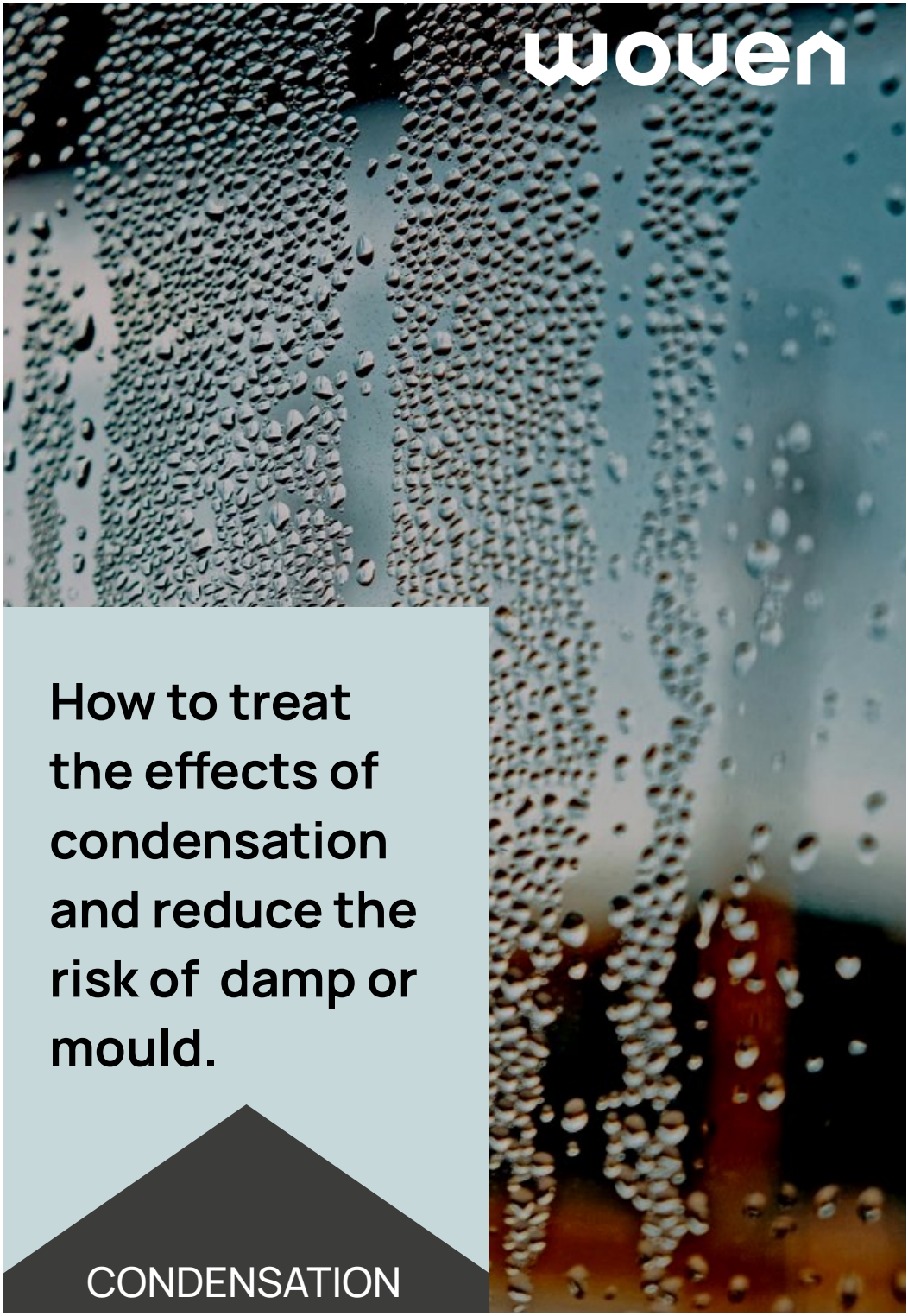

How to treat the effects of condensation and reduce the risk of damp or mould.

CONDENSATION

Condensation

Condensation is caused when water vapour comes into contact with cold surfaces. This leaflet provides information on how to treat the effects of condensation and how reduce the risk of damp or mould which may occur as a result.

How do you know if damp in your home is condensation?

Rainwater or plumbing leaks, usually leaves a 'tidemark'. If damp is occurring in your home and there is a visible tidemark, be sure to check pipes and overflows to see if there are any obvious leaks. Have a look outside, too - you may notice slates missing from the roof or cracked gutters or pipes.

If you live in a new or recently modernised house or flat, the property may not have ‘dried out’ thoroughly from the building process and it usually takes 9 - 18 months for this to happen. You may need to use more heat during that time.

Damp from condensation is different. It is usually found on north facing walls or in corners, cupboards and under work surfaces where there is little air movement. It can quickly form mould.

Why is condensation occurring?

Air can only hold a certain amount of water vapour and, when it is cooled by contact with a cold surface such as a mirror, a window or even a wall, the water vapour will turn into droplets of water-condensation. So the warmer you keep your home the less likely you are to get condensation.

Keep your home warm and open windows a little if they become misted up. Leaving background heat on during the day may cost little more than heating your home quickly in the evening. Ask your Housing Officer or Community Assistant for advice about the heating system you have in your property.

When is it a problem?

Every home gets condensation at some time, usually when lots of moisture and steam are being produced, bath times, when a meal is being cooked or when clothes are being washed. It is also normal to find your bedroom windows misted up in the morning after a cold night. It should not, however, be a continual problem.

Is condensation bad for my health?

If your home is damp or has lots of condensation, the chances are the house will be a cold house. Living in a cold house will lead to negative health effects.

Mould and fungi can be allergenic. However, house dust mites are the most common triggers of asthma rather than mould growth. House dust mites thrive where the amount of ventilation is reduced and there is high humidity. These conditions can also lead to condensation.

What can I do about Condensation?

You can get rid of the mould by washing down with a bleach type solution and you can buy special paints which may help prevent growth of mould but the only permanent solution is to reduce the amount of condensation in your home.

Remember, the way you use your home affects the amount of condensation you get. This does not mean that you should alter your habits dramatically - just bear in mind the following tips.

Tips to reduce condensation in your home:

Doors - Keep kitchen and bathroom doors shut, particularly when cooking, washing or bathing - otherwise water vapour will spread right through the house.

Ventilation and windows - The more moisture produced in your home, the greater are the chances of condensation, unless there is adequate ventilation. Nobody likes draughts, but some ventilation is essential.

In winter open the window a little, only as long as they are misted up. if you have draught stripping or ventilation, leave a space for a small amount of air to get through.

Extractor fans - If you have an extractor fan use it whenever cooking or having a bath/shower.

Kettles and Pans - Don't overfill kettles and pans or allow them to boil for any longer than is necessary.

Heating and Insulation - You will get less condensation if you keep your home warm most of the time. Try, where possible, to maintain a constant, low level of heating. Fuel is expensive so it is important that your heating system is checked regularly to ensure that it works efficiently. If you use bottle gas or paraffin heaters you will need to allow additional ventilation.

Insulation will help you keep your home warmer but remember you will need to keep some form ventilation if you install draught proofing or double glazing.

Drying Clothes - Drying clothes indoors, particularly on radiators, can increase condensation unless you open a window to allow air to circulate. If you have a tumble dryer which is not vented to the outside you will need to allow more ventilation when you use it.

Cupboards and Wardrobes - Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes. Always make sure that some air can circulate freely by fitting ventilators in doors and leaving a space at the back of the shelves.

woven

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE® We invest in people Gold

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY The Responsible Business Network Northern Ireland

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE® CSE

Laganwood House
44 Newforge Lane
Belfast BT9 5NW

028 9042 7211

info@woven.org.uk

woven.org.uk

Exchange House
2nd floor, Queens Quay
L/Derry BT48 7AS

028 7136 0015

woven's offices are open:
08:45 to 16:45 Mon to Thurs
08:45 to 16:30 on Fridays