

Cheshire West & Chester Council

Council Housing Management Service

Work to remedy the cause of damp and mould

What to Expect



Cheshire West
and Chester

Damp Proof Course (DPC)

A damp proof course (DPC) is a physical barrier that prevents water from moving up a wall. This process of water travelling up through walls is known as rising damp. You can either use liquid DPCs or physical DPCs to prevent this from happening.

A DPC is normally installed during construction of the property and is placed around 150mm above ground level of the property. DPC's are required as most of the materials used in construction are porous and allow moisture to be absorbed through a process known as 'capillary action'.

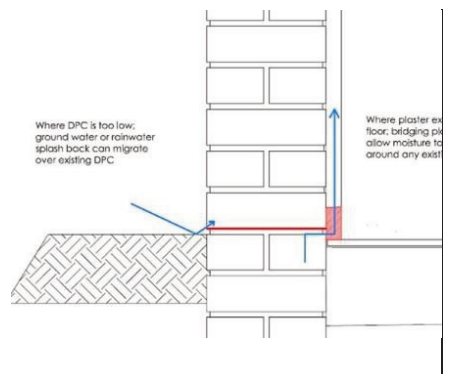
A DPC can fail due to deterioration or localised damage. A DPC is designed to last many years, so it is unusual for it to fail. The most common issue with a DPC is that it has been bridged which can be rectified by removing any internal breaching or reducing the level of ground outside.

In some cases a DPC can be replaced externally but in some occasions internal work such as removing and replacing plaster is required.



Bridging

Bridging occurs where dampness crosses over the damp proof course (DPC – see below) in the external wall. This happens when the external level around the property is higher than it should be which then allows rainwater or surface water to penetrate the property as there is not a sufficient gap between the damp proof course and the ground level.



Bridging can also be seen internally where moisture from the ground travels up through the walls through capillary action. There are many causes for bridging such as; debris in the cavity or internal plaster or external render overlapping the DPC.



Solutions to fix a bridged DPC can include external drainage trenches which allow for excess water to be drained away to the nearest outlet such as a gulley or drain, this diverts the water away from the property and prevents any breach of the DPC. If internal plaster is bridging the DPC, we need to cut it back and remove the skirting board until the DPC can be seen, and seal this with a damp resistant paint and/or de bridge this.

De-Bridging

Internal bridging or thermal bridging can be rectified by installing a new DPC (if required) and removing existing plastering and renewing to allow for a ventilation space between floor and plaster. This is referred to as de-bridging.

Loft Insulation

Loft insulation is a material installed in the loft of a property, between the joists. The insulation reduces heat loss from the living space below.

You will need to empty your loft of items for this work to take place. If only one area of the loft requires insulation, this area will need to be cleared.



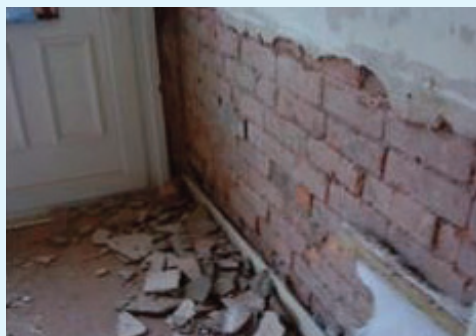
‘Hacking Off’ Plaster or ‘Back to Brick’

‘Hacking Off’ is a term used to describe the removal of existing plaster board and plaster from a wall, which will expose the brickwork to that wall. This type of preparation is required when there is a need to completely renew the plastering which has failed within a property.

Sometimes only 1 meter of plaster in height is removed, this is because we are just removing the damaged section of plaster and the rest of the plaster above is in good order. This helps to minimise disruption to your home if some of the plaster is in good order. Don’t worry we make good afterwards and the wall will be smooth when we’ve finished.

Installing a ‘thermal board up to 1m high’ involves the removal of the existing plaster and replace with thermal plaster board and make good.

If the wall we are working on has a radiator, we will need to remove this before works can start and once the plaster has dried, which typically takes



3-4 days, an appointment will be made to rehang this.

New skirting boards will need to be installed on the newly plastered walls. Before we can do this, we need to give the plaster at least 3-4 days to dry, so an appointment will be arranged after this.

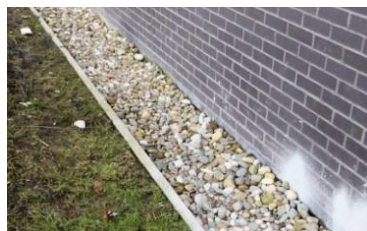
We will do our best to match any new skirting boards to the existing one, and if this is not possible, the closest match will be installed.

We have provided more information on pages 4 and 5 on what to expect when plastering works are required.

If we are planning to carry out works in numerous rooms, you can choose to have these carried out one room at a time rather than all at the same time.

Soakaway

This involves digging a small trench along the external wall of the property and filling the trench with stone. This allows any rainwater to disperse and not sit along the exterior walls.



Extractor Fan

Extractor fans are designed to remove excess moisture from the air within a property. They are normally found within the kitchen and bathroom of a property, both of which are rooms that have a high moisture level.

Extractor fans use a motorised impeller that draws air through the duct and removes the air from the room it is installed in. This allows the fan to draw fresh air from the rest of the property. It is important to have and use an extractor fan in high humidity rooms such as bathrooms and kitchen to remove humid air before it condenses which can result in mould and other damp related issues.

In certain circumstances an extractor fan may be fitted in the glazed unit of an existing window.



Pacifier Dehumidifier Vents

A new vent from the inside to the outside on an external wall. These vents are through the wall dehumidifier vents that operate continuously and silently. These vents are well suited to habitable rooms such as bedrooms and living rooms that have experience with high volumes of condensation. They work by allowing air to flow through the wall in a controlled manner and note the pressure differences between internal and external spaces which help the moisture heavy air to escape. These vents can extract around 2.3 litres of water a day which helps in the control of indoor humidity levels.

These deliver a constant airflow but on occasions you will be able to feel cold air being blown back in. Opening a window or vent can achieve the same outcome.

If you do not want a pacifier vent installed and would prefer to manage the condensation by opening a window and/or window vent in the room. There is lots of information available on our website on managing damp, which may help with your decision.



Internal Installation



External Installation

The planning of the remedial works

Nearer the time when the work will be carried out you will be contacted by the planning team, to make an appointment. If the work has been recommended from a damp survey this can take up to 50 working days. For all other large plastering jobs, the priority is to carry these out within 100 days.

Work to remedy the cause of damp and mould may need to be done in a set order. For example, an electrician may need to remove a light before plastering can start and then return afterwards. In the same way, a joiner can only install new skirting boards once the plaster work has dried and been completed.

If even one appointment is missed, all the follow on work that depends on it must be rearranged, as the sequence is disrupted. If this happens your works will be unavoidably delayed while we try to replan the sequence. Our tradespeople have full calendars several weeks or months in advance, so moving appointments at short notice is very difficult and can affect other tenants booked work as well.

Please try to keep all agreed appointments. If you can't make one, please let our Contractors Planning Team know as soon as possible so we can reduce delays and avoid costly wasted visits **by telephone** 0300 123 7724 or **by email**

Liberty.Planners@Liberty-group.co.uk

If we are planning to carry out works in numerous rooms, you can choose to have these carried out in phases rather than all at the same time to help with removal of contents from one room to another. Please tell the planning team when arranging the remedial works this is your preferred approach.

You will be given an approximate number of days from start to finish. Works will be carried out during working hours, Monday to Friday. All operatives on site will wear ID badges and safety signs will be visible.

What does the work involve?

The works may include the removal of existing plaster before re-plastering can be carried out. To gain access to the affected areas, it may be necessary to remove existing fittings such as tiles, skirting boards, kitchen units, cupboards, and other fixtures. Kitchen units and cupboards will be carefully removed and refitted once the plastering works have been completed and the new plaster has fully dried.

We will make every effort to match any other fittings or materials that require replacement, including tiles and skirting boards. However, where an exact match is unavailable or no longer manufactured, the closest suitable alternative will be installed. While every care will be taken throughout the works, the removal of certain fittings may be unavoidable to ensure that the repairs are completed correctly, effectively, and to the required standard.

In some cases, to resolve damp-related issues, we may only need to remove and replace the lower section of the affected wall, typically up to 1 metre in height. This allows for improved airflow between the floor and wall structure, helping to reduce moisture build-up and prevent future damp problems.

Re-plastering is undertaken in several stages, which includes:

- Preparing wall(s), which may include removing existing plasterboard.
- Priming wall(s)
- Applying plaster
- The plaster will need time to dry/cure for each of the stages within this process.
- If any of the walls being replastered have a radiator, we will arrange for this to be removed before works begin and re-hang it once the new plaster has dried sufficiently to hold its weight. This typically takes a minimum of 3 days to be sufficiently dry.
- We may have to remove the existing skirting boards and replace with a new one once the plaster is dry. We will do our best to match any new skirting to the existing one, if this is not possible, the closest match will be installed.

What do I need to do before and during the works being carried out?

Plastering work can be extremely dusty, we provide floor coverings and dust sheets, but we ask that you remove all valuables and any personal belongings such as furniture, ornaments, pictures, rugs, curtains within the area(s) to prevent damage.

If you cannot move large items of furniture elsewhere, please move them into the centre of the room. You must ensure that these items are covered and protected prior to work starting and that the area is clear for operatives to work. If you require assistance, please do inform us prior to the work being undertaken.

When work is being undertaken, we ask you to supervise pets and children at all times as well as take due care to ensure your own personal safety. Warning signs advising of potential hazards where work is being carried out may be placed at various locations. We ask that you do not ignore them as they are there for your safety and welfare.

How long does the plasterwork take to dry?

A newly plastered wall can take around 2-4 weeks, but this will be dependent on:

- Thickness of plaster
- Temperature and weather when undertaking the work
- Humidity in the room

To prevent the new plaster drying too quickly and causing cracks or hazing, we recommend providing some ventilation, by opening a window slightly and if heating is needed in your home due to the time of year, ensure that the radiator thermostat is turned on low in the room(s) that have been plastered, if it hasn't been removed to allow for the plastering works.

The plasterwork needs to fully dry before decorating. We do not paint the fresh plaster; it is your responsibility to decorate.

It is recommended that you should seal the new plaster using a 'mist coat'. To do this you can buy paint specially for bare plaster or you can dilute some emulsion paint with water and apply with a roller or brush. Usually anything between 20% - 40% water mix is fine (depends on the brand) please read the instructions on the paint tin and do your own research to find out what works best for you.

Who can I contact if I have any further questions regarding this work?

If you would like to ask further questions about this work, please get in touch with a member of our staff. Please contact your Housing Officer. Details on how to do this can be found on the contact us page on this website .

Accessing Cheshire West and Chester Council information and services

Council information is also available in audio, Braille, large print or other formats. If you would like information in another format or language, including British Sign Language, please email us at: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

You can also telephone: **0300 123 8 123**
or textphone: **18001 0300 123 8 123**
website: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk



Contact us on tel: **0300 123 7724**