

Populo Living

HHSRS, Damp, Mould & Condensation

Policy

Revision 1.0 – October 2025

1. Purpose & Scope

- Ensures all Populo Living homes are safe, healthy, warm, and dry.
- Applies to all rented homes, both social and private, from 27 October 2025 under Awaab's Law.
- Covers responsibilities, timescales, and compliance regarding DMC.
- Aligns with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) by embedding risk-based assessment principles for identifying and mitigating damp and mould hazards.
- Supports delivery of Populo Living's objective to keep residents safe and feeling safe in their homes.

2. Definitions & Health Risks

- **Damp:** moisture ingress (leaks, rising damp, penetrating damp).
- **Condensation:** water forming when warm air meets a cold surface.
- **Mould:** fungi growing in moisture; various colours and textures.
- **HHSRS Hazard:** A condition or deficiency in a dwelling that poses a potential risk to health or safety, assessed by likelihood and spread of harm.
- Health impacts include asthma, allergies, respiratory illness, eczema, weakened immunity, and mental health effects.

3. Legal & Regulatory Framework

- Awaab's Law (Social Housing Regulation Act 2023, extended 2025).
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.
- Housing Act 2004 / HHSRS, Environmental Protection Act 1990, Decent Homes Standard.
- Consumer Standards (2024), Housing Ombudsman Guidance, Pre-Action Protocol for Housing Conditions Claims (England, 2021).

- Populo Living recognises its duty to identify and mitigate Category 1 Hazards under HHSRS (mandatory action) and Category 2 Hazards (discretionary mitigation) as part of its DMC management process.

4. Policy Commitments

- Zero tolerance of damp and mould.
- Proactive hazard identification and prevention, using HHSRS-based assessment methods where appropriate.
- Prompt investigation, clear communication, written findings.
- Timely repairs and tailored support for vulnerable residents.
- Alternative accommodation if property cannot be made safe quickly.
- Ongoing staff training to recognise and respond to HHSRS hazards.

5. Response Timescales (Awaab's Law & HHSRS)

- Emergency hazards: investigate and complete works within 24 hours.
- Significant hazards: inspect within 10 working days, safety works within 5 working days.
- Prevent recurrence works: start within 5 working days, complete within 12 weeks.
- Written findings: within 3 working days of inspection.
- Where HHSRS assessments identify Category 1 Hazards, works will be prioritised as emergencies.
- Category 2 hazards will be mitigated within standard repair timeframes, ensuring proportionate and documented action.

6. Responsibilities

- Residents: report issues promptly, allow access, ventilate and heat home.
Populo Living: investigate, address root causes, provide updates, maintain records, follow up post-repair.
- Populo Living: Investigate all DMC reports using HHSRS-informed risk assessment principles (likelihood and severity of harm) Maintain accurate records of hazards, works, and outcomes. Address root causes, not just visible symptoms. Provide updates, ensure follow-ups, and support vulnerable residents.

7. Types of Damp & Mould

- Rising damp, penetrating damp/leaks, condensation, mould (Penicillium, Black mould / Stachybotrys, Cladosporium).

8. Emergency Hazards (24 hours)

- Widespread mould in multiple rooms.
- Damp causing unsafe conditions (electrics, structural failure).
- Severe leaks or mould causing resident illness.
- Any condition that constitutes a Category 1 HHSRS Hazard will trigger an emergency response under this policy.

9. Prevention & Support

- Ventilation (extractor fans), guidance on condensation.
- Humidity sensors or dehumidifiers where appropriate.
- Support for vulnerable residents, including fuel poverty.
- Targeted HHSRS-informed property MOTs to identify high-risk homes.
- Property data and stock condition surveys will incorporate HHSRS hazard screening.
- Ongoing awareness campaigns (website, social media, printed materials) on preventing DMC and understanding hazard reporting.

10. Reporting & Communication

- Reports accepted via phone, email, online portal, or in person.
- Acknowledgement within 1 working day; updates and written summary provided.
- Residents will receive clear explanations of findings, including hazard categorisation (where applicable) and remedial actions.

11. Monitoring, Compliance & Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- All reports, inspections, and works recorded centrally.
- Follow-up inspections: 7 days, 6 weeks, 3 months, 6 months post-works.
- Data used to monitor hazard trends in line with HHSRS principles.

KPIs:

- 100% of emergency hazards investigated and resolved within 24 hours.
- 100% of significant hazards inspected within 10 working days.
- 100% of written findings issued within 3 working days of inspection concluding.
- 100% of safety works completed within 5 working days where significant hazards are identified.
- 100% of recurrence prevention works commenced within 5 working days and completed within 12 weeks.
- 100% of follow-up inspections completed at 7 days, 6 weeks, 3 months, and 6 months.
- Resident satisfaction with communication and resolution of DMC issues.

12. Governance & Accountability

- Director of Customer Service accountable for policy delivery.
- Head of Property Services oversee implementation through Property Services and Housing teams.
- All staff and contractors responsible for recognising, reporting, and responding to DMC in line with this policy.

13. Equality & Inclusion

- Services adapted to meet diverse resident needs.
- Reasonable adjustments offered where appropriate.
- Safeguarding referrals made if children or vulnerable adults are at risk.
- Recognition that some residents may face barriers to ventilation/heating due to health, mobility, or financial hardship — Populo Living will support accordingly.

14. Review

- Reviewed every 3 years or sooner if legislation changes.
- **Next review:** October 2028.