

The New Reality of Damp and Mould

Why the smartest landlords are investing in prevention, not repetition

A thought leadership feature from ArcAirTech, Principal Sponsor of the DASH Services Conference

What changed in June 2026?

From 22 June 2026, councils in England gained a new power to issue civil penalties of up to £7,000 when a serious Category 1 hazard is present in a privately rented home and the landlord fails to act. Severe damp and mould can fall within this highest risk category. The power sits alongside existing enforcement measures, including notices requiring repairs and emergency action where tenants are at risk.

The new Decent Homes Standard will also apply to the private rented sector, although enforcement against that standard is planned from 2035. The message for landlords today is still clear: investigate reports promptly, address the underlying cause and be able to show what action has been taken.

As a landlord, you will probably recognise this scenario.

The mould was cleaned. The walls were redecorated. Repairs were completed. Yet a few months later, the tenant calls again.

The mould has returned.

Every year, landlords spend money dealing with damp and mould problems they thought had already been resolved. The visible growth may disappear, but the cost returns through another inspection, another contractor visit and another round of cleaning and decoration.

The most expensive mould treatment is often the one you have to carry out twice.

The question is no longer simply whether mould can be removed. It is why it keeps coming back and what can be done to break the cycle.

Beyond the visible signs

Mould is easy to define by what we can see, but visible growth is only part of the problem. Microscopic spores may already be circulating through a home before dark patches appear. Removing surface mould can address an immediate health concern, but it will not prevent recurrence if moisture, inadequate ventilation, a building defect or another underlying condition remains.

Government guidance for rented housing providers is explicit on this point. Landlords should identify and tackle the root cause, not simply remove what is visible. It also recommends checking the property after remedial work to confirm that the problem has not returned.

This does not mean every case has one simple explanation. Damp and mould are often created by several factors working together, including the fabric of the building, heating, ventilation, moisture production and the circumstances of the household. A good response starts with investigation, not blame.

The hidden cost of recurrence

The direct costs of a mould case are easy to list: inspection, labour, treatment, materials and redecoration. The less visible costs can be greater. They include management time, repeated appointments, tenant complaints, damaged belongings, delayed lettings, reputational harm and the loss of trust when a problem returns after residents were told it had been resolved.

For a landlord with several properties, a small number of recurring cases can consume a disproportionate amount of time and budget. For a landlord with one property, the same issue can disrupt rental income and turn a straightforward tenancy into a prolonged dispute.

The objective is no longer simply to remove mould. It is to stop the same property coming back into the maintenance cycle.

Why immediate action matters

Not every underlying problem can be corrected immediately. A survey may be required. Contractors may need to be scheduled. A leak, insulation defect or ventilation issue may involve more extensive work. None of this changes the fact that the tenant continues to live in the property while the permanent solution is organised.

That is why a credible damp and mould strategy needs two elements: an immediate response and a long term plan. Tenants should know that their report has been taken seriously, what will happen next and how risks will be managed while investigations and repairs continue.

Rapid response air treatment can form part of that interim approach. ArcAirTech's Portable Arc is designed to help improve indoor air quality and reduce airborne mould spores while surveys and remedial work are under way. It does not replace repairs. It provides landlords with an additional measure they can deploy quickly while the cause is identified and addressed.

At ArcAirTech, we do not believe landlords should have to choose between supporting tenants today and solving the problem for tomorrow. The strongest response does both.

Prevention in practice

A preventative approach begins with good information. Landlords should keep clear records of reports, inspections, works and outcomes. Previous cases can reveal patterns: the same room, the same building type, recurring condensation or ventilation systems that are not operating as intended. This information helps identify properties that need more than another clean and coat of paint.

Prevention also means checking whether the intervention worked. Government guidance recommends follow up after remedial work and further investigation if damp or mould reappears. This simple discipline turns each case into evidence that can improve future decisions.

For homes with persistent problems, permanent air treatment may complement repairs, ventilation improvements and effective property management. ArcAirTech's Fixed Arc is designed for this role, providing ongoing treatment as part of a wider strategy to improve the indoor environment and reduce recurrence.

Technology is not a substitute for fixing leaks, maintaining heating systems or correcting building defects. Its value lies in strengthening the landlord's response before, during and after those works.

A better investment

The changing regulatory environment will encourage greater scrutiny, but compliance should not be the only reason to act. A proactive approach protects tenants, preserves property condition and reduces the waste created by repeated interventions. It can also improve the relationship between landlord and tenant because action is visible, communication is clearer and the resident is not blamed for a complex property problem.

The future of damp and mould management will not be judged by how quickly walls are repainted. It will be judged by how effectively landlords prevent the problem from returning.

The new reality is clear. Prevention is no longer simply good property management. It is one of the best investments a landlord can make in protecting tenants, properties and the long term value of a portfolio.

As Principal Sponsor of the DASH Services Conference, ArcAirTech is proud to support landlords who are adopting a more informed and proactive approach to healthier homes. We look forward to meeting delegates and discussing how immediate response, effective investigation and long term prevention can work together to stop mould coming back.

Sources and legal context

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Crackdown on dangerous rented homes as new £7k fines kick in, 21 June 2026.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, The New Decent Homes Standard: policy statement, 28 January 2026.
- UK Government, Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home, updated 1 April 2026.