

Response ID ANON-PEGT-J2VQ-K

Submitted to Local authority returns form: damp and mould in private rented properties
Submitted on 2023-01-23 14:54:21

Introduction

Details:

1 Please provide the full name of your local authority:

Answer:
Chichester District Council

2 Please provide an email address of a named person we can contact with any further queries:

Answer:
lreed@chichester.gov.uk

3 Approximately how many private rented sector properties are in your area currently?

Answer. Please provide a number. If you cannot answer, please write 'NA':
10787

4 What data sources do you normally use to inform your knowledge of the quality and condition of the privately rented stock in your area?

b) Stock modelling

Answer (option - f):

5 Approximately what number of full-time equivalent (FTE) do you have in your housing enforcement team? In answering, please provide the number of all staff working on private rented sector standards, enforcement and licensing, including how many FTE Environmental Health Officers are carrying out enforcement, plus those that work in administrative and managerial roles, but not including legal resource. Also please do not include staff who only work on MEES. Where a staff member works on MEES alongside other housing enforcement, please include them in your FTE numbers.

Optional:
1FTE Team Leader, 2 FTE EHO inspecting officers, 1FTE Licensing Officer

6 Do you run any Selective and/or Additional Licensing schemes in your area?

Neither

7 If you do run any licensing schemes, approximately how many properties are covered by your scheme(s)? Please break down by each individual Selective/Additional licensing scheme

Optional:

Prevalence of damp and mould

8 Based on your assessment of damp and mould issues affecting private rented sector properties in your area, approximately what proportion do you currently estimate to have category 1 damp and mould hazards?

%:
0

9 What data sources do you normally use to come to the assessment provided in question 8?

c) Estimate based on contact with landlords/tenants

Other please specify:

10 Based on your assessment of damp and mould issues affecting private rented sector properties in your area, approximately what proportion do you currently estimate to have category 2 damp and mould hazards?

%:
0.0003%

11 What data sources do you normally use to come to the assessment provided in question 9?

c) Estimate based on contact with landlords/tenants

Other please specify:

12 If you have not collected the information requested or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

Answer:

N/A

Enforcement Questions: complaints

13 Please tell us what steps you take when you receive a complaint about damp and mould from a private rented sector tenant. Where relevant, please refer to or provide links to any enforcement policies you have in place (e.g. on enforcing category 2 hazards) and any guidance you might provide for tenants experiencing damp and mould issues.

Optional:

Private tenant complainants are asked to ensure they have contacted their landlord to report damp and mould issues in the first instance, and asked to return to the local authority if an unsatisfactory response is received. Tenants are advised to keep a record of all correspondence. Tenants are also provided with a link to the Council's damp and mould advice leaflet which provides practical advice to prevent issues with damp and mould and effectively manage moisture within the home - www.chichester.gov.uk/media/36430/Damp-Leaflet-Nov-2021/pdf/Damp_leaflet_Nov2021.pdf. Tenants who have already contacted their landlord/agent and have received an unsatisfactory response are asked to provide full details, including photographic evidence and a case is opened and allocated to an officer to investigate. Depending on the circumstances the investigating officers will either contact the landlord/agent to request an update or visit the property to carry out an assessment. Any action that would follow would be in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy - https://www.chichester.gov.uk/media/36709/Housing-Standards-Financial-Assistance-and-Enforcement-Policy-2021--2026-amended-March-2022/doc/Housing_Standards_Financial_Assistance_and_Enforcement_Policy_2021--2026-amended-March-2022.docx

14 Overall, how many complaints relating to housing standards have you received in the last three financial years that reference or relate to damp and mould issues in the private rented sector?

Answer - 2019/2020:

16

Answer - 2020/2021:

16

Answer - 2021/2022:

20

15 Of the complaints you received that reference damp and mould in the last three financial years, approximately how many resulted in inspections?

Answer - 2019/2020:

4

Answer - 2020/2021:

5

Answer - 2020/2021:

12

16 If you have not collected the information requested or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:

N/A

Enforcement Questions: category 1 damp and mould hazards

17 Approximately how many inspections have you undertaken overall in the last three financial years?

Answer - 2019/2020:

16

Answer - 2020/2021:

16

Answer - 2021/2022:

20

18 Thinking now ONLY about all of the inspections that you undertook as a result of complaints, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

1

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

3

19 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of licensing, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

20 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

21 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook for reasons other than complaints, licensing or stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 1 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

22 If you have not collected the information requested above or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:

N/A

Answer provided for question 17 includes all inspections undertaken where damp and mould was reported.

Enforcement Questions: category 2 damp and mould hazards

23 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of complaints, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

2

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

6

24 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of licensing, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

25 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook as a result of stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

26 Thinking now ONLY about all the inspections that you undertook for reasons other than complaints, licensing or stock modelling, approximately how many have identified a category 2 damp and mould hazard?

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

27 If you have not collected the information requested above or are not able to provide information in this way, please can you tell us why? Please put n/a if you have provided the above data.

answer:

N/A

Enforcement action

28 Please provide the figures for all formal and informal enforcement action taken on damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

29 Please provide the figures for improvement notices issued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

30 Please provide the figures for civil penalty notices issued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

31 Please provide the figures for prosecutions pursued in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

32 Please provide the figures for successful prosecutions in relation to damp and mould hazards:

Answer - 2019/2020:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

0

Wider context

33 Please rank in priority order (1 - the highest impact / 6 - the least impact) how the following have had an impact on enforcement action relating to damp and mould in your area

Optional - a) Capacity of your local authority. i.e. resource and funding hindering capacity to take enforcement action relating to damp and mould.:

4

Optional - b) Experience and expertise in the local authority. i.e. a lack of officers with experience, for example, experience pursuing prosecutions or expertise within the team including, for example, legal expertise.:

3

Optional - c) Strategic prioritisation of private rented sector enforcement. i.e. competing priorities leading to relatively lower prioritisation of enforcement action or proactively enforce.:

5

Optional - d) The regulatory/ legal framework for enforcement activity. i.e. too much complexity in legislation.:

2

Optional - e) Issues with gathering or providing evidence. i.e. tenants reluctant to provide statements or difficulties gathering the requisite evidence for issuing a fine or prosecuting.:

6

Optional - f) Limited data on the private rented stock. i.e. difficulties identifying private rented properties or insufficient resource to map out private rented stock.:

1

34 Please say why you have ranked the items on question 31 in this order

Optional:

The Council's activity in relation to enforcement is led by tenants coming forward to report the issues they are experiencing. The Council's complaint statistics show that a relatively small number of damp and mould complaints have been received in the last 3 years. In 2020 the council commissioned a desktop stock modelling survey to provide data on stock condition to assist with targeting resources. The modelling identified excess cold as the most prevalent hazard, no physical inspections of property were carried out. With regard to the challenges around the regulatory framework, officers report that the assessment scoring threshold for damp and mould hazard is high and rarely results in a Category 1 hazard. Officers report they can deal with cases more easily if an Excess Cold hazard also exists as the remedial works usual remedy damp and mould. Where appropriate officers will approach landlords/letting agents informally in the first instance. Officers have a track record of resolving matters in this way which avoids the need for formal enforcement action. The Council also runs a Landlord Accreditation Scheme for landlords who wish to work with the council to improve their property. This has resulted in long-standing relationships with landlords who self-manage and maintain their property to a high standard in the long term. The Council also offers financial assistance to accredited landlords who need to undertake works to meet the accreditation standard. Housing Standards

officers are experienced in working with landlords/agents to improve properties informally, which has reduced officer's experience of taking enforcement action. The Council has a comprehensive Enforcement Policy with a broad range of tools available as required. Strategically the council strongly priorities the improvement of poor housing standards and this is acknowledged in the Corporate Plan 2022-2025 with 'Homes for all', and more specifically improving housing conditions being one of the priorities. With regard to damp and mould, the council has launched a promotional campaign to remind landlords, letting agents and tenants of their responsibilities, rights and reporting lines to escalate issues to reach a resolution. All private landlords and agents on the council's database have been written to and the website information has been reviewed. From experience it has not been an issue for investigating officers to obtain evidence required for enforcement.

35 Does the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) allow for an effective assessment of how serious and dangerous damp and mould is in people's homes?

No

36 If not, what changes should be made to the HHSRS, to the system for categorising hazards or to enforcement powers under the Housing Act 2004?

Optional:

HHSRS requires review and update without delay. The system is nearly 20 years old and has not been thoroughly reviewed since its introduction. It would also be beneficial to simplify the system to enable landlords/agents to have a better understanding of the requirements. A defined minimum standard would be advantageous.

37 What other measures would help you to better prioritise addressing housing enforcement issues such as damp and mould?

Optional: