

## **Damp and Mould – Advice for Tenants**

If you spot any areas of damp and mould in your property you must report it to Neil Douglas promptly so that the cause may be identified and action taken to resolve the problem. This is very important for a number of reasons:

- 1) There are health risks associated with mould spores. The mould fungi have been identified as the source of many health problems, including infections, asthma, allergies and sinusitis. Moulds produce allergens, irritants, and in some cases, toxins that may cause reactions in humans.
- 2) Damp can cause severe damage to the property including the rotting of wooden windows, doors, carpets and deterioration of wall paper and plaster.
- 3) Damp can damage a tenant's belongings by staining clothes with mould and / or rotting furniture.

Whilst there are a number of causes of damp and mould by far the most common is condensation. Condensation will occur whenever a surface is cool enough to allow moisture in the air to condense on it. For example, a glass of ice water sweats because the warm air that surrounds the glass meets the cold surface and forms beads of water. Condensation is worse during the winter months when there is a big difference in temperature between the inside of the building and the outside.

Excessive condensation can be reduced by limiting humidity in your home and improving ventilation. For example, cooking for a family of four adds 2 litres of moisture a day to a house. Each shower contributes a quarter of a litre; a weekly laundry, 14 litres; human occupancy contributes 1 to 3 litres per day; dishwashing half a litre, etc. So the modern living of a family of four can easily release 70 litres, or more than 18 gallons of water per week into the air in your home! All of this moisture MUST eventually escape.

### **Steps to reduce condensation**

- Ensure your home is kept ventilated - open a small window or the trickle vents at the top of it.
- Keep internal doors shut when cooking and bathing so that moisture can't escape around the home.
- After a bath or shower, the room should be ventilated to the outside, not to the rest of the house - just opening a window will help. Use the extractor fan.
- Keep your home at a constant temperature; don't leave some rooms to get too cold.
- Don't obstruct airbricks - indoors or out.
- Leave a space between furniture and walls.
- Don't dry your washing on radiators. Dry clothes out of doors or in a cool room - it will take longer but less moisture will be held in the air at any one time. Open a window to allow the moisture from the drying clothes to escape.
- Hang wet coats up in an outside porch if you have one.
- Consider using a dehumidifier - domestic types are now available and can remove a surprising amount of water from the air.
- Vent all tumble dryers to the outside.