



# HEALTHY HOMES HANDBOOK

**A tenant's guide to condensation**

**Freebridge**  
COMMUNITY HOUSING

# INTRODUCTION

**Every home is at risk of condensation, which is particularly the case throughout the winter months.**

The presence of excess amounts of condensation in your home can lead to problems such as mould growth, which can affect your health and the health of your home.

Having small amounts of condensation present is not usually a problem – but there are a few everyday things we can all do to help prevent it.

This is why we have created this handbook, as helping everyone manage condensation will allow you to maintain a healthy home.

This guide also includes information on the different types of damp that

can occur, which will help you identify potential concerns and keep us informed of any problems.

As your landlord, it's our responsibility to make sure you have a safe and healthy home. So, if you read this guide and spot any signs of damp, mould or condensation in your home, please do let us know immediately.

We'll then arrange an inspection at your home to identify the cause of any issues you are experiencing – and work with you to ensure that all risks, hazards or problems are resolved as a priority.

**If, after reading this handbook, you would like further advice on how to maintain a healthy home, please do contact us.**



# WHAT IS CONDENSATION?

**Condensation occurs when excess moisture in the air meets a colder surface and turns into water droplets.**

Everyday activities such as cooking, cleaning, showering, bathing and breathing produce excess moisture in our homes.

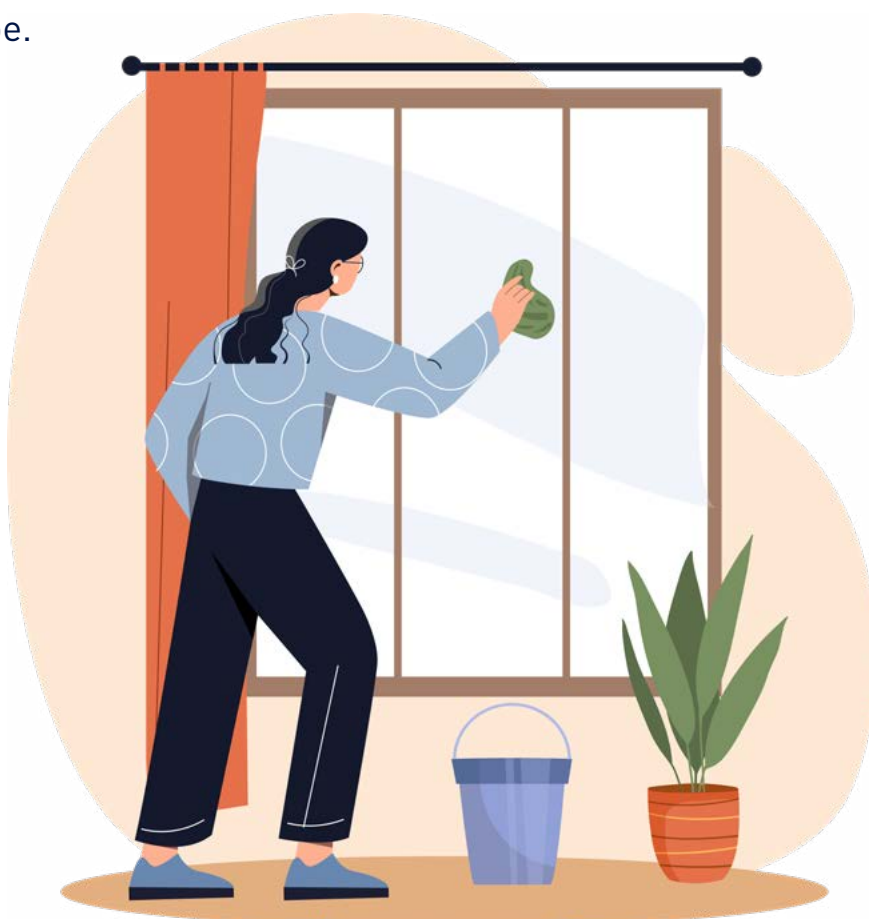
Condensation is much more likely to occur in winter due to surfaces like windows and walls being colder while there is more moist, warm air inside of our homes.

It's also the case that we tend to keep our windows and doors shut more in winter, meaning there is less ventilation to allow moist air to escape.

Small amounts of condensation, like the steam from a shower condensing on a bathroom mirror, aren't usually a concern if it's kept on top of.

With that in mind, if you happen to spot condensation on a surface, wipe it down with a dry, clean cloth or a piece of kitchen roll.

**Concerned about excess condensation in your home? Please call us on 0333 240 4444 or fill in the form on our website [here](#).**



# WHAT IS DAMP?

**Although condensation is a type of damp, there are other types you need to be aware of. This includes rising damp, penetrating damp and damp caused by plumbing faults.**

It's vitally important to know how to spot these types of damp, so that you can report it to us and we can take immediate action.

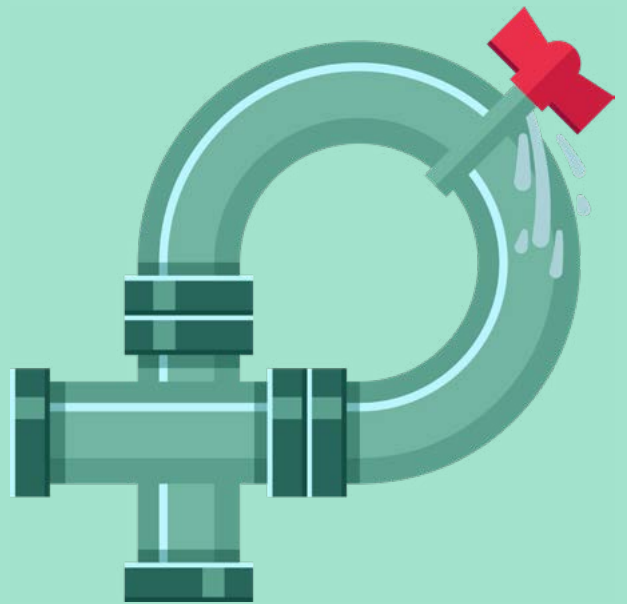
## **Rising damp**

Not very common, Rising Damp is caused by water in the soil moving up through a wall - and will only affect ground floor rooms or basements.

This is usually prevented by a barrier called a damp-proof course.

Be aware that rising damp can occur if the damp-proof course in your home is either missing or damaged. Signs of rising damp include damaged skirting boards and floorboards, crumbling or salt-stained plaster, and peeling paint or wallpaper.

A good way to spot rising damp is that it often has the appearance of a tide mark running along the bottom of a wall



## **Penetrating damp**

Caused by water seeping through the walls from outside, penetrating damp is caused by structural problems at your home.

An example of these issues would be faulty guttering and/or roofing.

Penetrating damp will usually show up as a concentrated damp patch on walls, ceilings or floors with a clear edge – and it gets worse when it rains.

## **Plumbing fault**

This kind of damp usually occurs in a kitchen or bathroom due to a leak in a water or waste pipe.

The damp area would be wet consistently, regardless of the outside weather.

**If you think you have rising damp, penetrating damp or a plumbing fault, contact us straight away on 0333 240 4444.**



# WHAT IS MOULD?

**Excess amounts of condensation or damp can cause water to sit on surfaces such as ceilings, walls, or floors.**

This can then lead to damage within your home, such as peeling wallpaper, flaking paintwork or even black mould.

Be aware that black mould can grow on any surface. However, common places include ceilings, walls and windowsills.

Should you notice mould forming, it's very important that it is treated straight away to prevent it from spreading.

You can do this yourself by using a clean cloth and white vinegar spray,

which is an effective way of removing small areas of mould.

White vinegar is safe to use on most surfaces and has the ability to penetrate porous materials and kill mould at the roots.

**Should mould return after you have followed these tips, please contact us immediately on 0333 240 4444 or fill in the form on our website here. We will need to arrange an inspection and take urgent action.**



# TOP TIPS FOR A HEALTHY HOME

**The best way to prevent condensation is to limit the amount of moisture that is produced in your home.**

You can do this by keeping it as warm and ventilated as possible.

We've shared some top tips to help you do this.

- When doing everyday tasks such as cooking, showering, bathing and drying clothes, opening windows helps the moist air escape.
- Turning on the extractor fan when cooking, showering and bathing also removes moisture from the air. To keep the extractor fan healthy, be

sure to regularly clear out debris and dust with your Hoover.

- When cooking, putting lids on your pans prevents excess moisture from forming.
- Heating up your home helps prevent condensation from forming. We appreciate the recent rise in energy prices can make this process difficult.
- Setting your thermostat to between 18-21 degrees helps keep your home healthy and your energy bills down.
- When drying clothes inside, open a nearby window slightly or turn



on your extractor fan to remove moisture from the air.

- Curtains and rugs help to keep your home warm. Ideally open curtains in the morning and close them at dusk, while ensuring they hang above radiators and not by the edge of a windowsill.
- Typical settings for your radiator valves are 4-5 in living areas and 2-3 in bedrooms, which help you use energy more efficiently.
- Keeping internal doors closed and using draught excluders helps reduce the amount of heat moving to colder

areas of your home. This keeps heat in the rooms you use more often, and makes them more comfortable.

- If you have a tumble dryer, make sure it is vented outside. If you're using a condenser dryer, remember to empty the water tray and clean the filters regularly.
- If you are storing items in your loft, be careful not to squash your insulation. Disturbed or patchy insulation can lead to cold spots and condensation.



# HOMES WITH HEAT PUMPS & STORAGE HEATERS

## Heat pumps

Should your home have a heat pump, it is usually designed to only come on when your home is cold. You are able to control how warm you'd like your home to get by using your thermostat – and don't need to worry about timing it.

**Need advice on your heat pump controls? Call us on 03332 404 444.**

## Storage heaters

If your home has a storage heater, it's important to become familiar with the controls in order to keep warm and improve energy efficiency.

'Input' controls how much energy is stored as heat, while 'Output' controls how quickly that heat is then released the following day.

So, turning Input up will store more heat, while if you want more heat you should set the Output higher.

You should turn Output lower while you are either asleep or out of the house.

Remember, set the Input today for the heat you need tomorrow.



Need help with your energy bills?

Freebridge have entered into a partnership with the Local Energy Advice Partnership (LEAP) to assist our tenants with energy bills and the cost-of-living.

LEAP helps to support as many people as possible who are at risk of going into fuel poverty. This service is open to all types of householders, including social housing tenants.

Thanks to the FREE energy advice service they can provide, those in need can stay warm and save money on their energy bills.

LEAP's efficiency advisors provide guidance and support that is specific to a person's energy efficiency needs, from referral, to home visit, to follow-up.

Please do get in touch with us if you would like help with a referral, or you can do it yourself by visiting [this link](#).

**You can reach us by calling 0333 240 4444 or emailing [CXSupport@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:CXSupport@freebridge.org.uk).**

