

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

COUNCIL – 14 DECEMBER 2022

QUESTION E

Councillor Srivastava to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lowe:

“Councils are being asked to undertake local assessment of homes that are affected by damp and mould issues and details any actions that need to be taken to remedy these issues following the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak.

May I ask the Leader of this Council how many assessments have taken place this year and how many properties in Rugby have mould or damp issues?”

Councillor Lowe, Leader of the Council, to reply as follows:

“With regards to the private rented sector we have large numbers of rented properties and no formal scheme for identifying them. There is no national registration or licensing scheme. We do have a Private Rented Sector Charter to support tenants and landlords, but we work mainly reactively although we are currently looking at a proactive scheme. Updated damp and mould advice is available on our web site at https://www.rugby.gov.uk/info/20077/private_rented_accommodation/154/health_and_safety_in_private_rented_accommodation/5

Our reactive work comes from various requests for service from our internal teams, such as the Housing Advice & Benefits Team, as well as complaints from Councillors and direct from the tenant or tenant representatives. From 1 January 2021 to 12 December 2021 the Council received and investigated 165 service requests for advice and action on housing issues, 34 of those resulted in further enforcement actions on damp and mould.

In terms of our own housing stock, we encourage any tenants that are concerned about potential mould or condensation in their homes to contact us so that we can arrange an inspection to ascertain the potential cause and provide appropriate advice and remediation. The causes can be varied, and only in the last few days, we found one reported case where the issue turned out to be a consequence of a leak in the washing machine in the flat above.

181 such inspections have taken place during 2022 in respect of 268 issues recorded (this includes duplication where more than one report was made per property).

A squad has been set up to pro-actively visit our properties to assess the potential for condensation and mould. The priority will be to visit those homes that are most vulnerable to the effects of cold – those with the lowest Energy Performance Certificates and those where tenants are known to be potentially financially vulnerable with paying their rent. In addition, our Independent Living co-ordinators are reaching out and visiting residents living in our independent living schemes to identify any potential issues with mould and condensation, as well as provide advice and signposting for additional support to those that may need it.

It should also be noted that our contractors, officers and surveyors visit properties daily, for example for managing repairs, offering support in respect of tenancy sustainment and gas servicing. Any issues identified, in respect of condensation and mould will routinely be reported back to the property repairs team for follow up.”