

Landlord taking fresh steps to tackle damp and mould in homes

ALL our customers deserve to live in homes that are safe and, as a community landlord, it is our job to make sure our homes are of the highest living standard.

All homes experience some condensation from time to time as there is always moisture in the air, even when we can't see it. When the air gets cooler, it can't hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear particularly on cold surfaces such as windows. This condensation can lead to damp and mould.

Taking lessons from the 2023 report by the Regulator of Social Housing, here at North Devon Homes we are committed to finding effective solutions to tackling damp and mould in our customers' homes.

We have recently been working with Arc Building Solutions (ARC) trying their Retrofit Eaves Insulator, as historically this has been one of the most challenging areas in the home to access and the insulation framework is often limited.

This trial has been a real success, allowing us to properly protect the

Rob Flavell

Home 2 Home
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space and in quick time.

This feedback has also been echoed by our surveying and site teams, who have been thoroughly impressed by the product and its performance. This will no doubt be a solution we look to deploy more widely as we continue in our commitment to manage mould and damp in our homes.

If you are a North Devon Homes customer, it is vitally important that if you notice any damp or mould in your home that you report it to us as soon as possible. We will then carry out a survey of your property to identify what is causing the problem. Damp and mould can be caused by a number of different factors and so the quicker we can investigate it,



The ARC Eaves Insulator being fitted

the quicker we can work together to eliminate it. It also allows us to check whether it is a bigger issue such as a roof or plumbing leak, so early detection really is key.

Once we have surveyed a customer's home we will issue a report on what actions we can collectively do to improve the situation in their home and we will work with them on these actions.

The South West is particularly prone to condensation due to the amount of moisture that is naturally in the air. This means that we all need

to ensure we keep our homes properly ventilated. There are a few things we can all do to reduce condensation in our homes which include:

- If possible, keep trickle air vents open at all times
- Turn on extractor fans, where available, in kitchens and bathrooms
- Open your windows slightly throughout the day and night during high-moisture activities such as bathing and cooking
- Cook with saucepan lids on to re-

duce the moisture in the air

- Dry your clothes outside wherever possible or use a drying rack in a room with an open window
- Move furniture away from external walls of your home to allow the air to circulate
- If using a tumble drier, make sure it is correctly installed and ventilated as per the type of drier

For more information or to book an appointment for one of our team to visit your home, please contact 01271 312500 or you can send an email to customercare@ndh-ltd.co.uk

Our unhappy spot on congestion blacklist

THE traffic congestion around Barnstaple goes to gridlock on a weekly and sometimes daily basis: many factors can be associated with the root causes.

Peak time traffic is when parents and carers drop students to schools and colleges then go to their places of employment with the other commuters - peak happens again when educational providers and employers finish at the end of the working day.

Peak time traffic does cause congestion, it is undeniable and can cause buses to be unable to keep to a timetable unless a bus lane can offer a traffic-free solution.

There is off-peak congestion that is associated with vehicle collisions, utility companies that have to install new and repair their existing networks, highways repairing and maintaining the road networks and the installation of new associated infrastructure.

When discussing congestion, many will remember the old 1990s bumper sticker 'Barnstaple home of the traffic jam'; some might even dare say that it is back!

Inrix is a universal data company that gathers the vital information that can be used by transport authorities to assess towns and cities. Inrix Global Traffic Scorecard has the global seven continents with 37 countries and over 900 plus towns

Tim Steer

Vice-chair of the
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Association



and cities in its database and each place is then ranked.

Inrix states that the scorecard utilises the most up-to-date post-Covid travel patterns to truly analyse and compare how commuting differs in more than 900 cities across the globe.

When viewing Barnstaple on the official Inrix scorecard, the town officially ranks at 221st on the most congested towns and cities on the planet! What is more alarming is the official ranking of where Barnstaple appears in the nation (UK), for congested towns and cities. Barnstaple is actually in the top 50 or to be exact number 46! What is concerning is apparently that the town is actually heading up the ranking unless solutions are found to the daily transport challenges.

Viewing the Year-Over-Year Speed Changes Peak Speeds, the absolute worst portion of the morning and afternoon commute times were 2020-25mph, 2021-21mph, 2022-20mph while the Off Peak Speeds the low point between the



Barnstaple's official rating on the Inrix website

morning and afternoon commute time periods show were 2020-31mph, 2021-29mph, 2022-28mph. Do you see that decreasing speed pattern that is now

part of your daily commute? When the official 2023 figures are released there is little doubt that the pattern has now been set to a gradual decline in speed due to congestion.

One way to overcome the congestion is if the public all use sustainable transport - bicycles, buses and trains. Of course, not all of us are in a position to have access to a bus route, railway or cycle network and that is why we must work on the solutions before the Barnstaple area goes to gridlock on a daily basis. Bideford and Northam are developing around 6,000 new houses in estates near the Affinity shopping centre and A39. These new houses will be inhabited by 2/3 people meaning an extra 12,000-15,000 more vehicle movements (peak and off peak), will be coming into, through or around Barnstaple and that has not included vehicles coming from new housing developments around Ilfracombe, Braunton, Fremington, Landkey and South Molton.

Car-centric culture has rapidly become unsustainable for North Devon and Torridge and that is why Devon County Council is proposing bus lanes around Barnstaple with footpaths and crossings for walkers and cyclists.

We need our sustainable transport networks to link up and connect with other associated modals. A utopian vision would include multi-modal corridors so that cyclists, walkers, bus and train service users are able to change to each network without the need to join the car congestion.