



**Public Health & Communities Directorate
Communities Business Unit
Safer Neighbourhood Service
Service Director: Phil Hollingsworth**

Caroline Crowther & Charlotte Spencer

Department for Levelling Up, Housing
and Communities
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

My Ref: SOS/Damp and Mould/Initial

Your Ref:

Date: 30th November 2022

Enquiries to: Jane Brannan

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Housing Standards in Rented Properties in England

Dear Caroline and Charlotte,

We were deeply saddened to hear of the death of Awaab Ishak as a result of extensive mould in his home.

Barnsley Council confirms receipt of the Secretary of State's letter dated 19th November 2022 and the updated correspondence from 25th November 2022.

The Council confirms our intention to provide as much information as possible in line with the requests and that we will make all efforts to provide this information by 27th January 2023. The letter dated 25th November 2022 asks Local Authorities if there are any issues which may prevent the completion of a full response by 27th January 2023. Barnsley Council must flag at this stage that there are limitations within our current case management system, Civica, meaning that it is not straightforward to disaggregate damp and mould cases from other hazards. It is not possible to simply run a report on the system which will pull off those cases for which damp and mould is a primary or secondary identified hazard. As such, to produce the required data with any degree of accuracy, will require the Council's Private Sector Housing Team to manually trawl individual action diaries for properties on our system. This process will be extremely time consuming as it will involve the sifting of over 2000 individual records which span the last 3 years. Initially, the team has undertaken a review of damp and mould complaints which have been received by the service over the last 12 months (this totals 80 private rented complaints) and are reviewing further cases with potentially linked issues such as leaking pipework, defective guttering, and excess cold.

Whilst Barnsley understands the urgency of a response, and very much welcomes the Secretary of State's interest in ensuring and improving housing conditions across the rented tenures, we would ask for consideration to be given to the timescales proposed for the full response given that Local Authorities, and our social and affordable housing providers, are keen to undertake proactive and accelerated campaigns and inspections to ensure that our residents are empowered and encouraged to report damp and mould issues and are aware of the pathways to remedy they should expect. With limited resource of technical housing officers, we will have to balance the resourcing of the data exercise with that of our proactive inspection plans.

In terms of our plan to prioritise addressing the issues of damp and mould in private rented stock, Barnsley will undertake the following steps:



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THEME	ACTIONS	BY WHEN?
DATA	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Collate required information relating to the prevalence of cat 1 and cat 2 damp and mould hazards based on casework and enforcement actions.2) Provide Case Studies relating to the actions of specific cases and details of successful enforcement activity.	All data to be collated and submitted by 27 th January 2023.
PROACTIVE OR PRIORITISED INSPECTIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Revisit/recontact tenants living in properties scoring high cat 2 (D and E) and cat 1 to evaluate the suitability of remedial action and responses. Reinspect where appropriate.2) Make proactive contact with residents known to be living in properties with EPC rating of F or G3) Continue to prioritise cold homes to the end of March 2023 with further emphasis on damp and mould growth.	ASAP – December 2022- mid January 2023
COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Review the Council's website and links relating to Housing Standards to ensure that sufficient information is provided relating to addressing issues of damp and mould and reporting pathways.2) Undertake a Communications Campaign with our Local Newspaper (the Barnsley Chronicle) and via social media to raise awareness of Damp and Mould in housing and providing details re: how tenants can	ASAP by mid-December 2022 ASAP – within 2 weeks



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	<p>address issues and report concerns.</p> <p>3) Establish/Communicate tenure referral pathways for Community and Health Colleagues.</p>	<p>ASAP – awareness raising at Health and Well-being Board 8th December 2022. Referral Pathway to be developed within 2 weeks.</p>
STAFF TRAINING – Every Contact Counts	<p>1) The Council already has a policy on Every Contact Counts; ensuring that once housing officers gain access to a property, they undertake a full review of conditions and assess for any vulnerabilities. Officers will receive additional training to ensure that issues of damp and mould are discussed with tenants and that sufficient advice, assistance, action is undertaken.</p>	<p>ASAP – within 2 weeks</p>
ACTION PLAN	<p>1) We will develop a full Action and Implementation Plan to respond to data findings and service improvement opportunities as identified following data works and inspections.</p>	<p>To be provided alongside the data response by 27th January 2022.</p>