



Yorkshire
Housing

Your guide to a healthy home



Creating a healthy home needn't be a chore. We've packed this guide full of useful hints and tips to help keep your home feeling tip-top!

So, what can you do to help keep your home healthy?

Just like when someone gets sick, your home develops tell-tale symptoms that can help you pinpoint what's going on.

Usually, the treatment is a few quick and easy changes in and around the home. Occasionally it's something more serious and we'll need to come and investigate.



Symptom: **Condensation or high humidity**

Noticed a build-up of condensation on your windows, walls or ceilings? Daily activities like cooking, showering and drying clothes indoors adds moisture to the air making your home feel stuffy and uncomfortable.

So, where's all this moisture coming from?

2 Pints: Having a bath or shower.



3 Pints: Two people active for one day.



6 Pints: Boiling a kettle and cooking food.



9 Pints: Drying clothes inside.



Black mould around the window is usually caused by a build-up of condensation. Keep condensation away by wiping it away with a damp cloth or piece of kitchen towel. If you start to see black mould forming around your windows get in touch with us.

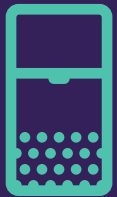
Treatment:



Extractor fans should be left running all the time. When you're **taking a shower**, make sure your extractor fan is switched on and windows are closed. Most extractor fans in our homes run on timers, so leave them running after a shower.



When you're **using your hob** make sure you keep pots and pans covered to help prevent excess moisture escaping.



It's normal to see condensation on your windows when it's been **really cold overnight**. Each morning take a couple of minutes wiping it away with a towel or piece of kitchen roll. This helps to prevent black mould from appearing around your window frames.



If your **windows have trickle vents**, keep them open all year round, except in rooms with a working extractor fan.



If your **windows don't have trickle vents** don't worry, open your windows and lock them in the vent position – it'll do the same job.



Myth buster: Extractor fans cost very little to run. On average it costs £9.20 a year to run your bathroom extractor fan. That's around 2p a day.

Top tips:

- Covering pots and pans while cooking helps prevent excess moisture escaping into your home. It also makes things cook faster, saving you time and energy.
- If you're running a bath, add the cold water first. Believe it or not this cuts the amount of steam produced by up to 90%.
- The humidity level in your home should be between 40% - 60%. It can be measured using a hygrometer. High humidity can cause condensation build up which can cause mould. You can buy a hygrometer online for as little as £3.



Example of black mould forming around a window frame

Symptom: Damp, mould and condensation

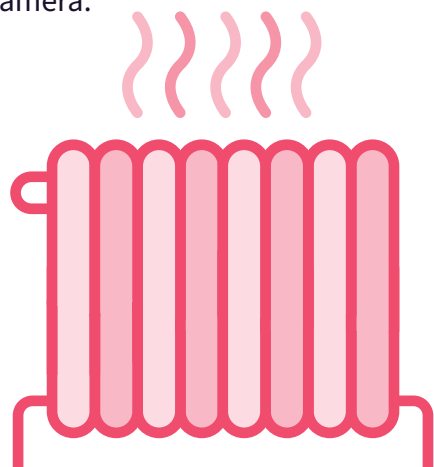
Let's face it the good old Yorkshire weather can make it difficult to keep the inside of our homes warm and dry.

Cold air can't absorb as much moisture as warm air. That's why things like damp and mould are more common throughout winter. If your home is very cold the moisture that's in the air condenses on colder surfaces creating condensation which can cause damp and mould.

Keeping your home warm

We know keeping your home warm isn't easy. Especially while the cost of energy remains high. If you're worried about money, please get in touch with us so we can find a way to help.

Find out more about our money coaching service by scanning the QR code with your phone camera.



Treatment:



We recommend you keep your home heated to between **18 and 21 degrees Celsius** and don't let the temperature drop below 16 degrees Celsius for long periods of time.



If you spot mould around the edges of your ceiling it could be because your loft insulation has been disturbed, creating **cold spots** where moisture can form. Try avoid using your loft for storage, and report any issues so we can come take a look.



Hint: Warm air holds more moisture than cold air, which in simple terms means that you have reduced humidity levels. Keep your home at a steady temperature throughout winter.



Example of mould caused by loft insulation cold spots

Symptom: Damp or mould on the ceiling

The insulation in your loft helps keep you warm and reduce your energy consumption. It traps the warm air inside your home and stops it from escaping through the roof, a bit like your favourite winter hat!

If the insulation is moved or squashed it stops working properly and cold spots can form on your ceiling. When warm air comes into contact with these cold spots condensation can form and can cause black mould to appear on your ceiling.

If you spot black mould on the ceiling, it's usually because there are cold spots in the loft. It could be because your loft insulation has moved or been disturbed creating cold spots on your ceiling where moisture can form. If you see mould like this, get in touch with us so we can send someone out to investigate and treat the mould.

Our customer promise

If you need to let us know about damp and mould in your home, you can see what to expect from us by reading our customer promise. Just scan the QR code with your phone camera to read the document.



Sometimes damp and mould problems can be hidden by furniture or kitchen cupboards.

Keep an eye out for stains or discolouration on floors, walls, windows, fabrics, and carpets. Check for a musty, “earthy” odour. This could be a sign of a damp problem and you should get in touch with us so we can send one of our colleagues out to investigate.



Symptom:

Damage and leaks

Wet and windy weather can expose problems with your home that you might not have noticed over summer.

If there's a problem with your roof, walls or guttering you're more likely to notice it during winter. Plummeting temperatures can damage pipes and cause leaks, driving rain can penetrate damaged brickwork and leaves can block gutters causing them to spill over onto your walls.

Damp patches like these could be caused by a few different things such as penetrating damp, leaking pipes, problems with your roof, walls, chimney or drains and sometimes a problem with your damp proof course. If you spot any damp patches like this, get in touch with us straight away so we can send someone out to take a look and sort things out.



Example of penetrating damp rising up the wall

Treatment:



As temperatures drop over winter there's a risk that **pipes can freeze causing a leak**. If your home has an outside tap cover it with a frost protector or isolate and drain the tap to help prevent leaks.



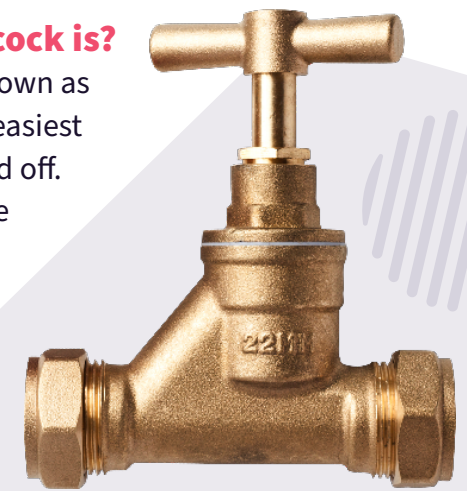
If your home is near a large tree, **leaves can make their way into your gutters**. Eventually they'll become blocked and rainwater can spill over and down onto your walls. If you notice your gutter leaking, get in touch with us.



If you notice any **damp patches on your inside walls** get in touch with us straight away so we can send someone out to take a look and put things right.

Know where your stopcock is?

Your inside stopcock, also known as stop valve or stop tap, is the easiest way to turn your water on and off. You'll usually find it under the sink and it looks like this.



You can now report problems with damp and mould online...



Scan the **QR code** to report a problem



Symptom: Pests and other unwanted visitors








During the colder months pests look for warmth and shelter. Sometimes they can make their way into your home. Here's a few things to help you prevent unwanted visitors:

- Keep your kitchen clean and tidy.
- If you have cats or dogs make sure their flea treatments are up to date.
- Wash your bedding and vacuum regularly.
- If you think pests are getting into your home through a hole or broken drain report it to us so we can send someone out to take a look.
- A build-up of rubbish outside your home can attract pests. Keep outside spaces clean and tidy.



Report pests to us if they're entering your home

Your healthy home checklist

-  Do not use Calor gas or paraffin heaters. Not only are these not allowed inside your home, but they also produce a lot of moisture which is released into the air.
-  Test your smoke alarms every week. If your alarm is always beeping it might need a new battery. If you're in any doubt get in touch with us.
-  Cover pots and pans when using your hob and keep the kitchen clean to keep pests away.
-  Extractor fans should be left running all the time. Most extractor fans in our homes run on timers, so leave them running after showering or taking a bath.
-  Make sure your trickle vents are kept open all year round, except in rooms with a working extractor fan.
-  If you can't hang clothes outside, hang them in a room with a working extractor fan and keep the door and window closed. Don't hang wet clothes on your radiators or over doors.
-  If you spot a problem, report it to us straight away. You can do this online, via email or over the phone.



For more tips and advice or to report an under the weather home visit our healthy homes hub...



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