Damp Proofing Services

Damp can be a problem for buildings of any age because it can be caused by so many different reasons. An experienced and qualified damp proofing specialist can usually detect potential damp problems before they arise and so it's always a good idea to get an inspection before costly damage has taken its toll.

Every damp situation in your property will only ever get worse unless it is properly treated before costly repairs or remedial work becomes a necessity. Even seemingly harmless conditions like condensation, which are often taken for granted, will in time cause expensive damage to buildings. If it's too late for vigilance and damp has already taken a hold in your home, it may be time to contact a reputable damp proofing services expert.

Damp Proofing

The term "damp proofing" covers a multitude of damp conditions, all of which can be costly to treat if ignored. The longer the problem has been allowed to continue then the more expensive it could become to put things right. Damp proofing refers to preventative measures and also remedial actions, designed to keep damp at bay and stop it from penetrating the walls and floors of your valuable property.

It's important to understand the different ways, in which damp can cause damage and the appropriate treatment necessary to keep it under control or eliminate it completely. A survey carried out by a damp proofing company or experienced contractor can usually reveal the extent of damp penetration and identify the causes. A free quote will then give you some idea about the cost of remedial works. Would you know how to identify all the damp problems in your home?

Rising Damp

One of the most obvious damp problems and one of the most destructive is rising damp. It's unmissable because the rising moisture in the plaster and brickwork of the property will make paint and wallpaper literally peel from the walls. The water has originated from ground level, penetrated the outer and inner walls by breaching any damp proof course and will then continue to rise unabated. Rising damp can affect many floors or levels of a building and not just the ground floor.

Older buildings are more prone to rising damp because quite often the damp proof membrane or barrier was either added after construction, was set too low or doesn't exist at all. The stone work and mortar joints of old solid walls can easily allow damp in, which can then affect the whole property in extreme cases. The most common cause of rising damp in modern properties is from breaching the DPC level with soil or paving.

Penetrating Damp

Damp can enter a building in other ways such as through cracks in a wall, a leaking gutter or cracked or dislodged roof tiles. This penetrating damp problem can also be as a result of a faulty internal plumbing system, which allows water to escape from

pipework. This problem is usually confined to areas around the kitchen, such as under the sink, or in the bathroom. The quicker the problem can be identified and remedied the better.

Another common cause of penetrating damp is old or poorly fitted windows or doors. Timber doors and windows are notorious for expanding and contracting during both warm and cold wet periods, which can leave gaps that allow rain to seep into the building. Penetrating damp is very often neglected, for one reason or another, but like any other form of damp problem, it will be very costly to put right the longer it is left. Again a survey could identify those areas most at risk.

Damp Proof Course

The term “damp proof course” (DPC) applies to a flexible waterproof material or membrane, usually made from very strong polythene or thermo-plastic, which is inserted into the lower level of a building during construction. Its purpose is to prevent any moisture rising above that level, so that the internal and external walls are adequately protected.

Many old stone built properties were constructed without any form of Damp Proof Course and in some circumstances they have managed quite well without one. However, that is usually only the case for those that still use an open fire and have rickety windows, which allows a steady stream of air to flow around the internal areas of the building. If unsure then seek advice and a survey from a specialist.

Damp Chimney Breast

Only a very small fraction of homes in the UK are without central heating today, which has made the chimney breast all but redundant. It is of course still used to insert a flue pipe for gas fires but that’s the only function it now has. It’s not surprising then that a damp chimney breast has become a bit of a problem for some. However, the problem can usually be nailed down to either penetrating damp from a leaking chimney, rising damp or more commonly, condensation from hygroscopic salts in the plaster drawn through from the brickwork behind.

If the chimney was ever used for its original purpose then hygroscopic salts in the plaster, which were deposited as a result, can still cause the problem of a damp chimney breast. However, it can be a tricky problem to accurately diagnose without a full inspection from a qualified expert who will also provide a free quote for putting it right.

Wet Walls

Nothing else is such as obvious, as wet walls when a damp problem is suspected. In severe cases, water can literally be seen oozing from the walls and running down to the skirting. This is undoubtedly a very serious problem and will need immediate attention. Wet walls can be caused by a number of reasons from penetrating damp, condensation or rising damp. The first tell-tale signs will be the emergence of patches of black mould, which if left untreated will steadily spread over larger areas.

Assuming a wet wall is not as a result of some faulty or malfunctioning plumbing system then the cause needs to be investigated and determined. If the area affected is in the lower regions of the wall then it's most likely rising damp. If the internal wall has patches, which are very cold or wet then it could be penetrating damp that is causing the problem. If unsure then contact a specialist for advice and perhaps a survey with full report before deciding how to tackle the problem.

Black Mould

There can be nothing more unsightly inside a house than black mould. It is a sure sign that damp is a major problem and it needs to be dealt with. Black mould appears where damp has penetrated a wall allowing the fungus to grow and spread. It can cause health problems or aggravate existing health issues if left untreated. If it appears on or allowed to grow on wallpaper then redecorating is most definitely going to be necessary.

Black mould can thrive in kitchens and bathrooms and around windows, where moisture is quite often present. There are numerous products available, which claim to remove the mould but this is usually just a temporary measure. Long term treatment will only be successful when the actual cause has been identified and addressed. Specialist advice is highly recommended where outbreaks continue to be a major problem.

Condensation

Condensation cannot really be avoided in places like the kitchen and the bathroom. However, adequate ventilation can reduce the amount of condensation and that may be enough in most cases. When condensation becomes a real problem in other areas of the house then you should look to find the cause and then take action to find a remedy. Some causes include drying clothes indoors and allowing steam from kitchens and bathrooms to enter other adjoining rooms.

Fitting extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms can help enormously but also some very minor changes can help get condensation under control. For example, indoor plants can give off moisture, paraffin and gas heaters can cause condensation and even a lack of heating will add to the problem. The warmer you can keep the inside of your house the less condensation will be created.

Basement Tanking

Basements are the most obvious rooms in any house, which can be affected by damp. This is simply because the room is below ground level, is less likely to get much natural daylight and because heat rises, it is most likely to be the coldest room. The answer is basement tanking. This is a method of lining the whole basement with an impenetrable waterproof jacket. The result is much like that of creating a tank effect, such as a fish tank.

The process of basement tanking includes creating a waterproof cellar, or basement by coating the walls with a waterproof application. However, for a longer lasting effect the basement can be lined with a membrane. Another method involves

actually building a new cavity inner wall with waterproof board, which can be the most effective but also the most expensive. If basement tanking is a method you might want to consider then best talk to a professional damp proofing contractor.

Cellar Waterproofing

Cellar waterproofing is similar to basement tanking except where the cellar is being converted into a living area, the process can be a little more complex. A cellar can be used for many different purposes but if it's continuously damp or filling up with water then it's nothing short of useless. Waterproofing a cellar can make it habitable or much more suitable for storage.

For cellar waterproofing it's always best to consult a waterproofing system design specialist who can advise and guide you through the process, and inform you of the various options available. It is not advisable to try and undertake a cellar waterproofing project without expert advice and a full survey, especially if the cellar is to become a living room or bedroom.

Damp & Timber Reports

If considering selling or buying a property you might want to arrange for receiving a damp and timber report. If the property is older than 100 years then this should be considered essential. A damp and timber report will reveal the true state of the property and consequently affect its market value and in some cases its saleability. Many mortgage lenders will very often insist on seeing this report before granting a mortgage.

Before submitting a damp and timber report, a qualified surveyor will usually undertake a thorough inspection of all the building's timber structures including roof trusses, beams and floorboards. Also, every wall and part of, will be tested for damp penetration. Obvious signs of condensation and other easily remedied aspects will be duly noted but unlikely to affect the property's value. However, all potential damp problems could affect the property's overall desirability.