Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol
Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr
BRIDGEND
County Borough Council

PUBLIC PROTECTION DEPARTMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

MOULD IN THE HOME

Mould growth within the home environment is a sign of damp conditions. Usually the cause of the dampness can be easily identified (see reverse) and fixed. However, sometimes it may be necessary for the property owner to employ a specialist contractor to investigate the problem and identify solutions.

Condensation

There is always some moisture in the air, even if you can't see it. If the air touches a cold surface, e.g. on windows and outside walls, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water then appear on these surfaces – this is condensation. The more moisture there is in the air the worse the condensation will be. If the water is left to build up in these cold areas it will lead to black mould forming. If you have mould growth throughout your property then the problem is likely to be caused by condensation.

How to prevent Condensation

Produce Less Moisture	Ventilate to Remove Moisture
Cover pan when cooking. Close kitchen door/open kitchen window when cooking. Dry clothes outside. Close bathroom door/open window during and after bathing and showering. Vent tumble dryer to the outside. Restrict the use of paraffin/bottled gas heaters.	If the windows have trickle vents, open them. Open windows (when someone is home). Use your extractor fans in the kitchen and bathroom (they are low cost to run). Leave a space between the back of furniture and the wall, position them on an internal wall where possible. Dehumidifiers can be used to remove excessive moisture from the air.

Ensure the property has adequate ventilation

A healthy home should be adequately ventilated. Extractor fans should be located in the kitchen and bathroom to remove moisture from the home. If you do not have extractor fans you may find that once they are installed the condensation will no longer occur. There are many different products available to ventilate a home from basic extractor fans to Positive Ventilation Units. These products can be easily researched on the internet.

Heat your home a little more

The increasing cost of fuel bills has led to many people turning down their heating. This can increase condensation within a property. Keep a low background heat on all day when it's cold (if possible) including in bedrooms. It may be cheaper to keep an even heat than to boost it when needed.

How to treat Mould Growth

Wipe down windows and sills each day. Wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator. Where mould has formed, wipe it off with a cloth, then wipe down the affected area with a fungicidal wash – this can be bought from a shop or made by mixing 1 part bleach to 5 parts water. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions with regards to health and safety precautions. Where mould growth has been severe, re-painting the area with fungicidal paint can help stop it re-occurring.

Health Effects

Evidence suggests that the presence of mould can aggravate existing conditions such as asthma and exposure over a prolonged period may contribute to symptoms such as rhinitis, conjunctivitis, eczema, cough and wheeze. However, following the simple steps above will ensure that any mould does not reach harmful levels.

Rising Damp



Rising damp will only occur on the ground floor. Signs of rising damp will usually include a damp stain along the base of a wall above the skirting board to a height of about 1.5m. Ground floor walls usually contain a damp proof course which is either built into or injected into the brickwork just above ground level. The purpose of the damp proof course is to stop water from the ground rising up through the brickwork. Rising damp can occur in the following situations –

Where the damp proof course has been 'bridged'.

If the level of the ground outside the property has been raised above the damp proof course water can then enter the wall and cause rising damp. **Remedy –** Reduce the ground outside the wall to a level below the damp proof course.

Defective damp proof course.

If the damp proof course has been damaged or incorrectly installed it may allow water to rise through the brickwork in that area. **Remedy –** Employ a contractor/builder to investigate the issue and carryout any necessary repairs or insert a new damp proof course.

There is no damp proof course.

Some older properties may not have a damp proof course. **Remedy -** In these situations it may be necessary to employ a specialist contractor to install a damp proof course. There are a number of methods of doing this. The most popular is for a damp proof chemical to be injected into the wall.

Penetrating Damp



The first signs of penetrating damp will usually be damp stains appearing on an internal wall. Penetrating damp is caused by a specific defect with the property which is causing or allowing water to penetrate to internal surfaces. The most common causes of this kind of damp are detailed below.

Gutters

The most common cause of penetrating damp is defective gutters. If guttering is out of line, broken or blocked with debris rainwater will overflow onto the area that is damp. If a rainwater downpipe is missing or broken this will have the same effect. **Remedy** – Look at the gutters during rainfall and note any areas where water is leaking/dripping onto the wall of the property. Carryout repairs to gutters to ensure that they are not overflowing, leaking or dripping.

Roof/Chimney Defects

Penetrating damp can also be caused by a defective roof or chimney. **Remedy –** Check roof, ensure that all slates/tiles are in place. Sometimes slipped tiles can be easily replaced but you may need to get a builder to investigate the matter further. Chimneys that are in a poor state of repair can cause dampness. You should check that the brickwork and cement are in good condition and that the 'flashing' is in good repair (the flashing is the metal area around the base of the chimney – its purpose is to stop water entering the property at the point where the chimney joins the roof). If in doubt ask a builder to investigate the problem for you.

Overflow

Sometimes overflow pipes can cause dampness. This can usually quickly be identified as the source of any problem. View the external wall in the area of where you are experiencing dampness. If there is an overflow pipe there that is dripping or if there is any form of staining on the wall below the pipe then this is likely to be the cause of the problem. **Remedy –** Carryout repairs or employ a plumber to fix the leaking overflow pipe.