



Report To:	Cabinet
Date:	30 June 2026
Subject:	Adoption of the Housing (HRA) Damp Condensation and Mould Policy
Purpose:	To seek Cabinets approval for the adoption of the updated Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy 2026-2029 (Appendix 3)
Key Decision:	N
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Tracey Carter, Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing
Report Of:	Vikki Cherry, Service Director - Housing
Report Author:	Adel Gardner, Change and Improvement Manager HRA
Ward(s) Affected:	All Wards
Exempt Report:	N

Summary

The report seeks Cabinets approval for the adoption of the Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy to ensure robust oversight and drive continuous improvement beyond statutory compliance. The report outlines the development of the Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy, confirming that the required legislative amendments were completed in September 2025. It focuses on the next phase of integrating tenant feedback to strengthen the policy further.

Recommendations

1. That Cabinet adopts the revised Housing Damp Condensation and Mould (DCM) Policy 2026-2029.
2. That Cabinet delegates minor operational amendments and/or legislative changes to the Housing Damp Condensation and Mould (DCM) Policy 2026-2029 to the Service Director for Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing.

Reasons for Recommendations

Incorporating tenant feedback strengthens the policy's relevance and effectiveness, improving trust and satisfaction.

Other Options Considered

Do Nothing: This was considered but dismissed because it would undermine the Council's commitment to tenant involvement and could result in a policy that does not fully address tenant needs.

1. Background

- 1.1 Policy Development Panel considered and feedback on the Housing Damp Condensation and Mould Policy on 6th February 2024. The Policy was then formally adopted by Cabinet on 26th March 2024. This Policy was focused on the learnings from the death of Awaab Ishak and recommendations of the Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Report of Damp and Mould.
- 1.2 On 20th May 2025 a report was presented to Performance Monitoring Panel on the performance of the Damp and Mould service and amendments were made to the Key Performance Indicators to provide robust oversight and assurance to members.
- 1.3 On 25th June 2025 MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) published draft guidance on the Phase 1 implementation of Awaab's Law, marking a significant step forward in improving the safety and accountability in social housing.
- 1.4 To ensure compliance with the new legislation it was necessary to make urgent amendments to the Damp Condensation and Mould Policy. On 16th September 2025 Cabinet adopted amendments to this policy. The Council recognised that our tenants aspire to go further than the minimum standards, and we are committed to ensuring they have an opportunity to enhance the Damp Condensation and Mould Policy.
- 1.5 Since these amendments were adopted, the Council has actively engaged with tenants to ensure the policy is clear, practical, and meets their needs. In addition, the Council wanted to provide both tenants and Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the policy and contribute to its ongoing development.
- 1.6 This report presents the findings from tenant engagement and outlines how their feedback has informed improvements to the Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy. It also seeks to provide assurance to members that the policy remains robust, compliant with legislation, and aligned with tenant aspirations.

2. Report

2.1 On 18th November 2025, the Housing Transformation Manager and the Housing Repairs and Compliance Manager hosted a tenant presentation at the Property Focus Group focused on Awaab’s Law and its meaning to tenants. The session aimed to:

- Explain what Awaab’s Law means for social housing tenants
- Provide clarity on the Councils Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy following recent amendments.
- Share a summary version of the policy in plain language
- Share a video version of the policy for feedback
- Gather feedback through a series of questions to understand the following:
 - How the policy is understood
 - Whether the policy meets tenants needs and expectations.
 - Opportunities for improvement or additional support.

2.2 Officers then attended existing tenant engagement events between January – March 2026 across the district to provide tenants with opportunities to shape the policy further.

2.3 Tenant Feedback from Focus Groups

2.4 Tenant feedback highlighted practical opportunities for improvement in the policy and process:

Tenant Feedback	Changes
Tenants want follow-up communication, such as phone calls after initial contact and updates at each stage.	<p>Policy to specify the key stages where updates to tenants must occur (e.g. case reported, survey booked, findings shared, works scheduled, works completed, follow up).</p> <p>Policy to specify that tenant communication preference will be captured and endeavour to use this for updates.</p>
Clear expectations should be set during triage, e.g., “We will do this within 24 hours” or “within 5 working days.”	Policy and process updated to make this clear that Service Level Agreements will be communicated with tenants at triage and tenants to be informed there is a Policy.
Greater performance transparency, including publishing compliance statistics (e.g., Awaab’s Law) on the Council website.	<p>Adding performance information to newsletters and annual reports and advertising frequently that this information is also available on the website which can be accessed by tenants at any time.</p> <p>Improving the access to performance for non-digital tenants by presenting performance information at in-person focus groups. (First set of performance information shared at Tenant Property Focus group on 20th January 2026).</p>

	Easy to understand Awaab's Law performance information being developed with tenants.
Non-digital communication options were suggested, such as promoting the need to report damp and mould in newsletters or the annual report.	<p>Inclusion that guidance to tenants will be published in the annual report which is posted to all tenants.</p> <p>Inclusion in the policy that performance information will be shared regularly at focus groups through face to face sessions to ensure accessibility for tenants who prefer non digital engagement.</p>
Tenants reported communication gaps, such as not knowing what jobs have been raised after a damp survey and contractors arriving without notice.	<p>Policy requires a written summary within 3 working days and to provide updates at agreed intervals. Updates to the process to ensure tenants are told what jobs have been raised and that any contractor will give notice before arrival.</p> <p>Contractor code of conduct developed with the requirement to notify before arrival.</p>
Improvements requested include informing tenants what work will be carried out and notifying them promptly if repairs are cancelled or rescheduled.	Update to the process to ensure tenants are told what jobs have been raised and that any contractor will give notice before arrival
Tenants noted that 'managing condensation' advice should be tailored to individual circumstances.	Include in the process that Officers will provide tailored advice that considers the tenant circumstances. This may also include referring tenants to support services for cost-of-living assistance where needed (included in policy).
Tenants are not sure what is their responsibility and what is the Councils responsibility as a landlord for damp and mould.	Inclusion of a Landlord Responsibilities section in the Policy
Communicate in tenants requested preference. (i.e. send emails where possible to save money on printing and posting)	Include in the Policy the requirement to communicate in tenants required preferences where possible.
Tenants didn't know there would be a 6 month follow up to check if the Damp and Mould had returned.	Ensure its clear in the procedure that tenants are informed there will be a 6 month follow up call to check if the Damp and Mould has returned, but also to explain to tenants they need to report any reoccurring DCM as soon as possible rather than waiting for the 6 month call back.

2.5 Tenant Feedback from Survey

The survey was sent to tenants who had reported Damp Condensation and Mould since Awaab's Law went live on 27th October 2025. 213 tenants were contacted, and 30 Tenants completed the survey.

The findings strongly echoed the themes raised during the tenant focus groups. The concerns highlighted through the focus groups such as the need for clearer communication, timely updates, follow-up after works, understanding what repairs are being carried out, and better coordination with contractors were consistently reflected in the survey responses. This alignment confirms that the changes proposed in the table above are directly grounded in tenant experience and represent the right areas for improvement.

Full survey findings can be found in Appendix 2.

2.6 Tenant influence Panel Involvement

Although the Tenant Influence Panel has not yet formally convened for its first official meeting, members have been actively participating in ongoing training. We wanted to use these sessions as an opportunity for tenants to apply and develop their scrutiny skills using real, live policy work. As part of this approach, the Draft DCM Policy was brought to the Tenant Influence Panel's practice session on 25 March, allowing tenants to test their developing skills and provide early insight and feedback as part of the policy development process.

The panel asked about how vulnerable residents can confidently report issues such as damp and mould. Officers confirmed the Council continues to actively promote the importance of reporting damp and mould through multiple channels, including tenant communications, visits, and support services. Alongside this, the Council carries out a rolling programme of stock condition surveys and tenancy audits, which help identify issues early and ensure that vulnerable tenants are engaged and supported to report concerns.

Concerns were also raised about contractor accountability, especially short notice appointment cancellations, with officers advising that contractor performance is regularly monitored through contractor meetings which have been strengthened and through the Capital Programme Clinic.

A detailed discussion took place regarding the responsibility to make internal surfaces good after works. The panel were however satisfied with the section overall and this wording has since been reviewed by Capsticks solicitors and amended accordingly.

Tenants were supportive of the Policy progressing to the Policy Development Panel.

Full feedback can be found in Appendix 2.

2.7 Learning from Stock Condition Reports and Complaints

To strengthen assurance and ensure the Damp, Condensation and Mould (DCM) Policy is effective in practice, the Council has triangulated data from multiple sources:

Stock Condition Reports

- The data showed that damp and mould may be under reported by ethnic minority groups, indicating potential barriers to engagement and reporting. This is being addressed through the Access to Services action plan report which was presented

to Performance Monitoring Panel on 10th March 2026, which will ensure promotion of translation and interpreter services and developing a communications plan to target different groups.

Complaints Analysis

- During 2025/2026 complaint themes relating to damp and mould cite delays in communication, lack of clarity on repair timescales and contractor issues.
- This mirrors feedback from the focus group and highlights the importance of transparent communication, proactive updates and contractor management.

Triangulation

- By comparing tenant feedback, stock condition data, and complaints trends, the Council has identified priority areas:
 - Improving communication campaigns and follow-up processes.
 - Addressing systemic property issues (e.g., faulty extractor fans) and extractor fan cleaning being added as standard at void.
 - Enhancing monitoring and reporting to ensure compliance with Awaab's Law.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1. The review of the DCM Policy demonstrates that the Council has taken proactive and meaningful steps to exceed minimum statutory requirements and strengthen its approach following the introduction of Awaab's Law. The engagement carried out with tenants alongside insights from complaints data and stock condition surveys has provided valuable evidence that the updated policy is more transparent, responsive, and aligned with tenant expectations.
- 3.2. The findings highlight that communication, clarity of processes, and the accessibility of information remain central to improving tenant confidence and service outcomes. The proposed amendments directly address these areas, ensuring that operational practices support both legal compliance and a more tenant centred approach.
- 3.3. Beyond tenant feedback, the Council undertook a best practice review to modernise the policy in line with sector expectations. The policy has been reorganised and restructured to ensure improved readability, clearer responsibilities and a more consistent approach to service delivery.

Implications

South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership

The revised Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy supports a consistent and robust approach across the Partnership by strengthening compliance, enhancing tenant engagement, and improving performance transparency.

Corporate Priorities

The policy directly supports priorities relating to:

- Providing safe, warm and high-quality homes.
- Protecting the health and wellbeing of residents.
- Strengthening customer experience and transparency in service delivery.
- Ensuring legal compliance and maintaining high housing standards.

Staffing

No implications.

Workforce Capacity Implications

The enhanced requirements for tenant updates, monitoring of Awaab's Law compliance, and increased performance reporting may place additional pressure on existing teams. These impacts are expected to be manageable as additional resource had already been introduced to support compliance with Awaab's Law.

Constitutional and Legal Implications

The updated Policy supports the Council to act in accordance with legislative requirements and government guidance. Specific details are contained within the Policy.

Data Protection

No implications.

Financial

No implications.

Risk Management

No implications.

Stakeholder / Consultation / Timescales

Extensive consultation has been undertaken with tenants through tenant forum groups, a survey, and ongoing engagement via property focus groups. Feedback directly informed amendments to the policy, particularly around communication, clarity of process, and accessibility. Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing, Service Director for Housing and Executive Director of Communities have been consulted.

Policy Development Panel were consulted on this Policy on 21st April 2026.

Comments and observations.

- Members welcomed the opportunity to review the amended policy and thanked officers for clearly highlighting changes, which supported effective scrutiny.
- Members sought reassurance about what arrangements are in place to ensure consistent communication, including contingency arrangements where staff are absent due to sickness or annual leave. Officers confirmed the procedure has been updated to set out clearer key contact points, and this has been expanded within the policy (page 13). In addition, two officers now jointly manage the damp condensation and mould inbox and triage system to ensure continuity of service and avoid single points of failure.
- Members queried whether the policy applies to outbuildings, noting that many properties include outside toilets or separate brick washing facilities. Officers clarified that yes, the policy includes outbuildings that form part of the tenancy and are used for essential facilities, such as outside toilets. Outbuildings that are purely ancillary (for example, storage sheds or garages) and do not present a health or

safety risk are normally managed through routine estate or asset management, unless a serious hazard is identified.

- Members asked for clarification of the term “decant” used and whether additional explanation should be provided. Officers have added definition on P4 of the policy.
- Members asked whether they are able to view the risk assessment tool. This has been shared directly with Members.
- Members noted that the date in the tenant engagement event table should read 16 December 2025. Confirmed and corrected.
- Members commented that the consultation outcome report may have been clearer if it had appeared earlier in the agenda pack, before the DCM policy itself, to allow proposed changes to be reviewed first. Amended.
- Members asked about contractors cancelling appointments at short notice, and asked how repeat issues are identified and addressed. Officers confirmed that contractor performance is monitored through regular contractor management meetings, which have recently been strengthened. Missed or short-notice cancellations are reviewed, and contractors are challenged where agreed standards are not met. Contractor complaints are also escalated to the Capital Programme Clinic, which now has an increased focus on contractor performance. This information is considered as part of decisions on contract extensions. Where tenants experience repeated service failures, complaints are logged and managed accordingly.
- Members noted that 17% of tenants reported contractors visiting without notice highlighting the impact on tenants’ ability to prepare, be present, or receive appropriate support. Officers clarified to strengthen accountability, a Contractor Code of Conduct has now been introduced, setting clear expectations around required contact and notice before visits.
- Members asked whether the proposed six-month follow-up contact for tenants requiring additional support would be telephone only, or whether in person visits could be requested. Reasonable adjustments will be made based on individual needs, and this may include face-to-face contact where appropriate or requested.
- Members asked about the procurement for the damp and mould works. Officers clarified the procurement process undertaken.

Reputation

Strengthening the Damp, Condensation and Mould Policy, incorporating tenant feedback, and improving transparency will enhance the Council’s reputation for being proactive, responsive and tenant-focused. The policy also mitigates reputational risk associated with damp and mould cases.

Contracts

No implications.

Crime and Disorder

No implications.

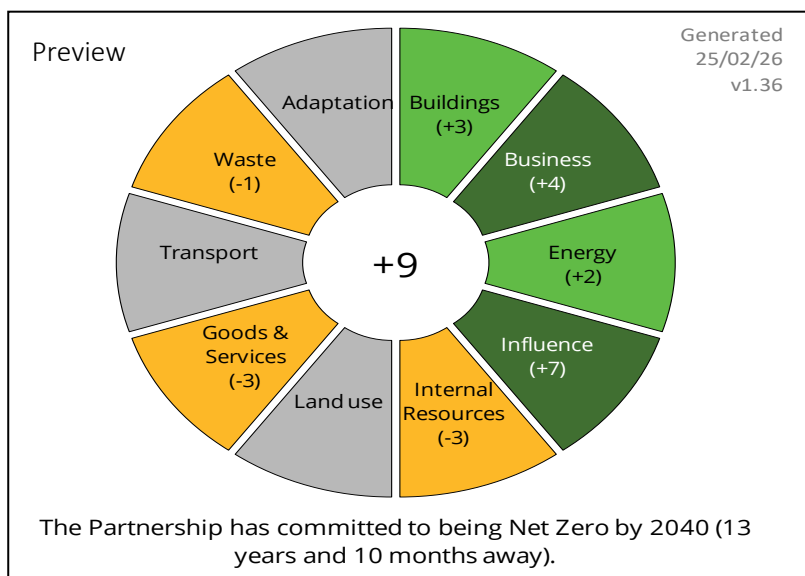
Equality and Diversity / Human Rights / Safeguarding

The policy supports fair and consistent treatment of all tenants. It strengthens safeguarding by recognising the health impacts of damp and mould, especially for vulnerable tenants. No negative impacts identified.

Health and Wellbeing

The policy has a positive impact on health and wellbeing by improving the Council’s ability to identify, address, and prevent damp, condensation and mould, which are linked to respiratory conditions and other health risks.

Climate Change and Environment Impact Assessment



Repairs to structural defects and improvements to ventilation and heating help prevent deterioration and reduce long-term resource use. Staff and contractor training, alongside investment in Energy Performance improvements and better asset management, support more sustainable housing performance. Addressing poor thermal efficiency reduces unnecessary energy demand, while strong communication, clear guidance and support for vulnerable tenants improve climate related behaviour and resilience. However, frequent inspections, in person visits and follow up checks increase resource use and travel emissions, and damp related repairs generate waste much of which cannot be recycled due to contamination.

Acronyms

- DCM – Damp Condensation and Mould
- MHCLG - Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
- HRA – Housing Revenue Account

Appendices

- Appendices are listed below and attached to the back of the report:
- Appendix 1 Summary of Changes made to the Policy
- Appendix 2 SHDC Housing Landlord Service – Damp and Mould Policy outcome report and detail of changes made.
- Appendix 3 Damp Condensation and Mould Policy 2026-2029

Background Papers

Background papers used in the production of this report are listed below: -

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Preparedness to deliver the Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulation 2025 (Awaab's Law)	Preparedness for Awaabs Law update.pdf
Housing Damp Condensation and Mould Policy (DC&M)	DCM_policy_for_website.pdf
Awaab's Law: Guidance for social landlords	Awaab's Law: Guidance for social landlords - GOV.UK

Chronological History of this Report

Name of Body

None

Date

Report Approval

Report author:

Adel Gardner, Change and Improvement Manager HRA
Adel.Gardner@sholland.gov.uk

Signed off by:

Vikki Cherry, Service Director - Housing
vcherry@sholland.gov.uk

Approved for publication:

Councillor Tracey Carter, Portfolio Holder for Strategic and Operational Housing