

## **WARNING**

**All tenants are advised to read the details below. Any damage caused to the property during your tenancy by condensation may result in charges being raised and deductions from your bond.**

### **Avoiding 'condensation dampness'**

'Condensation dampness' is a condition that affects millions of homes in the UK and is particularly common in houses which are poorly heated and insulated i.e. have more cold surfaces and usually gets worse in winter. This problem can lead to staining and mould growth damaging wallpaper, wall surfaces, window frames, furniture and clothing. The tiny spores produced by this mould and higher numbers of dust mites due to the moist conditions can also increase the risk of illness such as asthma and bronchitis.

This section will cover what condensation is, where it arises and finally how to tackle the problem.

#### **What is condensation?**

All air contains a certain amount of 'invisible' water vapour. The higher the temperature of the air the more water vapour it can hold. Condensation frequently occurs when air carrying vapour comes into contact with a cool surface. At this reduced temperature less water can be held and it is deposited. It is for this reason that the bathroom mirror steams up after a shower or a window when you breathe on it.

#### **Where does condensation dampness occur?**

The most vulnerable areas will either be rooms where a large amount of moisture is produced, i.e. bathroom/kitchen, or on cold surfaces in other rooms where this moisture can travel to. The effects of this process may be

visible, for example droplets of water on gloss painted windowsill's, but often the water droplets will soak into the wall and a problem will not be diagnosed until black mould patches start to appear.

The following areas are particularly prone to condensation:

- Cold surfaces such as mirrors, single glazed windows (above) and metal window frames.
- Kitchens and bathrooms.
- Walls of unheated rooms.
- Cold corners of rooms.
- Wardrobes/cupboards and behind furniture against an outside wall.

### **How to tackle condensation dampness**

The major difference between condensation and other forms of dampness is that *you* have the ability to reduce or solve the problem just through changing behaviour in the home. Try following these steps:

**Reduce the moisture:** Normal activities such as bathing, washing and cooking all produce moisture, which cannot be avoided. Simple changes however can prove effective in tackling condensation dampness. Steps to consider are:

- Keep lids on saucepans while cooking.
- Tumble driers should be vented to the outside.
- Avoid the use of bottled gas and paraffin heaters; these produce high levels of vapour.
- Dry washing outside when possible.

The most effective course of action you can take however is simply:

- When creating steam in the kitchen/bathroom open windows and close doors to these rooms. This will let moisture escape and prevent it from spreading through the house.

**Increase ventilation:** This is required so that moist air produced can escape; simply opening a window will do. A suitable level of ventilation will allow this without making occupants uncomfortable by causing draughts and making the

room cold. It may be quite difficult to strike the right balance however. It is for this reason many houses have built in ventilation measures such as trickle ventilators and extractor fans. This is not recommended.

Kitchen and bathrooms with severe condensation problems should not be draught proofed.

**Heating:** Condensation is most likely to be a problem in homes, which are under heated. Try to keep temperatures in all rooms above 15°C as this will reduce condensation forming on external walls.

**Insulation:** Following these steps should significantly reduce any condensation dampness problem you may have. If a problem still exists insulating your home will have a three-fold value in tackling the problem through:

- Warming the surface temperature of wall, ceilings and windows.
- Generally increase the temperature of the home.
- Reducing heating costs thus allowing the home to be heated to a higher standard more affordably.