

# Appendix 1

## Damp & Mould Conference Technical solutions, operational management & shared learning

Follow up:  
solutions & shared learning  
from the conference

### Damp & Mould Conference September 2015

Condensation, damp and mould present considerable and reoccurring issues for social landlords and residents alike. Understanding underlying causes for condensation, damp and mould, as well as the different range of options to tackle these issues, is key to implementing effective and sustainable solutions.

Taking forward this need to address root causes of damp and mould, and more effectively manage resident experience of the issues, this conference sought to:

- Promote engagement & consultation with partner organisations – driving development of initiatives;
- Share & expand knowledge – through shared experience solutions & efficiencies can be found;
- Identify best practice – ensuring optimal solutions are shared and established for the benefit of all organisations.

Representatives from a large number of social landlords and partnering organisations attended the conference, bringing forward a range of experience and knowledge from across the social housing sector. Taking Thurrock's experience and solutions, innovative technology from Eco Langley, with the expert knowledge presented by the guest speaker, workshops provided a means for attendees to share knowledge and experience.

Key outcomes of the conference focused on:

- Working smarter: effectively implementing new working processes to manage residents & stakeholders, as well as identifying & planning works programmes;
- Improving communications: optimising content & delivery best achieve results;
- Using innovative solutions & technology: identifying new and innovative solutions to drive forward improvements in identifying and managing damp & mould.

## Review of conference sessions

### Thurrock Council: damp & mould management

A presentation from members of the Thurrock Council Housing Team sought to demonstrate the holistic approach the authority is implementing to tackle issues of condensation, damp and mould. Thurrock increasingly uses intelligent data and performance analysis, with resident feedback, to develop and target programme scope and delivery. Key objectives in this approach are:

- Delivering a targeted service: using limited resources where most required, ensuring residents are best placed to have improved housing conditions;
- Delivering service efficiency: optimising delivery of solutions through efficient programme provision;
- Long term asset management: optimising asset management through delivery of works appropriate to asset condition, in view of long term costs of asset maintenance.

Taking this approach delivers a number of targeted solutions through Thurrock Council's five year flagship Transforming Homes Programme, its responsive repairs programme and also its Thermal Efficiency Programme. It also underlies Thurrock's approach to investigating new technological solutions, including those currently being assessed in conjunction with Eco Langley – and the possibility of integrating these technologies into the Housing asset. Effective asset and programme management is further supported through intelligent performance and data analysis using Horus-IM dynamic reporting solutions.



## Review of conference sessions

### Thurrock Council: damp & mould management

Using a partnership approach provides Thurrock with a range of innovative opportunities to deliver cutting edge solutions to historical social housing issues – delivering benefits in service, performance and economic advantages.

The conference overview of Thurrock's programmes provided an illustration of how a local authority may take forward a new approach and solutions within the context of wider constraints – and progressing a new approach to social housing management.



### Eco Langley: innovative technological solutions

Addressing damp and mould requires a multi faceted approach – addressing building fabric issues, as well as those of resident lifestyle and livelihood. Innovative technological solutions have the potential to target these multiple underlying issues – with Eco Langley demonstrating infrared heating as a means of addressing costly heating systems replacement and renewal, as well as addressing running costs which underlie fuel poverty.

## Review of conference sessions

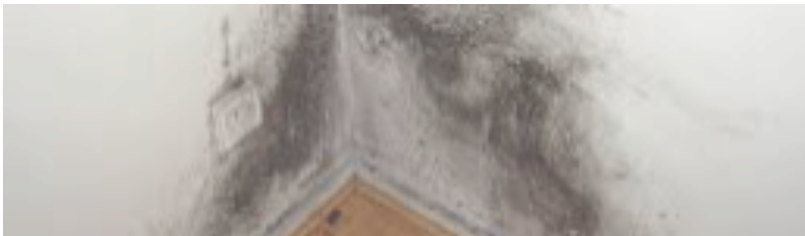
### Medway Council & Mears: repairs partnering approach

Implementing a partnering approach, Medway Council with Mears have developed a comprehensive service to address condensation, damp and mould. Staff are fully trained in the range of underlying factors contributing to the visible signs of damp and mould, with a range of diagnosis and delivery options:

- Tools for diagnosis (including damp meter, infrared thermometer and borescope),
- Halophen and Bacdet applications
- Positive input ventilation systems
- Envirovent filterless extractor fans
- Tenant awareness through publications, forums, and social media

### Guest Speaker: Mike Parrett, damp expert

Providing a broader understanding of the topic, world renowned independent damp expert Mike Parrett presented updates on best practice within organisations and the industry. Highlighting current processes and approaches, his substantial experience provided revealing background on the effectiveness of frequently used approaches to damp issues. Linking to other conference themes, there was further insight on new and emerging technologies including their effectiveness in damp and condensation reduction and ultimately eradication.



## Focus: working smarter

### Improving staff awareness and knowledge:

A common theme of the conference was the increasing awareness and knowledge of condensation, damp and mould amongst the wider organisation – beyond those dealing directly with repairs on a day-to-day basis. Establishing this knowledge base underlies the ability to identify and address condensation, damp & mould from the earliest opportunity, thereby targeting lifestyle changes or repairs works to address issues from the outset.

- Medway Council highlighted the efforts of their income officers to provide support and information around managing finances amongst their tenants with the aim of raising awareness between this and lifestyle choices that contribute to condensation issues in a property.
- Common experience suggested landlords provide awareness workshops to their estate officers and staff to enable them to identify the difference between condensation and damp and mould where lifestyle has been identified as one of the contributing factors. This will allow councils to respond quicker to queries as well as provide an opportunity for one to one talks with the residents.
- Basildon Council shared their experience in providing training to their Councillors to ensure they have the technical knowledge to provide information to residents at surgeries and visits within the community.

### Planned approach to asset management

Across the organisations attending, experience suggested a critical factor to effectively and efficiently addressing issues underlying damp and mould is the implementation of a planned approach to asset management. Limited resources can be wasted in operating a service focused on responsive repairs – while failing to address underlying issues with the building fabric:

- Programmes to pre-empt occurrences of damp by ensuring essential cyclical maintenance programme are completed – including roof and guttering works, drainage checks, insulation and rendering;
- Thurrock Council have a number of programmes running via its Repairs and Maintenance Programme – initiating batch programmes for common damp related repairs. Intelligent data and performance analysis underlies identification of repairs programmes.

## Focus: improving communications

Across organisations attending the conference, a consistent message was the effectiveness of targeted and appropriate communications to residents – using a range of measures to improve understanding of condensation, damp & mould issues. Communication with residents included a range of channels – across resident forums, leaflets and posters, as well as social media.

- A range of approaches to content – from comprehensive and wide ranging, to targeted and specific – with a balance for each communication channel used. Critical is the communication of specific actions for residents to easily adopt in everyday life within their home;
- Timing of communications is further critical, with awareness leaflets targeted prior to the start of winter advising on how to manage condensation during the winter time;
- Various other methods have been adopted by the other landlords using social media such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter – Medway Council have a YouTube video which is linked to their Facebook page to educate residents, which is proving to be successful.

## Focus: using innovative solutions & technology

The conference provided an opportunity to review technological solutions social landlords are using to drive forward improvements in identifying and resolving issues related to condensation, damp and mould:

- Haringey Council demonstrated how they provide and utilise humidity monitors (battery powered ETI hygrometers) that allows the resident to see when they need to take action to reduce humidity in their home to avoid the condensation forming throughout their property;
- Eco Langley presented Infrared heating benefits and how they are very energy efficient up to 60% less than storage heaters;
- Mears presented a MGC vinyl product currently being tested, comparing winter to winter results to measure its effectiveness and benefits;
- Medway, in partnership with Mears, are implementing Positive Input Ventilators – to be fitted in each flat, and following 18 months operation are proving to be 100% successful;
- Housing Associations such as Grainger detailed how they have providing pacifier vents in their housing stock and how these have proved an effective solution to certain cases.

## Conference summary

Effectively addressing condensation, damp and mould is critical to the ability of social landlords to implement asset management within limited resources, yet at the same time taking action which substantially improve the health and wellbeing of affected residents. This conference demonstrated a number of key measures and approaches being employed which address issues relating to building fabric, resident lifestyle and staff and stakeholder awareness.

Thurrock Council hope this conference, and the associated speakers and workshops, proves beneficial to furthering shared knowledge and experience in the capacity of social landlords to tackle issues relating to condensation, damp and mould.



Investment & Development Services  
**Thurrock Council Civic Offices**  
New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL  
01375 652 652