

## Fact Sheet – No 3

### Condensation and Mould Growth

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Condensation and mould growth are a serious problem for 1 in 4 homes nationally, with rented properties often being the worst affected. It has been estimated that **between 80-85% of cases of dampness in houses are the result of condensation or man-made moisture.** The incidence of condensation has increased tenfold in the past ten years, chiefly as a result of making modern homes draught free, with double glazing, more effective insulation and the removal of open fires.

Without adequate heating, insulation and ventilation, condensation will occur as a result of everyday tasks such as cooking, drying clothes or taking a bath or shower. Up to 20 pints of moisture per day can be produced and if not dealt with effectively, it will condense on cool surfaces throughout the property. The moisture is not just water, but may also contain grease, household dirt and nicotine. This provides the ideal conditions for mould spores to flourish, and mould will grow on walls and ceilings. Clothes, carpets and furnishings can be completely destroyed.

Measures to control condensation –

- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed
- Dry clothes outside
- Ensure mechanical clothes driers are vented to the outside
- Don't use flueless gas heaters
- Increase the level of ventilation by fitting extractor fans with humidistat controls
- Increase heating to raise room temperature
- Improve insulation

As well as damaging clothes and furnishings, mould poses a serious risk to health and can result in asthma and other respiratory diseases. Mould may also attack foodstuffs, producing dangerous toxins which can cause severe food poisoning.

**Measures to treat mould growth –**

- Remove condensation from windows as it occurs
- Wash affected walls with a dilute solution of household bleach
- For severely affected areas, treat mould with fungicide paints from a specialist manufacturer.

**You should make sure that your tenant understands the problems caused by excessive condensation and mould growth and of the actions they can take themselves to alleviate those problems. This is vital if condensation and mould growth is to be prevented in the long term.**