

Position Statement on Damp, Mould and Condensation

This paper highlights the current issues around damp and mould in the social housing sector and ClwydAlyn's response. The main details are contained in the appendices which should be read alongside this note.

More recently the tragic death of 2-year-old Awaab Ishak in Rochdale has shone a spotlight on the impact of damp and mould on residents and their health. A review of this incident led to a number of recommendations being published. Our assessment of ClwydAlyn's position against these recommendations are shown in **Appendix A**. When ClwydAlyn receives a disrepair claim it responds immediately to work with the tenant to address any issues. In addition, complaints are reviewed for trends to assess whether what is being seen in one property is more widespread.

In December 22, the Better Social Housing Review report was published, (undertaken by a panel of independent social housing experts). Several recommendations were made including the need for a higher priority to be placed on the suitability and quality of social housing stock; and importantly that, a Housing Association's culture and the way it responds to tenants concerns and complaints is an important factor in "getting it right". ClwydAlyn has assessed itself against the recommendations, which is included below as **Appendix B**. ClwydAlyn's mission is to beat poverty, which means that we place a strong focus on getting the basic services right and responding to resident concerns. We recognise that providing high quality affordable homes is a fundamental part of the company's mission. Our business model also places a strong focus on resident engagement, and this is evidenced through the way the Resident Committee operates and influences what we do and how we do it which includes the "Influence Us" programme and resident oversight of complaints.

The Welsh Government has written to housing providers to request that they respond by the 20th January 2023 explaining how they are effectively identifying and managing damp and mould. The Welsh Government letter is included below as **Appendix C**. Our response is included as **Appendix D**.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of damp/mould related concerns reported during December 2022 compared to previous years. Other social landlords across Wales and the UK are reporting similar patterns of increased reporting.

Like all landlords ClwydAlyn faces small numbers of disrepair complaints. (The current figure is 7). These cases involve residents engaging solicitors to act for them where they believe that their home is not being adequately maintained. In these situations, ClwydAlyn has processes in place which provide proactive communication with the resident to attempt to get into the home and remedy any problems. In the case of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing this had not been their practice and they would stop completing work until a case had been heard in court.

We take all complaints seriously and respond to try and address any problems we find as quickly as possible. Since the concerns raised about poor property conditions in the social rented sector, we have been strengthening our leadership of property condition and our processes across the whole business.

We are currently in the middle of a proactive communication campaign encouraging residents to report any concerns if they have signs of damp and mould; and equipping all front-line staff with the tools and knowledge needed to deal with damp and mould issues. A new robust process for identifying and prioritising damp concerns using system led workflows will be implemented. A risk profiling tool has also been developed and is being implemented to proactively identify homes and residents more likely to be suffering damp/mould so that we can make contact, inspect, and act.

We use our partner agencies to help our residents manage their energy consumption, as well as continue to improve our homes to make more homes energy efficient; as well as improvements to ventilation to reduce humidity levels.

Current actions/processes and data

When tackling disrepair claims, ClwydAlyn proactively engages with residents to ensure that we address their concerns and resolve any issues in a timely manner. We positively engage and challenge the claimant's solicitors to exercise our right to enter the property to remedy any disrepair. This has proven successful and prevents barriers from being established between the residents and the landlord.

As part of our proactive approach, a disrepair action plan is in place and is monitored regularly by the CEO to review progress. In addition, we are a member of the North Wales disrepair working group collaborating and sharing best practice and intelligence across 5 local RSLs. TPAS (Tenant Engagement) has recently joined the group and established a subgroup, funding a joint marketing and communication plan to educate residents on tackling mould and condensation and promoting the ease of raising issues and complaints.

An increase in damp and mould repair orders is being received, and this is expected to continue due to; the current cost of living crisis affecting people's ability to heat their homes adequately, increased media coverage; and our proactive communication approach encouraging residents to report any concerns. We also envisage a higher number of disrepair claims being filed against Landlords, focusing on damp and mould related issues.

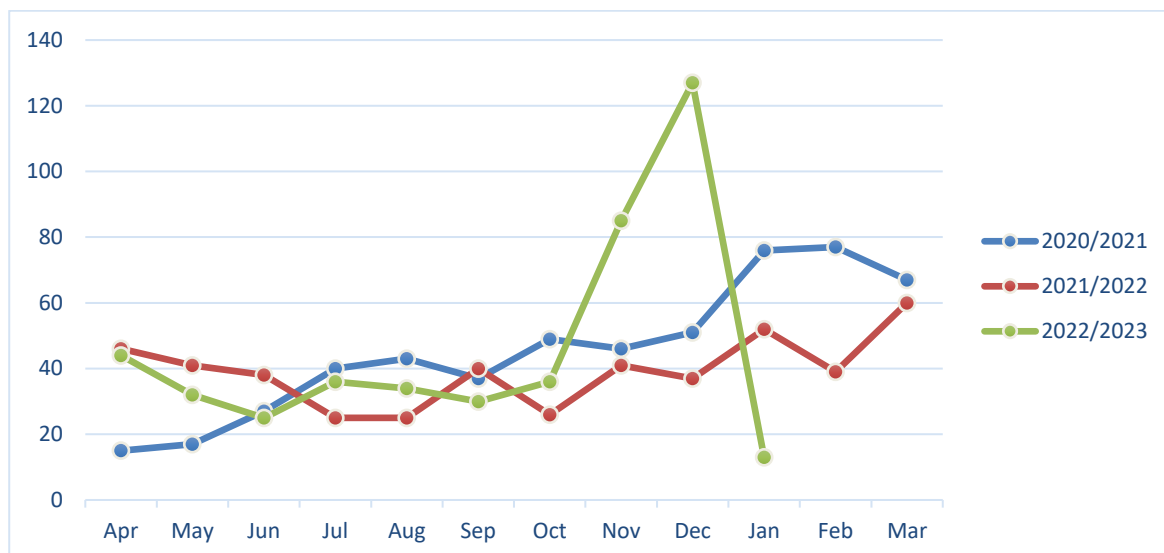
Since April this year we have been averaging around 30 jobs each month, but in November we received 85 Black Spot Mould works orders, and in December we have received 127.

Our cleaning team have now been allocated time to respond to damp and mould calls within 7 working days. This will allow us to quickly react and address concerns faster.

A support team for Trades and Assets, (using staffing from across the group), has been established, to increase our capacity to deal with reactive orders in a timely manner.




Table A - Number of BSM/Damp related jobs 2020 – 2023

Category Mould/BSM			
Month	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Apr	15	46	44
May	17	41	32
Jun	27	38	25
Jul	40	25	36
Aug	43	25	34
Sep	37	40	30
Oct	49	26	36
Nov	46	41	85
Dec	51	37	127
Jan	76	52	13
Feb	77	39	
Mar	67	60	
Grand Total	545	470	462



All front-line trade staff have been educated and equipped with basic damp and mould removal techniques and products to tackle minor black spot mould which they may come across during their visits. They have been told to report directly to their manager if there are parts of the home which require further works or investigation. The Asset team undertake Damp readings on all Home Health Checks, 832 have been completed to date.

As part of the new Housing Structure implemented in August 21, Housing Officers were tasked with undertaking home visits to all residents. As part of this home visit Housing Officers can identify any property concerns and raise these directly. Even though the Housing Officer visit does not constitute a full home inspection in the way that a Home Health Check by an Assets Officer would, they are able to identify any obvious causes for concern and ask the residents on each visit if there are any repair issues within their home. These are then reported directly by the Housing Officer so remedial action can take place. As of the end of November 22 out of the 4032 visits required the following progress has been made:

-  3427 visits successfully completed
-  502 attempted visits with no access gained
-  103 visits outstanding

Officers continue to target the remaining 605 properties where a home visit has not been successfully completed.

Resident satisfaction is currently undertaken bi-annually via the Acuity survey. Previously feedback was not reviewed until after the survey was completed and this meant that there was often a delay in residents who had raised dissatisfaction being contacted for their concerns to be resolved. This year the process was changed so that Acuity sent through any resident concerns raised at the point of their contact with the resident for ClwydAlyn to respond quickly.

In February 2023 this process will be further enhanced and any concerns or requests for contact from residents will be raised directly into the Housing Management System as a 'Raise a Concern' and allocated to the appropriate Officers. This will enable better oversight of how many concerns are raised, the nature of the concerns and response times from Officers internally.

To support our residents and to address fuel poverty, in March 2022 we created the Healthy Homes, People, Lives and Communities Initiative in partnership with Warm Wales, to provide support and education on energy matters and provide interventions which will enable residents to better afford to heat their homes. 531 Residents to date have been supported with 1148 interventions, including £62K

of savings for residents via income maximisation, energy measures installed, food support and energy metre top ups provided.

We are carrying out a proactive communications campaign encouraging residents to report any concerns about damp and mould. The campaign started on 8th January (Sunday evenings usually get the best responses) with 2,288 emails sent out (open rate 39.9% – 913 people had opened it in the first 24 hours); and 4,706 text messages (only 323 people **haven't** opened it). So far, we've had 18 cases raised through our housing management system which are being checked against the 127 recently reported jobs, and then will be prioritised for inspection by the asset team

What further processes are being established?

Risk profiling of our Residents, and our Homes has been completed (**Appendix E**) to identify any resident with a higher potential of living in a damp home, and homes more at risk of damp. This has identified 212 vulnerable tenancies, which includes 135 homes which are over occupied and there are rent arrears of more than £750: and a further 77 homes with secondary risk factors such as the age of people in the home. There are 153 higher risk homes which have been identified as part of the risk profiling that relate to our poorer performing energy homes where the resident may be more likely to struggle to heat the home. Some of these have reported damp/mould issues; others are known cold homes. We are actively prioritising these homes in our approach to decarbonisation.

We are part way through completing the management assessment part of the profiling which includes aspects such as homes which have not had a visit in the last 12 months; a property survey in the last 5 years or not reported a repair in the last 18 months.

As the profiling is being completed direct communication is starting via resident questionnaires; with follow ups including onsite inspections/home visits to adopt a proactive approach to identifying and tackling damp and mould issues.

A damp steering group has been established to examine the process of how ClwydAlyn tackles Damp, Mould and Condensation issues when raised/put on notice. This project is set to be complete by April 23. The steering group's current goals are.

- (a) To develop a single consistent process across all tenancy types
- (b) Develop risk profiling of people and properties
- (c) Develop new escalation process where damp or mould is identified which cannot be managed by the tenant i.e. an enhanced Technical Damp Survey, Works Orders, Resident Education, damp specialists.
- (d) New follow up process with residents, to ensure matters addressed fully via periodic time bound follow ups.
- (e) Marketing and comms plan to supplement the new process as well as general communication i.e. Leaflets, videos etc

A Damp, Mould and Condensation Strategic Action Plan has been created to capture and track all actions across the group in tackling Damp, Mould, and Condensation Issues.

We are investing £1.2m in 2023/2024 and have successfully obtained £1.8m of ORP grants to further expedite programmes to upgrade homes and currently have energy specific software 'Parity' due to be implemented in February 2023 to aid us in programming our works by achieving a target pathway for these homes. Officers within the asset team will be trained in 2023 in PAS 2035 surveying techniques.

We are working closely with ECO4 (Energy Company Obligation) providers who will (through grants), provide further assistance to help us deal with poor energy performing homes by providing (for example), additional loft/wall insulation, affordable heating systems, intelligent energy monitoring systems.

We are trialling the implementations of environment sensors for our homes which will monitor humidity, temperature and energy usage which will enable us to better manage homes to meet resident's lifestyles and provide early intervention to prevent damp and mould issues. This will be trailed in January alongside energy works and will be offered to residents who have raised disrepair cases.

We are strengthening our communication process around damp/mould and condensation by informing residents how to report their concerns to us and setting out (through our customer charter), specific campaigns on how to tackle condensation and humidity levels in a home, information leaflets in simple to read format as well as developing videos and social media. We recognise that language barriers need to be identified to ensure that the right language is being used to inform our residents.

Conclusion

ClwydAlyn has always given a high priority to addressing problems of damp, mould, and condensation and over the last 18 months has undertaken further work to provide higher levels of assurance and more focussed interventions. That said, this work will be ongoing and will require long term resource commitment. We must continue to get the balance right between responding well to complaints raised and proactively searching out issues and addressing them in a supportive way.

List of Appendices

- ***Appendix A Rochdale Boroughwide Housing Findings ClwydAlyn position***
- ***Appendix B The Better Social Housing Review ClwydAlyn position***
- ***Appendix C Welsh Government Regulatory Directors letter***
- ***Appendix D Draft Response to WG Regulatory Directors letter***
- ***Appendix E Risk Profiling Overview***

Appendix A

Summary of the findings Rochdale Boroughwide inquest

(a) The use of correct language

We recognise as a landlord our residents come from a diverse background and may not have English as a preferred or first choice language. We will ensure that their preferred language is used when communicating and delivering important message around damp and mould by collecting and keeping up to date personal data on residents. We have more work to do to ensure that we have current records on language preferences for 100% of our residents. We are able to provide written communications in a range of languages and a recent example has been the Polish translations for Penrhos.

(b) Failing to correctly diagnose the damp problem

All of the asset team are adequately equipped with the right tools to measure damp and humidity and will continue to be sufficiently trained to diagnose and deal with damp/mould related concerns.

Housing staff are being provided with training to enable them to spot damp or mould during a visit and ask the relevant questions to residents during any homes visit. Contact centre staff are also being trained so that they can correctly identify and record complaints/problems for corrective action.

(c) Failing to install adequate extractor ventilation in the bathroom and kitchen

All homes meet both building regulation and WHQS (Welsh Housing Quality Standards) which require adequate ventilation in bathroom and kitchen, extractor fans which are broken will be repaired or replaced within 28 working days.

We may have cases however where ventilation has been covered over or disconnected to save money/address perceived draughts etc. These issues need to be picked up proactively in home visits by both the repair and maintenance/assets and housing management teams.

(d) Failing to proactively deal with disrepair cases and putting legal barriers up

Our disrepair process is proactive. If we receive a complaint, we want to address any problems immediately to ensure the tenant is living in a safe and good quality home. We engage with residents throughout the process to ensure that the right of entry under tenancy (Contract Agreement) to undertake repairs is exercised and we continue to communicate with our residents during any legal action which may be progressing.

(e) Failing to quickly investigate damp related matters on the estate that Awaab lived in until 2 years after his death

We attend resident raised concerns within 10 working days, including damp related matters. These are investigated by competent officers with appropriate outcomes delivered, both to address any short-term issues but longer-term ones also.

Our Complaints process includes lessons learned meetings and involves residents. This ensures that our approach and communication is resident focussed, and that we adopt any broader organisational learning and/or patterns of issues.

Our Board receive complaints reports twice a year, and these identify learning and improvement opportunities.

As well as the Intelligence, which is gathered through our stock survey inspections, and energy assessments, we review and analyse trends for Works orders, Disrepair Cases, and complaints. This enables us to identify areas and estates where damp mould issues are being repeatedly reported.

An example of how we manage this can be evidenced as follows: -

Officers have been dealing with several homes within Garden City area in relation to rising damp created by poorly fitted wall insulation and removal of essential air bricks below ground floor level. Residents have been decanted to allow the necessary works to proceed.

Data and insight from the first homes improved is being used to adopt a planned approach to the whole estate. This will be addressed over time through our planned revenue and capital programmes or other grant programmes such as Optimised retro fit.

Our current assessment of our stock has identified 153 homes which are part of our older stock portfolio and have been assessed as one which have are of a poorer energy performance; have an EPC rating of **D** and below; and therefore, may be more prone to black spot mould/damp. We don't have any serious damp concerns raised against these homes currently and officers are monitoring them closely over the winter period.

These poorer performing homes are being included in our energy investment program and energy improvements will be undertaken over the next year.

We are carrying out a proactive media campaign encouraging residents to report any concerns about damp and mould. The campaign started on 8th January (Sunday evenings usually get our best responses) with 2,288 emails sent out (open rate 39.9% – 913 people had opened it in the first 24 hours); and 4,706 text messages (only 323 people **haven't** opened it). So far, we've had 18 cases raised through our housing management system which are being checked against 127 recently reported jobs, and then will be prioritised for inspection by the asset team.

(f) Weakness in the housing management system failed to inform maintenance staff of concerns about damp

We have invested in a new housing management system Civica CX, which is equipped with a case and task workflow. This enables housing staff to raise a concern which is used to generate inspections for our technical staff. This process is also used to facilitate our complaints process which is escalated to managers to investigate.

Our call centre staff also have access to the repairs system (MAVIS) which creates works orders and Asset management inspections whilst retaining historical data on previous repairs and inspections.

Appendix B

Better Social Housing Review

[BSHR Report FINAL embargoed until Tues13thDec.pdf \(pcdn.co\)](#)

The Better Social Housing Review was set up by the National Housing Federation and Chartered Institute of Housing to examine these and other issues relating to the quality of social housing. This report is the culmination of six months of work by a panel of independent experts in social housing and includes key findings, and recommendations.

They have looked at the quality of social housing in England through several different lenses including:

- the challenges of managing and developing housing stock
- culture, complaints, and communication
- stigma and discrimination
- tenant voice and power
- sustainability and climate change
- workforce
- health
- access to data and information

They have structured the investigations around two key pillars which quickly emerged as the top priorities for those living in social housing:

- i) the suitability and quality of housing stock, and
- ii) the housing association's culture and responsiveness to tenants' concerns and complaints.

7 recommendations have evolved from the report and officers have provided a position statement against each one. The full detail of the recommendations can be found within the report using the hyper link attached.

(1) Every housing association, and the sector as a whole, should refocus on their core purpose and deliver against it

When housing associations can demonstrate that they are delivering against that purpose they should then review again what further capacity they have available to continue to deliver against wider responsibilities and ambitions

ClwydAlyn position:

We agree with this recommendation. We believe that ClwydAlyn has a balance between its strategic mission to beat poverty, and its regulatory and financial accountabilities. The poverty mission provides a strong organisational focus on quality of services to residents and quality of homes; focussing on building trust between the association and its tenants so that concerns and problems are raised with confidence; and are actively addressed.

We have completed a strategic review of our priorities and portfolio of activities over the last few years so that we can focus more on our core purpose. Examples of this include reducing our Care portfolio; agreeing to not develop any more registered care services; transferring our PRS management portfolio to another association; actively agreeing not to undertake market sale housing etc.

Any new potential activity is rigorously assessed to check we have the skills/knowledge and capacity to undertake it, and then most importantly will it contribute to addressing poverty in our tenancies and communities.

(2) Housing associations should work together to conduct and publish a thorough audit of all social housing in England

There is currently no comprehensive, consistently measured picture of the state of social housing across the country. Different housing associations have varying approaches to auditing their stock and expressing data. Housing associations should work together to undertake a comprehensive national audit of social housing. The panel recommends that they should do this by adopting and applying the new HACT UK Housing Data Standards right across the sector.

ClwydAlyn position: -

We agree in principle that housing association should be working consistently to develop better data sets on stock condition across Wales. This would need to be driven by the regulator.

(3) Housing associations should partner with tenants, contractors, and frontline staff to develop and apply new standards defining what an excellent maintenance and repairs process looks like

There are widespread and growing concerns about how too many housing associations manage the maintenance and repair of their housing stock and respond to concerns and complaints about this raised by tenants. Each housing association should ask tenants, frontline staff, and contractors to work together to review how the organisation deals with maintenance and repairs. They should develop new standards together to be applied to review the organisation's performance and then develop an annual plan for continuous improvement.

ClwydAlyn position: -

We have over 100 resident volunteers who are part of our #InfluenceUs programme. Services are designed, redesigned, and remodelled in collaboration with residents.

We currently have residents reviewing our maintenance and repairs service and the feedback has led to improvements and changes to service. An example of resident feedback was to support Residents to complete their own repairs, A new Resident DIY repair model has concluded an initial trial successfully and will be rolled out further.

The feedback from residents has also helped us introduce evening and weekend appointments as well as flexible appointments to suit resident needs. Most recently, residents' have fed back that notification of 'engineer on the way' on the day of a repair would benefit them. This has been introduced as a text messaging service

Residents are included in setting specifications of works, most recently our grounds maintenance contracts prior to tender, as well as scoring tenders and making contractor appointment decisions with officers. Tenants also form part of the recruitment panels for senior staff.

Our resident committee play a key role in our day-to-day activity, deciding on any of our products used such as heating systems, deciding on the resident choice on finish of Kitchen and Bathroom upgrades as well as monitoring our performance and being key influencers in areas of budget spend and prioritisation.

Residents' mystery shops the service and provide feedback on their experience of all aspects of the process. This will then feed into a wider review of areas for improvement and future development.

Continual community events are held to ensure residents have access to frontline staff 'in person, over 1800 resident were invited to our ask us anything events.

We have reviewed and remodelled our complaints process to include outcomes and business wide learning. This ensures that complaints are not dealt with in isolation, but that wider service improvements are implemented as and when identified via a lesson learned approach.

A resident panel has been formed which review both our performance in handling complaints but also our responses, reviewing our approach and communication with residents, integrating officers which has helped to improve the quality and language of complaints and resident raised concerns.

(4) The Chartered Institute of Housing should promote the traditional housing officer's role as a supported and valued employment opportunity with a Chartered Institute of Housing recognised programme of training and continuing development

Exceptional pressures and demands on frontline staff working directly with tenants are contributing to very high turnover rates at this level and making it harder for many tenants to communicate with their landlord. Housing associations should increase investment in recruiting, developing, and supporting the retention of more housing officers to enable them to re-establish more manageable patch sizes.

ClwydAlyn position: -

We have a programme of placing housing officers through CIH diploma and encourage membership of professional bodies.

We have restructured our housing service to provide smaller community patches for our housing officers. We have reduced patch sizes from circa 600 to circa 250. This allows our housing officers to build relationships with our residents and provide targeted support (alongside key partners) to ensure that we can help to sustain tenancies.

We support staff internally via our Wellbeing Team, ensuring that they have an opportunity to discuss and de-stress around any issues that they may be experiencing. We provide regular training for staff in areas such as conflict resolution, TRACE, Health and Safety, and understand the pressures that are faced daily as a front-line worker.

We have a very low turnover rate for housing officers and pay is linked to the market median salary.

(5) Housing associations should work with all tenants to ensure that they have a voice and influence at every level of decision making across the organisation, through both voluntary and paid roles

There are widespread concerns that tenant voice, and the diversity of that voice, can get lost in a sector under pressure where leaders can be distanced from the realities of tenant experience. Tenants should be recognised as key partners in delivering sector purpose. All housing associations should assess their performance against tenants' experiences by empowering them to lead investigations and reviews and should expand the roles they can play across organisations.

ClwydAlyn position: -

As stated in 3 above we have over 100 resident volunteers who provide input at different levels across the business. Some residents are registered for survey response only and this would involve the initial stages of a service redesign or review, requesting their personal experiences of that service. This then follows on with review groups who provide more time and a more in-depth review of the service, making formal recommendations for improvements.

This work is completed alongside our resident and community involvement officers.

We have an active Resident Committee, and our Board has 2 Tenant Board Members.

Residents also complete peer led reviews on services such as our maintenance and repairs service. This involves residents contacting other residents who have received a repair and asking for their views of the service.

(6) Housing associations should develop a proactive local community presence through community hubs which foster greater multi-agency working

Too many tenants are concerned about reduced face to face contact with landlords. Internal silo working and lack of commitment to external multi-agency working can reduce the efficiency and impact of associations. Housing associations should actively seek to create more community-based hubs, either by engaging with existing ones or actively setting up new ones. These hubs should reflect the needs and aspirations of the community and be based on the principle of 'go where the tenants are.

ClwydAlyn position: -

We undertake community drop-in sessions for our residents where they can talk to a member of staff about any issue that they may be experiencing with their housing. At these sessions we also have welfare advice staff on hand to assist with any financial or support questions that they may need help with.

In addition, we are also operating Croeso Cynnes throughout the winter months and have been making sure that support and welfare staff are on hand to support anyone accessing the centre.

Over the past 12 months we have visited 85% of all tenancies and are now putting in place a targeted programme to build relationships with those that we have been unable to connect with.

(7) Housing associations should support tenants and frontline staff to undertake an annual review of the progress each organisation is making in implementing this review's recommendations

For these recommendations to have real impact, housing associations should work with their tenants and frontline staff to examine how well they are doing in terms of implementing them and to find ways to overcome the challenges and barriers they face in doing so.

ClwydAlyn position: -

As part of the annual Regulatory Self-Assessment, we work with staff and residents to review our performance, what has worked well and what could work better, together with identifying how those improvements could be made.

Annual performance is reported to Resident Committee, and we are producing an annual report to be sent out to all residents.

We have developed wider social media campaigns about issues that residents tell us are important to them, whilst at the same time providing residents with information about our performance.

We have developed a Resident Charter called 'Our Promise' which outlines our commitment to residents and what they can expect of us as a landlord.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Tai ac Adfywio
Housing and Regeneration

Local Authority Leaders (Stock Holding)
Local Authority Chief Executives (Stock Holding)
Local Authority Chief Housing Officers (Stock Holding)
RSL Chairs
RSL Chief Executives

15 December 2022

Dear Colleague,

The Minister for Climate Change wrote to all social landlords recently following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who died from a respiratory condition caused by exposure to mould. As I am sure you are aware, the mould had been reported to the social landlord, but they failed to act appropriately.

We also wrote to you last year regarding conditions and disrepair in social housing, seeking assurance that appropriate systems, processes and monitoring were in place to ensure complaints and issues are dealt with, fully investigated and acted on, including robust escalation processes. This subsequently led to the publication of feedback in February, which provided some shared learning and included a number of 'think points' for all social landlords to consider.

In particular, Think Point 9 of [Social housing conditions and disrepair](#) suggests "social landlords should ensure measures are in place to specifically identify and address reported issues with damp and mould. This should include investigation/inspections by default, ensuring condensation and its causes are accurately diagnosed, rectifying any defects as promptly as possible and supporting tenants with help and advice, including fuel poverty". Several landlords also provided information on positive steps they had taken to manage damp and mould related complaints and issues.

Keeping tenants safe in their homes is the core business of a social landlord and I'm sure you are all reviewing policies and procedures and systems once again, reflecting on the lessons of this tragedy. I'm also sure it won't come as a surprise that in turn, we are now seeking urgent assurance on how landlords are responding.

We need you to tell us, in relation to damp and mould issues:

- Whether you have carried out a review of this nature in recent weeks and if not, why not.
- If you have carried out a review, what did the review tell you?
- If there are any damp and mould cases which are not being dealt with effectively, what is the scale of this and what are your plans for remediation?
- Explain the data you hold in relation to damp and mould, including the level of stock coverage and how often the data is scrutinised and refreshed.

- Explain the assurance the governing body has scrutinised to give them confidence the organisations' systems and processes are the best they can be and do not discriminate in any way, to ensure damp and mould issues are dealt with promptly and effectively.

I would be grateful if you could provide this information by cop 20 January 2023 to the HousingConditions@gov.wales mailbox. We may follow up responses with individual social landlords and an analysis of the responses may be published to support practice and improvement across the social landlord sector.

We are also considering, in conjunction with our sector partners, whether further "support" events such as webinars would be useful.

Should you have any queries in relation to this request, please email to the mailbox above rather than contact individuals.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'EMMA WILLIAMS', written over a light blue horizontal line.

EMMA WILLIAMS

Cyfarwyddwr Tai ac Adfywio / Director of Housing and Regeneration
Llywodraeth Cymru / Welsh Government

18th January 2023

Dear Emma,

Re: Damp and Mould Concerns

Thank you for your letter dated 15th December 2022. Please find enclosed our response to the 5 bullet points which you have requested be answered.

Point 1

We need you to tell us, in relation to damp and mould issues:

- Whether you have carried out a review of this nature in recent weeks and if not, why not.

We can confirm that officers have carried out a review of all mould and damp concerns which have been recorded in our housing management and repairs system. We have also provided a board paper to inform our members of the current situation and what we are doing in relation to damp and mould concerns; a copy of which is attached to this response

Point 2

We need you to tell us, in relation to damp and mould issues:

- If you have carried out a review, what did the review tell you?

Our review has identified an increase in damp and mould concerns being reported to us during the period of December. We currently have 127 more reported cases compared to the same period last year. This is highlighted in Table A below.

ClwydAlyn is managing concerns quickly, by using all the available resources within the Housing and Asset Teams and Trade staff. 65 front line staff have been trained including call centre staff around damp and mould, which is helping to reduce inefficiencies (caused by multiple visits). In addition, a risk prioritisation tool has been developed to ensure those at greatest risk of living in damp properties are prioritised proactively for action. (This is described in the Board paper). During annual home visits, all staff ask relevant questions on damp/mould and action any concerns accordingly.





Where it is appropriate, ClwydAlyn is supplying tenants with small easy to read humidistats/hydrometers to enable tenants and residents to monitor and manage the levels of humidity in their properties. Housing and technical staff explain how these can be used to assist with controlling condensation and assist residents to site them throughout critical areas of the house.

Table A - Number of BSM/ Damp related jobs 2020 – 2023

	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Apr	15	46	44
May	17	41	32
Jun	27	38	25
Jul	40	25	36
Aug	43	25	34
Sep	37	40	30
Oct	49	26	36
Nov	46	41	85
Dec	51	37	127
Jan	76	52	13
Feb	77	39	
Mar	67	60	
Grand Total	545	470	462



Point 3

We need you to tell us, in relation to damp and mould issues:

- If there are any damp and mould cases which are not being dealt with effectively, what is the scale of this and what are your plans for remediation?

All our damp and mould cases which we are aware of are being managed effectively and residents are being kept informed. Most of the cases are attributed to black spot mould and are being rectified at source with follow up communication by officers

We have undertaken a proactive media campaign through Facebook as well as texting and emailing residents directly to raise awareness asking if they have damp or mould concerns. Emails were sent to 2288 addresses with a 39.9% open rate in the first week. Texts were sent to 4,706 tenancies and only 323 people didn't open it. to date this (16th Jan), this has resulted in 43 responses/problems raised, which we are dealing with.

Our internet page has been updated with information on damp mould concerns and how to report them to us as well as a video on reducing humidity within the home.

Our frontline staff (Housing/Trades/Asset management/Compliance teams) are being proactive when visiting homes to see if there is any concerns which need attention. We will use our stock condition survey programme combined with the annual visit carried out by Housing Officers, to access homes to determine if there is any damp mould concerns.

We have prioritised our cleaning team to react to any damp or mould concerns within 7 working days, firstly remedy if possible the area of concern by applying mould irradiation solution, if this method is not suitable and further intervention from a technical perspective is needed, then this is passed back urgently to the Asset team who will undertake a full survey within 10 working days to determine the extent of the work needed. In situations where damp proof membrane failure or excessive mould is present, we will move the resident out until such time the works have been completed.

Our proactive risk profiling process has identified 153 homes which are part of our older stock portfolio and have been assessed as ones which have a poorer energy performance and have an EPC rating of **D** and below. We don't have any serious damp concerns raised against these homes currently and officers are monitoring them closely over the winter period as these homes are more likely to be subjected to black spot mould. These poorer performing homes are included in our energy investment programme and energy improvements will be undertaken over the next few years.



If any situation occurs whereby the extent of damp/mould has been allowed to flourish and spread without our knowledge and is found to be hazardous to health, then residents will be immediately provided with alternative temporary accommodation to remove them from the hazard.

The risk profiling also identifies customers who may be at risk of living in damp homes, perhaps because the home is over occupied or perhaps there are rent arrears owed. We currently have 212 customers who we believe could be at risk of living with damp/mould, and a further 77 homes where there may be secondary vulnerabilities due to the age of someone living in the home.

The final part of the risk profiling identifies people/homes we have not been in in the last 12 months. Perhaps there is no boiler to service or perhaps the resident does not want to let us in to their home. This part of the risk profiling is still underway.

All those identified as living in homes potentially at risk, or who are customers we believe to be potentially at risk are being contacted proactively; initially by questionnaire but these cases will be pursued relentlessly until we can be assured there are no concerns/issues that need to be addressed.

We have also partnered with Warm Wales, to support tenants who may be suffering fuel poverty. To date 531 customers have been supported with a range of measures to address income and affordability issues.

Enabling our residents to have warmer homes is a primary proactive approach to combat the causes of damp/mould and this falls within our Decarbonisation and energy improvement programmes. We are investing £1.2m in 2023/2024 and have successfully obtained £1.8m of ORP grants to further expediate programmes to upgrade homes and currently have energy specific software Parity due to be implemented in February 2023 to aid us in programming our works by achieving a target pathway for these homes.

Point 4

We need you to tell us, in relation to damp and mould issues:

- Explain the data you hold in relation to damp and mould, including the level of stock coverage and how often the data is scrutinised and refreshed.





ClwydAlyn manages 5130 tenancies across a varied portfolio of tenure types. There are also a number of shared ownership and leased homes which do not require landlord intervention on repairs and maintenance, however these homeowners can access the social media information which is on our internet page to assist them in combating mould damp issues.

We hold all records of communication to and from our residents in our Housing Management System and log and record all maintenance requests and concerns, including all damp or damp related matters within our Maintenance & Assets system.

We undertake a full stock survey of every home every 5 years, refreshing the data at this interval, which includes damp readings. We also actively collect data annually via Housing Officer visits as well as during any reactive inspections when attending to deal with resident raised issues.

We have robust internal control measures for reviewing our data as well as third party audits on both our key controls and data integrity.

Where we have undertaken measures to address damp, mould or condensation in our homes, records of this are held including logs and times of attendance and works carried out as well as logs of communications with our residents.

Where cases of disrepair are raised against us, a new suite of case files are created from our records. Which provide a clear audit trail of actions to remedy any concerns.

Point 5

We need you to tell us, in relation to damp and mould issues:

- Explain the assurance the governing body has scrutinised to give them confidence the organisations' systems and processes are the best they can be and do not discriminate in any way, to ensure damp and mould issues are dealt with promptly and effectively.

On the 17th January 2023 a damp and mould report was presented to the ClwydAlyn Board (Copy of which is attached). ClwydAlyn board have also been provided with a copy of the Directors letter together with this response.

This report provided Board members with an update on the current situation when we shared the number of concerns being received (**Table A**) the measures to strengthen our current process around prioritising, communication and equipping frontline staff with the necessary knowledge and equipment to deliver responsive solutions to damp and mould concerns.





ClwydAlyn

ClwydAlyn Housing Limited
72 Ffordd William Morgan,
Parc Busnes Llanelwy, Llanelwy,
Sir Ddinbych, LL17 0JD

ClwydAlyn Housing Limited
72 Ffordd William Morgan,
St Asaph Business Park, St Asaph,
Denbighshire, LL17 0JD

ffôn/tel : 01745 536800

Canolfan Gwasanaeth Cwsmeriaid/ Customer Service Centre: 0800 183 5757

e-bost/email: help@clwydalyn.co.uk

As well as providing 6-monthly updates to ClwydAlyn Board, both Property and Resident committee will scrutinise quarterly performance reports detailing the operational performance in addressing damp and mould concerns.

If you require any further information or details, please do not hesitate to contact me?

Yours Sincerely

Clare Budden

Group Chief Executive

ClwydAlyn.co.uk

Cymdeithas Elusennol Gofrestredig / Charitable Registered Society (Rhif/Number 22360R)
Landlord Cymdeithasol Cofrestredig / Registered Social Landlord (Rhif/Number L051)
Wedi ei hawdurdodi a'i rheoleiddio gan yr Awdurdod Ymddygiad Ariannol /
Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority
Byddwn yn trin gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg yn gyfartal /
We will treat correspondence received in English and Welsh on an equal basis



Appendix E

Risk Profiling

Damp, Mould, and Condensation

For our Residents, our Management, and our Homes

To support our approach to tackle damp and mould in our homes and support our resident in tackling condensation in homes, to identify those homes that may contribute to mould issues and tenancies that may intensify or hold residents more susceptible to the health impacts.

Our approach will identify core indicators for our Residents and Our homes which may contribute to damp, mould, and condensation forming in the home as well as identifying our own management and awareness of the issues in the homes.

Our Residents - COMPLETE



Core Indicators	Secondary Indicators
Over Occupied	Age Above 75
Arrears >£750	Age Below 15
	Country of Origin Non-UK
	Fully Occupied

- 212 Resident identified as potential high risk or susceptibility to Damp and Mould
- 135 homes Over occupied, and further 77 Fully occupied with secondary indicators present.

Our Homes - COMPLETE



Core Indicators	Secondary Indicators
Energy Efficiency < D Rated	Single Glazed Windows
Historic Damp Orders <2 Years	Heating Type (inc. Gas Capped)
	Wall Construction
	Property Age
	Nr. Historic Damp Issues <5 Years

- 153 Homes identified as poor performance which they may be more likely to be cold homes and contribute to Damp or mould issues.
- 143 Homes with known current or damp issues raised in last 2 years with secondary indicators present

Our Management – **UNDERWAY**



Core Indicators	Secondary Indicators
Open Damp/ Mould Orders	Last HO Visit >12 months
Last Visited >12months	Last Surveyed > 5 Years
	No Repairs > 18 Months
	Disrepair Cases

On completion of management, additional risk profiling considering all core and secondary indicators can be formulated to identify our highest risks.