

Letting Agents

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DATE	5 December 2023

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Damp and Mould complaints in privately rented properties

We are writing to all letting agents in the Stafford Borough and Cannock Chase District areas along with agents that we have worked with previously to ask for your help and support in investigating and addressing damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties.

We recognise that letting agents play an essential role in managing rented properties. They provide expert advice to property owners on their legal responsibilities, and act as a front line in responding to concerns from tenants about damp and mould issues in their home.

Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has written to all local authorities following a coroner's report into the death of 2-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020 as a result of the mouldy housing conditions he was subjected to. Mr Gove has been clear that he expects robust action by local authority housing standards teams to identify and take action to protect tenants from harm.

In helping support local authorities, landlord and agents, DLUHC have published guidance on the government website www.gov.uk. Without prejudice to the full guidance, in essence:

- Landlords must treat concerns about damp and mould seriously and take urgent action to identify and remedy the underlying cause.
- It is not appropriate to blame tenants for the presence of mould. Whilst tenants have a role to play in managing their home environment, it must never be a substitute for addressing the underlying causes of damp and mould.
- Where quick and robust action is not taken, local authorities must use all the legal powers available to them to ensure the safety of tenants.

We expect landlords to manage their own properties, obtaining expert advice as necessary to help them comply with their repairing obligation.

Please do not wait for a tenant to complain to us before you take action. We are there to support landlords but as our role is to enforce statutory provisions we are not able to act as your expert advisor.

We believe that reputable letting agents have a central role to play in making sure that landlords take these types of concerns seriously and provide advice to their clients and to tenants. We ask that you make sure you are familiar with the published guidance and understand the steps that local authorities can take in following their legal responsibilities.

We have published a webpage on the subject and a copy of this letter is included.
<https://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/damp-condensation-and-mould>

Thank you for the daily action you take to listen to tenant concerns and to help landlords respond appropriately. We are always open to reviewing how we can work collaboratively in areas of housing standards, with the understanding that we have different roles to play.

If you have any queries please feel free to contact me.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Chris Butcher
Lead Officer – Housing Standards