Dealing with condensation and mould
Condensation can be a problem in certain types of housing. However the good news is that it is very easy to prevent.

This leaflet outlines the causes of condensation and explains how you can reduce the risk of condensation in your home.
Our responsibility

- We will make sure you are able to ventilate your property.
- We will ensure you have a heating system which, if properly used, will reduce condensation.
- We will carry out a full investigation when condensation is first reported and complete a survey report.
- We will write to you to confirm our findings and actions.
- We will resolve any problems if condensation is due to shortcomings in either the fabric of the building or the materials or work supplied by us.
- We will give you advice about how to reduce condensation which occurs as a result of lifestyle.
- If we find penetrating or rising damp, we will tell you how we intend to resolve the problem and estimate how long the works will take.

Your responsibility

- To adequately ventilate your home.
- To adequately heat your home.
- To dry washing outdoors wherever possible.
- To ventilate tumble dryers externally in all cases.
- To open windows during and after cooking to clear steam. If fitted use the extractor hood whilst cooking and any extractor fan if fitted. Keep the door closed whilst cooking.
- To open windows after baths or showers to clear steam. Use any extractor fan if fitted. Keep the door closed whilst bathing/showering.
- Clean mould off walls and ceilings promptly when it appears.

The information in this leaflet has been provided by experts in the field of condensation. If you follow this guidance you will minimise any condensation.
What is condensation and how does it cause mould?

Everyone hates mould. It’s ugly and unsightly.

Mould forms on walls, ceilings and furniture – and it makes window-frames rot. As mildew, it can eat into clothes and make them smell.

Condensation can cause mould. There’s always some moisture in the air. Moisture is there even if you can’t feel it – and you won’t see it.

What happens is that when air gets cold, the moisture in the air forms tiny drops of water. This is condensation. You can often see it on windows on a cold day. You can also see condensation on mirrors after a bath or shower, or on cold surfaces such as tiles and walls. It can form on wallpaper but you may not be able to see it.

Condensation is much more likely in cold weather. Normally you won’t see a ‘tidemark’ like you get in a rim around the bath. If you can see a tidemark, it’s likely that you have rising damp.

Beware of condensation

Watch out for condensation – it can cause trouble. You’ll see it on or near windows, in corners, hidden behind curtains or behind wardrobes and cupboards. If there’s little movement of air, there’s greater danger that condensation will happen and mould will form – so keep your rooms well aired.

Beware of mould

Condensation causes the enemy – mould – to grow. You will see the evidence – ugly small black dots that multiply and spread.

Watch out for evidence of mould damage.
Fight the condensation
There are some simple steps you can take in the fight against condensation and mould.

- Dry your windows and window-sills every morning.
- Wipe dry all surfaces in your kitchen and bathroom that are wet.
- Wring out wet cloths.
- Don’t dry wet clothing on a radiator.

Fight the mould
You can fight the mould by wiping walls and windows or by spraying them with a fungicidal wash (available at your local supermarket or DIY store).

- Dry-clean all mildewed clothes.
- Shampoo the carpets.
- Don’t try to remove mould with a brush or a vacuum cleaner.
- Re-decorate the walls and window frames. Use good quality anti-fungal paint and anti-fungal wallpaper paste. Don’t use ordinary paint or wallpaper paste.
- You must wash any affected areas with an appropriate mould wash solution, this can be purchased from most DIY outlets. Do not wash the affected areas with bleach.
- Please watch the videoclip on our website to see how straightforward it is to clean mould: http://www.thrivehomes.org.uk/i-am-a-tenant/repairs-and-maintenance/damp-and-condensation/

REMEMBER: to get rid of mould you must tackle and remove dampness.
Causes of condensation

- Too much moisture
- Not enough ventilation
- Cold surfaces
- Uneven temperature

Moisture

Moisture in your home is the result of everyday activities. Even just breathing adds moisture. It’s amazing but true that just one person asleep over one night can add half a pint of water to the air in the room and twice this amount when active during the day.

If you cause less moisture you will reduce condensation in your home.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Water moisture</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A bath or shower</td>
<td>2 pints (1.14 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing dishes in the sink</td>
<td>2 pints (1.14 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two people at home for 16 hours</td>
<td>3 pints (1.7 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking and using a kettle</td>
<td>6 pints (3.4 litres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drying clothes indoors</td>
<td>9 pints (5.13 litres)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What you can do

- Hang washing outside to dry.
- Hang washing in the bathroom with the door closed and open the window.
- If you have an extractor fan, turn it on when drying clothes.
- Don’t put clothes on radiators or in front of a fire.
- If you use a tumble-dryer, make sure it is vented to carry moisture outside.
- Cook with the pan lids on. Use the minimum amount of water to cook vegetables and turn down the heat once the water has boiled.
- When filling a bath, run the cold water first, then top up with hot water. This simple rule reduces steam by up to 90% – thus preventing condensation.
- Do not use bottled gas heaters. They produce excessive moisture and using them is against your tenancy agreement.
- Don’t use a gas cooker to heat your kitchen. Burning gas creates moisture – you’ll soon notice this when the windows mist over.
- If you use sterilizing equipment (for baby bottles and other items) make sure a window is open.
Ventilation

Ventilation (air flow) reduces condensation. Ventilation removes moist air and replaces it with drier air from outside.

What you can do

- Reduce overnight condensation by ‘cross-ventilating’. This means opening windows as far as the first notch on the handle, on opposite sides of your home (or upstairs and downstairs).
- Open room doors throughout your home.
- Cross-ventilate your home for at least 30 minutes each day to allow dry air to circulate.

But – don’t invite intruders. If you go out, make sure all the windows are tightly closed.

In the kitchen, bedroom and bathroom

- You should ventilate the kitchen when cooking, washing up or washing clothes by hand. A window slightly open is as good as one that is wide open.
- If you have a cooker extractor hood or extractor fan, use it.
- Keep your kitchen and bathroom doors closed to prevent moisture escaping into the rest of your home.
- When you’ve finished in the kitchen or bathroom, open a small top window for about 20 minutes.
- Ventilate your bedroom by leaving a window slightly open at night unless the window can be easily reached by an intruder.
- Some windows have ‘trickle ventilation’. If you have this system, make sure the vents are open – never block them up.
Cold surfaces

Cold surfaces in your home are likely to be walls, ceilings, floors. Condensation forms more easily on cold surfaces than on warm ones. So, cold surfaces should be made warmer.

This can be done by effective insulation and by keeping out cold draughts. And your heating bills will be smaller – always a good thing.

Tips on keeping out draughts

- Don’t draughtproof rooms with a condensation problem.
- Don’t draughtproof a room with a heater or cooker that burns gas or solid fuel.
- Don’t block permanent ventilators or airbricks.

Remember: if you are a tenant and you think your home needs loft or wall insulation, ask Thrive Homes for help.
Temperature

Warm air hangs on to moisture. Cooler air deposits drops of moisture. Think of air like a sponge: the warmer it is, the more moisture is held in it.

Therefore, if you heat one room to a high level and leave other rooms cold, condensation is likely to be much worse in the unheated rooms. A short burst of high level heating for an hour or two warms one room only. If you turn off the heater, the temperature quickly falls.

Heating your home

- Choose low or medium level heating over a longer period. This heats the air and the fabric (such as walls) in your home.
- Walls retain heat for longer than air. This reduces the time and the amount of heat you need to warm up your room the next time you turn the heater on.
- Use heating controls and thermostats to make sure the heating is on at times that suit you.
- Heating is an expensive household cost. Keeping the heating on all day at a low temperature solves the condensation problem. But you need to keep an eye on the meter to see how much your heating is costing you.

Heating tips

- Even if you don’t heat every room, open the doors of unheated rooms to allow some heat into them.
- Electrical equipment such as freezers, computers and televisions give out heat. Therefore, they help to control condensation. Positioning these against cold, outside walls where possible should help.
- Try to avoid causing draughts or ‘over-ventilating’ your home. Draughts cause temperatures to drop and increase the cost of your heating.
Control condensation, take action now!

- Reduce moisture
- Improve ventilation
- Warm surfaces
- Heat your home evenly