

DRAFT DAMP AND MOULD STRATEGY

Aims:

- Outline draft strategy
- Set out how you can feed back by 19th July 2023

Why?

- In November an inquiry found that two-year-old Awaab Ishak died due to exposure to mould
- This has been a call to action across the sector

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PRINCIPLES OF THE STRATEGY

1. Ensure that a thorough assessment is undertaken to identify the **cause** of damp and mould
2. Ensure that an **effective** response to damp and mould is provided
3. Provide **information** about reducing condensation to residents in a sensitive way
4. Take a **proactive** approach to identifying and resolving cases of damp and mould
5. Treat all residents who report issues with damp and mould with **respect**

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**Draft Damp and Mould Strategy and
Action Plan 2023-25**

COMMON CAUSES OF DAMP AND MOULD

- Leaking pipes wastes, drainage and overflows
- Rainwater from defective roof coverings
- Blocked or leaking gutters and broken pipes allowing rainwater to enter
- Penetrating dampness around windows, through walls (such as through pointing in brick walls)
- Raised ground levels allowing dampness to enter
- (In rare cases) rising damp due to lack of, or no effective, damp proof course
- **Condensation**

CONDENSATION

- **Just because damp and mould are the result of condensation does not mean it is the fault of the tenant or their “lifestyle”**
- **Condensation damp generally happens when a property can't deal with normal levels of water vapour because of a lack of insulation, ventilation or heating, or a combination of all of these things**
- If a property is not properly ventilated, this moisture can condense forming damp patches on colder surfaces such as windows, cold walls or behind cupboards and wardrobes. It often forms on north facing walls
- Damp walls and windows can cause mould growth which may be black, white, yellow or green in colour, depending on the specific type of mould and the surface that it grows on

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CONDENSATION

- The property could have a number of defects that result in inadequate ventilation:
 - Lack of **extractor fans** in kitchens and bathrooms
 - **Air bricks** that have been covered up or filled in
 - **Trickle vents** that are broken or painted over
 - Insulation to the property that doesn't allow the walls to "breathe"
- In some cases there is action that residents can take to reduce the risk of damp and subsequent mould growth.
- However it is crucial that all other causes are ruled out first, rather than blaming residents for "lifestyle issues". This may mean paying for a **survey**.
- "**Lifestyle**" should be the explanation of last resort.



IMPACTS OF DAMP AND MOULD

- Respiratory problems and infections
- Allergies and allergic reactions like runny nose and red eyes
- Skin rashes and exacerbation of skin conditions
- Asthma
- Mental health impacts
- Stigma/shame



VULNERABLE GROUPS

If you live with damp and mould you have a heightened likelihood of experiencing health impacts. However some groups are particularly vulnerable:

- Babies and children
- Older people
- Those with existing skin problems, such as atopic eczema
- Those with respiratory problems, such as allergies and asthma
- Those with a weakened immune system, such as those having chemotherapy

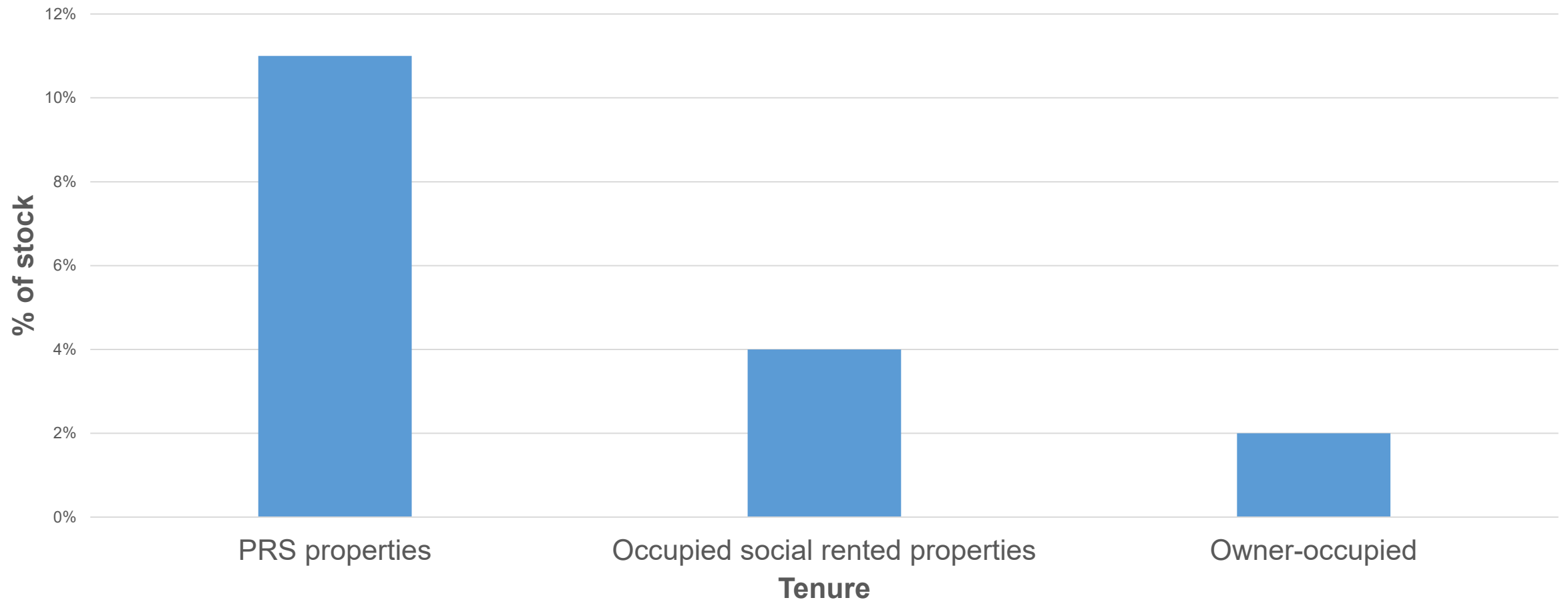


DAMP AND MOULD IN THE PRS

- A study by Citizens Advice (2023) found that, nationally, **70% of renters surveyed had experienced cold, damp or mould in a property they had rented**. 40% of renters surveyed had felt stressed as a result of damp and mould.
- In Newham a large proportion of PRS properties are older terraced properties which can be prone to damp and mould.
- However the issue can affect any property type, even modern homes.

RATES OF DAMP AND MOULD IN THE PRS

Prevalence of damp in England's housing stock (modelled), 2021
Source: English Housing Survey 2021 to 2022: headline report



ENFORCING LAWS AROUND PROPERTY CONDITIONS



- In response to a direct complaint or referral we can undertake an inspection of a property and assessing the conditions using the **Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**.
- HHSRS assesses if the poor conditions lead to 1 of 29 possible hazards. They are determined as either serious Category 1 hazards or lower scoring Category 2 hazards. **Damp and mould and excess cold are all conditions that are covered by the HHSRS.**
- We can then serve a legal document, called an Improvement Notice, on the landlord to make repairs. In more serious cases we can prohibit the use of a property.
- Where a landlord fails to make improvements or improve poor management then the council can issue a **financial penalty notice (FPN) of up to £30,000** or take the landlord to court and prosecute them
- We sometimes use other legislation like environmental health laws or enforcing **minimum energy efficiency standards** (EPC ratings)

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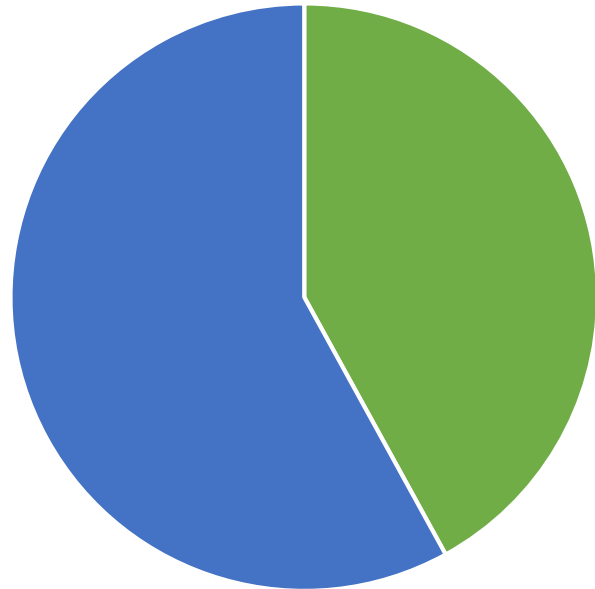


PROPERTY LICENSING

- Newham has selective, additional HMO and mandatory HMO licensing schemes **across all wards in the borough except Royal Victoria and Stratford Olympic Park wards**. The current selective and additional HMO licensing schemes are both five-year schemes launched in 2023.
- Licence conditions are designed to **drive up management standards and professionalism** in the landlord sector and drive rogue landlords out of the sector.
- Licensing is important because it allows us to conduct **proactive inspections** of properties to ensure that they are complying with the terms of their licence
- The main offences are failing to apply for a licence or failing to comply with conditions associated with the licence. **Being free from disrepair (including damp and mould) is one of the terms of the licence**
- Both offences are subject to **financial penalty notices** as well as prosecution

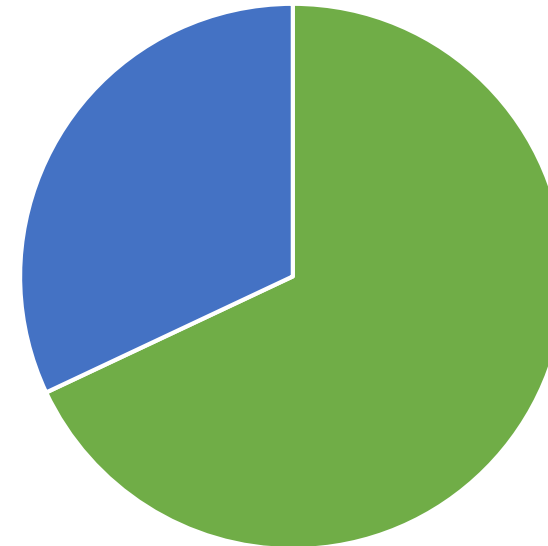
ENERGY EFFICIENCY

EPC ratings in Newham PRS



- EPC of A-C (good energy efficiency)
- EPC D-G (poor energy efficiency)

EPC ratings in Newham Council stock



- EPC of A-C (good energy efficiency)
- EPC D-G (poor energy efficiency)

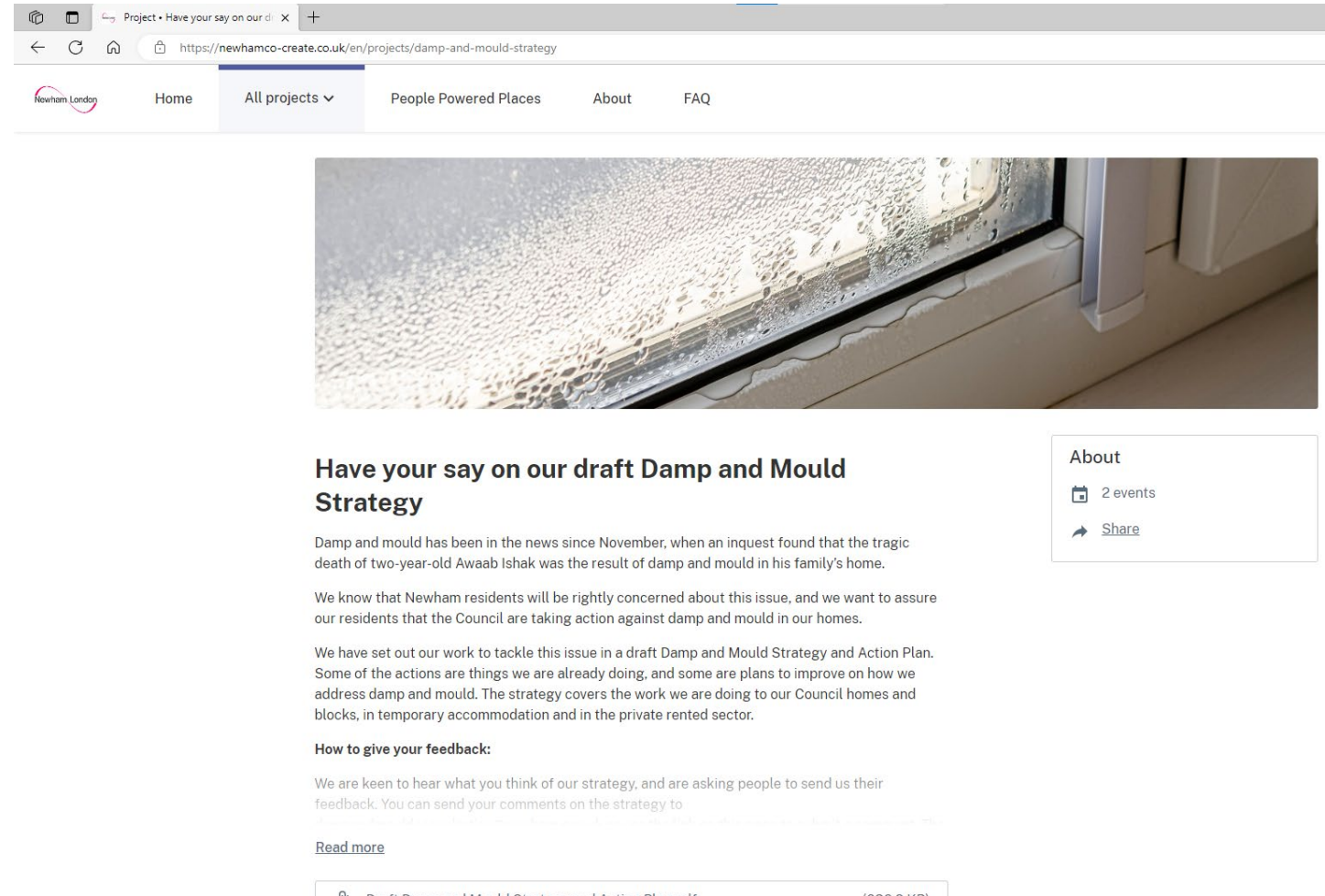
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- Renters in homes with an EPC D-G (less efficient homes) are **73% more likely to experience damp** than those with an EPC of A-C (more efficient homes).
- Unless they qualify for an exemption (for example if the property is a listed building), **landlords letting out properties with EPCs of F or G may be subject to enforcement action.**
- The energy-efficiency team **supports landlords to securing grant funding** and facilitating improvements to properties
- The most recent property licensing schemes also offer a discounted licence fee for properties where the property's EPC has been brought up to a C or higher.

TAKE PART IN THE CONSULTATION

- View the full strategy at <https://newhamco-create.co.uk/en/projects/damp-and-mould-strategy>
- Respond by emailing your comments to dampandmouldconsultation@newham.gov.uk
- The deadline for responses is **Wednesday 19th July 2023**
- We then review our draft strategy in light of comments and aim to submit a final version to Cabinet in Autumn 2023


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Project • Have your say on our d... x

https://newhamco-create.co.uk/en/projects/damp-and-mould-strategy

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Have your say on our draft Damp and Mould Strategy

Damp and mould has been in the news since November, when an inquest found that the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak was the result of damp and mould in his family's home.

We know that Newham residents will be rightly concerned about this issue, and we want to assure our residents that the Council are taking action against damp and mould in our homes.

We have set out our work to tackle this issue in a draft Damp and Mould Strategy and Action Plan. Some of the actions are things we are already doing, and some are plans to improve on how we address damp and mould. The strategy covers the work we are doing to our Council homes and blocks, in temporary accommodation and in the private rented sector.

How to give your feedback:

We are keen to hear what you think of our strategy, and are asking people to send us their feedback. You can send your comments on the strategy to dampandmouldconsultation@newham.gov.uk or call us on 020 7556 0100.

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MORE INFO FOR LANDLORDS AND PRIVATE RENTERS



- Newham's advice for renters can be found at <https://www.newham.gov.uk/housing-homes-homelessness/help-problems-renting-privately/1>
- Information on reducing the likelihood of damp and mould can be found at <https://www.newham.gov.uk/housing-homes-homelessness/damp-condensation-mould>
- NRLA has published advice for landlords with links to other guidance at <https://www.nrla.org.uk/news/monthly-bulletin/202103/news/damp-condensation-mould-tds-blog>
- If the problem is an old, inefficient property that is hard to heat, energy efficiency referrals can be made, either to
 - SHINE, a London-wide scheme which helps residents access funding and help, on 0300 555 0195
 - The Mayor of London's Warmer Homes Programme providing free heating, insulation and ventilation for low income private renters or homeowners. Tenants can review eligibility and apply here: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/housing-and-land/improving-quality/warmer-homes/you-apply>
- Leaseholders can contact the Damp and Mould Taskforce and dampandmouldtaskforce@newham.gov.uk if their property is in a Council-owned block and the cause of the issue has been found to be structural

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