

**1****Background**

Everyone deserves a warm, secure home, but many in England live in properties with damp and mould, which can negatively impact their health. Estimates range between 4% to 27% of homes, or 962,000 to 6.5 million households, are affected, with renters more likely to experience these conditions than homeowners. This percentage is likely to be significantly higher in Lancashire due to the higher density of older, terraced houses in the region and socio economic challenges.

In the last five years, the Pan Lancashire Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) reviewed five cases where damp or mould was identified as a modifiable factor which may have been a contributing factor to the child's death.

**2****Why it matters**

Damp and mould primarily harm the airways and lungs, exacerbating conditions such as asthma, allergic rhinitis and lower respiratory conditions, but can also affect the eyes and skin. It can cause serious illnesses and even death, as seen in Awaab Ishak's tragic case from prolonged mould exposure in his home. Damp and mould can negatively impact mental health due to worries about health risks, unpleasant living conditions and damaged property. While everyone is at risk, certain groups, like children, older adults, and those with underlying health conditions, are more vulnerable.

**3****Information**

Types of Dampness in Homes

1. Rising Damp: This occurs when water from the ground rises through the brickwork and plaster, typically affecting basements or ground floors.
2. Penetrating Damp: This type arises from water entering the home due to defects in the exterior, such as roof leaks, blocked gutters, or missing pointing.
3. Defective Plumbing: Damage or wear to internal water pipes, particularly in kitchens or bathrooms, as well as leaking

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leaking seals around baths or showers, can cause this issue.

4. Condensation: Resulting from excessive moisture, inadequate heating, and poor ventilation. Condensation is identified by water droplets on windows, black mould on cold surfaces, musty smells, and damp clothing. Black mould almost always accompanies this type of damp.

**5****Reducing and preventing condensation:**

- Reduce Excess Moisture: Cover pans while cooking, dry clothes outdoors, and run cold water first in baths.
- Enhance Ventilation: Open windows to release moisture whilst keeping doors closed, avoid blocking vents and help air circulate, and don't overfill wardrobes.
- Ensure Adequate Heating: Maintain a stable temperature of 18-21°C in living areas and keep unoccupied rooms at a low temperature. Regularly service heating systems. Maintain a steady temperature between 18-21 degrees. Please note, the room baby sleeps in should be kept between 16-20 degrees.

**7****Questions to consider**

Am I confident to have conversations about damp and mould with families?

Do I know where I can refer families to locally for help and support?

Discuss this briefing and resources in your next team meeting.

[Awaab Ishak: Prevention of future deaths report.](#)

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional\\_resources/legal/housing\\_conditions/responsibility\\_for\\_repairs/damp\\_and\\_mould\\_problems](https://england.shelter.org.uk/professional_resources/legal/housing_conditions/responsibility_for_repairs/damp_and_mould_problems)

**6****What to do**

Be sensitive to the needs and circumstances of each family. Identify motivational factors that are influencing behaviours that worsen damp and mould.

If you notice signs of damp and mould, approach the situation with empathy, acknowledging that many people encounter these problems in their homes. Instead of simply advising against drying clothes on radiators, offer practical solutions to reduce condensation. Be aware of the support available through CHIL, the Household Support Fund, Citizen's Advice, and the Energy Savings Trust.