



## SEASONAL ADVICE (WINTER): CONDENSATION & MOULD

During periods of cold weather, condensation can become a serious problem. Allowing damp patches to persist in your home can cause a variety of problems and some can be costly not only to your finances, but also to your health.

**What is condensation?** When air becomes cold it cannot hold all of the moisture produced by everyday activities. This excess moisture condenses, forming tiny droplets of water. The droplets collect into damp patches or small pools known as condensation.

**What is mould?** Mould or fungi are small organisms that grow in warm, moist conditions and are usually harmless, but problems occur when allowed to over-grow. The main cause of mould over-growth in a typical household is condensation. Excessive mould growth can cause damage to the interior of a property, eventually damaging the structure itself. In addition, it can be harmful to your health - mould spreads by releasing spores into the air and in large quantities can aggravate allergies or cause respiratory problems.

**Minimise condensation** The best way to help prevent mould overgrowth in the home is to minimise condensation - reducing the overall moisture content of the property by heating and allowing moist air to vent. Cleaning any visible mould from the property will reduce the rate of growth. See details below on how to minimise condensation:

### Our three top tips to minimise condensation in the home:

#### 1. Ventilation

- Daily ventilation will help to remove excess airborne moisture. Aim to ventilate each room for at least 1 hour per day
- Ensure you use extractor fans (where available) or open a window when showering or cooking, allowing moist air to escape
- Avoid blocking the flow of warm air by ensuring any furniture is at least 5cm away from any radiators
- Avoid stacking possessions against external walls as condensation will form in the resulting cold spot
- If you need to dry your clothes inside the property, please do not dry them in your bedroom as this will create excess moisture

#### 2. Heating

- During the cold months, it is essential that the heating is used in all rooms. The property should be heated to a temperature of at least 18 degrees for a minimum of 3 hours in the morning and set to come on from 4pm for a period of no less than 6 hours
- Please remember that your heating will take about 1 hour to dry the air. If there is a lot of condensation in the house, heating for a short period of time will have no effect in reducing condensation
- Use your heating and be warm now rather than face the cost of fixing any damage to the property at the end of your tenancy caused by condensation, mould and/or damage to your health

#### 3. Treatment

- To kill and remove mould, wipe down all affected walls, ceilings and windows using a damp cloth which has been soaked in bleach or use a fungicidal spray (available from supermarkets). Ensure that you wear rubber gloves when using such chemicals
- Net curtains and shower curtains affected by mould should be laundered in the washing machine on a 30 degree program. If your curtains show excessive signs of mould, please contact your landlord as they may have to be dry cleaned or, in certain circumstances, replaced