Archie Homes

Damp and Mould Procedure

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Archie Homes will provide this document, on request at no cost, in large print, in Braille, in audio or other non-written format, and in a variety of languages.

1. Purpose

This procedure sets out the operational process Archie Homes will follow when it becomes aware of damp, mould or a potential hazard within a resident's home. It provides a clear process for receiving and recording reports, assessing risk, identifying vulnerability, determining whether Awaab's Law applies, arranging investigations, making properties safe, addressing underlying causes, completing preventative works, communicating with residents, managing alternative accommodation, escalating overdue cases, managing repeat cases, and closing and learning from cases.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to Archie Homes employees, contractors, managing agents and housing management partners acting on Archie Homes' behalf, in any role involved in receiving, triaging, investigating or resolving reports of damp, mould or related hazards in resident homes.

3. Awaab's Law – Key Requirements

Emergency hazard	• Investigate within 24 hours of Archie Homes becoming aware • complete relevant safety work within 24 hours if confirmed; • start (or take steps to start) supplementary preventative work within 5 working days; • secure suitable alternative accommodation if the property cannot be made safe in time.

Potential significant hazard	• Investigate within 10 working days; • if confirmed, complete relevant safety work within 5 working days of the investigation concluding; • issue a written summary within 3 working days of the investigation concluding; • start (or take steps to start) preventative work within 5 working days, • physically beginning within 12 weeks at the latest if it cannot start sooner; keep the resident informed throughout.

Important: the Awaab's Law clock starts when Archie Homes becomes aware of the potential hazard, not when the case is allocated to a contractor.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Housing team

- Receives and records reports, and identifies vulnerability
- Completes initial triage and ensures correct categorisation
- Communicates with the resident and monitors statutory deadlines
- Escalates delays and coordinates with repairs/asset management
- Ensures the case is not closed prematurely

4.2 Repairs Team

- Arranges inspections and diagnoses defects
- Completes safety works and identifies underlying causes
- Arranges specialist investigations and commissions preventative works
- Monitors contractors and provides evidence of completion

4.3 Repairs Contractor

- Responds within the required timeframe and inspects competently
- Identifies hazards and takes immediate action where required
- Provides photographic/written evidence and identifies the likely cause
- Completes instructed works and escalates additional defects
- Reports any circumstance that may prevent compliance with statutory timescales

4.4 Housing / Repairs Manager

- Monitors live cases and ensures statutory deadlines are met
- Challenges delays and authorises escalation
- Reviews repeat cases and ensures appropriate resourcing

- Reports material failures

4.5 Director of Housing & Support

Has overall operational oversight and is responsible for ensuring that Archie Homes has appropriate systems, resources and governance arrangements to comply with this procedure and Awaab's Law.

5. Reporting, Recording and Triage

Reporting: Reports may be received by telephone, email, online reporting, housing officers, support providers, contractors, managing agents, resident representatives, complaints, inspections, property visits or any other route. A resident does not need to use the words "damp", "mould" or "Awaab's Law" for the procedure to apply. Examples of triggers include:

- Mould on walls, ceilings or behind furniture, or returning after previous treatment
- Persistent condensation, musty smells or persistent high humidity
- Damp patches, water staining, peeling paint or bubbling plaster
- Recurring leaks or water ingress
- Concerns about the effect of damp or mould on health

Recording: Cases must be recorded on Archie Homes' housing/repairs system immediately, or as soon as reasonably practicable, including the date and time Archie Homes became aware (this determines the Awaab's Law deadline), resident and property details, description and rooms affected, photographs/videos, household circumstances and known vulnerabilities, previous reports/repairs, immediate risks, initial classification and required actions.

Triage: Initial triage on receipt determines whether the case may be an emergency hazard, a potential significant hazard, a routine damp/mould issue, or another repair/housing matter – it is not the final diagnosis. It should consider the property, the household (composition, children, older or vulnerable residents, health conditions, accessibility needs) and immediate risk (active leak, electrical risk, unsafe structure, severe mould, rooms unsafe to use).

6. Classification

Emergency hazard: an immediate and significant risk to health or safety, e.g. very serious damp and mould, major water ingress or leaks, dangerous electrical conditions near water, or serious structural problems.

Action: immediate escalation, investigate and make safe within 24 hours, then preventative works and follow-up.

Potential significant hazard: available information suggests a significant risk to health or safety. The fact that it is not an emergency does not mean it can be treated as an ordinary repair.

Action: investigate within 10 working days.

Routine damp and mould: no indication of a significant or emergency hazard, but the issue must still be investigated and appropriately repaired. Routine classification must never be used to avoid the Awaab's Law process, and must be reviewed immediately if new information emerges.

7. Investigation

The investigation must establish whether a significant or emergency hazard exists, the extent of the problem and its likely cause, the effect on the resident, the works needed to make the property safe and to prevent recurrence, and whether further specialist investigation is required.

A standard investigation for a potential significant hazard must be completed within 10 working days, in person or remotely where sufficient information is available. An in-person inspection should normally be used where extent, cause or risk cannot reasonably be assessed remotely, and a renewed in-person investigation must be arranged if the resident explicitly requests one following a remote investigation.

The inspection should assess the property as a whole, not just visible mould: the damp/mould itself, building fabric (roof, walls, windows, insulation), water sources (plumbing, heating, drainage), ventilation, heating, and resident circumstances (vulnerability, ability to heat or ventilate). Evidence should include photographs (taken before mould removal where practicable), moisture/humidity readings, inspection notes, and contractor or specialist reports.

Where the cause or extent cannot be established, further investigation (e.g. specialist damp or structural survey, thermal imaging, leak detection) must be arranged as soon as reasonably practicable. This does not suspend the duty to make the property safe – Archie Homes must continue managing the immediate risk while the cause is investigated.

8. Investigation Outcomes

A – No significant/emergency hazard: explain findings, complete any necessary routine repairs, provide resident advice, record the rationale, and monitor where appropriate.

B – Significant hazard: make the property safe within 5 working days; issue the written summary within 3 working days; start (or take steps to start) preventative works within 5 working days, physically beginning within 12 weeks at the latest if delayed.

C – Emergency hazard: move the case immediately to the emergency process.

D – Further investigation required: arrange further investigation as soon as reasonably practicable, while continuing to manage the immediate risk and keeping the property safe.

9. Making Safe and Preventative Works

Safety works (within 5 working days of the investigation concluding for a significant hazard, or 24 hours for an emergency) remove or reduce the immediate hazard, for example mould treatment, removing contaminated materials, stopping an active leak, temporary repair or heating, improving ventilation, a dehumidifier, or isolating an unsafe area. Work must be proportionate to the hazard; cleaning mould alone is not sufficient where the underlying cause remains.

Preventative works address the underlying cause (e.g. roof, plumbing, external wall, ventilation, heating, insulation, thermal bridging, window, drainage or structural repairs) and must start, or steps must be taken to start them, within 5 working days of the investigation concluding, physically beginning within 12 weeks at the latest where they cannot start sooner. Where work cannot start within 5 days, Archie Homes must be able to demonstrate the active steps taken.

10. Written Summary and Resident Communication

A written summary must be provided within 3 working days of the investigation, unless the issue is fully resolved within that period, covering when and how the investigation took place, what was found, whether a significant or emergency hazard was identified, the likely cause, safety action taken, further works required and timescales, resident safety advice, and who to contact if the condition worsens. It must be provided in a format that meets the resident's communication needs.

Residents must be kept informed throughout: on receipt of the report, after triage, when inspection is arranged, following investigation, when safety or preventative works are arranged, where delays or access issues arise, on completion, and at closure, and must always be told who to contact if the condition deteriorates.

Archie Homes may share general advice on ventilation, heating, moisture, drying clothes, extractor fan use or furniture positioning, but this must never be used to avoid an inspection, delay necessary repairs, close a case prematurely, attribute the problem to resident behaviour without evidence, or transfer Archie Homes' repair responsibilities to the resident.

11. Vulnerability and Alternative Accommodation

The Housing Officer or investigator must consider whether the resident or household may be particularly vulnerable to the effects of damp and mould. Where identified, this should be reflected in the risk assessment, may justify faster intervention, reasonable adjustments, additional support, or alternative accommodation. Health information must be handled confidentially and shared only where necessary and lawful.

Where a property cannot be made safe within the applicable statutory timeframe, suitable alternative accommodation must be offered, taking account of household size, children, disability, accessibility, location, support arrangements, caring responsibilities, employment or education, and pets. It must remain available until the hazard has been satisfactorily addressed.

12. Contractor Management and Access

Contractors must understand Awaab's Law, statutory deadlines, Archie Homes' escalation process, required inspection standards, evidence requirements, resident communication expectations, emergency procedures and closure requirements, and must immediately report an emergency or significant hazard, suspected structural problems, recurring damp and mould, defects outside their original instruction, or any circumstance that may result in a statutory breach. A case must not be closed without adequate evidence of completed works.

Where a resident does not provide access, Archie Homes must record the appointment, make reasonable attempts to contact the resident, offer alternative appointments, consider communication needs and vulnerability, explain why access is necessary, and escalate where repeated access problems threaten statutory compliance. A missed appointment must never be assumed to be deliberate refusal without considering the circumstances.

13. Repeat Cases and Escalation

A repeat report must not simply be logged as a new routine repair – the previous case must be reviewed, including what was reported and diagnosed, works undertaken, whether they addressed the cause, whether the problem has returned, contractor performance, and whether further investigation or referral to asset management is needed. Repeated occurrence should prompt consideration of a systemic building defect.

Cases must be escalated to a manager where there is any emergency or significant hazard, a deadline approaching or missed, repeated damp and mould, significant vulnerability, inability to make the property safe, a need for alternative accommodation or major works, potential legal or disrepair action, or significant resident dissatisfaction. Any actual or anticipated breach of Awaab's Law must be escalated immediately.

14. Deadline Monitoring, Case Status and Closure

The housing/repairs system must record Day 0 (when Archie Homes becomes aware) and track the applicable deadlines for investigation, written summary, safety works and preventative works (see Appendix 1), generating alerts before deadlines are reached.

A case must not be closed simply because the resident has stopped contacting Archie Homes, a contractor has attended, mould has been cleaned, or a repair/work order has been raised or marked complete. Before closure, the responsible officer must confirm the identified hazard has been addressed, relevant safety and preventative works are complete or appropriately progressing, the underlying cause has been addressed where reasonably possible, the resident has been informed, documentation is in place, follow-up has occurred where appropriate, and nothing remains outstanding.

15. Complaints, Legal Claims and Records

A complaint about damp and mould must be logged under Archie Homes' complaints procedure while the repairs/hazard process continues in parallel; any safety issue must be escalated immediately, and a complaint must never be used as a reason to stop or delay necessary repairs. Where a case involves a disrepair claim, legal correspondence or potential litigation, it must still be managed operationally, statutory duties remain in place, the relevant legal/complaints team must be notified, and records, photographs and resident communication must continue.

The case record must retain the original report and notification date/time, triage assessment, vulnerability information, photographs/videos, inspection reports, readings, contractor reports, diagnosis, written summary, repair orders, completion evidence, correspondence, alternative accommodation and follow-up records, complaints, escalation records and the closure decision, sufficient to demonstrate compliance with statutory obligations.

16. Performance Reporting and Phase 2 Expansion

Housing and Property teams will report regularly on volume (total, new and repeat cases by scheme/contractor), compliance (percentage investigated, made safe, summarised and preventative-works-started within target; cases exceeding 12 weeks; statutory breaches), quality (repeat cases, specialist investigations, alternative accommodation, complaints, satisfaction, contractor performance) and risk (vulnerable households, repeat properties, systemic defects, blocks with multiple cases, unresolved cases).

From 30 November 2026, Archie Homes will extend this framework to the additional Phase 2 prescribed hazards: excess cold, excess heat, falls, structural collapse, fire and explosions, electrical hazards, and domestic/personal hygiene and food safety, using the same core triage and Awaab's Law process.

17. Quality Assurance, Lessons Learned and Compliance

Managers will periodically audit cases for correct classification, accuracy of Day 0, statutory compliance, quality of inspection and diagnosis, quality of safety/preventative works, resident communication, vulnerability assessment, alternative accommodation decisions, contractor performance, closure, repeat cases and lessons learned; any systemic issue identified must result in an improvement action.

Significant, emergency or repeat cases should prompt consideration of a formal lessons-learned review covering early identification, correct classification, deadline compliance, diagnosis, quality of works, contractor competence, resident communication, vulnerability handling, preventability, and whether wider stock investment or referral to Asset Management for a stock-wide response is needed. Failure to follow this procedure may result in management escalation, contractor performance action, additional training, service improvement action, formal investigation, or other action appropriate to the circumstances.

18. Related Documents

This procedure should be read alongside the following Archie Homes documents:

- Archie Homes Damp and Mould Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Data Protection and Privacy Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

19. Review

This procedure will be reviewed at least every two years, or sooner in response to legislative or regulatory change, audit findings, or lessons from complaints or incidents. Review is led by the Director of Housing & Support.

Appendix 1 – Awaab's Law Timeline

Day 0	Archie Homes becomes aware of potential hazard.
Emergency	Investigate and undertake relevant safety work within 24 hours.
Significant hazard	Investigate within 10 working days.
Investigation completed	Determine hazard, cause and required works.
+3 working days	Written summary to resident.
+5 working days	Relevant safety work completed.
+5 working days	Start, or take steps to start, preventative work.
Within 12 weeks	Latest point for supplementary preventative works to physically begin, where they could not begin sooner.
Following works	Follow-up/monitoring as appropriate.
Closure	Only when the hazard has been satisfactorily addressed.

Appendix 2 – Escalation Triggers

Immediate management escalation is required where: an emergency or significant hazard is identified; the property cannot be made safe within the statutory timeframe; alternative accommodation may be required; a statutory deadline is at risk or has been missed; the resident is particularly vulnerable; damp and mould repeatedly returns; a systemic building defect is suspected; specialist investigation is delayed; a contractor fails to attend or disputes the hazard classification; significant works cannot be arranged; the resident reports deterioration; or there is significant complaint, legal or reputational risk.