



## **TOWER SCRUTINY PANEL BCH Damp and Mould Service Report AUGUST 2023**

### **Tenant Scrutiny Panel Members**

7 TOWER members who undertook this scrutiny

### **Introduction**

Dampness and mould are common problems in buildings that can pose significant health and safety risks if not addressed correctly. Dampness, caused by excess moisture in a building, can lead to the growth of mould. This can result in health problems and potential structural damage to the building.

Recent inspections have revealed varying degrees of dampness and mould across BCH properties. While some properties demonstrate only minor signs of mould, others show significant dampness, particularly in areas like bathrooms, and kitchens.

This report provides an evaluation of the current situation regarding dampness and mould in BCH properties and presents a comprehensive plan to manage these issues. The management plan includes tenant education, regular inspections, clear communication strategies, and recommended policies for ensuring tenant satisfaction and safety while reducing health and financial risks for BCH.

Following a tragic death in Rochdale attributed to Damp and Mould. We were invited in January 2023 to carry out a review of the Blackpool Coastal Housing (BCH) Damp and Mould service.

To help the scrutiny team complete this review of the Damp and Mould service we undertook the following:

Bench marking other housing providers:

- Lancaster City Council
- Bury Council
- Aspire
- Calico
- Six Town Housing

We interviewed the following members of BCH staff and took accompanying notes:

- Repairs Hotline Manager
- Repairs Operations Manager

- Director of Resources
- Repairs and Assets services
- Performance Manager
- Repairs and Maintenance Manager

TOWER reviewed a range of service-related documents:

- D&M complaint data
- D&M disrepair data
- Board D&M Data
- D&M by property type
- D&M by area
- D&M summary data
- D&M works by type

## 1. Key Observations

BCH are very proactive in tackling damp and mould. And based on our investigations are in the top tier of housing Associations in this matter. All the BCH Managers we interviewed had a very clear and detailed understanding of the current situation and future.

## 2. Recommendations

In supporting continuous improvement of the service, our results show a need to explore further, and scope out approaches to target the following recommendations:

	Priority 1,2,3	Recommendations
1.	P2	<b>Tenant Education:</b> Launch an education campaign for tenants, including issuing postcards, leaflets, and educational videos. These should emphasize that dampness and mould are primarily due to environmental factors, not lifestyle choices.
2.	P1	<b>Regular Inspections and Maintenance:</b> Schedule three-month post-inspection to assess the situation and carry out necessary maintenance. Establish a protocol for referring tenants for redecoration assistance and managing associated costs.
3.	P2	<b>Communication with Tenants:</b> Be proactive with communication regarding cold callers (Companies offering to get Compensation from BCH) and damp issues.
4.	P1	<b>Staff Training:</b> Regularly train staff and new starters on damp and mould management to ensure all team members are knowledgeable. Including,

	Priority 1,2,3	Recommendations
		advice over what chemicals will kill mould spores and what chemicals are ineffective and how to apply.
5.	P2	<b>BCH House Visits:</b> Staff should carry business or visitor cards to give to tenants. These cards could simply contain their names and the phone number for repairs. Tenants will then know who visited them.
6	P1	We should develop and use "Next Step" leaflets for workflow management. For instance, if a contractor's visit becomes necessary during a BCH dampness visit, the Next Step leaflet will indicate to the tenant that we will arrange a contractor visit. The contractor will assess the work required and send a quote to BCH. Upon BCH's approval, the contractor will carry out the work. If redecoration is necessary, it will take several months before that happens. It should also include the complaints procedure.  As a result, the tenant will have a clear understanding of the process and won't feel forgotten.
7.	P3	Scrutiny to be informed of any major work projects being undertaken to address damp & mould – such as GRW (Garstang Road West).
8.	P2	Contractors to take before and after photos of jobs.
9	P3	Tenants to be reminded of BCH's access policy as laid out in their tenancy agreement.
10	P3	Ensure that Multi Language information is available.
11	P1	Detailed recordkeeping
12	P2	Add QR codes to leaflets to link to website information

### 3. Conclusions

TOWER Scrutiny would like to thank all parties for their help with this report.

TOWER would ask the Senior Management Team and Board to consider the Recommendations in this report and give feedback by the end of **August**. Should any other information be required please contact TOWER.