



15 April 2025

**Our Ref: FOI 720****Request**

We received your request on 21 March 2025 for the following information:

*I am submitting this request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I would like to request data on reported cases of mould and damp in properties owned or managed by your council over the past three financial years (2021/22, 2022/23, and 2023/24).*

*To ensure clarity and ease of response, I have formatted the request as a structured questionnaire. Please provide responses in an Excel or CSV format where possible. If, however, the information is available in a different format please provide it as such, or any other related information available.*

**1. Incidence of Mould and Damp Reports**

*How many reported cases of mould and/or damp have been recorded by the council in each of the last three financial years?*

**2. Number of Rooms Affected per Reported Case**

*For each reported case, how many rooms were affected? Please provide data in the following categories:*

- ☐ 1 room
- ☐ 2 rooms
- ☐ 3 rooms
- ☐ 4 rooms
- ☐ 5+ rooms
- ☐ Other (please specify)

**3. Type of Property Affected**

*For each reported case, what type of property was affected? Please provide the number of reports by property type:*

- ☐ Studio flat
- ☐ 1-bedroom flat
- ☐ 2-bedroom flat
- ☐ 3-bedroom flat

- ☐ 4+ bedroom house
- ☐ Other (please specify)

4. Financial Cost of Remediation

What was the total financial expenditure on mould and damp remediation for each of the last three financial years?

If possible, please provide a breakdown of remediation costs by type of room affected (e.g., bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, living room, hallway).

5. Timeframes for Resolution

What is the average time taken to resolve a reported case of mould and/or damp, from initial report to resolution? What is the longest and shortest time recorded for resolution in the past three years?

6. Repeat Cases

How many cases required repeat interventions after initial remediation work was completed? If available, please provide data on how soon after initial remediation a repeat case was reported (e.g., within 6 months, 6-12 months, 12+ months).

7. Data on Scent Detection Research

Has the council undertaken any trials or research into alternative methods of mould detection, such as the use of trained scent detection dogs or air quality monitoring technology? If so, please provide details of any pilot studies, outcomes, and costs incurred.

Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

## Our response

### 1. Incidence of Mould and Damp Reports

How many reported cases of mould and/or damp have been recorded by the council in each of the last three financial years?

Council Area	Reported Financial Year			
	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	Grand Total
ANTRIM AND NEWTOWNABBEY	818	1,041	1,183	3,042
ARDS AND NORTH DOWN	778	900	1,043	2,721
ARMAGH CITY BANBRIDGE AND CRAIGAVON	868	1,102	1,600	3,570
BELFAST	2,625	3,385	4,643	10,653

CAUSEWAY COAST AND GLENS	771	948	1,286	3,005
DERRY CITY AND STRABANE	1,118	1,453	1,524	4,095
FERMANAGH AND OMAGH	364	492	665	1,521
LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH	525	671	1,170	2,366
MID AND EAST ANTRIM	770	1,192	1,756	3,718
MID ULSTER	363	422	480	1,265
NEWRY MOURNE AND DOWN	754	948	1,387	3,089
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>9,754</b>	<b>12,554</b>	<b>16,737</b>	<b>39,045</b>

**Including:** Response Trade Types, Customer Report contains 'Mould', 'Damp', 'Condensation'

**Excluding Property Types:** Blocks, Garages, Land, NIHE Office

**Excluding Expense Types:** Commercial Property Repairs, Community Let Repairs, Compliance Fire Safety Works, Office Accommodation, Repairs - Vertical Lift, Response Gas, Response Heating

## 2. Number of Rooms Affected per Reported Case

**For each reported case, how many rooms were affected? Please provide data in the following categories:**

- ☐ 1 room
- ☐ 2 rooms
- ☐ 3 rooms
- ☐ 4 rooms
- ☐ 5+ rooms
- ☐ Other (please specify)

We cannot provide this information without investigating each individual job. There are 39,000 jobs and it is estimated that this would take in excess of 600 hours and beyond the 'appropriate limit'.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where it is estimated that the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for the Housing Executive is set at £450. This represents the cost of one or more individuals spending 18 hours collectively in determining whether the Housing Executive holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

## 3. Type of Property Affected

**For each reported case, what type of property was affected? Please provide the number of reports by property type:**

- ☐ Studio flat
- ☐ 1-bedroom flat
- ☐ 2-bedroom flat
- ☐ 3-bedroom flat
- ☐ 4+ bedroom house
- ☐ Other (please specify)

We cannot provide this information in this format, we can only provide the house type; house, flat, bungalow, maisonette etc.

Property Type	Count of Reports
Bedsit	25
Bungalow	8,796
Cottage	451
Flat	8,160
Hostel	120
House	21,086
Maisonette	404
Travellers' Dwelling	1
Travellers' Pitch/Site	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>39,045</b>

**Including:** Response Trade Types, Customer Report contains 'Mould', 'Damp', 'Condensation'

**Excluding Property Types:** Blocks, Garages, Land, NIHE Office

**Excluding Expense Types:** Commercial Property Repairs, Community Let Repairs, Compliance Fire Safety Works, Office Accommodation, Repairs - Vertical Lift, Response Gas, Response Heating

#### 4. Financial Cost of Remediation

**What was the total financial expenditure on mould and damp remediation for each of the last three financial years? If possible, please provide a breakdown of remediation costs by type of room affected (e.g., bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, living room, hallway).**

We cannot provide accurate information on the cost of damp and mould due to the incorporation of additional non-D&M works; this would require individual assessment of each works order in excess of 600 hours.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where it is estimated that the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for the Housing Executive is set at £450. This represents the cost of one or more individuals spending 18 hours collectively in determining whether the Housing Executive holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

#### 5. Timeframes for Resolution

**What is the average time taken to resolve a reported case of mould and/or damp, from initial report to resolution? What is the longest and shortest time recorded for resolution in the past three years?**

We cannot provide this information. We can provide the priority classifications given to the totals and the accompanying timescales associated with each priority.

Job Priority	Count of Reports
A1	3
A2	13

ASBESTOS ROUT	4
COT	6
EMERGENCY	344
LIFT CALL OUT	1
PRIORITY X	11,073
RECALL-ROUTINE	144
ROUTINE	24,254
URGENT	3,203
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>39,045</b>

**Including:** Response Trade Types, Customer Report contains 'Mould', 'Damp', 'Condensation'

**Excluding Property Types:** Blocks, Garages, Land, NIHE Office

**Excluding Expense Types:** Commercial Property Repairs, Community Let Repairs, Compliance Fire Safety Works, Office Accommodation, Repairs - Vertical Lift, Response Gas, Response Heating

Core Works	
Priority	Requirements
Emergency	Responsive To be commenced immediately and on site and made safe within [2] two hours and completed within 24 (twenty-four) hours with a triage call to Customer within 15 minutes of notification of Task Order or repair request.
Urgent	To be commenced and completed within [4] Four Working Day.
Routine	To be commenced and completed within [15] Fifteen Working Days.
Priority X (client Defined)	To be commenced and completed in the specified period on the Task Order request.

Disabled Adaptation Works	
Priority	Requirements
A1	To be completed within [5] Five Business Days
A2	To be completed within [20] Twenty Business Days
A3	To be commenced and completed in the specified period on the Task Order request

## 6. Repeat Cases

**How many cases required repeat interventions after initial remediation work was completed? If available, please provide data on how soon after initial remediation a repeat case was reported (e.g., within 6 months, 6-12 months, 12+ months).**

We cannot provide this information without investigating each individual job. There are 39,000 jobs and it is estimated that this would take in excess of 600 hours and beyond the 'appropriate limit'.

Section 12 of the Act makes provision for public authorities to refuse requests for information where it is estimated that the cost of dealing with them would exceed the appropriate limit, which for the Housing Executive is set at £450. This represents the cost of one or more individuals spending 18 hours collectively in determining whether the Housing Executive holds the information, locating, retrieving and extracting it.

## 7. Data on Scent Detection Research

**Has the council undertaken any trials or research into alternative methods of mould detection, such as the use of trained scent detection dogs or air quality monitoring technology? If so, please provide details of any pilot studies, outcomes, and costs incurred.**

In December 2023 the NIHE invited Touchless Infection Control to give a presentation and demonstration on their innovative electrostatic vapourisation system which treats mould and fungi.

A small research pilot was undertaken in March 2024.

8 sample properties were selected to be included within the pilot. The properties in the sample included a mix of house types, estates, date of construction and heating systems.

A telephone survey was conducted at the start of May 2024 to the tenants of 6 of the properties. The tenants were asked to respond if any mould had returned post treatment and response repair remedial works. 5 out of 6 tenants (83%) stated that the mould has not returned to date. 1 tenant stated that the mould had returned and confirmed they had reported this.

This system is shown to be an effective first step to address mould in properties, once the repair has been reported, to ensure the property is safe for the occupants and the operatives undertaking remedial works. It is uncertain what period of time the treatment is guaranteed to last, before any follow up interventions are required.

With regards to costing information, we are not able to provide this as it is currently exempt from disclosure under FOIA Section 43(2).

FOIA Section 43(2) states that:

“Information is exempt information if its disclosure under this Act would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the public authority holding it).”

Section 43(2) is a ‘qualified’ exemption and we have considered the public interest test.

In favour of disclosure there is a public interest in openness, transparency and accountability about how public funds are spent and decisions are made.

However, there is a strong public interest in avoiding unwarranted prejudice to the commercial interests of the Housing Executive. The public interest in avoiding this prejudice (by maintaining the exemption) is particularly weighty. Revealing this costing information would be detrimental to the Housing Executive’s negotiations in a way that would be likely to hinder its ability to obtain value for money in the future which would not be in the public interest.

Therefore, on balance the public interest favours withholding the information at this time.

This concludes our response.