mhs homes group | Customer Scrutiny Panel

Damp and mould service review

September-December 2025

Customers helping our customers

As members of the Customer Scrutiny Panel (CSP), we believe that listening to customers and understanding their experiences can make a real difference to the services mhs provides.

We chose to review the Damp and Mould Service because we wanted to understand what it feels like to be a customer experiencing damp and mould in their home, recognise what is working well and identify where further improvements could be made.

Our review brought together the experiences of customers and officers, helping us understand the service from both perspectives.

The timing of our review

Our review commenced during a period of significant change for the Damp and Mould Service, as mhs was preparing for the new regulatory requirements that came into effect on 27 October 2025.

mhs was introducing dedicated resources, new ways of working, clearer procedures, additional training, new technology and specialist contractor arrangements.

It is important to recognise that some of the customer experiences we heard about related to the service before these new arrangements were fully in place.

We have therefore used these experiences as valuable learning to help shape the continued development of the service, rather than assuming they reflect the service customers receive under the new arrangements.

The next stage is to understand whether these changes are making a positive difference to customers.

How we carried out our review

We wanted our review to be based on real experiences, rather than relying on performance information alone.

To help us understand the service, we:

- Received 91 responses to our customer survey.
- Held 12 more detailed telephone conversations with customers.
- Provided opportunities for customers to share their experiences through drop-in sessions.
- Visited customers in their homes.
- Accompanied officers on inspections and post-inspections.
- Spoke with officers and managers from across mhs and its specialist damp and mould contractor, Guildmore.
- Reviewed policies, procedures, performance information and customer communications.

Bringing this information together helped us understand not only what happened, but how the experience felt for customers.

What customers told us

What was working well

There were many positive messages from our customer survey:

- **80%** found it easy to report their damp and mould problem.
- **81%** felt the inspector listened to and understood their concerns.

- **93%** said their problem was correctly identified first time.
- **80%** rated the overall service as good to excellent.
- **76%** felt valued as a customer throughout the process.

During our visits, we also saw examples of officers taking time to listen, explain what they were doing and identify additional problems in customers' homes.

We were encouraged by the commitment of the people delivering the service and their willingness to share ideas for further improvement.

Where customers wanted to see improvements

Our survey and wider conversations also highlighted areas where the customer experience could be better.

Customers told us they wanted:

- Clearer information about what was happening and what would happen next.
- Updates without having to chase for information.
- Their health, household circumstances and individual needs to be understood.
- Appointment arrangements that recognise their work, family and other commitments.
- The underlying cause of damp and mould to be resolved, rather than simply treating visible mould.
- Work to be completed to a good standard.
- Follow-up to check that the problem had been resolved.
- Opportunities to provide feedback about their experience.

One finding that particularly stood out to us was that **75% of those responding to the survey question about household needs or vulnerabilities said these had not been discussed.**

We believe understanding individual needs and using that information to shape the service is particularly important.

What officers helped us understand

Our conversations with officers helped us recognise the considerable work already undertaken by mhs to improve the Damp and Mould Service.

We heard about clearer responsibilities, dedicated teams, improved risk assessments, additional training, new technology and specialist contractor arrangements.

We also heard about some of the challenges officers face when delivering the service, including information being held in different systems, communication between teams, keeping customer information up to date and managing demand during busy periods.

We particularly valued the openness of officers, who were willing to talk about both the improvements already made and the opportunities to do things differently.

Where customer and officer insight came together

One of the most valuable findings from our review was how often customers and officers independently identified the same challenges.

Both recognised the importance of better communication, joined-up information, understanding individual needs, flexible appointments, quality checks and learning from customer feedback.

This gave us greater confidence about where further improvement should be focused.

Customers helped us understand where the journey could be better. Officers helped us understand why.

For customers, damp and mould is one journey. They do not see separate teams, systems or contractors. To them, everyone represents mhs.

We believe the opportunity now is to join the improvements already made together around the customer.

Our seven recommendations

We identified seven priority areas to support the continued improvement of the Damp and Mould Service.

1. One clear customer journey

Make sure customers understand what happens from their first report through to final resolution, who is dealing with their case and what they can expect.

2. Joined-up information and systems

Make sure the people delivering the service have access to the information they need to support customers and answer their questions.

3. Individual needs shape the service

Make sure customers' health, household circumstances and individual needs are understood and make a practical difference to the service they receive.

4. Proactive communication and flexible appointments

Keep customers informed without them having to chase and recognise their individual circumstances when arranging appointments.

5. Right-first-time resolution and quality assurance

Make sure the underlying cause of damp and mould is addressed, work is completed to a good standard and appropriate checks are carried out to ensure the problem has been resolved.

6. Customer feedback drives learning

Use customer experiences, satisfaction feedback and complaints to understand what is working well and where further changes are needed.

7. Capacity and performance remain resilient

Continue to review resources, training and service performance to ensure customers receive a responsive service, particularly during periods of higher demand.

How will we know things have improved?

For the CSP, making recommendations is only part of our role.

We also want to understand what difference those recommendations make to customers.

When we follow up this review, we will be looking for evidence that:

- Customers are better informed and fewer need to chase for updates.
- Individual needs are understood and influence how the service is delivered.
- Appointments work better for customers.
- Damp and mould problems are genuinely resolved and fewer problems return.
- Customers are satisfied with the quality of completed work.
- Customer feedback is being used to make improvements.
- The service continues to meet regulatory requirements during periods of increased demand.

We believe success should not simply be measured by whether an action has been completed, but by whether customers experience a better service as a result.

What has changed – and can customers feel the difference?

Our conclusion

We believe mhs has put much stronger foundations in place for managing damp and mould.

The next stage is to continue developing the service as customers' experiences of the new arrangements help identify what is working well and where further improvements can be made.

This review has also provided valuable learning for the CSP. Just as we ask mhs to remain open to challenge, learning and new ideas, we believe the same applies to us.

Customer scrutiny is not about finding fault.

It is about listening, learning, recognising what works and helping services improve.

Thank you for helping us make a difference

We would like to thank every customer who completed our survey, spoke with us or welcomed us into their home.

We also thank the officers, managers and contractors who gave their time, shared their knowledge and welcomed customer scrutiny.

By sharing your experiences, you have helped us do much more than produce a report. You have helped us identify improvements that could benefit other customers.

As members of the Customer Scrutiny Panel, we freely give our time because we believe customers can make a real contribution to improving services for other customers.

Customer Scrutiny Panel – mhs homes