

## Response ID ANON-PEGT-J2UB-3

Submitted to Local authority returns form: damp and mould in private rented properties  
Submitted on 2023-01-17 15:52:45

### Introduction

#### Details:

1 Please provide the full name of your local authority:

Answer:  
Wokingham Borough Council

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

Answer:  
emma.choules@wokingham.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':  
6,755 (2011 Census)

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?

c) Estimate based on contact with landlords/tenants, d) Estimate based on general knowledge of local housing stock

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:  
2.8

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:  
n/a

### 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?

%:  
Estimate less than 1% based on number of complaints received compared to total PRS

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, d) Estimate based on general knowledge of local housing stock

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?

%:  
Estimate less than 5% based on number of complaints received compared to total PRS

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:

Initial investigation comprises phone discussion with the complainant, regarding occupancy (overcrowding), use of (and type of) heating & ventilation systems, assessment of photo evidence & checking the EPC. Advice documents regarding managing condensation issued if the evidence suggests the issue is lifestyle related and/or a site visit (using protimeter tool) to assess the hazard and contributory factors where there may be doubt as to the cause(s). Whilst a complaint maybe received with specific reference to D&M it is normal practice to ask a range of questions in relation to other potential hazards such as Gas and Electrical Safety and excess cold for example.

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:

24

Answer - 2020/2021:

28

Answer - 2021/2022:

26

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:

16

Answer - 2020/2021:

8

Answer - 2021/2022:

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:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

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:

0

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:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

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:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

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:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

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

## 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:

0

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

1

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:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

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:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

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:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

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:

1 x formal IN HA2004 (Cat 1) + 1 x EPA90 (re caravan) / 21 x informal

Answer - 2020/2021:

0 x formal / 24 x informal

Answer - 2021/2022:

1 x formal IN HA2004 (cat 2) / 22 x informal

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

Answer - 2019/2020:

1

Answer - 2020/2021:

0

Answer - 2021/2022:

1

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:

n/a

Answer - 2020/2021:

n/a

Answer - 2021/2022:

n/a

## 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.:

1

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.:

4

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

2

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

5

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.:

3

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.:

6

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

Optional:

Capacity and prioritisation are the main inhibitors, linked to lack of evidence of a significant problem needing to be addressed in this area. Tenants often start a service request but do not follow it through, meaning we have to close the case with no real resolution, we have to assume the problem has been dealt with independently of us. Technical difficulties can be overcome.

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:

Data on significance of harm and likelihood of occurrence are out of date. It is very rare to score a hazard category 1 just for damp and mould.

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

Optional:

Training EHOs and Housing Surveyors in accurately assessing the causes of damp and mould. Education for tenants about ventilation, condensation control, reducing overcrowding of individual rooms. Energy costs are an inhibitor as tenants are more concerned than ever about the costs of heating.