

How To Guide for less mould in tenanted housing



How to identify mould often caused by internal conditions



Places where mould is found

- 1 In the corners of the wall, floor, and ceiling Junctions
- 2 Around the top and bottom of the walls & ceilings
- 3 Along & around the window lintels and reveals
- 4 Down the side or back of the bed
- 5 In alcoves or airless places
- 6 On curtains or furniture.

How to talk about mould with tenants?

Have you or your team ever had a conversation about mould with tenants or staff which has broken down? How many repairs have you witnessed to do with mould which were to halt a complaint, only for the mould to return.

Now think about how you like to be spoken to. Do you like someone else telling you what to do in your own home? When was the last time someone went on at you for hours, or weeks, or years, did it work? Perhaps you gave in only to repeat the same action again.

How about the last time you made a change in your life. Why did you change?

Did you have some new information that made sense? Maybe it was when you had something to gain, or lose, which was worth the pain and upheaval.

When dealing with mould start with the basics, make sure you know why someone wants to resolve the problem, and gets why it got there. BUT a shut window alone doesn't grow mould, does it? Think about it, if fresh air alone was enough to stop mould it wouldn't be able to grow on an outside wall.

Saying "OPENING THE WINDOWS" alone is A RISKY EXPENSIVE STRATEGY.

If you hear yourself or your colleagues saying "JUST OPEN THE WINDOWS" I'm afraid you don't know enough yet to be dealing with this problem.

For at least the last 40 years that has been the advice given, 40 years ago 1/3 of social housing had mould and 40 years on 1/3 of social housing has mould.

Before talking to a tenant about mould make sure you have a good idea about how you're going to:

- Get into the conversation and find out what they want.
- Find out what they already know about how the mould got there.
- Test your knowledge is correct.
- Communicate using a mix of auditory, visual and kinaesthetic styles.
- Make it relevant to them.
- Demonstrate with the right tools.
- Find out what actions relate to the mould.
- Test your knowledge of what actions they should take, or what remedial actions would be helpful and available.

How to choose the right damp meter

What are you trying to measure & record with a damp meter?

What is your training and how much of a technical visit is a requisite of your role?

STOP!

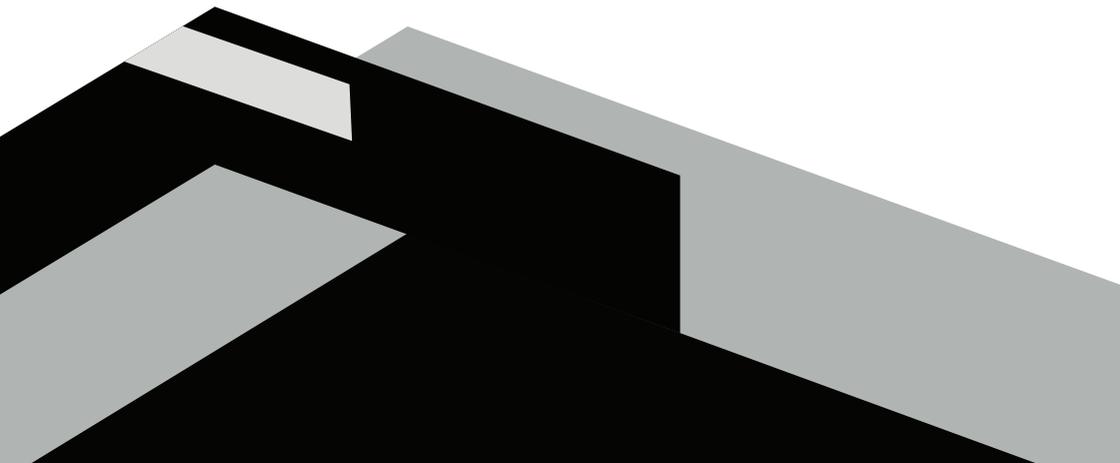
How many experienced property professionals actually need their damp meter to diagnose the source of mould? The reality is that in most situations they use their eyes, experience, and look at the patterns of mould to decide. The damp meter in the wrong hands is just a method of trying to appear technical, or at worse obtaining needless work. They are needed for compliance, confirming a diagnosis and making a robust record. But that alone DOES NOT help housing be less mouldy.

BUT, DAMP METERS CAN HELP you get LESS MOULD in tenanted housing.

IF YOU HAVE A DAMP METER THAT CAN MEASURE THE DAMPNESS IN THE AIR you can reduce it in a 30 minutes visit. MANY TIMES we visit and the tenants have the windows either all open or shut, or just one open in the bathroom. Did you know that if you take an air reading when you arrive, then make sure there are only two windows slightly ajar, on each side of their home, with the window dressings pulled back, closing the rest of the windows, the damp air can often be significantly reduced.

Having a damp meter that can measure the cold spots on the wall can show where condensation is already forming, and explain why it is where it is, and demonstrate why things placed against an outside wall give a great environment for mould.

On page 7 we show examples of the tools we are talking about.



How to train staff in dealing with mould.

Consider what you are looking for.

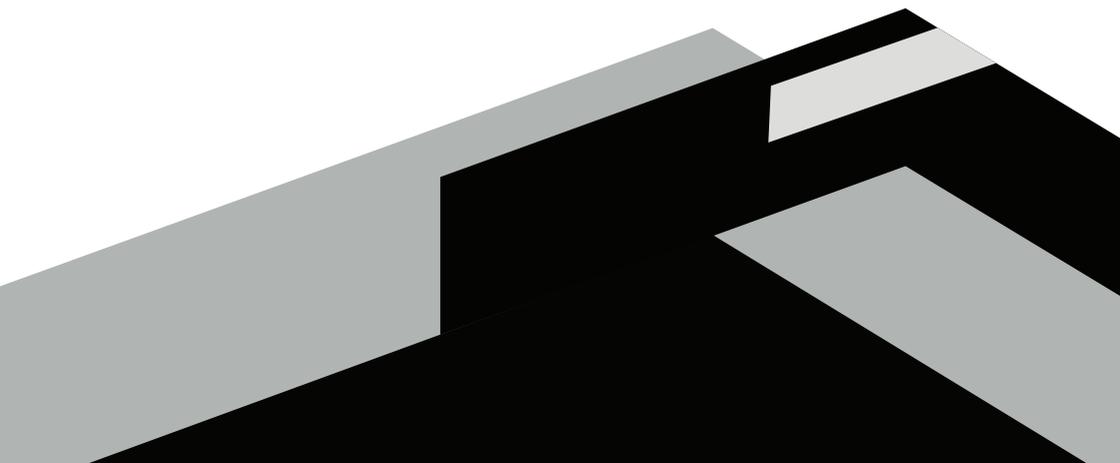
- Training at your offices?
- Training at a centre?
- A general maintenance qualification?
- Damp specific training and qualification?

A HNC/D in Construction would be a good qualification for any technical team members.

The Chartered Institute of Housing CIH often runs maintenance qualifications.

If you wish to get staff up to a qualified damp surveyor level or take small technical courses in damp and mould The Property Care Association provides a terrific range of useful courses.

The learning in any of the above will marry perfectly into the Social Housing specific Mould Tutor® Pathway run by The Mould & Damp Specialist. The Mould Tutor® training is for every front line and behind the scenes member of staff who come into contact with an enquiry, repair, complaint or visit to do with mould. Mould Tutor® brings the discussions in this booklet into real understanding, positive attitudes, and the skills to put them into force. It also knits together the understanding of different departments.



How to choose a damp surveyor

Firstly have a good consistent offer in-house. Once things get on the wrong foot with mould complaints the trust can break down. That can happen between staff as much as between landlord and tenant. Then it becomes a tricky uphill battle.

The Property Care Association has qualified experienced damp surveyors. You can choose from Contractors or Independent Damp Surveyors. You can look up who is operating in your area here:

www.property-care.org

At The Mould & Damp Specialist we cover London and The South East. Our speciality is solving mould as part of a positive experience, having useful, enjoyable conversations with tenants, showing how things can be improved with the right tools, backed up by technical investigation and robust reporting.

Our visits follow a ribbon of progression, so if it comes to it, we can slowly build in enforcement such as data logging and responding to disrepair claims.

We also do Expert Advice and Expert Witness visits and reporting.



Make every mouldy visit count! This Mould Tutor® Starter Pack helps you save time, spend less, and improve health. Pack contains 1 x Air Tester, 1 x Surface Tester, and 42 X Mould-Less® meters. All this for only £230.25 plus VAT.. (price correct September 2019)



42 Mould-Less® meters.

These handy little gadgets show residents what improves damp air and what makes it worse



The Air Tester

Show how much damp you can remove in just half an hour*



The surface tester

Show the temperature on different parts of the wall to demonstrate why some areas are more prone to mould than others.

Support your visual observations with readings, show tenant what can be improved while you are in their home, reduce visit times and wasteful repairs.

* using cross ventilation in the right conditions. For supportive use only. Not for enforcement/expert witness/ legal use.

The common mistake with a traditional damp meter is to say that a high reading means it is structural dampness, or if it's mould to just "open the windows" But how should we be approaching this with tenants and where can we go to get the right training and tools to take action, This booklet looks at the main questions facing a social housing or maintenance professional.



The Author

Tanya Eldridge CSRT HNC CIHcert is a passionate supportive housing professional who wishes to give everyone the best chance of resolving mould. At the time of writing she has over 9 years experience dealing with this issue. In 2018 she was invited to speak at the International Ventilation and Remedial Treatment of Dampness in Buildings Conference.

Tanya Eldridge

The Mould & Damp Specialist Ltd
www.MouldandDamp.com
Office 37.01 Town Hall
Queens Square
Hastings
TN34 1TL

tanya.eldridge@MouldandDamp.com
01424 552709

