Matt's **PlanScope**

A CHARTERED SURVEYOR'S TOOLKIT

Condensation & Mould

A Complete Practical Toolkit

Identify the cause, fix the problem, and understand responsibility
— in under 30 minutes.

DIAGNOSE	DECIDE	DOCUMENT
Tests a surveyor uses	*Clear next steps*	*Copy-and-use templates*

12 sections · 8 ready-to-use templates · Decision tables for every test · UK landlord & tenant law

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Stop guessing.
Start diagnosing.

Most condensation guides tell you what condensation is. This toolkit tells you what to do, what the results mean, and who is responsible — using the same logic a chartered building surveyor would apply on site.

It is written for homeowners, landlords and tenants who need answers fast — whether you are looking at mould in your home right now, preparing for a dispute, or specifying remedial work.

In the next 30 minutes, you will:

- Run two simple at-home diagnostic tests a surveyor uses
- Interpret the results against clear decision criteria
- Understand where responsibility sits — and where it is commonly misunderstood
- Apply a practical action plan to reduce mould immediately
- Have ready-to-send email templates for reporting, escalating, or defending
- Build the documented evidence trail that wins disputes

> **WHAT TO DO TODAY**
>
> If you are looking at mould right now: turn to Section 3 — Surveyor's Diagnostic Approach and read What Your Results Mean. A five-minute hygrometer reading and a foil test will tell you more than a week of cleaning ever will.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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"Condensation isn't a mystery and it isn't always the tenant's fault. This toolkit is the evidence-first approach I use on inspections — distilled into something anyone can use at home."

Contents

Start Here

Identify your situation in 2 minutes.

Use the table below to go straight to the sections that will help you fastest. Each row is a pattern we see repeatedly on inspection.

If you see this...	It typically suggests...	Go to
Humidity consistently above 70%	Likely a moisture generation issue	Sections 5 & 6
Mould localised in one specific spot	Likely a cold bridge or structural defect	Sections 2 & 9
No extractor fan fitted in the bathroom or kitchen	Likely a landlord responsibility	Section 2
Mould returning in the same place after cleaning	Investigate for a structural issue or hidden leak	Sections 3 & 9
Washing dried indoors on radiators or in closed rooms	Major indoor moisture source — change first	Section 5
Need to report or dispute mould in a rented property	Use the evidence steps and templates	Sections 10 & 11
Unsure what the readings in your home mean	Use the decision table to interpret results	Section 3

WHAT TO DO TODAY

Place a £10 digital hygrometer in the worst-affected room. Take one reading now and one tomorrow morning. Those two numbers are the first line of your evidence — and the fastest route to a correct diagnosis.

SECTION

01 Understanding Condensation

The three factors — and why lifestyle blame is lazy

Condensation is one of the most misunderstood issues in residential property. It is often blamed on “lifestyle” — but in practice it is typically the result of three interacting factors, and rarely just one of them.

The three factors

- Heat — the temperature of internal surfaces versus room air
- Moisture — how much water vapour the air is carrying
- Ventilation — how fast humid air can leave the property

If one or more of these is unbalanced, condensation will typically occur.

The dew point, explained

Condensation forms when warm air carrying moisture meets a colder surface. The dew point is the temperature at which air becomes saturated and releases water.

> **THE PRACTICAL RULE**
>
> Typical indoor conditions of 20°C and 60% relative humidity create a condensation risk on any surface sitting at approximately 12°C or below. Cold-spot surface temperatures typically matter more than room air temperatures.

Where condensation forms

It does not occur randomly. It typically appears at cold spots:

- External walls — especially north-facing
- Window reveals
- Behind furniture pushed against cold external walls
- Ceiling corners
- Around lintels and concrete elements

These areas are typically affected by thermal bridging — places where heat escapes the building fabric more rapidly than through surrounding construction, pulling surface temperatures below the dew point.

Typical condensation-related mould forming to a ceiling where warm, moisture-laden air meets a colder surface.

Localised mould growth at a tile and sealant junction, typically associated with high humidity and restricted airflow.

COMMON MISTAKE

"It must be the tenant's showering habits." On inspection it is far more often a cold external wall, a missing extractor fan, or a cold bridge around a steel lintel. Lifestyle is rarely the whole story — and almost never the only story.

SECTION

02 Landlord vs Tenant Responsibility

Where it sits — and where it's commonly misunderstood

Responsibility is typically determined by cause, not simply by the presence of mould. In most cases responsibility is shared — and UK law is clear about where the structural half of that typically sits.

Landlord responsibilities — structural & legal

Under UK law — including the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 — landlords must typically ensure a property is fit for occupation. A landlord is generally responsible where condensation and mould are caused by any of the following.

> **LANDLORD NOTE**
>
> The five categories below are the ones that typically shift responsibility toward the landlord. Where more than one applies, the case for landlord action is usually stronger.

1. Inadequate heating provision

- Heating system cannot maintain 18–21°C
- Poor distribution of heat across rooms
- Inefficient or outdated systems

> **SURVEYOR'S INSIGHT**
>
> If the property cannot be heated properly, the resulting condensation is typically not the tenant’s fault.

2. Poor ventilation design

- No extractor fans in wet areas
- Fans present but not functioning
- No trickle vents or passive airflow routes

> **SURVEYOR'S INSIGHT**
>
> Occupants cannot typically remove moisture if the ventilation provided is inadequate. A missing or broken fan is usually a landlord issue — not a lifestyle one.

3. Thermal defects (cold bridging)

- Solid walls with no insulation
- Missing or defective cavity insulation
- Structural cold spots — lintels, concrete elements, exposed steelwork

4. Structural damp

- Roof leaks
- Defective rainwater goods
- Cracked render or brickwork
- Failed damp proof course

> **SURVEYOR'S INSIGHT**
> Moisture entering the structure from outside is almost always the landlord's responsibility, regardless of what the occupants are doing inside.

5. Poor property design

Common in flats and conversions:

- No cross-ventilation
- Internal bathrooms with no windows
- Overcrowded layouts

Tenant responsibilities — occupancy & behaviour

Tenants must manage the moisture they create. A typical household produces 8–15 litres of moisture per day through breathing, cooking, bathing, plants and laundry.

Expected tenant behaviour

- Use extractor fans during cooking and bathing
- Keep internal doors closed when generating steam
- Avoid drying clothes on radiators (see Section 5)
- Maintain consistent heating
- Allow airflow behind furniture — minimum 50 mm gap
- Report issues promptly and in writing

> **THE PRACTICAL RULE**
> The expectations above are reasonable where the property itself gives the tenant the tools to meet them — working extraction, adequate heating, and somewhere to dry laundry. Where those tools are missing, "lifestyle" is rarely the real cause.

Shared responsibility — the most common scenario

Issue	Who is typically responsible
No extractor fan fitted	Landlord
Fan present but not used by occupants	Tenant
Cold wall or insulation defect	Landlord
Drying clothes indoors daily with no extraction	Tenant

Issue	Who is typically responsible
Poor fabric combined with high moisture load	Shared
Failed roof flashing causing penetrating damp	Landlord
Trickle vents present but taped over by occupant	Tenant
Heating inadequate & tenant cannot afford to over-heat	Landlord

Where responsibility is commonly misunderstood

On real inspections, disputes almost always revolve around grey areas. The scenarios below are the ones that surface repeatedly — and where the default "it's a lifestyle issue" response is usually wrong.

Scenario 1 — No extractor fan, but tenant is blamed

A bathroom has no mechanical extract and no openable window. Mould appears on the ceiling above the shower. The letting agent tells the tenant to "open the door while showering" and ventilate more. Reality: the property typically fails the minimum ventilation requirement. Responsibility sits with the landlord to install adequate extraction, regardless of how the tenant showers.

Scenario 2 — High-moisture lifestyle in a poorly ventilated property

A family of four lives in a small, poorly ventilated flat. They cook at home, dry laundry indoors and have plants. Mould develops. The landlord blames the lifestyle. Reality: responsibility is typically shared. The family's moisture load is high — but the property's capacity to remove that moisture is demonstrably inadequate. Both sides may need to change something.

Scenario 3 — Letting agents defaulting to "lifestyle"

A common script from letting agents is to attribute any mould report to lifestyle — without inspecting the property, without humidity readings, and without considering the construction. Reality: an agent typically cannot evidence that a condensation problem is lifestyle-caused without inspection and readings. A tenant is entitled to a proper assessment of cause.

Scenario 4 — Mould returning despite regular cleaning

The tenant has cleaned mould multiple times and it keeps returning in the same spot. Reality: recurrent mould in a fixed location strongly suggests a cold bridge, a leak, or a structural defect. A lifestyle cause typically produces diffuse mould in rooms of high vapour generation; a structural cause typically produces focused mould in cold spots. The pattern is a useful diagnostic tool in itself.

Scenario 5 — Mould in a room the tenant does not use heavily

Mould appears in a spare bedroom used only for storage. This is rarely a lifestyle issue — the room is barely occupied. It is usually a combination of low heating, reduced airflow (door kept closed), and a cold external wall. The remedy is usually a small amount of background heat, a trickle vent, and furniture spacing — not a lifestyle change.

Scenario 6 — New build with vapour control issues

Mould appears in the first 12–18 months in a new build. Often blamed on the occupant. Reality: new builds may carry significant construction moisture and frequently have undersized or commissioned-but-disabled MVHR systems. The fix is typically system commissioning and dehumidification, not behavioural change.

Scenario 7 — HMO / shared house, single occupant blamed

In a shared house, mould appears in one bedroom and that occupant is blamed individually. Reality: the moisture load of a shared household is cumulative, and ventilation is usually rated for the building as a whole. Apportioning blame to one occupant without a whole-building assessment is rarely defensible.

> **COMMON MISTAKE**
>
> Treating any mould as automatically the tenant's fault. The pattern, location and conditions in which mould appears are evidence — they usually tell you what the cause actually is, before anyone needs to argue about it.

SECTION

03 Surveyor's Diagnostic Approach

Tests, readings, and what your results actually mean

Professionals assess cause, not assumption. Two simple tools and a short habit of recording readings will typically tell you what is going on in your home — and, more importantly, what to do about it.

> **QUICK CHECK — 5 MINUTES**
>
> Buy a £10 digital hygrometer. Place it in each problem room. Take three readings a day — morning, evening, and after cooking or bathing — for one week. That single data set will typically shortcut almost every dispute.

Hygrometer monitoring

A digital hygrometer (£10–£15) gives you a live humidity reading. Place one in each problem room and note the reading in the morning, evening, and after cooking or bathing.

- Ideal relative humidity: 40–60%
- 60–70% — manageable, but watch for cold-surface condensation
- Above 70% — high condensation risk

Moisture meter reading indicating elevated dampness within building fabric, used to distinguish between condensation and structural moisture.

The foil test

Tape a piece of aluminium foil tightly to the damp wall and leave for 24 hours. Then peel back and inspect both sides:

- Moisture on the room-facing side — suggests condensation
- Moisture on the wall-facing side — suggests penetrating or rising damp

Identifying damp types

Type	Appearance	Likely cause
Black mould	Spotting on surfaces	Condensation
Efflorescence	White salt deposits	Water passing through the wall
Tide marks	Low-level staining	Rising damp
Brown stains	Halo marks on ceilings	Roof or pipe leak above
Bubbling paint	Localised blistering	Trapped moisture / leak

Moisture movement through masonry is often visible both internally and externally, as shown in the examples below.

Penetrating damp with associated salt contamination indicating moisture ingress through the building fabric rather than condensation.

External efflorescence to brickwork showing salts deposited as moisture evaporates from the masonry.

What your results mean

The tests above produce data. This is what the data typically tells you — and what to do next. Use the table as a decision flow.

What you see / measure	What it suggests	What to do next
Humidity consistently above 70%, mould diffuse across a room	High moisture generation — may be a behavioural or laundry issue	Increase ventilation; reduce indoor clothes drying; consider a dehumidifier (Section 9)
Humidity in the 40–60% range, but mould persists in one location	Structural or thermal issue — often a cold bridge or leak	Escalate to landlord; investigate insulation and external fabric
Foil test shows moisture on the room-facing side	Condensation — moisture is coming from the air inside	Address moisture generation and ventilation
Foil test shows moisture on the wall-facing side	Penetrating or rising damp — moisture is coming from outside or below	Stop treating it as condensation; request specialist damp investigation
Mould returns in the same spot despite cleaning	Typically a fixed cold spot or hidden leak	Investigate thermal bridge, roof, plumbing or rainwater goods
Mould across several rooms, humidity always high	Likely systemic ventilation failure	Consider whole-house solution (PIV or MVHR — see Section 9)
Humidity normal but only after cooking; rooms slow to recover	Kitchen extract may be under-spec or ducting blocked	Test fan with the toilet-paper test (Section 6); upgrade if it fails
Humidity high in winter only, surfaces noticeably cold	Heating pattern may be inadequate — surfaces below dew point	Switch to steady low background heating; do not heat in bursts

Top three actions to reduce mould immediately

If you can only do three things this week, do these — they typically work across almost every property type and almost every cause.

1. Heat the property to a steady 18–21°C. A consistent background temperature keeps internal surfaces above the dew point. Stop-start heating is typically the single most common reason condensation returns.
2. Use extraction every time you cook or bathe — and for 15 minutes afterwards. If you do not have a timer-overrun fan, open the window and close the door.
3. Stop drying washing on radiators. Move laundry to a dedicated room with a closed door, an extractor running, and a dehumidifier if you have one (see Section 5).

SURVEYOR'S INSIGHT

These three actions will typically improve the situation within two weeks. If they do not, the cause is more likely structural — and the focus usually needs to shift from occupants to property.

WHAT TO DO TODAY

Place your hygrometer now, in the room with visible mould. Note the current reading and the time. Repeat in the morning. Two readings is the start of evidence.

SECTION

04 Removing Mould Properly

The right steps — in the right order

Cleaning mould incorrectly almost guarantees it returns. The steps below are the ones restoration contractors typically use — slow, chemical-first, minimal scrubbing.

Step-by-step

4. Ventilate the area fully before starting.
5. Wear protective gloves and a mask (FFP2 or better).
6. Apply the treatment — do not scrub immediately; let the chemistry do the work.
7. Allow the full dwell time specified on the product.
8. Wipe gently with a disposable cloth — scrubbing spreads spores.
9. Dispose of materials in a sealed bag straight to the outside bin.

Recommended products

- HG Mould Spray
- Dettol Mould & Mildew Remover
- Astonish Mould & Mildew Blaster

Look for:

- Bleach-based active (sodium hypochlorite)
- Fast-acting formulations with a short dwell time

IMPORTANT

Replacement is often required for: silicone sealant, plasterboard, and heavily affected finishes. Mould colonies typically penetrate porous materials — surface cleaning only removes the visible layer.

COMMON MISTAKE

Cleaning mould and stopping there. Cleaning addresses the symptom. Unless the cause is addressed, it will typically return — usually in exactly the same spot — within 4–8 weeks.

WHAT TO DO TODAY

Before you clean, photograph each affected area with the date visible (use your phone's screen as a reference). The cleaning resets the evidence — capture it first.

SECTION

05 Drying Washing Indoors — A Hidden Source

The single biggest underestimated source of indoor moisture

Drying laundry inside a home is typically one of the single largest sources of internal moisture — and it is consistently underestimated. In a typical UK home it can be the difference between a property that stays balanced and one that struggles with persistent mould.

2–3L

PER WASH LOAD

A single load of washing can release 2 to 3 litres of water into the air as it dries. Drying two loads a week indoors adds more than 200 litres per year — all of which must leave through ventilation, or may condense on cold surfaces.

Why radiators are the worst place of all

- Radiator heat accelerates evaporation, releasing moisture rapidly into the room
- The warm, damp air travels directly upwards to cold ceilings and external walls
- The radiator's heat output is suppressed — energy is going into evaporating water
- Heating costs rise while perceived warmth falls — a classic hidden cost
- In rooms with poor ventilation, moisture deposits on the coldest available surface

Why drying indoors anywhere can cause problems

Even clothes airers placed away from radiators release the same total amount of water. The issue isn't where the washing is placed — it's whether the moisture can be ventilated out as quickly as it is generated. Common risk scenarios include:

- Airers placed in bedrooms with closed doors overnight
- Washing dried in small hallways or under-stairs cupboards
- Clothes dried in the same room as sleeping occupants
- Drying in unheated rooms — moisture saturates the cold air rapidly

Better practice for drying indoors

When outdoor drying is not possible, these steps typically reduce the impact substantially:

- Dry in one dedicated room — ideally bathroom or utility — with the door closed
- Run an extractor fan continuously during drying, or crack a window for cross-flow
- Spin the washing at the highest appropriate speed before hanging
- Use a heated airer where possible — faster drying, less airborne vapour than a radiator
- Run a dehumidifier in the same room while drying (see Section 9)
- Avoid overnight drying with doors and windows closed

WHAT TO DO TODAY

Move tomorrow's wash into the bathroom with the door closed and the extractor fan running. Test the

difference with your hygrometer. In most homes, humidity in the rest of the property typically drops significantly.

LANDLORD NOTE

If a property has no outdoor drying area, no tumble dryer provision, and no adequate utility ventilation, expecting tenants to “dry clothes elsewhere” is often unrealistic. A dedicated extract fan — or a permanent dehumidifier — is frequently the practical fix.

SECTION

06 Ventilation — The Key Control Measure

If only one thing is fixed, it should usually be this

Ventilation is typically the most common failure point in homes with condensation problems. Whether passive or mechanical, it needs to move moist air out as fast as occupants and cold surfaces can create it.

Common problems

- No extractor fans fitted
- Poor positioning relative to the moisture source
- Blocked or ineffective ducting
- Trickle vents painted shut, sealed, or covered
- Loft vents blocked by stored items or insulation

Condensation staining above a shower where moisture is not adequately removed, typically due to missing or ineffective extraction.

Incorrect installations we see often

- Fan located near the door instead of the moisture source
- Too far from the shower or hob
- Installed in dead airflow zones (above wall-hung cupboards, behind doors)
- Ducted upwards into the loft instead of out through the roof / wall

Retrospective installations — high risk

Particularly problematic:

- Shower rooms in cupboards
- Bathrooms under stairs
- Internal utility rooms

These areas typically have:

- No natural ventilation
- High moisture concentration

THE HARD TRUTH

Without strong mechanical extraction, condensation in these spaces is usually inevitable — regardless of occupant behaviour.

QUICK CHECK — 5 MINUTES

Hold a single sheet of toilet paper against your bathroom fan while it is running. If it doesn't stick, the fan is typically underperforming. Replace or service it.

SECTION

07 Extractor Fans — What to Install

Specifications, costs and pitfalls

A well-specified extractor fan is cheap, quiet, and transformative. A badly-specified one is typically a ceiling ornament people switch off. The tables below cover the specifications that actually matter.

Minimum extraction rates

Room	Requirement
Bathroom	15 L/s
Kitchen — over the hob	30 L/s
Kitchen — elsewhere	60 L/s
Utility room	30 L/s

Fan types

Type	Behaviour	Verdict
Basic fan	Operates only with the light	Often insufficient
Timer overrun fan	Continues after switch-off	Recommended minimum
Humidity sensor	Activates automatically when RH rises	Removes human error
Continuous (dMEV)	Runs constantly at a low level	Best long-term solution

Power & running costs

Typical usage: 5–30 watts — typically very low running cost, even continuous.

Noise levels

- A good fan typically operates at under 30 dB
- Continuous dMEV units are typically 12–18 dB on trickle setting

> **COMMON MISTAKE**
>
> Buying the cheapest fan. Noisy fans get switched off by occupants — which is typically one of the most common routes back to mould. A quiet continuous dMEV unit costs a little more and usually delivers far more.

Ducting

- Keep runs short and straight wherever possible
- Avoid flexible ducting where rigid can be used
- Ensure the external vent is clear and unobstructed
- Insulate ducts that pass through cold lofts to prevent internal condensation

Installation positioning

- Above and as close to the moisture source as possible (shower, hob)
- Air-replacement path: open the room door briefly to allow flow
- Avoid placement directly opposite an open window — it typically short-circuits the airflow

> **WHAT TO DO TODAY**
>
> Walk to your bathroom fan and listen. If it's noticeably loud, time it with your phone — does it run for at least 15 minutes after the light goes off? If the answer is no to either, that fan is typically part of your problem.

SECTION

08 High-Risk Moisture Areas

Spaces that typically fail without targeted specification

Some spaces are set up to fail from the day they are built or converted. Recognising them early — and specifying correctly for them — typically avoids expensive remedial work later.

Problem scenarios

- Windowless bathrooms
- Cupboard shower rooms
- Under-stairs installations
- Internal kitchens with no openable windows
- Loft conversions with single-pitch sloped ceilings

Why they fail

- High moisture generation in a small volume
- Limited airflow — no passive route out
- Rapid cooling of hard surfaces (tile, mirror, glass)
- Often share an external wall with cold corners

Minimum requirements

- High-performance fan — above the stated minimum for the room type
- Timer or humidistat control
- Adequate heating (ideally low-level, continuous)
- Properly specified ducting — short, rigid, and clear at the vent
- Periodic filter / grille cleaning — at least every 6 months

> **SURVEYOR'S INSIGHT**
>
> If a property has any of the above spaces, mould is typically not a sign of occupant failure — it is more often a sign of inadequate specification. Plan ventilation around the room type, not around assumed behaviour.

SECTION

09 Long-Term Solutions

When the basics don't go far enough

Once the easy fixes are in place and the problem persists, these are the heavier interventions — ventilation systems, fabric upgrades, and dehumidifiers used as supplementary controls.

Positive Input Ventilation (PIV)

- Introduces filtered dry air at low level from a loft unit
- Typically reduces internal humidity throughout the dwelling simultaneously
- Generally low-cost to run, around 5–15W continuous

Continuous mechanical ventilation

- Constant background airflow at low wattage (dMEV per wet room; MVHR whole-house)
- MVHR additionally recovers heat from extracted air — typically useful in well-sealed homes

Thermal improvements

- Insulated plasterboard to cold walls
- Thermal linings to problematic reveals and corners
- Loft insulation top-up where currently below 270 mm
- Cavity wall insulation, where suitable for the wall type

Heating strategy

- Maintain a steady background temperature
- Avoid short, intermittent heating cycles — they typically keep surfaces below dew point
- Use thermostatic radiator valves to balance individual rooms

Dehumidifiers — a practical tool

A dehumidifier removes moisture from the air by condensing it and collecting it into a tank (or draining continuously). Used correctly, it is typically one of the most effective short-term and supplementary controls for condensation — particularly where ventilation is limited or indoor clothes drying is unavoidable.

When a dehumidifier is helpful

- Properties with persistent high RH (consistently above 65%)
- Rooms used for drying laundry
- Basements, cupboards and internal bathrooms with limited ventilation
- Flats with no cross-ventilation or openable windows
- After leaks, floods, or plaster drying

Types of dehumidifier

Type	Best use	Notes
Refrigerant (compressor)	Warm UK homes, summer & autumn	Typically efficient above 15°C; less effective in cold rooms

Type	Best use	Notes
Desiccant	Cold rooms, garages, winter use	Works well at low temperatures; uses more electricity
Mini / Peltier units	Wardrobes, small cupboards	Very limited capacity — not typically suitable for whole rooms

Choosing the right capacity

Dehumidifiers are rated by the litres of water they can extract in 24 hours under test conditions. Approximate guidance for typical UK homes:

Property size	Recommended capacity
1 bedroom flat / small rooms	10 L/day
2–3 bedroom home	12–16 L/day
4+ bedroom home or severe condensation	20 L/day or greater

How to use a dehumidifier correctly

- Set a target humidity of 45–55% — continuous 24/7 running is not typically necessary
- Close the doors and windows of the room being dehumidified
- Place centrally with at least 20 cm clearance around it
- Empty the tank regularly — or run a continuous drain hose to a sink or drain
- Clean the dust filter monthly — a blocked filter dramatically reduces performance
- In laundry-drying mode, run for the full drying time plus 1–2 hours after

Running costs

A modern 12 L/day compressor unit typically runs at 5–15 pence per hour at current UK electricity rates. Most units reach target humidity then cycle on and off, so actual daily cost is usually well below the maximum running figure.

> **IMPORTANT**
>
> A dehumidifier is not a replacement for adequate ventilation, insulation, or heating. It is a supplementary control. If the property has a structural defect or a missing extractor fan, the dehumidifier will mask the symptom — not fix the cause.

SECTION

10 Evidence & Dispute Toolkit

What to keep — for either side

Most condensation disputes are typically decided by the quality of records on both sides. The party who has documented the property — humidity, temperatures, photographs, dated communications — almost always prevails.

For tenants

- Humidity logs (see the tracker in Section 11)
- Dated photographs of affected areas
- Heating records — thermostat settings, bill evidence
- Communication logs with the landlord or agent (emails, texts)
- Notes of any health symptoms experienced by occupants

For landlords

- Ventilation evidence — specifications, installer certificates, test results
- Maintenance records — boiler services, fan servicing, roof inspections
- Property condition reports from inventory checks and periodic visits
- Records of advice given to tenants and any responses received
- Independent surveyor or environmental health reports, where commissioned

WHAT TO DO TODAY

Create a single folder on your phone titled “[Property address] — Mould evidence”. Every photo, every hygrometer reading, every email goes in it, with dates in the filename. In a dispute, this folder is typically worth more than an hour of argument.

SURVEYOR'S INSIGHT

Records do not need to be fancy. Three months of dated phone photos, a humidity log on paper, and a saved email thread are typically persuasive evidence in any housing forum. Build evidence calmly, before it is needed.

SECTION

11 Templates — Copy and Use

Eight ready-to-send templates, fill in the brackets and go

Ready-to-use formats. Copy, fill in the square-bracketed fields, and send. Written to be professional, balanced, and legally literate — not inflammatory.

Use these exactly as written — they are designed to be clear, balanced and defensible in a dispute.

Template 1 — Initial mould report (tenant to landlord)

COPY & USE

Subject: Mould at [property address] — report and request for action

Dear [Landlord / Letting Agent name],

I am writing to formally report a mould issue at the above property, which I have been observing since [date]. The affected area(s) are:

- [Location 1, e.g. the bathroom ceiling above the shower]
- [Location 2, e.g. the north-facing bedroom wall behind the wardrobe]

I have attached dated photographs showing the current condition. I have also been keeping a humidity log and can provide this on request; current readings are averaging around [X]% relative humidity.

For context, I can confirm the following:

- I heat the property to around [X]°C during occupied hours.
- I use the extractor fan(s) during cooking and bathing.
- [Brief note on drying habits, e.g. "I dry clothes outdoors where possible"].
- I have cleaned the affected area but the mould has returned.

I would be grateful if you could arrange for the property to be inspected and the underlying cause assessed. Under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018, I understand there is a duty to ensure the property is fit for habitation, and persistent mould may indicate a structural, thermal or ventilation defect.

Please could you confirm within [7 / 14] days what action you intend to take.

Kind regards,

[Tenant name]

[Date]

Template 2 — Follow-up and escalation

COPY & USE

Subject: [Original subject] — follow-up and notice of escalation

Dear [Landlord / Letting Agent name],

Further to my message of [date], I have not yet received a substantive response regarding the mould at the above property.

Since that date I have observed the following:

- [Any worsening of the affected area]
- [Any additional locations]
- [Any health symptoms being experienced by occupants]

If I do not receive a response within [7] days confirming either a site visit or a specific remedial action, I will:

1. Report the condition to my local authority's Environmental Health team under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).
2. Seek advice from Shelter, Citizens Advice, or a housing solicitor regarding my rights under the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018.

I would much rather resolve this collaboratively. Please confirm the action you propose to take.

Kind regards,

[Tenant name]

[Date]

Template 3 — Health-impact statement (optional add-on)

COPY & USE

Subject: Add-on paragraph: Health impact (use as part of Template 1 or 2)

Use only if symptoms are present and you are willing to disclose them. Keep factual; do not diagnose.

Since [date], occupants of the property have experienced the following, which we believe may be associated with the mould:

- [e.g. persistent cough or congestion in [name], aged [X]]
- [e.g. flare-up of pre-existing asthma in [name]]
- [e.g. GP visit on [date] — [outcome / advice given]]

We are raising this for the record. We are not asking for a medical assessment, but ask that this is taken into account when deciding the urgency of the inspection and remedial works.

Template 4 — Dispute evidence summary

A one-page structured summary you can hand to a housing officer, a solicitor, or a court. It marshals the evidence into a form that is easy to scan.

Item	Your entry
1. Property address and tenancy dates	
2. First date mould observed	
3. Locations affected (with photo reference dates)	
4. Average humidity reading (from tracker)	
5. Heating pattern and temperature maintained	

Item	Your entry
6. Ventilation provided — fans, trickle vents	
7. Drying habits and facilities available	
8. Communication log summary	
9. Inspections / contractor reports received	
10. Current status and action requested	

Template 5 — Mould reporting fields (per occurrence)

A quick structured report — useful for logging each occurrence.

Field	Your entry
Date	
Location in property	
Description of affected area	
Hygrometer reading (if taken)	
Photos attached (filenames)	
Action requested	

Template 6 — Humidity tracker (one week)

Print and complete; or recreate in your phone notes. One week of consistent readings is typically the foundation of any condensation conversation.

Date	Room	Humidity (%)	Temperature (°C)

Template 7 — Inspection checklist

Walk each room with this list. A ticked item is typically a defensible position.

☐ Extractor fans running on demand, with timer overrun

- ☐ Trickle vents open and unobstructed
- ☐ No visible leaks — plumbing, roof, rainwater goods
- ☐ Furniture spacing of at least 50 mm from external walls
- ☐ Hygrometer readings below 60% in normal conditions
- ☐ Heating capable of maintaining 18–21°C in every room
- ☐ No drying of washing on radiators or in unventilated rooms
- ☐ Mould, where present, has been photographed and logged
- ☐ Loft insulation present and not blocking eaves ventilation
- ☐ Window seals intact; no condensation pooling on sills

Template 8 — Landlord response (acknowledging a report)

COPY & USE

Subject: Mould at [property address] — acknowledgement and proposed inspection

A measured, professional acknowledgement protects landlords from escalation and demonstrates compliance with the duty of repair.

Dear [Tenant name],

Thank you for raising the mould issue at [property address] on [date]. I take this seriously and want to investigate the cause properly before deciding on remedial action.

I propose the following next steps:

3. An inspection of the affected areas on [proposed date / window].
4. A check of the extractor fan(s), trickle vents and heating performance during the visit.
5. If the inspection suggests a structural, thermal or ventilation defect, I will arrange the appropriate specialist within [X] days.

In the meantime, I would be grateful if you could continue to photograph the affected areas and, if possible, take humidity readings using a hygrometer. This information will help any specialist diagnose the cause efficiently.

Please confirm the proposed inspection date works for you, and let me know of any further information that might be helpful.

Kind regards,

[Landlord / Agent name]

[Date]

SECTION

12 Common Mistakes

The habits and assumptions that invite mould back

The habits and assumptions that typically invite mould back. Avoid these and you will generally be ahead of most properties in similar condition.

- Ignoring early signs — small dark spots in ceiling corners
- Blocking vents to save heat — this usually guarantees mould
- Intermittent heating — cold surfaces stay cold, condensation returns
- Over-reliance on cleaning rather than addressing cause
- Drying washing on radiators or in closed rooms without extraction
- Using a dehumidifier as a substitute for fixing a structural defect
- Accepting “it’s your lifestyle” without a proper inspection and readings
- Not keeping written records — photos, humidity, communication
- Painting over mould instead of treating and addressing the cause
- Sealing trickle vents during winter for warmth — typically guarantees recurrence

COMMON MISTAKE

Leaving a dispute until it is urgent. The earlier you report — in writing, with evidence — the stronger your position. Records built calmly over weeks are typically more credible than urgent claims made at the point of escalation.

WHAT TO DO TODAY

Pick the one habit on the list above that applies most to your home. Change it this week. Write down the date you started. That single change, documented, is typically the start of meaningful progress.

The rule,
in one sentence.

Remove one factor, reduce
the problem.
Address all three, solve it.

MOISTURE	SURFACES	VENTILATION
How much vapour the air carries	*Keeping them warmer than the dew point*	*Letting moist air out fast enough*

If you follow this process — diagnose, decide and document —
you replace guesswork with evidence.
That is what resolves condensation problems.

A short note on scope

This toolkit provides general guidance based on professional surveying principles. It is written for homeowners, landlords and tenants as a practical education tool and does not replace:

- a full building survey by a chartered surveyor
- legal advice in a tenancy or housing-disrepair dispute
- specialist investigation for structural damp, timber decay, or hidden defects

No reliance should be placed on this guide as a substitute for a professional inspection of a specific property.

Language throughout this toolkit is indicative: words such as “typically”, “may”, “suggests” and “often” are used because every property is different and definitive diagnosis requires inspection on site. Any references to UK statute (the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018) are summarised for context only and are not legal advice.

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