



Healthy Homes Project Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions

On 7 September 2023, the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, wrote to local authorities emphasising the government's commitment to ensuring landlords take action to remove damp and mould from tenants' homes to protect tenants' health. The letter also addressed the challenges of effective enforcement, acknowledging feedback received from the government on this issue.

Alongside this the government published guidance on ['understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home'](#), jointly developed by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This signalled the government's commitment to tackling this serious issue, and to ensuring action is taken by landlords to remove damp and mould from tenants' homes in order to protect their health.

The Healthy Homes project will be run in collaboration with DHSC and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to understand the impact of housing interventions on health and wider societal outcomes. The expectation is that this project will:

- Support local authorities in tackling damp and mould hazards in private rented properties in the areas of greatest need.
- Build greater understanding regarding the impact on enforcement activity, when funding specific interventions.
- Build an understanding of best practice in housing enforcement teams when it comes to damp and mould.
- Assess the impact to benefit expenditure associated with non-decent housing in the private rented sector relative to the supplied funding.
- Evaluate the impact of better enforcement of damp and mould in the home on health outcomes.
- Increase awareness of the health impacts of damp and mould with landlords, and the implications of not dealing with it quickly.
- Build understanding of the effects that poor quality housing (damp and mould hazards) has on labour market activity; and
- Build understanding of landlord behaviour as it pertains to repairs and maintenance (particularly with regards to damp and mould hazards).

To gather the evidence mentioned above, we will be running the Healthy Homes project as a randomised controlled trial (RCT). This approach divides participating local authorities into two groups: a 'treatment' group, which will implement the interventions, and a partially funded control group. Members of the control group will provide data but will not implement the interventions. **This guidance is for local authorities in the treatment group.**



Funding Guidance

This project aims to provide funding to enhance capacity and capability of local authority enforcement teams. It will also assess the wider impact of greater enforcement of standards, particularly in reducing damp and mould. Each local authority in the treatment group will receive funding to implement a set of approaches and in this guidance we have set out how we anticipate this funding being used. However, we recognise that each area will have its own unique challenges and existing arrangements, and so we have allowed for flexibility within these approaches to reflect this. Each participating local authority should consider local issues and determine how this funding might best be used to mitigate them, while staying within the scope of the guidance provided below.

Local authorities will be expected to deliver all of the following five interventions to support damp and mould enforcement in their area.

Resource

Capacity within enforcement teams is consistently highlighted as an area of significant challenge, and authorities in the treatment group can use the funding to increase the capacity of these teams. There are no restrictions on the roles which can be funded, provided they support enforcement of damp and mould in PRS properties. For example, these may include:

- i. Environmental health officers (EHOs)
- ii. Housing standards roles
- iii. Housing or tenant support roles
- iv. Housing or technical officers
- v. Trading standards positions.

Please note, this is a non-exhaustive list, and the Department is happy to engage on any resourcing proposals you may have.

The Department is funding these roles up to April 2025, and there is no commitment to further funding beyond this.

Training and upskilling

The funding provided for training and general upskilling aims to enhance the capability in your existing teams. This could include ensuring that officers are trained to a consistent standard or building capability in junior or entry level staff.

We would encourage that, at a minimum, damp and mould specific training is procured as part of this project. More general training is acceptable, although we would ask that you articulate the links between the training outcomes and the improved management of damp and mould hazards in your PRS stock.

More general training examples may include:

- i. HHSRS training
- ii. Advanced investigative training
- iii. Interviewing under caution (PACE) training
- iv. Powers and legislation training
- v. Relevant tenant and landlord engagement training
- vi. Dispute handling.



Please note, this is a non-exhaustive list, and the Department is happy to engage on any training and upskilling proposals you may have.

Should it be helpful, the Department can provide examples of competency frameworks, developed by and in use with other local authorities.

You may also wish to use a portion of this budget to fund one, or more, one-year private sector housing regulation courses, or similar academic qualifications.

We will be working with DHSC to provide additional support to authorities with regards to the [government guidance](#) on understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould. This support may include training via webinars or worked examples of the guidance.

Communications and engagement

Communications and engagement may target various audiences and can be used to both elicit intelligence to guide future enforcement and encourage proactive rectification of hazards. The funding can be used for any communications and engagement activity which could raise awareness of damp and mould and improve compliance. The specific activities will depend on the intended audience, population dispersion, and intended outcomes. We would encourage any communications and engagement to reference the [new guidance](#) and draw upon its content.

Activities may include:

- Dedicated social media, media, or leaflet campaign
- Updated or dedicated online presence
- Landlord forums, or self-regulatory groups
- Tenant 'clinics' in community locations
- Use of local jobcentres; or
- Use of third parties, i.e. Citizens Advice Bureaus.

Data collection and administrative support

The funding can be used for any data or admin related activity which will help damp and mould enforcement, or to build a greater understanding of the extent of damp and mould hazards.

For example, eligible activities may include:

- Bespoke or procured digitised systems, possibly including table/phone based recording of inspections
- Expansion or improvement of existing systems
- Standardisation of system where integration with other authorities is needed/ preferred
- Recruitment of additional analytical or administrative support.

Please note, this is a non-exhaustive list, and the Department is happy to engage on any proposals you may have.

It should be noted that any implemented solutions should make it easier to capture the extent of damp and mould hazards throughout your PRS. We will be capturing monitoring information (see Annex A - Draft KPIs)

Supplementary equipment

Local authorities have indicated that replacing, or supplementing, existing technical equipment would be beneficial to enforcement teams. This funding can be used for any equipment which



the local authority considers will aid in damp and mould enforcement. The nature of the equipment required will depend on existing availability and/or condition. It is expected that teams may purchase:

- Damp meters or thermal cameras
- Replacement of aging kit
- Additional kit to ensure sufficient availability
- Drones
- Endoscopic cameras

If possible, please make the necessary preparatory arrangements to deliver these interventions, so that they commence immediately following the completion of the baseline data collection, anticipated in May or June.

Funding Levels

Ninety authorities have been approached to participate in this project and will be randomly assigned to either a treatment or control group. To minimise the burden on control groups, whilst maximising the validity of the evaluation, funding will be provided to cover the costs of expanded data collection.

Treatment Group

The following amounts are indicative – local authorities have the ability to flex between interventions should they wish.

- i. Resourcing – £45,000
 - ii. Training and upskilling – £10,000
 - iii. Communications and engagement – £30,000
 - iv. Data collection and administration – 36,000;
 - v. Supplementary Equipment - £9,000;
- Total – £130,000.

This funding package has been estimated using data from existing programmes run by DLUHC through the Pathfinder Programme. This funding is allocated to cover the lifetime of the programme and is expected to be paid out in two equal amounts, in approximately May 2024 and October 2024. These will be made in the form of Section 31 grant payments.

The payment of the second tranche of funding (October 2024) will be subject to the Department agreeing that:

- Progress is being made against the outputs specified in this guidance, or that satisfactory reasons have been given where this is not the case;
- The activities undertaken are meeting the objectives of the Healthy Homes Project; and
- Local authorities are certifying that any expenditure from the Healthy Homes Project has been used for activities that support damp and mould enforcement.

Where a partner authority does not expect to need to draw down the full allocation in any given period, the Department should be informed so that the allocation can be adjusted downwards.

Alternatively, local authorities may submit a request to the Department, based on actual expenditure plans, for the underspend to be reallocated into a later period. This is at the



discretion of the Department, as the budget is fully allocated across the whole programme from the outset, and there should be no general expectation that underspends in one period can be transferred to a later point in the programme. Any delays to delivery, which necessitates transferring funding from the initial tranche to the second, should be agreed with the Department at the earliest opportunity.

Where underspend in the first six months is not expected to be utilised, it may be deducted from the following tranche except where the clear plans for the additional expenditure are demonstrated.

Monitoring and evaluation

Funding is conditional on participating local authorities agreeing to take part in the collection of relevant data, such as project spend data, and project KPIs (see annex A). In addition, the Department will identify and fund an external evaluator, with whom local authorities will be required to engage.

We expect that data collection will take place on a quarterly basis, and include the set of KPIs set out in the annex. This is provisional, and we expect to provide full details of the data requirements in May.

These requirements, including data collection and engagement with the evaluator, may (within reason) extend beyond the period for which funding has been provided by the Department.

FAQs

Is the expectation that enforcement funded by this project will specifically target damp and mould?

- Whilst this project is intending to assess the extent of damp and mould throughout the private rented sector, DLUHC acknowledges that it is not possible to undertake enforcement in isolation. As such any enforcement actions undertaken as a result of this funding should target any identified hazards, as prescribed in the relevant legislation.

Can delivery of outcomes be undertaken in collaboration with neighbouring authorities?

- Where neighbouring authorities are part of the programme and in the treatment group, collaboration is acceptable where that would deliver better economies of scale and help reduce costs.
- If the neighbouring authority is not a participant in the programme and not in the evaluation control group, it may be possible for you to collaborate, if this does not compromise the outcomes within your area. For example, if you have excess training spaces, and would like to offer these to other areas. This should be agreed with the department in advance, to ensure that areas acting as counterfactuals do not inadvertently receive funding.
- If a neighbouring authority is a participant in the project, but has been assigned to the control group, it will not be possible to collaborate on outcomes.

How many LAs are participating? Can you provide a list of the participating LAs?



- We are still in the process of finalising the full list of participants. Once this has concluded, we will distribute a list of the included authorities.
- For our proposed evaluation approach to be viable, we will need at least 60 LAs participating. If we do not meet this target we will amend our evaluation plans and inform participating LAs.

Can you clarify whether funding is to be spent within the lifecycle of the project?

- Funding is provided up to April 2025. At this stage, there can be no expectation of ongoing funding following this date.

Can you clarify if LAs can include other objectives, i.e. tackling criminality?

- To ensure the evaluation of the impact of this funding is effective, we would ask that all participants focus on the core objectives of the project, i.e.:
 - I. Testing the value for money of the various intervention options
 - II. Evaluating the effectiveness of various interventions in reducing category 1 damp and mould hazards
 - III. Testing societal benefits of reduced damp and mould hazards in the PRS (i.e., Health outcomes, ability for tenants to seek, maintain and progress employment, etc.); and,
 - IV. Testing pathways for multi-agency co-operation to target enforcement more effectively in LA enforcement teams.
- Whilst the project is seeking to improve our understanding of damp and mould in the PRS, we expect that this will involve enforcement on all elements constituting non-decency.



Annex A – Draft KPIs

The set of KPIs below are draft. We expect to provide full details of the data requirements in May.

Number of service requests	From Tenants	# total
	From landlords	# total
	From healthcare providers	# total
	Other, i.e. Charity	# total
Number for which primary concern was damp and mould		# total
Number of inspections	Reactive	# total
	Proactive	# total
Number of properties in which inspection identified:	Category 1 hazards (or combination of Category 1 and Category 2 hazards at bands D & E)	# total
	Category 2 hazards at bands D & E	# total
	Failure to meet DHS requirements	# total
	Combination of Category 1 and/or Category 2 hazards (bands D & E) and failures to meet DHS requirements	# total
Number of properties in which inspection identified:	Number of properties where a category 1 damp and mould hazard is found	# total
	Number of properties where a category 2 damp and mould hazard is found	# total
Number of improvement notices issued for HA04 breaches		# total
Number of hazard awareness notices issued for HA04 breaches		# total
Total number of properties remedied through enforcement notices		# total
Number of hazards remedied through formal enforcement notices		# total
Number of misc. case closure (e.g. lack of evidence, lack of cooperation)		# total
Total value of civil penalties issued	<£1,000	# total
	£1000-£5000	# total
	£5000+	# total
Number of civil penalties issued	<£1,000	# total
	£1000-£5000	# total
	£5000+	# total
Number of visits requiring support intervention- specify interventions i.e. doc referral, social services etc		# total
How many officers have undertaken enforcement related training in the last period		# total
How many officers require further training to enforce on damp and mould?		# total
Number of FTE enforcement officers in enforcement team		# total
Number of FTE posts in enforcement team		# total
Number of FTE vacancies in enforcement team		# total
Number of landlord / letting agent training sessions delivered		# total
Number of separate landlord forums run		# total



Department for Levelling Up,
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of Health &
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