

01 October 2023

Condensation damp and mould checklist for landlords

Ventilation

Do kitchens have ventilation systems that are fully operational and sufficiently powered to remove moisture from cooking?

Fans provided for kitchens must achieve an extract rate of 60 litres per second (unless provided within a cooker hood in which case the rate is 30 litres). To encourage use, consider humidity-controlled fans which automatically activate when humidity reaches a certain point or connect extractor fan to a light and have an over-run which means the fan continues to operate for a period of time after the light is switched off.

Extractor fans should be linked to the outside or a central unit and should be positioned close to the hob. In addition, overhead cooker hoods are also recommended to extract moisture from cooking.

Do bathrooms have ventilation systems that are fully operational and sufficiently powered to remove moisture from showering and bathing?

Fans fitted in a bathroom must achieve an extract rate of 15 litres per second. To encourage use, consider humidity-controlled fans which automatically activate when humidity reaches a certain point or connect extractor fan to light and have an over-run which means the fan continues to operate for at least 15 minutes after the light is switched off. Extractor fans should be linked to the outside or a central unit.

Do tenants know how to use ventilation systems and are they making use of them?

Ensure tenants are provided with guidance on how to use the ventilation system in the property and try to understand why they might not be using them. Tenants may have concerns about running costs. If so, they can be signposted to sources of advice and support on the Shelter website, such as [help with energy bills and the cost of living](#).

Can the windows effectively provide ventilation?

Windows should be in good working order and be openable, ideally so they can be kept open and locked in the 'vent position'. Windows should have 'trickle vents' to assist with ventilation. Check they are free from blockages and ensure tenants are keeping these open. Where tenants are concerned about security or safety consider fitting window restrictors which enable windows to be left ajar safely and securely.

Do tenants understand what they can do to improve ventilation and moisture control?

If not, talk to them about the importance of leaving a gap between furniture and external walls, using extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms, closing internal doors when they cook or shower, covering pans when cooking, drying laundry outdoors (if possible) and opening windows periodically. You can signpost tenants to the leaflet on the National Energy website: [Dealing with damp and condensation](#) or [Warm & Well](#) for more detailed guidance.

Do tenants have access to secure spaces to dry laundry outdoors?

If not, consider whether this is possible. Ideally, covered, secure spaces should be provided. If tenants must dry clothes inside, advise them to use a vented bathroom with the door closed.

Are roof and under floor spaces properly ventilated to ensure timber remains dry?

If not, consider whether this is possible. Air bricks are a cost-effective and easy means of addressing inadequate under-floor ventilation. Existing air bricks should be kept clear and free of debris and obstruction.

Heating

Is the heating system (including radiators) working effectively, sufficiently powered for the property and are tenants able to control it?

The heating system should be a fixed controllable and efficient heating source throughout the property either in the form of gas central heating or electric/storage heaters.

The fixed heating should be of sufficient capacity to maintain the living room at a temperature of 20° C when the outside temperature is -1° C. Heating should be controllable by the occupants (i.e. timer and thermostatically controllable), and safely and properly installed and maintained.

It should be appropriate to the design, layout and construction, such that the whole of the dwelling can be adequately and efficiently heated. Consider whether the placement and heat output of radiators needs addressing. Free online radiator room size calculators can help with this. Where possible, locate radiators on external walls and under windows, as this is optimal for heat distribution

For an electric heating system, off peak storage heaters should be installed in the living room, bedroom and kitchen which have an automatic charge control and a thermostatically controlled damper outlet. The bathroom should be provided with a storage heater or on peak down flow heater.

All works or alterations to heating systems must comply with any relevant standards and be carried out by a suitably qualified engineer.

The council funds [low interest loans](#) available to support landlords to carry out all repairs and improve heating and insulation including renewables, delivered by Lendology CIC an ethical lender.

Has the tenant been given clear, written instructions on how to use the heating system most effectively?

Ensure that your tenants have been provided with the necessary guidance on how to use their heating system. For tenants whose first language is not English and/or tenants with additional language or communication needs, consider whether they may need extra support to understand the guidance.

Are the occupants struggling to heat their home?

Cost of living pressures may mean that tenants struggle to adequately heat their homes or heat them irregularly. This can lead to increased condensation and damp. Consider signposting them to support with their energy costs such as [the household support fund](#).

Energy efficiency

[Low interest loans](#) are available to help with energy efficiency measures.

Find out about the [Great British Insulation Scheme](#) on GOV.UK.

Tenants themselves may be eligible for grant funding if they are on a low income, and you should discuss with them the possibility of them applying for grant funding for insulation and heating from [Warm & Well](#).

As a landlord you should:

- improve loft insulation to a minimum of 270mm
- replace single glazed windows with double glazing or secondary glazing
- minimise draughts
- improve external and internal wall insulation
- provide thermostatic radiator valves on radiators
- insulate hot water tanks and pipes
- ensure tenants have carpets and curtains to retain heat
- avoid gaps in insulation which create cold spots

You can borrow a thermal imaging camera from your [local South Gloucestershire library](#) to identify gaps in insulation.

Are your tenants at greater risk from the health harms of damp and mould?

Damp and mould can cause disease and ill health in anyone but people with underlying health conditions, weakened immune systems, children and older people are at greater risk and for these groups particularly urgent action should be taken. Read the latest government guidance on [understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home](#) for more information.

Do you need assistance in communicating with your tenant?

The following advice on communicating with tenants is available the Housing Sector website:

- [Multi-lingual advice leaflets](#)
- [Effective communication with tenants](#)

Tenants may be receiving support from social workers or other professionals who could better support them in reducing the risk of damp and mould. With your tenant's consent you could consider asking them to help support your tenant.