

# Homeowner Advice Booklet

## Condensation & Damp



Commissioned by:



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## Disclaimers:

The websites printed in this booklet are not endorsed by Ridgewater Energy or Dorset Council. Information has been collated from a range of sources, including, but not limited to: National Energy Action, Gov.UK.

Tips and advice stated in this booklet are suggestions and therefore may not be applicable to every home. Seek professional advice if you are unsure and always follow manufacturers guidelines when using any product.

Website links may be updated periodically, try searching the relevant words in Google to find the new website link.

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### Did you know:

- A family of four can produce up to an extra 30-40 litres of water from breathing each week, and all this can be added to the air in the home!
- Drying clothes indoors can add up to 10-15 litres of moisture each week – more if it's big thick jumpers and towels you are drying!
- Other household activities like showering, bathing and washing can add an additional 20 litres of moisture each week!

# What causes condensation?

During the Autumn and Winter, many homes experience condensation.

This happens when warm moist air comes into contact with a cold surface, like a window, a tiled area, a toilet cistern, mirrors or an external wall.

This results in water droplets forming on those surfaces, which can lead to smelly black mould, which can in some cases lead to health issues. It can also cause considerable damage to items such as clothes, furniture, shoes, books and decorations.

Condensation can occur in any property, it can be just as severe in a very modern home, as it can be in an old draughty home.

This is because some modern homes may be very well insulated and heated, but not have sufficient ventilation.

Some older homes may be well ventilated, but may not be insulated well enough, to be able to heat up properly and maintain that warmth.



# Do's and don'ts

## Heating



### MAINTAIN TEMPERATURE

- Maintain a regular and even heat in the property whenever possible.
- Condensation tends to form on surfaces when the internal temperature drop below 15°C
- Ideally maintain the inside temperature of your home at between 18 – 21°C.

### THERMOSTAT CONTROL

Control your heating effectively using your room thermostat, heating programmer/timer and thermostatic radiator valves:

<http://shorturl.at/hoD09>



### REMOVE OBSTRUCTIONS

Keep radiators and heaters clear and free from obstructions like furniture in front of them.



### WARM THE ROOM



Make sure you have warmed up the room before opening a window – warm air lifts moisture off surfaces and then it can travel out through the windows.

### STORAGE HEATERS

When using older storage heaters, use the input, output and boost controls as laid out in our guide:



[shorturl.at/gMNT1](http://shorturl.at/gMNT1)

## Ventilation

### DRYING

If you must dry clothes indoors, open the windows but close the door to that room.



### FURNITURE

- Keep furniture at least 100mm/4 inches away from walls to allow air to circulate.
- Do not overfill wardrobes and keep them aired.

## BATHROOM & KITCHEN

- Use extractor fans in bathrooms, shower rooms and kitchens.
- Keep the bathroom door closed when showering or bathing.



### WINDOWS




- Open a window to allow moist air out & fresh air in.

- Keep your trickle vents open on your windows if needed.
- Keep fixed vents open and unblocked (in walls and in the underfloor).



## Insulation

### ENERGY PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

- You may be able to check your property's Energy Performance Certificate (EPC), to find out what insulation the property has: [www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate](http://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate) 
- Check the EPC to see if your walls are insulated.



### LOFT INSULATION



Check the loft, if you have one, to ensure it has 300mm/12 inches of insulation (anything over 150mm/6 inches is doing most of the job).

Ensure good ventilation is maintained in the roof space.

### RADIATORS



Put reflective foil behind radiators to reflect heat back into the room.

### CURTAINS

- Close curtains and blinds at dusk to keep the heat in.
- When the sun shines make sure the curtains or blinds are open.
- Keep curtains tucked behind radiators where possible




### WINDOWS



LOCAL ENERGY ADVICE  
PARTNERSHIP

Draught proof wooden doors and windows if you have them

(A free LEAP home visit will do this if you qualify:

[www.ridgewaterenergy.co.uk/projects-and-services/leap/](http://www.ridgewaterenergy.co.uk/projects-and-services/leap/) 



You could apply a shrink-to-fit window film to your windows.

## Housekeeping

### CLOTHES

- Hang up clothes outside even in cold weather.



- Wash any clothes, curtains etc effected by mould
- Don't take mouldy items to a new property with you!
- Leather shoes and handbags are particularly prone to damage – do not stack them up in dark corners of wardrobes, they may get damp and mouldy.



### DEHUMIDIFIER

You may need to use a dehumidifier if the moisture levels are really high.

### WINDOWS

- Wipe up any excess condensation on windows & window sills.
- Rubbing a small spot of washing up liquid to the inside of the window may help stop condensation forming on it.
- Cutting a potato in half and rubbing that on the window and buffing with a cloth afterwards may also help.



### KITCHEN

- Use saucepan lids on pans.
- Do not leave the kettle boiling.



### BATHROOM

When running a bath, add cold water first before the hot.



### TUMBLE DRYERS

Make sure if you use a tumble drier that it is vented to outside.





## What else creates moisture and can lead to condensation?

### AIR HUMIDIFIER

This adds moisture to the air.



### BOTTLE GAS MOBILE ROOM HEATERS

The burning of the gas, creates as much moisture as the amount of gas burnt.



### FISH TANKS WITH NO LIDS

The water in the tank will evaporate more quickly and add moisture to the air if it has no lid.



### BATHS & SHOWERS

Steam from baths and showers adds to moisture levels!



### SOAKING CROCKERY

Leaving pans and washing up soaking in the sink, adds evaporating water in to the air.



### KETTLES

Leaving a kettle boiling away creates lots of steam!



## Healthy Homes Dorset

Supported by Dorset Council, Public Health Dorset & BCP Council to help homeowners access advice, insulation funding and other energy saving improvements.

- Free energy advice for all households
- Cavity wall insulation
- Loft insulation

Not all residents will be eligible to receive funding, however, the qualifying criteria is more extensive than other funding schemes.

### Eligibility criteria

- Has a cardiovascular condition
- Has a respiratory condition
- Has a mental health condition
- Has a disability
- Is aged 65 or over
- Has a child under 5 living in the property
- Is living with addiction
- Has attended hospital due to a fall
- Is a recent immigrant or asylum seeker
- Has a low income
- Is armed or ex-armed forces
- Had a recent bereavement
- Is pregnant

All funding is subject to terms and conditions.



SCAN  
**ME!**

[www.healthyhomesdorset.org.uk](http://www.healthyhomesdorset.org.uk)

## Local Energy Advice Partnership

LEAP (Local Energy Advice Partnership) provides residents with a free in-person advice home visit, along with the fitting of free energy saving devices and measures, to help cut energy bills.

During the LEAP visit, we may be able to offer the following:

- Free energy advice, including on heating control use, condensation prevention, appliance use, bills, checking meters etc.
- We may refer the most vulnerable for free appliances, which may include fridge-freezers, electric cookers, heated airers & dehumidifiers.
- Free energy saving measures installed, such as LED lightbulbs, draught proofing, remote controlled sockets and chimney balloons.
- Referrals to other support agencies including Citizens Advice, the Fire Service and many others.
- Referrals for funded insulation measures.

### Eligibility criteria

- Total annual household income less than £31,000

#### Or:

- Income or Contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance.
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance / Income Support
- Pension Guarantee / Savings Credit
- Child Tax Credit / Working Tax Credit / Universal Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Reduction (not single persons discount)
- A Disability Benefit (Incl. Attendance Allowance, Carer's Allowance, DLA, PIP, Severe Disablement Allowance)
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit



**SCAN  
ME!**

[www.ridgewaterenergy.co.uk/projects-and-services/leap](http://www.ridgewaterenergy.co.uk/projects-and-services/leap)

# Energy & Money Saving Booklet

Ridgewater Energy have a range of electronic / printed resources to raise awareness of the funding schemes we offer. These include an Energy & Money Saving Booklet, which is tailored specifically to the Dorset Council area. It provides a comprehensive range of tips and advice, to help reduce bills and maintain a warmer, more healthy home.

Tips include:

- Boiler and central heating usage
- How to effectively use storage heaters
- Energy use in the home
- Insulation
- Kitchen, food & shopping tips
- General hints and tips
- Budget planner
- Local agency contact details

## Dorset Council

Energy & Money Saving Advice Booklet:

[www.ridgewaterenergy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/dorset-energy-money-saving\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.ridgewaterenergy.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/dorset-energy-money-saving_booklet.pdf)



# Existing cavity wall issues

It is estimated that over 90% of all homes in Dorset that can have cavity wall insulation have been insulated already, but in rare cases there can be issues with the building, it's maintenance or the installation itself. In those situations you may have a guarantee on the work and may be able to seek remediation through that guarantee. You can approach the below organisations to check on this.

## Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency

Start by checking with CIGA (Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency) that you have a valid guarantee in place, as you may have recourse to the installer, or another installer may be appointed to rectify any issues. However, any guarantee will be void if any building works have since taken place, for example, wall ties, damp proof course, extensions added, or windows changed.

**CIGA Cavity Wall Guarantee Agency**  
[www.ciga.co.uk](http://www.ciga.co.uk) 



**CAVITY INSULATION**  
GUARANTEE AGENCY

## Installation Assurance Authority

The IAA (Installation Assurance Authority) framework gives property owners the confidence that insulation work is carried out to the highest standards and subject to a level of rigour and surveillance, which helps ensure it is done 'right first time'. The IAA accredited members cover a range of energy saving measures, including air source heat pumps, solar PV, solar thermal and insulation.

**Installation Assurance Authority**  
[www.theiaa.co.uk](http://www.theiaa.co.uk) 



# Check list and action plan

Confused about where to start?

We suggest you start by looking at the following...

(Depending on your own circumstances)

- Do the bathroom and kitchen have an extractor fan or extracting cooker hood? Do they work and are they clean?
- Check if your windows have trickle vents - make sure they are at least partly open during the colder months in the daytime.
- Get out the saucepan lids and start using them when boiling or heating anything up on the hob.
- Can you lock your window open if it's on the ground floor? A lockable window catch helps maintain security whilst you ventilate.
- Check your property's insulation – is the loft insulated sufficiently? Are the walls insulated? Is there a habitable room in the roof or an accessible underfloor area or basement that needs insulating?
- Do not leave your dishes and pans soaking for more than an hour or two!
- Try to avoid drying clothes indoors wherever possible! (especially thick or large items which contain more water/moisture!)
- Open the curtains and let in the daylight when you can – even better when the sun shines!
- Minimise clutter – lots of items in a home can block air circulation, soak up heat and increase the risk of mould forming.
- Spend some time working out how your heating controls work.
- Keep a record of how much energy you use (electricity/gas) or check your smart meter in-house display or online account/app – this can help you understand what the heating uses per day/week etc and how much your appliances might use!
- Refer to our 'Energy and Money Saving Booklet' for more useful advice to save energy and money, which may help you afford a bit more heating when you really need it!


# Help and assistance

## Need expert advice?

### **Dorset Council**

[www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/damp-mould-and-heating-advice](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/damp-mould-and-heating-advice) 

### **National Energy Action**

[www.nea.org.uk/get-help/resources/dealing-with-damp-and-condensation-national-energy-action-leaflet](http://www.nea.org.uk/get-help/resources/dealing-with-damp-and-condensation-national-energy-action-leaflet) 

### **Property Care Association's 'Find a specialist tool'**

[www.property-care.org](http://www.property-care.org) 

### **Mould Growth Consultants**

[www.mgcltd.co.uk](http://www.mgcltd.co.uk) 

## Further advice

Visit the Dorset cost-of-living pages for advice and support on energy bills, health and wellbeing: [www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/cost-of-living-help](http://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/w/cost-of-living-help) 

Citizens Advice offer support and advice on damp and mould:

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-common-problems/repairs-damp](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/housing/repairs-in-rented-housing/repairs-common-problems/repairs-damp) 

Search "Understanding damp and mould Gov UK" in Google or other search engine, for the most up to date advice and information.

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