.

3. Our Approach

3.1 Our approach to the prevention, treatment and remediation of dampness and mould will benefit our customers. Going forward our tools will include:

- better data,
- improved reporting and identification of mould, condensation and dampness,
- end-to-end customer service with better joined up advice, guidance and support,
- preventative technology systems.

3.2 Employees will be trained in this procedure as relevant to their role, and as detailed in the Learning and Development Learning Needs Analysis. **Appendix 1** confirms the training requirements.

3.3 In addition, relevant employees will be trained in the use of the housing management system / register and in-house record keeping and inputting all data in accordance with procedures.

3.4 The procedure identifies workflow events for each stage of the process, and these are highlighted where they have failed or are due to fail. The workflow events will be used to issue warnings to employees and managers of an impending target date falling due to allow corrective action to be taken. Target setting for this type of case can be difficult but will be agreed on an individual basis by the manager and the relevant employees.

3.5 Detailed process steps can be seen in **Appendix 2.**

4. Receiving reports of dampness and mould

4.1.1 When a customer reports a dampness/mould issue in their home or in a common area we will record this as a specific repair type and open a case file within our case management system/ dampness register.

4.1.2 Employees receiving reports of damp and mould must ascertain at the time of reporting if there is any member of the household who has vulnerabilities that may put them more at risk of ill health and record this to allow the appropriate prioritisation.

4.1.3 Reactive Repairs Advisors will utilise the checklist in **Appendix 3** to assist with gathering relevant information.

4.2 Effective Inspection and Diagnosis

4.2.1 Hanover will provide relevant employees with the skills to identify and differentiate between signs of damp and condensation and understand the causes and remedies.

4.2.2 We will take action to identify homes that have, or may be at risk of developing, problems with damp and mould. We will use data on our households and homes to help us understand the risk profile in relation to damp and mould.

4.2.3 Hanover will inspect all repair requests reported in relation to dampness and mould. Where required we will seek support from specific damp and mould consultants.

4.2.4 We will make best use of technology to manage dampness and mould and use technological insight to better understand cause and solutions. This will include systems such as humidity and temperature monitoring.

4.2.5 After the initial inspection we will make an assessment of the problem and categorise/prioritise the issue and feed this information into our case management system/dampness register. The vulnerability of the customers will be a material factor in determining the priority attached to the case.

4.3 **Case/Data Management**

4.3.1 Repair and improvement solutions to address any issues are implemented through a system of casework management.

4.3.2 All cases of dampness and mould whether reported by customers or identified by employees on site will be logged and managed via the case management system/ register. Cases will be tracked through the system and reports will be developed to monitor case management, identify trends and themes and to monitor the number of properties affected by dampness and mould. Regional Maintenance Managers will be responsible for the overall management of cases.

4.3.3 Cases will be assessed and categorised as follows:

Category 1

Source of dampness/mould is identified and required remedial action can be ordered and the situation monitored.

Category 2

Source of dampness/mould is not identified on first inspection/assessment and either follow up is required and/or more detailed or invasive survey work is needed.

Category 3

Problem is ongoing and either the source has not been identified following survey or the remedial action taken has not been successful.

4.3.4 Within the categories above the Regional Maintenance Manager will identify in the monitoring system the source or suspected source of the problem. In particular, if the issue is identified as condensation the case will be subject to specific remedial “progression”.

4.3.5 At first point of contact it will be established if this is a new complaint or has been previously reported. Where the issue has been reported before the case will be reopened and treated as a continuation of the original complaint.

4.3.6 Defective plumbing or water penetration reports will have repair orders issued direct to our reactive repairs team but the case will be recorded in the Dampness and Mould monitoring system to allow the Regional Maintenance Manager to arrange a follow up visit/review to ensure the issue has been resolved and if any additional remedial action (water damage or staining, assistance with drying out etc.) is required. Regardless of the remedial action taken all cases will be recorded and monitored in the same way.

4.3.7 We will always attempt to resolve issues of dampness and mould as a first time fix but understand that there will be instances where work is more complex or specialist in nature and needs to be programmed and monitored accordingly.

4.4 Remedial Action

4.4.1 The Regional Maintenance Manager will identify the cause of damp occurring in the property and order remedial works, where required, within set repair categories.

4.4.2 The Regional Maintenance Manager will develop an action plan in consultation with the customer where the problem is in Categories 2 or 3.

4.4.3 In minor instances of condensation with associated mould growth, the Regional Maintenance Manager may issue a mould eradication removal and prevention kit, to allow the customer to treat the issue themselves. Note this would only be appropriate for very minor cases and where considered appropriate for the individual customer. A follow up inspection will always take place to confirm that the kit has been effective or if further remedial works are required.

4.4.4 When a particularly severe or recurring damp or mould issue is identified we will undertake a comprehensive assessment which might result in a range of actions to support the customer depending on their circumstances, including providing dehumidifiers, the installation of mechanical or passive ventilation systems, internal cavity wall or solid wall insulation or applying mould resistant cleaners and coverings, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis.

4.4.5 We will keep customers informed of any property inspections, diagnosis of issues and the timetabling of works, where these are required. This includes explaining to them why work might be needed and what work might be done.

4.4.6 For more complex cases, and especially where more intrusive building work is required and/or there is a serious health risk to the customer or their household, we may require them to move out of their home either on a temporary or permanent basis. We will consider the individual circumstances of the customer. We will ensure that appropriate checks are carried out at the property to ensure it is suitable for the customer to return.

4.4.7 We will seek to mitigate any risks of damp and mould arising as a result of our work to meet SHQS, EESSH2 or Net Zero standards.

4.4.8 We know that some customers cannot afford to heat their homes adequately due to their income levels. We will refer such cases to Housing and Welfare Rights who will work with them to ensure that they are receiving the income to which they are entitled and that they are benefitting from the most economically efficient fuel tariff.

4.4.9 We recognise that there may be instances where the problem, particularly where it is as a result of condensation, cannot be resolved. This could be due to financial issues or where there is serious overcrowding. We will work with the customer and explore solutions which may include the customer moving to a more suitable home if this is available and appropriate.

4.5 **Managing Condensation**

4.5.1 As identified earlier condensation is the most common issue for those experiencing dampness and mould. Our approach to managing condensation is a partnership between Hanover and the customer. Our emphasis will be on addressing the causes not just the symptoms.

4.5.2 We will assist the customer to deal with mould growth in the property. We will support them by making available mould/ fungicidal wash and limited decoration, particularly in severe and persistent cases.

4.5.3 The adequacy and efficiency of heating and ventilation will be addressed in all cases. A referral will be made to our in-house Welfare Rights Officer, to ensure the customer has the means to adequately heat their home and that they have access to the most advantageous fuel tariffs.

4.5.4 Access to fuel efficient dehumidifiers will be made where appropriate, particularly in the early stages of managing a case. There may be limited times that humidity within the property is at a high level and such an intervention could resolve the issue without any major changes to ventilation, heating or insulation.

4.5.5 We will undertake reasonable improvement works required to assist in the management and control of condensation damp, for example the installation or upgrading of mechanical extract fans or whole house ventilation systems, the installation of fresh air vents, upgrading of existing insulation and improvements to heating systems.

4.5.6 If it is unsafe for the customer to remain in the property while the works are carried out, alternative accommodation arrangements will be made with the assistance of the housing or care team. This may be on a day-by-day basis or a temporary decant to an alternative property. The customer will be supported throughout this process.

4.5.7 Where all available income maximisation routes have been exhausted and the provision of all fuel poverty interventions carried out and the constraints of the existing building design and structure mean there can be no further upgrades to heating, ventilation and insulation, and condensation and mould are still prevalent we will consider the rehousing of the customer to alternative suitable accommodation.

4.5.8 Whilst the options will concentrate on the construction of the property, its thermal efficiency and the alleviation of the issues experienced in the existing property we will try where possible to offer accommodation within the area the customer currently resides. Our Allocation Policy gives further details of this process. This will be a last resort and will only be applicable in a very limited number of cases given the general condition of our stock and its structure and design. The Dampness and Mould Working Group will receive referrals of this type of case and will determine if rehousing should be pursued and if so, will refer the case to the Head of Housing or the Head of Care for approval as per the Allocation Policy. The Dampness and Mould Working Group will as a minimum consist of the Director of Asset

Management, the Head of Investment and Sustainability, the Head of Repairs and Compliance, the Senior Regional Maintenance Manager, the Investment and Sustainability Coordinator and Head of Housing.

5. Contributory Factors of Dampness, Mould & Condensation

5.1 **Fuel poverty**. It is recognised that fuel poverty is a major factor in cases of condensation which can lead to mould problems when customers are unable to afford to heat their home effectively.

5.2 **Customer management of the home**. Excessive humidity within the home and the lack of adequate ventilation is the primary cause of condensation. Drying clothes on space heaters, cooking with lids off pans, and over-crowding all add to the moisture levels within a property. High humidity can in itself cause or exacerbate health problems.

5.3 **Cold Bridging**. Cold Bridging can be found in many areas including poorly installed cavity wall insulation for example. Where a gap occurs in the insulation this can cause areas to become colder, which would then be at risk of increased condensation.

5.4 **Broken or no extractor fans** Where possible, all kitchens, bathrooms and utility rooms should have a functioning extractor fan.

5.5 **Radiators** Heating systems performance is not always at the standard required to prevent condensation. Radiators may be undersized for the room volume and can be located on internal walls creating colder external walls.

5.6 **Missing/damaged render or pointing on brickwork** There could be various reasons for poor or broken pointing (i.e. the finish between bricks) on parts of a brick wall which may have created cold spots for condensation and penetrating damp. The same can also be true with damaged render.

5.7 **Leaking guttering**. Guttering can, over time, corrode, warp or sag causing leaking joints. Lack of effective maintenance can result in blocked or choked gutters and downpipes that can, through time, cause damage to the fabric of the building.

5.8 **Leaking roofs** This could be caused by many things i.e. damaged or missing tiles, damaged flashing, roof vents or chimneys, blocked gutters or simply that the roof is approaching the end of its serviceable life.

5.9 **Unvented and condensing tumble dryers** These can produce excessive amounts of water vapour in the property, encouraging condensation.

5.10 **Rising damp** Rising damp can occur where there is missing or ineffective damp proof course or where a high ground level breaches the damp proof course.

6. Four Main Categories of Dampness

6.1 **Rising Dampness (structural)**: This is caused by water rising from the ground into the home. The water gets through or around a defective damp proof course (DPC) or passes through the natural brickwork if the property was built without a DPC. Rising damp will only affect basements and ground floor rooms. It will normally rise no more

36 inches above ground level (900mm) and usually leaves a ‘tide mark’ low down on the wall. You may also notice white salts on the affected areas. Rising damp will be present all year round but is more noticeable in winter. If left untreated it may cause wall plaster to crumble and paper to lift in the affected area. Mould will rarely be seen where there is rising damp (and then only in the early stages). This is because rising dampness carries with it salts that prevent the growth of mould

6.2 **Penetrating dampness (structural)**: This type of dampness will only be found on external walls or, in the case of roof leaks, on ceilings. It only appears because of a defect in the structure of the home, such as missing pointing to the brickwork, missing roof tiles, loose flashing or leaking gutters. These defects then allow water to pass from the outside to the inner surfaces. Penetrating dampness is far more noticeable following a period of rainfall and will normally appear as a well-defined ‘damp patch’ which looks and feels damp to the touch. “Tide marks” will be left, even in periods of dry weather.

6.3 **Penetrating dampness e.g. Internal Leaks (Other)** : Leaks from water and waste pipes, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, are relatively common. They can affect both external and internal walls and ceilings. The affected area looks and feels damp to the touch and stays damp whatever the weather conditions outside. An examination of the water and waste pipes in the kitchen and bathroom and the seals around the bath, shower and sinks will usually find the problem. In cases when leaks are not attended to, rot may become established in wooden joists and floorboards leading to a risk of collapse in severe cases. Mould may be seen with this type of dampness and even fungi are not uncommon if the defects are not addressed.

6.4 **Condensation and Mould Growth**: This is by far the most common enquiry we receive from customers which often leads to a repair request. Condensation is caused by water vapour or moisture in the air, inside the dwelling, coming into contact with a colder surface, such as a window or wall. The drop in temperature causes water to form on the surface. This water may then soak into the wallpaper, paintwork or plasterwork. Mould spores are invisible to the naked eye but are in the air all around us all of the time and will quickly grow on surfaces where condensation has formed into a visible covering. Condensation can be more prevalent during the colder months and we often experience a spike in customer demand during Autumn and Winter. A symptom of condensation is mould growth which is usually found in the corners of rooms, north facing walls and on or near windows. It is also found in areas of little air circulation such as behind wardrobes and beds, especially when they are sited against external walls. It also forms in bathrooms and kitchens as they are high moisture areas or in properties which are overcrowded. All homes are affected by condensation at some point however certain activities can increase the problem and good practices can ensure the condensation does not lead to mould growth. Condensation and mould growth can be affected by customer habits and lifestyles and relatively minor changes can eliminate the problem. Lifestyles are not however the root cause and should not be used as a reason to avoid tackling the issues. The amount of condensation in a home depends upon a number of things, mostly:

- How much water vapour is produced by the actions of its residents
- How cold or warm the property is

- How much air circulation (ventilation)
- How well the property has been insulated

6.5 Simply turning up the heating will not sort out the problem, this may only temporarily reduce condensation. All factors may need to be looked at to reduce the problem. The first sign of a problem is often water vapour condensing on windows and other cold surfaces, which then takes a long time to disappear. This allows the surfaces to become damp resulting in mould growing on these damp areas

7. Dampness and Mould Procedure Responsibilities

7.1 The main aims of this procedure are to resolve all cases of dampness, mould and condensation. For the procedure to work efficiently and effectively the Regional Maintenance Managers manage the process, any repairs contractors and the use of any specific measures designed to eradicate the problem.

7.2 They are ultimately responsible for co-ordinating the process and they are involved at every stage i.e. from the initial inspection stage right through to the eradication of the problem or the relocation of the customer. Regional Maintenance Managers are the lead officers in the process, but administrative tasks are carried out by the Repairs and Voids Team Leader, Investment & Planning Coordinator and Repairs Advisors.

7.3 The Senior Regional Maintenance Manager must also be closely involved not only from a supervisory position and in the provision of expert advice but also to ensure the process is continued in the absence of the Regional Maintenance Manager by deputising for their functions.

7.4 First contact in relation to a dampness and condensation problem will normally be a call received from the customer. A Regional Maintenance Manager may come across a problem whilst visiting the property for an unrelated matter and this can apply to another employee (Housing Officer, Development Manager etc). Reports can also be received from contractors working in responsive repairs or planned/cyclic maintenance. In all cases, and regardless of the source of the report, the case should be entered in the Dampness and Mould monitoring system. A dampness and mould initial inspection/assessment request will be issued automatically as a workflow alert from the system to the Regional Maintenance Manager, identifying this as a “live” case and allowing for monitoring the individual instance and Hanover’s overall caseload.

8. Rules and Assumptions

8.1 The concept for changing the dampness and condensation process is to remove the issues causing the problem, eradicate the dampness, condensation and mould or relocate the customer to alternative accommodation.

8.2 Hanover’s planned maintenance programme will include measures to improve thermal efficiency, heating and ventilation across the stock reducing the conditions that give rise to condensation and mould growth.

8.3 Hanover will work in partnership with its customers addressing the causes and not just the symptoms of dampness, condensation and mould growth. Customers will be

advised of all actions proposed and will be kept informed at all stages of the process and consulted on options available.

8.4 No reports of dampness/ condensation will be left unattended. Hanover has at the heart of its policy a commitment that no customer should endure damp conditions and that all reported cases will result in a successful outcome.

9. Some Reasons Why our Approach Could Potentially Fail

- Failure to respond timeously to reported instances of dampness/condensation
- Employees visiting a property who note dampness and condensation fail to report this through our repairs team.
- Initial inspection is not followed up with remedial action or invasive survey.
- Appropriate measures to combat dampness/condensation are not put in place.
- Remedial measures are not followed up or monitored.
- Repairs contractor fails to meet target completion date for repairs.
- Condensation is assessed as being a “lifestyle” issue and appropriate remedial action is not instigated or referrals are not made.

9.1 It is essential that those involved in carrying out this procedure respond to all reports of dampness/ condensation, record these and understand the required outcomes. Cases will be tracked through the Dampness and Mould monitoring system and our main housing system to ensure in every case the customer is not forced to live in conditions detrimental to their health and wellbeing.

9.2 Case management will be monitored through our housing system and the Senior Regional Maintenance Manager will provide direct supervision of the Regional Maintenance Managers and ensure that all available methods for controlling condensation and mould growth have been utilised and that all cases reach a satisfactory conclusion and have been dealt with in accordance with Hanover’s Dampness and Mould Policy.

9.3 We want to ensure that our customers have warm, safe and healthy homes to live in. Our approach to the prevention, treatment and remediation of dampness condensation and mould will benefit our customers. Going forward our tools will include better data, improved reporting and identification of mould, condensation and dampness, end-to-end customer service with better joined up advice, guidance and support, and preventative technology systems.

10. Review

10.1 This procedure will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if required.

Department	Asset Management
Author	Director of Asset Management

First Approved	13/11/2023
Approved By	Head of Asset Management
Most recent Review	28/5/2025
Approved By	SMT
Next Review Due	28/5/2028

Revision History

Version Number	Revision Date	Approval Date	Approved by	Review Reason
1		13/11/2023	Head of Asset Management	
2	28.5.2025			updates
3				
4				
5				

Appendix 1

Reactive Repairs Advisor checklist

REPAIRS ADVISOR DAMP AND MOULD CHECKLIST

Is there a current water leak that requires attention?

Yes → Reactive Repairs process

No

Has there been a previous water leak that is resolved but you can still see damp/mould?

Yes

No

Is there damp or mould but no previous water leak?

Yes

No

Is there condensation e.g. around the windows/on cold surfaces?

Yes

What does it look like?

Where is the damp / mould / condensation?

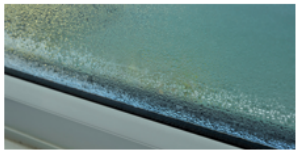
How much of the area is affected by the damp / mould/condensation?

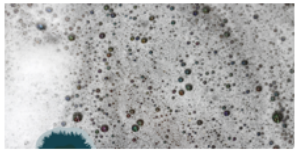
Are photos available that be provided showing the damp / mould/ condensation?

Are there any vulnerable residents in the property? (specifically, health issues)

Has the issue been treated/reported previously? If so, when?

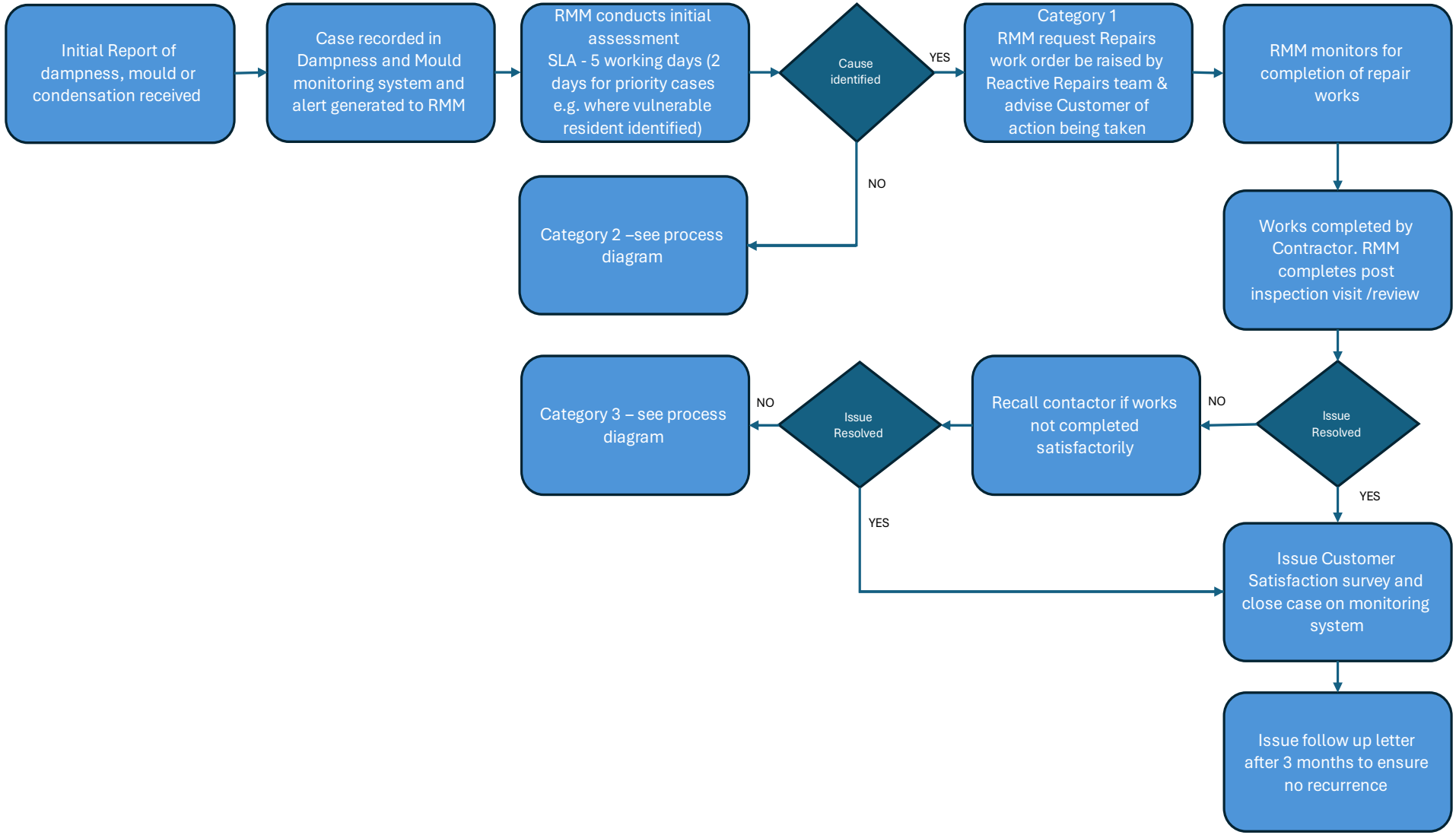
Record all this information on the Damp & Mould Register



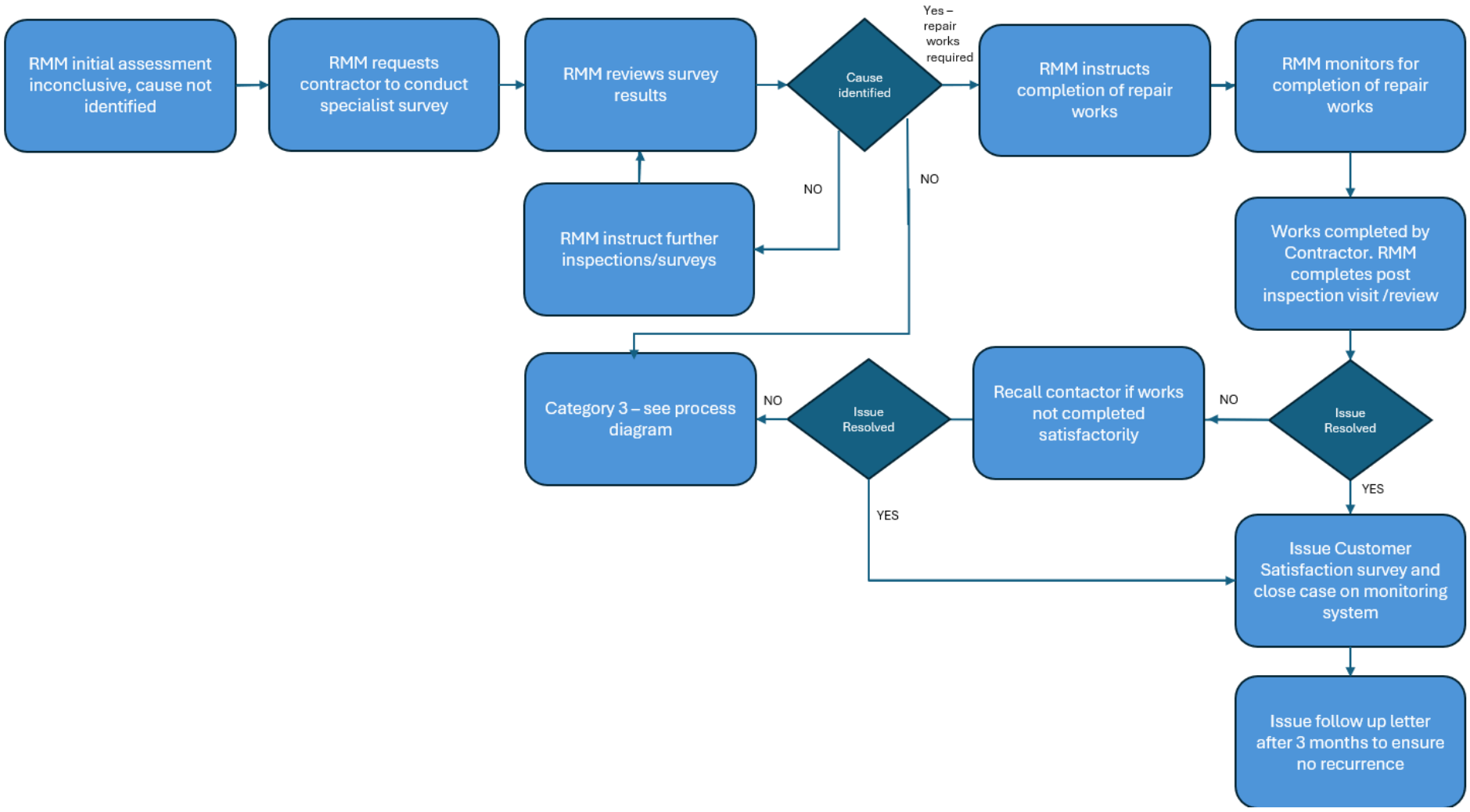


Appendix 2

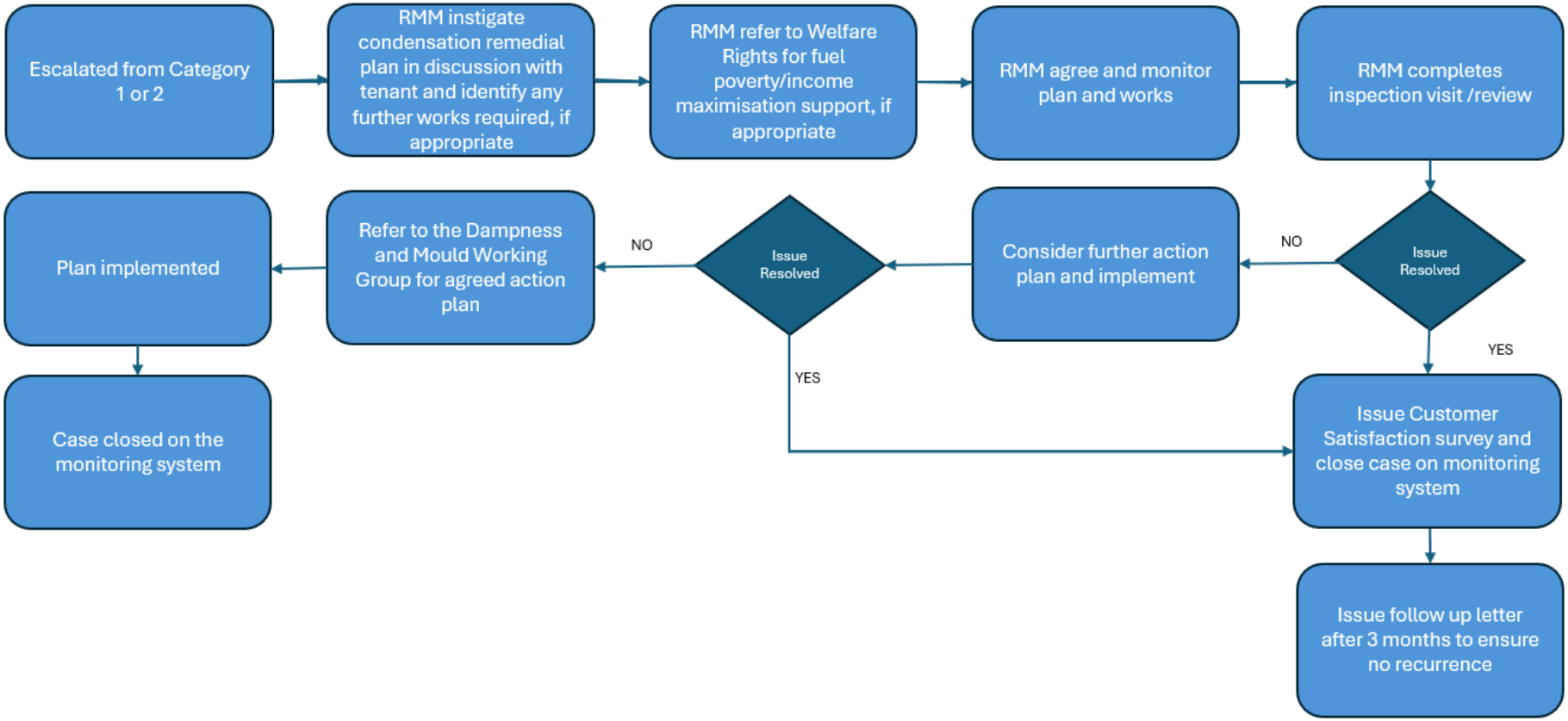
Damp and Mould Process– All Cases



Damp and Mould Process – Category 2



Damp and Mould Process – Category 3



Appendix 3

Training Matrix

Module	Format	Audience	Mandatory
Damp and Mould Awareness	E-learning	All staff	Yes
Damp and Mould Policy and Procedure	E-learning	Asset Management staff Head of Housing, Housing Officers, Housing Managers and Development Managers	Yes
Specialist Damp and Mould Training	External	Regional Maintenance Managers / Investment Project Managers	Yes
Damp and Mould policy and procedure	Face to face presentation	Asset Management Team	Yes