



**Riverside Customer Voice Executive Scrutiny Working Group**

**Scrutiny exercise – Damp Mould & Condensation Communications**

**With independent guidance from TPAS.**

**March 2024**

Summary

The Scrutiny Panel (SP) was tasked with reviewing Riverside’s amended Damp and Mould (D&M) process with particular focus on communications to customers, scripts, and training provided to the CSC team. The project ran from January to March 2024.

The Scrutiny Panel has seen evidence and received assurance that Riverside is generally communicating effectively with its customers over Damp and Mould (D&M). Staff training is very good, and the scripts are well thought through.

The customer journey needs to be mapped and our findings suggest that, in doing so, customer communications and the customer experience can be enhanced.

It could be argued that there is an issue over Riverside’s approach to protecting its public image versus giving customers the full facts about the gravity of untreated damp and mould. We have compared the Housing Ombudsman Services guidance with Riverside’s Communications plan and provided our perspective as customers.

There are ten recommendations and a further four discussion points, which RCVE and Riverside may wish to explore in more depth.

Finally, we would like to acknowledge the hard work that Riverside staff have put into responding to Damp and Mould both prior to and after the publication of the Regulator’s guidance on understanding and addressing the health risks for rented housing providers.

	Scrutiny Report Recommendations- Major	
R1	Provide customers with a damp and mould report when the work is completed and information about what to do if the problem returns within, or after 6 months.	Accepted
R2	Introduce a dedicated hotline for damp and mould as per the new Complaints procedure - which now includes a direct line number.	Rejected
R3	Produce a customer journey map for reporting damp and mould and carrying out repairs and use it to review customer communications.	Accepted
R4	Review the customer information videos with customers, using the in-house training videos as reference material. More information is needed on where to look, and about the physical appearance of different types of damp and mould. Additional information is also needed on what customers can expect when the works are carried out. For example, potential temporary loss of power.	Accepted
R5	Carry out consultation with customers over the Communications plan, in line with the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight report	Accepted

	Scrutiny Report Recommendations- Minor	
R6	Evolve to work with a customer panel/focus group to draft letters about damp and mould repairs that are more customer-friendly than the current versions.	Accepted
R7	Remove the word 'here' on the webpage to avoid any misunderstanding that there may be a dead hyperlink. (Details passed to Business Partner Brand & Marketing).	Accepted
R8	Clarify how the offer to fit an extractor fan offer works on the website. State that installation is free of charge, and who qualifies.	Accepted
R9	Add an QR code to customer letters about damp and mould, which links to the Riverside customer information video.	Accepted
R10	Revise customer information to explain the option to be moved into a hotel under certain circumstances.	Accepted