

Scrutiny Panel Service Review: Damp and Mould: Reasonable Adjustments 2024

Why look at Reasonable Adjustments in Damp and Mould?

As customers, we know that dealing with damp and mould can be challenging, especially for those who have vulnerabilities and may need reasonable adjustments.

The Scrutiny Panel, took a deep dive into customer feedback, complaints, and performance data, and it became clear that damp and mould issues were generating a lot of customer concerns. We also recognized the growing importance placed on Housing Associations to effectively address damp and mould, especially in light of Awaab's Law..

What we focused on:

We wanted to define what 'good' looks like for reasonable adjustments in dealing with damp and mould and improve how Stonewater communicates the availability of these adjustments to customers.

We looked at:

- Customer journeys
- Call centre scripts
- Colleague training materials
- Internal policies
- Meetings with the Damp and Mould team
- External research such as policies from other housing associations and reports from the Housing Ombudsman.

We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the staff who assisted us in this review. Your help and dedication have been invaluable in shaping our recommendations.

Our priority recommendations

We made 14 recommendations in total, and we're pleased to note all of these recommendations have been accepted by Stonewater and agreed with the Customer Experience Challenge and Assurance Panel (CXCAP)

Our priority recommendations are:

Recommendation 5

Stonewater to explore options for systems to flag when there has been no access instances which allows Stonewater to follow up with customers to ensure vital works are completed.

Recommendation 6

Stonewater to provide more tools/training for colleagues on damp and mould and reasonable adjustments. Colleagues need more guidance on what a reasonable adjustment is/what they can offer and how/where to signpost customers who need more significant adjustments/support, especially around damp and mould.

Recommendation 12

Stonewater to raise awareness for colleagues (including contractors) to check customer management system before a colleague visits or calls customer. This is to ensure they are checking for vulnerabilities within household and any reasonable adjustments.

What happens next?

Some great work has already been completed. A customer guide to reasonable adjustments has been created, and a new page about reasonable adjustments has been created on the Stonewater website. The Damp and Mould policy has also been amended to mention reasonable adjustments and you can find it in the policy section of the Stonewater website. We'll work closely with Stonewater to monitor the progress of all recommendations.

How do Scrutiny Reviews work?

The Scrutiny Panel is made up of a maximum of 14 Stonewater customers who work alongside Stonewater colleagues to review and improve services.
A Scrutiny review takes an in-depth look at services and makes recommendations for changes or improvements based on the panel's investigations and findings.
You can find out more about the Scrutiny Panel on our webpage www.stonewater.org/scrutiny