

Damp and disrepair in Shelter Cymru casework

Overview and context

Overview

On Thursday 5 March 2026, Shelter Cymru provided oral evidence to the Local Government and Housing Committee. In responding to questions from Members, Robin White (appearing on behalf of Shelter Cymru) highlighted the value of Shelter Cymru data in providing additional insight to the extent of this issue. Following a request from the Committee, this short paper has been drafted to provide an overview of some of that data

We hope that this data adds additional value to our existing contributions on this topic. We would ask that advance notice is provided if any of this data is included in published reports by the Committee.

Context

There are a number of caveats and context issues to be considered when using this data:

1. This data represents a snapshot in time and is from a 10-month period (06/05/2025 – 05/03/2026) rather than a full year. This time period reflects recent changes to how Shelter Cymru captures data in our work and the fact that a longer period would return data that was not comparable.
2. Shelter Cymru provides housing advice in a variety of ways, some of which will not be recorded in this data set. For example, this data does not cover advice people may have taken from the more than 30,000 visits that were made to relevant advice pages on our website.
3. Cases are all unique, and data presented in this way and at this level does not necessarily reflect that. To gain a fuller picture of both the extent and impact of damp and disrepair, it would be necessary to review individual cases in greater detail. While this work is possible, it is not something Shelter Cymru has the capacity to undertake. If the Welsh Government felt that work was valuable, then we would be happy to talk with them about what support would be needed to make it possible.

Headline data

At the Committee session on 05/03/2026, Robin White highlighted that in January 2026 damp and disrepair cases accounted for 15% of our work. It should be noted that our monthly data does show some seasonal variation, as might be expected with this issue. However, results for December and November of 2025 were broadly similar, with more than 14% of cases involving damp and disrepair.

As noted above Our online advice pages also saw significant traffic to relevant pages, with almost 30,000 unique visits between 01/01/2025 and 31/12/2025.

Below we have provided a more detailed breakdown of relevant data covering the period 06/05/2025 – 05/03/2026. As noted above, capacity has only allowed us to do an initial review of data at this stage and a deeper dive that included reviews of specific cases would likely yield additional insights. While we would be happy to undertake that work we would likely require financial support from a third party in order to make it possible.

Ddamp and disrepair by tenure

Tenure Type	Percentage of damp and disrepair caseload
Home Owner	4%
Homeless: Sofa Surfing	1%
Homeless: Supported Living	0%
Homeless: TA	4%
Other	1%
PRS	62%
Social Home	27%

Damp vs. disrepair by tenure

Note: Cases recorded with one issue may also have other issues present but these might not be recorded as well. This is why a review of case notes would be necessary to deliver a complete picture.

Tenure Type	Percentage of dampness caseload	Percentage of other disrepair caseload
Home Owner	4%	4%
Homeless: Sofa Surfing	1%	2%
Homeless: Supported Living	0%	0%
Homeless: TA	3%	5%
Other	1%	1%
PRS	63%	60%
Social Home	27%	26%

Ddamp and disrepair by household type

Household Type	Percentage of damp and disrepair caseload
Adult Household	7%
Couple	7%
Couple & Children	13%
Extended Household	2%
Single Man	18%
Single Parent Man	1%
Single Parent Woman	22%

Single Woman	31%
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Ddamp and disrepair by age

Age	Percentage of damp and disrepair caseload
18-25	16%
26-35	29%
36-49	33%
Over 50	22%

Key findings

We believe key findings from this data set for the committee to take note of are:

- The Private Rented Sector is responsible for a significant proportion of our work on disrepair, however, it is clearly also a major issue for social housing tenants that come to us for support. Based on anecdotal feedback from members of staff in our Housing Services Team, we believe there is a potential difference between when social housing tenants and private rented sector clients might approach us. Clients who live in the private rented sector are, in our experience, more likely to come to us as a first port of call. On the other hand, social housing tenants appear more likely to come to us when they feel alternative routes have been exhausted. One of the impacts of this difference would be that damp and disrepair is less likely to be an issue among social housing tenants but where it is present it is perhaps more likely to be a significant issue or a complex case.
- Single person and single parent households appear to over-represent in this data. This also reflects the fact that those groups are often at greater risk of bad housing or poor housing conditions.
- When looking at the overall profile of our client base there is no significant trend in over representation of certain age categories when it comes to damp and disrepair.