**Chichester District Council – Plan for Damp and Mould cases**

Chichester District Council proactively deals with service requests relating to poor property conditions in the private rented sector. Tenants who approach the council are initially provided with written advice on how to escalate complaints with their landlord. In the case of a complaint relating to damp and mould an advice leaflet is also given. If a landlord fails to respond to their tenant within a reasonable timescale, tenants are encouraged to return to the local authority to request Housing Standards involvement. This is when an officer would carry out a visit to the individual property to carry out an inspection.

All Council Visiting Officers have completed the required training in the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) for property inspections and have regard to both Category 1 and 2 damp and mould hazards. Using professional judgment, officers either issue advice to tenants on controlling and minimising condensation, or if there are structural defects or building deficiencies the landlord is contacted and required to make improvements.

In accordance with the Council’s Enforcement Policy, officers deal with landlords informally in the first instance. Landlords are informed of any required works in writing and provided with a timescale to ensure compliance. If landlords fail to engage, officers use formal enforcement action, including the issue of a civil penalty.

During the last 3 years we have received 58 requests from residents in relation to damp and mould relating to privately rented properties. At present there are 5 cases that remain under investigation by officers, and the oldest case dates back to July 2022. In this case the landlord has engaged and remedial works are underway.

The Council is currently undertaking a full analysis of the data relating to all damp and mould cases over the last 3 years and this will be provided in the full response which will be submitted by 27th January 2023.

The Council owns 3 residential properties, which are managed by the Estates team.  No issues with damp or mould have been identified or reported to date; inspections are being arranged of these properties and any issues found will be addressed as appropriate.

There are also residential elements to a number of commercial properties owned by the Council, again managed by the Estates team.  No issues with damp or mould have been identified or reported to date, apart from at one premises where some light mould has been identified in an unoccupied bedroom.  The tenant has been advised to remove/treat the mould in the first instance before the room is used/occupied (in accordance with the terms of their lease) and to advise the Estates team if the issue is not able to be rectified, at which point the team will investigate/support as needed.

**Plan for addressing damp and mould in privately rented properties within the district includes the following:**

1. The Council is launching a promotional campaign to remind tenants to report damp and mould issues in their property. The campaign will target landlords, letting agents and tenants informing all parties of their responsibilities, rights and reporting lines to escalate issues to reach a resolution.
2. The Council will continue to closely monitor the volume of service requests relating to damp and mould and adjust resources accordingly. If demand significantly increases a policy to prioritise households with young, elderly, or vulnerable customers will be introduced whilst resources are considered for any additional work. As a local authority we are and remain extremely focussed on supporting residents with damp and mould issues.
3. Existing information on the Council’s website will be reviewed and revised to strengthen the content for landlords and tenants.
4. Through our established Landlord Forum, the Council will provide information to landlords on effectively managing damp and mould in their properties.

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