

## Keep your home warm

Insulation and draughtproofing will keep your home warmer and will also cut fuel bills. When the whole house is warmer condensation is less likely to form.

- Maintain low background heat when the weather is cold or wet.
- Consider installing secondary double-glazing of windows to reduce heat loss and draughts. If you wish to do this you must make sure that there is some ventilation in the room.



## Some words of warning:

- **Do not** block permanent ventilators.
- **Do not** completely block chimneys. Leave a hole about two bricks in size and fit a louvered grille over the opening.
- **Do not** draughtproof rooms where there is condensation or mould growth.
- **Do not** draughtproof a room where there is a gas cooker or a fuel-burning heater, for example a gas fire.
- **Do not** draughtproof windows in the bathroom or kitchen.
- **Do not** put furniture against cold external walls.

## First steps against mould:

- Treat any mould you may already have in your home then do what you can to reduce condensation. This will restrict new mould growth.
- **Do not** disturb mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning. This can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- Wipe off mould growth immediately with water. **Do not** use washing up liquid.
- To kill and remove mould growth, wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash. This is available from a hardware or DIY store or supermarket. You should choose a product which carries a Health & Safety Executive 'approval number'. Always follow the instructions carefully. **Do not use bleach.**
- Dry-clean clothes affected by mildew and shampoo carpets.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint to help prevent mould recurring. This paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper.

## More information is available from:

### Private Sector Housing Team

Mid Devon District Council  
Phoenix House  
Phoenix Lane  
Tiverton  
EX16 6PP

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Mid Devon District Council

## Dealing with damp, condensation and mould growth



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**Requests for alternative formats will be considered on an individual basis.**

## What is condensation?

Condensation starts as moisture in the air, usually produced by cooking, washing, or drying clothes indoors on radiators.

When it hits cool surfaces such as walls, mirrors, wall tiles and windows it condenses and forms water droplets.

The moist air rises when it is warm and often ends up on ceilings and in upstairs rooms and then it forms mould.



## Why is it a problem?

Left untreated, condensation can result in mould growth on walls, ceilings, furniture, furnishings, and clothing in cupboards and drawers.

It can also affect wall plaster and cause woodwork to rot.



## What are the different types of dampness?

Condensation is caused by moisture in the air inside your home. This leaflet explains how you can reduce condensation and prevent mould forming.

Damp is generally caused by a fault in the structure of the building.

There are two basic types of damp:

- Penetrating damp happens when water enters your home through an external defect.
- Rising damp is when there is a problem with the damp proof course or membrane and water rises from the ground into the walls or floor.

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## How to reduce condensation in your home

### Control excess moisture

- Close kitchen and bathroom doors to prevent steam going into colder rooms.
- When cooking or washing, let the steam escape by opening a window or using an extractor fan if you have one fitted. Leave the window open or the extractor fan on for up to 20 minutes after you have finished cooking or washing.
- Open some windows in other rooms for a while each day and open any trickle vents in your window frames. This allows a change of air.
- Wipe down surfaces when moisture settles to prevent mould forming.
- **Do not** block air vents and allow air to circulate around furniture and cupboards.
- You must not use bottled gas or paraffin heaters – these produce a lot of moisture and they are also a health and safety risk.

### Produce less moisture

- Dry clothes outdoors whenever possible or use small ventilated rooms.
- Cover fish tanks and remember that house pets and plants produce moisture as well.
- Cover pans when cooking.
- If you have a tumble drier or washing machine ensure that it is vented in accordance with the manufacturers instructions.