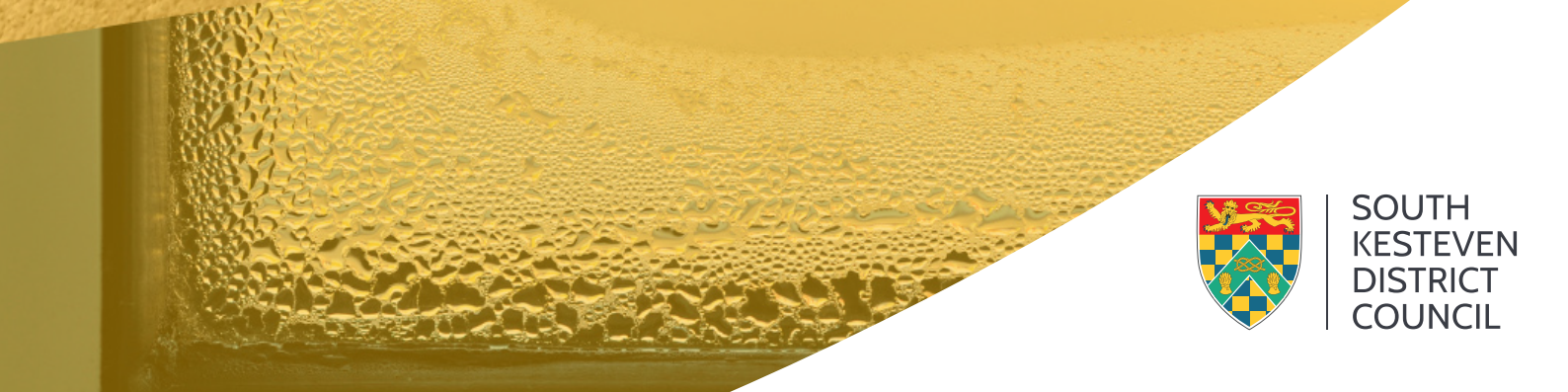


Damp, Mould and Condensation Advice



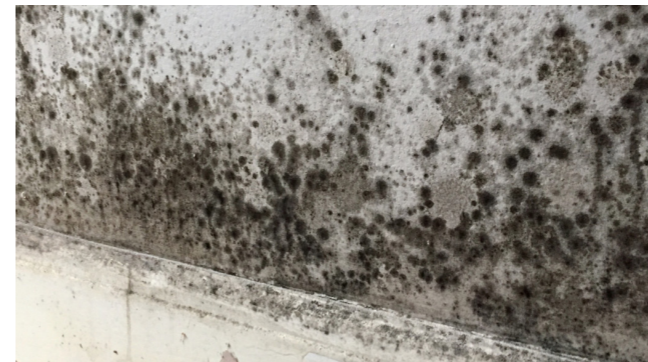
SOUTH
KESTEVEN
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COUNCIL



What causes dampness and condensation in your house?



Damp



Mould



Condensation

- Lack of adequate heating and/or ventilation
- Penetrating Damp - water coming in from the outside through leakage
- Rising damp - dampness from the ground rising into the building fabric
- High levels of moisture/water vapour being produced inside the house

Damp

There are three main types of damp

Penetrating Damp

Penetrating damp is caused by water leaking through walls usually because of structural problems such as leaking pipes, wastes or overflows, a faulty roof, a faulty or blocked gutter or leaking in and around window frames.

Signs of penetrating damp are damp patches on walls, ceilings or floors, which may darken when it rains.

Rising Damp

This mainly affects ground floor rooms and is caused by ground water soaking up into the walls and floors.

This is usually because a damp proof course or damp-proof membrane is not working or because there is no damp proofing.

Signs of this are damaged skirting boards and floorboards, crumbling or salt-stained plaster or a tide mark along the wall.

Condensation

Condensation is when excess moisture in the air changes to a liquid.

Condensation can occur in kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms and, in fact, in any room where there is excess moisture combined with cold surfaces and little ventilation.

Typically, it is found in places where there is little air movement, such as:

- in corners
- behind large pieces of furniture
- on soft furnishings
- in and behind wardrobes
- around windows
- on external walls
- on mirrors in bathrooms (a mirror steams up when you bathe)



Mould

Mould is a fungus that grows on wet materials and requires moisture for its growth.

Mould comes in a variety of colours: Black, Green, Brown, Grey and White. It can be difficult to identify mould by the colour as it can occur in many shades.

Some of the most common mould strains in the home are:

- **Black Mould** – Also called *Stachybotrys chartarum*, Black mould is commonly found in bathrooms and wet rooms but can also occur on cold exterior walls in habitable rooms such as the bedroom or living room.

- **Alternaria** – Grows in damp, dusty areas, soil and plants.

- **Aspergillus** – Frequently found in air and soil and building materials such as dry wall.

- **Cladosporium** – Commonly found in bathrooms, under sinks, and around faucets but it can grow on surfaces like carpets, furniture, walls, and floors.

- **Penicillium** – Found growing on fabrics, old mattresses, couch cushions, carpet, plywood and in insulation inside walls.

Mould reproduces from tiny spores. The spores float through the air and deposit on the surfaces.

Under adequate temperature, moisture, and nutrient conditions, the spores can form new mould colonies. Initial signs of mould growth can easily go unnoticed but if not treated, this can lead to adverse mould problems.



How can I reduce damp and mould?

Reduce steam and moisture

Every day, the average UK household puts about 12 litres (about 20 pints) of moisture into the air in their home. In homes where clothes are dried indoors the total moisture can be over 20 litres (36 pints) a day. The main daily activities which produce a lot of water very quickly are cooking, washing and drying clothes, and having baths and showers.

Cooking

Reduce the amount of moisture given off by covering pans and do not leave kettles boiling, open windows or ensure extractors are on when cooking.

Washing and drying clothes

Dry washing outside if possible. If drying washing indoors is unavoidable, then dry it in a heated and well-ventilated room, such as a bathroom with the doors closed. If using a tumble dryer, make sure this is vented outside, or if a condenser dryer that there is still adequate ventilation. Do not dry clothes on radiators.

Wipe down windows and sills

If condensation appears on them, wring out the cloth rather than drying it on a radiator or in front of a heater.

Trickle Vents / Windows

If you have trickle vents, ensure these are always open, if not ensure that the room has adequate ventilation via the windows

Kitchen and bathrooms

These rooms need more ventilation when you cook, wash up, bathe or dry clothes. You will need to open windows wider or use extractor fans, if fitted. Humidistat controlled fans are particularly useful because they operate automatically when the air is humid and are relatively cheap to run.

Don't turn off extractor fans or systems

It is important that you use and do not turn off extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms as these help to remove excess moisture from the air.

Close kitchen and bathroom doors

whilst these rooms are in use and for a while afterwards to allow the moisture to be vented to the outside. This will help to reduce condensation in other parts of your home.

Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes

Do not overfill them as overfilling reduces air circulation. Cut slots into backs of shelves or use slatted shelves. If you can't do this yourself ask someone to do it for you. Leave enough space to allow air circulation between the backs of large furniture, beds and walls.

Avoid locating wardrobes, beds and large furniture against external walls.

Do not cover, block airbricks or other permanent ventilators

These are often carefully placed to ventilate vulnerable areas and gas appliances. Covering these can cause build up of moisture leading to damp and carbon monoxide.

Don't use bottled gas heaters

South Kesteven District Council does not permit the use of bottled gas or paraffin heaters in our homes.

Loft spaces

These need to be clear to allow air circulation.

If you are following this guidance but still experiencing problems with damp or condensation in your home, please contact us:

Call: 01476 40 60 80

Or via the following link:



www.southkesteven.gov.uk/repairs

What happens when I report damp and mould in my home?

Questions

We will ask a series of questions to gain a better understanding of the problem. This will help us identify any immediate repairs.

Inspection

We will carry out an inspection of your home.

Our inspector will look at every room, complete a full inspection and complete a written report of identified issues.

Repairs

Where we identify that repairs are needed, we will arrange appointments to carry these out.

Where mould is present in your home and cannot be cleaned easily with household products, we will arrange an appointment to clean these areas, regardless of the cause.

Follow up

We will contact you to confirm that the problem has been resolved. This might involve a post-inspection of any completed works.

Specialist

If the problem persists, we will arrange for a damp and mould specialist to inspect your home.

If there are no visible defects in your home, we may install data loggers to give us more information about the problem.

We won't always need to carry out all of the steps on every case reported. However, we want to make sure that you know what to expect at each stage if it is not always possible to get to the root of the issue immediately, but we are committed to working with you to resolve the problem.

Where we identify that repairs are needed, we will arrange appointments to carry these out in accordance with our repairs policy.



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