SOLIHULL COMMUNITY HOUSING

HOUSING OPERATIONS COMMITTEE 12 APRIL 2023

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICE TRANSFORMATION AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

SCHape Panel Report

1. Purpose of the Report

1.1 The attached report provides an overview of the Damp, Mould and Condensation Policy SCHape Panel Review and sets out the recommendations made by the panel.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Committee is recommended to:

(i) **DISCUSS** the report and recommendations

(ii) **AGREE** the next steps

3. Financial Implications

3.1 None.

4. Equality and Diversity Implications

4.1 None.

5. Risk Management Implications

5.1 None.

6. Value for money and efficiency considerations/implications

6.1 None

7. Tenant Involvement/Consultation

7.1 This was a tenant led activity

8. Consistent with Strategic Vision

8.1 Always listening to customers: Taking the opportunity to listen to our customers is key to delivering services which are both effective and efficient

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SCHAPE
Residents Panel
Solihull Community Housing
Achieving Performance Excellence

Damp, Mound and Condensation Management Policy: A review of the draft SCH policy

1. Introduction

As a Panel we have developed a process whereby we choose a subject for review based on performance and feedback from residents. We focus on an area where there may be poorer performance or gaps in services and where the Panel could add value in terms of making recommendations for improvement.

Earlier this year we were approached by SCH with an ask to undertake a slightly different type of review – to review a proposed new policy for damp, mould and condensation. With the recent tragic death of Awaab Ishak, caused by the damp and mould in his home which was managed by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, SCH has developed a policy to ensure all reports of damp, mould and condensation are treated the same. They were keen for our input before the policy was introduced.

SCH provided an awareness session around damp, mould and condensation and the current processes in place. Following this the Panel agreed that reviewing this policy was really important to residents and agreed to carry out this review.

The review has been supported by the Engagement Team and the Panel would like to thank those involved.

2. Overview of review process

Working session 1: Background information and review

The Panel received a presentation and information video about damp, mould and condensation. As this was an urgent review, we agreed to focus on the first half of the policy at this meeting, with a further meeting arranged to complete the task.

Working session 2: Complete review and recommendations

The Panel recapped the progress from the previous meeting. We then worked through the policy in detail, discussing each section in turn.

Using information from the following sources, the panel developed a set of recommendations

- National, regional, local and organisational context and data
- Understanding the service delivery models, process and practices used at SCH
- Information provided by officers and subsequent Q&A sessions

3. Key recommendations

As a Panel, we would like to highlight our key recommendations:

- Timescales for damp and mould inspections need to be included (contact centre, connect contact us page, social media).
- It isn't clear that the policy recognises that the cause could be a problem with the structure of the building and not lifestyle. This needs to be acknowledged and mentioned early on.
- Make it more health related. The affects it could have on health need to be highlighted, and this should come at the beginning of this section.
- Suggestion for information leaflet to include something about high rise ventilation in bathrooms and all properties that don't have a window in the bathroom.

4. Recommendations

Recommendation	Benefits to SCH and tenants
1. Section two Make it more health related. The affects it could have on health need to be highlighted, and this should come at the beginning of this section.	• Tenants will be more informed with the necessary information

2. Section two Stress the severity this could have on health and include the consequences	• Tenants will be more informed with the necessary information
3. Section three Make reference to which appropriate sections of each legislation	• Tenants will have the correct information to allow them to check legislation
4. Section three In mention of “local standard” explain what this is.	• Provides clarification for tenants
5. Section four Paragraph about drying wet clothes inside mentions “never in a bedroom” – include an explanation as to why	• Tenants will be more informed with the necessary information
6. Section six Timescales for damp and mould inspections need to be included at the end of this section.	• Tenants will be more aware of the process
7. Section seven Online form – there should be a separate form for damp & mould	• Clear available information will guide tenants to the right form
8. General Information about timescales needs to be given to tenants when they report it through either the Contact Centre or at Connect offices.	• Tenants will be more aware of the process
9. General Ensure the same timescales apply through the “Contact Us” forms	• Prioritising these enquiries (without the general 10 days to respond rule) will encourage residents to use this reporting mechanism
10. General It isn’t clear that the policy recognises that the cause could be a problem with the structure of the building and not lifestyle. This needs to be acknowledged and mentioned early on.	• Tenants will be more informed of all possible causes
11. General Language throughout needs to be checked and appropriate to the audience	• Policy written in plain English will be easier to understand

12. General Suggestion for information leaflet to include something about high rise ventilation in bathrooms and all properties that don't have a window in the bathroom	• Tenants will be aware of the importance of ventilation in properties without windows
13. General Suggestion for information leaflet to include some information about special bathroom and kitchen paint being available to purchase	• Tenants will be more informed about alternatives that may help the build-up of condensation