
WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

MANAGING DAMP AND MOULD

This policy defines how we will respond to reports of damp and mould and implementation of actions to prevent recurrence.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Damp and mould causes serious concern because of its health and wellbeing impacts for residents but is a particular issue for residents living in accommodation that is either rented, council owned or temporary.

1.1 This policy defines how we will respond to reports of damp and mould and implementation of actions to prevent recurrence. The Damp and Mould Policy will achieve lasting improvement in how we tackle damp and mould and will set out how we will meet the requirements of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and specifically reports of damp and mould within the following sectors:-

- Council owned homes.
- Private rented sector homes.

2. PURPOSE

2.1 The purpose of the policy is for us and our residents to work together to solve the causes leading to damp and mould in people's homes and to control, manage and eradicate damp.

2.2 The key aim is to provide assurances for residents that effective processes are in place to resolve issues of damp and mould in their homes.

2.3 It is our objective to make sure the fabric of council and private sector leased homes is effectively maintained to prevent damp and mould, disrepair and are compliant with the requirements of Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

2.4 We will adopt clear processes for staff and contractors to report, monitor and manage concerns regarding damp and mould.

2.5 We will elevate awareness and understanding of the causes and remedies for damp and mould with residents and council officers.

2.6 We will provide guidance, advice and assistance for residents living in properties of all tenures.

3. THE COUNCIL'S PRINCIPLES TO RESOLVING DAMP AND MOULD

3.1 To achieve long term improvement in dealing with damp and mould, our policy and action plan are guided by the following principles:

- Ensure that an effective response to damp and mould is provided to residents regardless of the route through which reports are made.
- Treat all residents who report issues with damp and mould with respect, empathy, demonstrating an appreciation of the seriousness of the problem.
- Take a proactive approach to identifying and resolving the causes of damp and mould in council owned properties.
- Ensure that a thorough assessment is undertaken to identify the cause of damp and mould, with all options being considered. Lifestyle and occupation should never be the default explanation.
- Develop awareness to prompt behaviour change, understanding, and above all, good support. Provide information about reducing condensation in a sensitive way that avoids blaming and stigmatising residents. Train staff and contractors.
- Clearly signpost our and resident's responsibilities in the handling all reports of damp and mould.
- Provide residents with really good support and guidance to help reduce the likelihood of damp and mould reoccurring in their home.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 We are required to meet statutory duties set out in the following:

- Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018
- Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Decent Homes Standard (DHS)
- Section 4 of the Defective Premises Act 1972
- Social Housing Regulation Bill (HL) 2024
- Section 3 & 4 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The above can be accessed via the <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/site>

4.2 Our responsibilities are set by the Housing Regulator relating to damp and mould and can be accessed through the Regulator of Social Housing - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

4.3 Residents are required to follow the instructions and guidance set out in the Tenancy Handbook:

4.5 [Our housing tenancy agreement and handbook](#) [Tenants Handbook](#) - Winchester City Council sets out the

specific responsibilities for residents which include:

- Reporting to us as soon as possible any evidence of damp and/or faulty equipment that will hamper the management and control of damp and condensation (e.g. faulty extractor fan, unable to open windows, lack of heating etc.).
- Regularly check and clean off mould as soon as it is discovered.
- Allowing access for inspections and for the carrying out of remedial works as set out in the Tenancy/ Lease Agreement.
- Managing moisture in their homes by eliminating/minimising the conditions that lead to condensation by following the guidance provided to them by us.
- Practicable and reasonable measures will be made available to residents to suitably manage condensation in their homes with further advice and support provided by us if difficulty occurs.
- If a resident fails to properly heed the advice/guidance provided and take reasonable steps to eliminate /minimise the effects of condensation, the resident may be recharged for any resulting repairs.

5. RESPECTING DIVERSE NEEDS

5.1 GENERAL DUTY

5.1.1 Our Nov 2021 Public Sector Equality Duty Policy states that we will ensure its policies and services meet the needs of all its service users and are delivered in a fair, flexible, efficient and accessible way.

The Housing Service Accessibility Statement sets out the measures taken to meet this standard and applies to how we should handle contact from service users for all elements of the service including queries relating to damp and mould.

5.2 HOUSING ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

5.2.1 These measures require staff to design contact and communication around the individual. Respect what we already know about people or ask them what would help. By taking this approach the outcome is more likely to be successful; plus it should mean that residents will be happier, that there will be less work and conflict for us, from follow up and complaints as well as saving the organisation costs.

5.2.2 Monitoring performance against this standard (for those living in council homes) is through the annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey which looks for variances between household groups to check for disparities in service delivery. The survey also asks about ease of use,

fairness and respect. Survey reports can be found on the website.

5.3 TENANTS SATISFACTION SURVEY - WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

5.3.1 At the point of contact service users will be asked about their needs and communication preferences and this will be checked with our records and updated as appropriate. Any early indications that the household will require a bespoke approach (e.g. language, culture, literacy, health, neurodiverse, cognitive impairment) will be highlighted to the Property Surveyor and/or Tenancy Sustainment team. Moderate and high-level cases are automatically passed to the Tenancy Sustainment Team to check for support required.

5.3.2 It is critical to be aware that some people are more sensitive to damp and mould than others, including:

- Babies and children
- Older people
- Those with existing skin problems, such as atopic eczema
- Those with respiratory problems, such as allergies and asthma
- Those with a weakened immune system, such as those having chemotherapy.

6. CAUSES OF DAMP AND MOULD

6.1 One of the most common issues for residents is the causes and outcomes of dampness and mould in their homes. Condensation and Dampness is a condition that affects many homes and has become the major cause of dampness, typically causing mould growth on ceilings, walls, furniture and personal effects. Mould can encourage the growth of mites, which feed on mould and can increase the risk of respiratory and other illnesses for some people. Condensation is particularly common in homes which are inadequately heated and poorly ventilated and will usually get worse in the colder winter months. There are however other causes of dampness that are less easy to diagnose and resolve which are rising damp and penetrating damp.

6.2 PENETRATING DAMPNESS is a result of moisture that might originate from building defects such as

- Leaking pipes, wastes, drainage and overflows
- Rainwater from defective roof coverings, blocked or leaking gutters and broken pipes.
- Dampness around windows, through walls and due to raised ground levels.
- Cold bridging

6.3 RISING DAMP is when moisture rises through the walls of a building. The common cause is a breakdown or the bridging of the damp proof course/membrane. Debris piled up against the outside of a wall that is higher than the damp proof course can cause bridging which will lead to rising damp. Buildings constructed prior to 1876 were built without a damp proof course.

6.4 CONDENSATION is prevalent in homes which are inadequately heated, poorly ventilated and insufficiently insulated. There will always be moisture present in the air, which is not evident until it condenses onto cold surfaces. Controlling and managing moisture in the air is critical to minimising condensation.

6.5 Moisture is released into the air through normal daily activities such as breathing, washing, cooking, drying clothes, showering and bathing. Typically, a family of four will introduce around 20 pints of water into the air within their home each day. When the air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture and the water condenses on cold surfaces like windows or external walls, or other cold surfaces within the fabric of the property.

6.6 Ventilation is key to removing moist air and preventing condensation. This should be provided through extractor fans in bathrooms and kitchens, air bricks, and trickle vents

6. CAUSES OF DAMP AND MOULD (CONTINUED)

in windows. However, when these ventilation systems are absent or not performing as they should, condensation can occur and mould growth can develop.

6.7 The appearance of mould may be black, white, yellow or green in colour, depending on the specific type of mould and the surface that it grows on. It can often be found in corners, on or near windows, in or behind furniture that is situated close to walls.

6.8 The lasting way of avoiding condensation and mould growth is to minimise moisture in the air that can condense onto cold surfaces:

- By increasing insulation to the structure,
- Introducing effective ventilation,
- Ensuring homes have an effective heating system.
- Working with residents to understand what they can do to manage the moisture in their homes and reduce condensation dampness.

CHAPTER 1



COUNCIL OWNED HOMES

7. RESPONDING TO REPORTS OF DAMP AND MOULD

7.1 This section of the policy sets out the process by which reports of damp and mould either received directly from residents or through other channels will be managed. It defines the actions taken to diagnose the cause and provide solutions for resolving the problem.

7.2 To speed up diagnosis and dealing with reports of condensation and damp from council residents or other sources, steps A-H below should be undertaken by the Customer Repairs Team (CRT) direct calls from residents will be triaged based on whether it is a new or existing report, so that the team will be able to establish priority cases.

7.3 The emphasis will be for the Customer Repairs Team (CRT) to:

1. To check for residents needs and vulnerabilities using the dashboard in Orchard.
2. Establish the cause(s) of the damp, mould or condensation from a discussion with the resident.
3. Ask residents to provide photos to assist the Customer Repairs Team to triage the report more effectively.
4. Assess the extent of condensation, damp and mould in accordance with the risk ratings outlined in the table below and apply the relevant actions.

5. Respond sensitively, assess the issue, identify the severity of the damp and mould and potential risks to residents and action accordingly.

6. Ensure residents are informed about the steps that will be taken to address any issues and the timeframes for the work.

7.4 All moderate and high-risk Damp and Mould cases to be reported to the Tenancy Sustainment Team (via the TenancySustainment@wincheser.gov.uk inbox). The resident will be contacted to assess whether they may benefit from support for any underlying tenancy related issues.

7.5 RESPONSE PROCESS FOR HRA PROPERTIES

7.5.1 There are 3 levels as to how damp and mould will be reviewed at the time it is reported and are Low; Moderate and High. Each has a different outcome in terms of the action that we will engage with. The Housing Regulator has set clear guidelines on what we should do when receiving reports of damp and mould from residents. The response formula below largely follows that guidance and seeks to provide guidance initially to residents for self-help. The triaging of initial calls by the CRT will determine the most appropriate action. If the damp and mould is minimal then residents will be guided on how to manage the condensation and clean off mould growth. If the condition is moderate or high, then a surveyor will visit to make a detailed assessment. In cases where mould growth is found to be extreme the residents may need to be decanted. The Tenancy Sustainment Team should be notified of all moderate and high-level cases as they may have knowledge of a resident's needs and can guide accordingly. A weekly report of all damp and mould reported cases is to be created and forward to the Tenancy Sustainment Team to review.

RISK RATING	REPORTED ISSUE	ACTIONS
LOW	Condensation or slight mould on or around windows.	1. Request the resident sends in photographs. To a new email address i.e reportmould@winchester.gov.uk **
	Minor amount of mould on the extremities of walls and ceilings.	2. Advise the resident to wipe off any condensation when seen and to clean off any minor amounts of mould, using an appropriate mould prevention solution of their choice. 3. Information leaflet to be sent to the resident. 4. The Repairs Team to call the resident 6 weeks from the initial report date to ascertain if the problem has been resolved. 5. If not, then instruct a contractor to undertake a mould clean within 5 working days

MODERATE

Black mould occurring on the extremities of external walls and behind furniture.

Large amounts of condensation on windows.
Damp and musty smell in the affected areas.

1. Request the resident sends in photographs. reportmould@winchester.gov.uk**
2. If an inspection is required a Winchester City Council Surveyor to attend within 10 working days of receipt of the resident's report.
3. As required the surveyor will instruct a contractor to undertake a mould clean within 1 working day.
4. The surveyor's report will identify the cause of the damp/mould and incorporate the following:
 - Identifying whether the property is suitably heated.
 - Identifying whether the property has sufficient insulation and meets EPC band C.
 - Identifying whether the property is properly ventilated.
 - Ensure that the residents understand their role with managing moisture in their home.
 - The surveyor will raise identified works i.e. humidistat installation(s), insulation top up
5. The Repairs Team to call the resident 6 weeks from the initial report date to ascertain if the problem has been resolved.
6. If the problem has not been resolved then a APS should attend to conduct further investigation to identify possible building defects, using appropriate means. The Area Property Surveyor to liaise with the Tenancy Sustainment officer on their findings and whether support is being provided. If appropriate, joint visits with the Area Property Surveyor and Tenant Sustainment Officer to the resident to help resolve damp and mould occurring in the home.

RISK RATING	REPORTED ISSUE	ACTIONS
HIGH	Excessive amounts of black mould on external and internal walls that cannot be managed with household products.	1. Request the resident sends in photographs: reportmould@winchester.gov.uk** 2. Refer the matter to our Area Property Surveyor. 3. If remaining in the homes is not advised the tenant will be offered a move into temporary accommodation. 4. The surveyor will, instruct a contractor to undertake a mould clean within 1 working day if decanting the residents is not necessary. 5. The surveyor will instruct a specialist relevantly qualified damp and mould surveyor to conduct a full damp investigation to determine the potential causes of damp. • Identifying whether the property is suitably heated. • Identifying whether the property has sufficient insulation and meets EPC band C. • Identifying whether the property is properly ventilated. • Ensure that the residents understand their role with managing moisture in their home. • The surveyor will raise identified works i.e. humidistat installation(s), insulation top up 6. The outcome of the investigation will be to ensure: 7. The surveyor will call the resident 6 weeks from when works are completed to ascertain if the problem has been resolved. 8. Conduct a full review of the property and further remedial work, if the follow up found that treatment was unsuccessful, and damp and mould reappeared.
	White staining on lower walls and salty substance present on lower walls. (Efflorescence)	The Area Property Surveyor to liaise with the Tenancy Sustainment officer on their findings and whether support is being provided. If appropriate, joint visits with the Area Property Surveyor and Tenant Sustainment Officer to the resident to help resolve damp and mould occurring in the home.

** Where residents are unable to take photos and family/friends are not able to assist on their behalf, we will make appropriate arrangements.

7.6 PERFORMANCE MEASURES for how we will monitor managing damp and mould. Performance information to be reported on a weekly basis via the Winchester City Council website and internal communication channels.

- Number of damp and mould cases for low; moderate; high received each month.
- Source of the report of damp and mould.
- Number of cases awaiting an inspection by criteria.
- Number of cases where work determined within 7 days after inspection.
- Number of cases completed and signed off by criteria.
- Number of cases by criteria that have been reinspected within 3 months. (initial treatment/works has failed)
- Average no of weeks in which cases are resolved.
- A schedule of all damp cases to be maintained that includes the date first reported, the date case is closed and the number of weeks the case was open.
- Tenant satisfaction with the process.
- Number of cases where tenancy sustainment has supported household.

The Repairs Team Manager/Supervisor will maintain and update weekly the damp and mould case schedule and circulate to all relevant staff.

7.7 RESPONSE PROCESS FOR LEASEHOLD PROPERTIES

- Leaseholders are responsible for the interiors of their homes. We would not undertake works within a Leaseholders' home unless the cause was due to a defect in the structure of the building and the damp was as a direct result.
- In such cases the leaseholder would be asked to submit photographs providing the location(s) of the damp, for referral and consideration by the Area Surveyor for review and action.
- These cases need to be referred to the Home Ownership Service via homeownership@winchester.gov.uk
- Home Ownership Officer will work with APS to investigate whether this is a property defect. It should be confirmed if under the respective lease what liability we have to rectify the issue.

7.8 RESPONSE PROCESS FOR VOID PROPERTIES

- Apply the relevant triage and inspection steps outlined in Section 7 to void properties
- We must ensure that the accommodation provided is free from serious hazards, including damp and mould, and that homes are fit for habitation.

8. COMMS AND GUIDANCE

- We will publish effective and easy to follow guidance leaflets on how residents can manage moisture and condensation in their homes.
- We will ensure that advice and support about damp and mould is provided at all community events.
- We will regularly review and update the website providing guidance and support to residents to report damp and mould.
- We will contact tenants who live in homes which are similar to those that have experienced damp and mould so that we do not rely on tenants having to contact us.

9. TRAINING

9.1 All applicable council housing staff and term contractors should understand the causes of damp and mould, why it is crucial to address them and should be trained to:

- Understand the health risks of damp and mould and the importance of acting quickly to protect residents.
- Understand that some residents might be at a greater risk of the health harms from damp and mould.
- Understand the need to 'make every contact count' and look for signs of damp and mould when carrying out home visits by both contractors and our officers.
- Take residents' reports seriously, give a first assessment as to the severity of damp and mould, and be able to pass it on quickly to someone trained to make a judgement on the root cause (or causes) of the issue.
- Understand the need to identify and address the underlying causes of damp and mould, not just remove visible mould.
- Be sensitive to residents' circumstances and ensure they are not blamed for damp and mould.
- Ensure that repairs are undertaken within a reasonable timescale and that trades people are competent to undertake the nature of the work required.
- Understand the discrimination some residents can face when experiencing damp and mould, such as discrimination based on race or religion when reporting problems.
- Be conscious that changes to residents' personal or financial circumstances might impact their ability to maintain their homes or heat or ventilate them adequately.
- Understand corporate policies, processes and data handling related to damp and mould.
- Include a detailed introduction to damp & mould in all new starter inductions (where applicable)
- Offering reassurances at each stage

CHAPTER 2



HOMES IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

10.1 The cause and potential health consequences of damp, mould and condensation in private rented homes is no different to our housing stock and the advice previously given in respect of our own housing tenants on to how to deal with damp and avoid, in particular, the build - up of condensation and mould, will similarly apply to tenants in the private rented sector.

10.2 Complaints of damp, mould and condensation in private rented homes will be investigated by our Private Sector Housing (PSH) team. Tenants of residential social landlord (RSL) properties should follow their own housing association guidelines on how to report problems of damp and mould. Further information for both private and RSL tenants on what their landlords should be doing to address damp and mould issues are detailed in the guidance document 'Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home' available on the GOV.UK web site:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/damp-and-mould-understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-for-rented-housing-providers/understanding-and-addressing-the-health-risks-of-damp-and-mould-in-the-home--2>

10.3 However, in the first instance

and before PSH will become involved tenants must first have written to their landlord to discuss their circumstances to try and resolve matters informally themselves.

10.4 Following discussions with their landlord should tenants still feel their situation has not improved, or they don't hear back or their landlord refuses to take action in a reasonable amount of time, they can contact the Private Sector Housing team on telephone number **01962 848 526** or email: **privatesectorhousing@winchester.gov.uk**

10.5 ENFORCEMENT ACTION

10.5.1 In response to a direct complaint or referral, we can undertake an inspection of a property and assess the conditions using the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS).

10.5.2 Deficiencies identified in a property are determined as either serious Category 1 hazards or lower scoring Category 2 hazards. Damp and mould and excess cold are all conditions that are covered by the HHSRS, although damp and mould would usually have to be very serious to meet the threshold of a Category 1 hazard.

10.5.3 When a hazard or hazards have been identified and the landlord has

failed to act to resolve the issue, we will serve a legal document called an Improvement Notice on the landlord to make repairs. In more serious cases we will prohibit the use of a property, sometimes suspended until the current tenancy comes to an end to avoid making households homeless.

10.5.4 Where a landlord fails to make improvements or improve poor management then we can also issue a financial penalty notice (FPN) of up to £30,000. For serious breaches, or where there is previous history of non-compliance, we in extreme cases can also prosecute the landlord.

10.5.5 Guidance on HHSRS provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government can be found at:-
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/9425/150940.pdf

10.6 PRIVATE LANDLORDS ARE REQUIRED TO MEET STATUTORY DUTIES

- Environmental health and nuisance laws, in particular 'statutory nuisance' under section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.
- Section 10 of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 requires a privately rented home must be fit to live in. It gives a checklist of factors to consider that

are issues for landlords to address which include damp and mould.

- Decent Homes Standard 2006
- The Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 creates a new right for tenants where their landlords have failed to maintain their home to the appropriate standard in an attempt to improve housing conditions for tenants.
- Defective Premises Act (DPA) (1972) – Under section 4(1) of the DPA, a duty of care is imposed on landlords to ensure that users of their property are reasonably safe from damage or personal injury attributable to a relevant defect. A tenant may be able to claim compensation if their home has been severely damaged or they have suffered adverse health effects due to the condition of the premises such as due to damp and mould.

10.7 ENFORCEMENT OF MINIMUM ENERGY EFFICIENCY STANDARDS (MEES)

10.7.1 Enforcement of energy-efficiency standards are the primary legal tool through which we (PSH) can take a proactive action to prevent damp and mould in homes in the private rented sector. Private rented sector properties are required to have a EPC of E or higher under Minimum

Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) regulations. Unless they qualify for an exemption (for example if the property is a listed building), landlords letting out properties with EPCs of F or G may be subject to enforcement action.

10.8 SCHEMES AND GRANTS

10.8.1 We are part of the Warmer Homes Consortium scheme which is headed up by Portsmouth City Council and Agility ECO. Inclusive of Winchester City Council it comprises of 22 different local authorities mainly located in Hampshire and the Southeast. The scheme offers grants to eligible homeowners, landlords and private sector tenants to have various energy efficiency measures installed ranging from insulation to air source heat pumps.

Information on grants available can be found at: **www.warmerhomes.org.uk** or by calling **0800 038 5737**

11. APPENDICES

Strategic Action plan

ITEM	ACTION	DELIVERY TARGET
1	Develop a resident centric culture that makes residents feel completely at ease with reporting damp and mould in their homes.	
2	Create a range of communication options that help residents understand the causes, diagnosis and ways to mitigate condensation in their homes.	
3	Implement a simple process that effectively manages residents through the entire process of dealing with damp and mould in their homes.	
4	Collect and store data/reports relating to damp and mould cases in order that appropriate reports and performance can be compiled.	
5	Ensure that all relevant council staff and contractors are properly trained in how to help residents manage condensation/damp in their homes	
6	Take appropriate action when residents act flagrantly against guidance provided and completed improvement works to mitigate damp in their homes.	
7	Take a proactive approach with ensuring that council homes are free from damp and mould	
8	Dedicate appropriate resources for all council resident's homes to be warm and dry.	
9	Monitor performance through KPI's	

ITEM	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TARGET DATE	STATUS
A	Implement and communicate a process for residents to report damp and mould, which is easy for residents and council staff to understand and use.			
B	Develop a system to record, document, manage and act on reports of damp and mould. and to identify common issues and trends in their housing stock			
C	Create good guidance to help and support residents to understand what they can do to reduce damp and mould in their homes.			
D	Implement data capture systems so that trend analysis relating to damp and mould in the housing stock can be reported			
E	Create a 5-year stock condition survey protocol, that incorporates identifying if properties. • Have suitable heating. • Have effective ventilation. • Are insulated so that the property meets EPC band C,			
F	Identify and act upon common issues and trends relating to damp across the housing stock.			
G	Create an environment for all relevant teams across housing to work collaboratively.			
H	Work with health and social care and other frontline professionals supporting residents to ensure that every opportunity to identify residents living in homes with damp and mould is utilised.			

ITEM	ACTION	ACTION OWNER	TARGET DATE	STATUS
I	Take a direct and proactive approach and ask residents if they are experiencing damp and mould in their homes.			
J	Set out a programme for when all properties will meet EPC Band C			
K	Create a set of online DIY tutorials that guide residents on how to look after their homes.			
L	Enhance the website to provide guidance to all residents on how to manage condensation and damp in their homes.			
M	Implement a training programme for diagnosing and remedying damp and mould for all relevant council staff.			
N	Create a protocol so that all contractors working within our housing stock can report evidence of damp and mould.			
O	Create a weekly Business Objects report that records all reports of damp and mould by the respective criteria			
P	Develop a satisfaction questionnaire for residents to complete in response to action taken			
Q	Set up a forum with other LA's within HCC to establish common practise and develop improvement through learning.			





UPDATING THE POLICY

To ensure the policy remains up to date and evolves in time the policy will be regularly reviewed every 2 years to support compliance, minimise risk and support operation.

Version control:

Version	Date	Policy Owner	Last review	Next review
0.1	August 2025	Property Services Manager – Repairs & Voids	June 2025	June 2027