

# DAMP & TIMBER SURVEY

**CLIENT:****Live Sample**

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**PROPERTY:****Bishop's Stortford CM23, UK**

REF NO: 15112200

INSTRUCTION DATE: 23 February 2026

SURVEY DATE: 26 February 2026

REPORT DATE: 26 February 2026

**SURVEY PREPARED BY:****Ed Harrison (FODCS Certificated Damp Surveyor)**

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## CLIENT INSTRUCTIONS

High humidity level and condensation on the ground floor.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the time of inspection no visible mould growth, active condensation or structural dampness was identified. Environmental readings indicate elevated relative humidity combined with low internal temperatures. These conditions create a perception of dampness despite the absence of material saturation or building envelope failure.

## SCOPE & DEFINITIONS

The client reported a general perception that the ground floor of the property felt cold and damp, despite no visible mould growth or active condensation being apparent. The purpose of this inspection was to determine whether the concern was attributable to structural dampness, building envelope defects, or internal environmental conditions.

Although the ground floor was identified by the client as the primary area of concern, the investigation extended to all accessible areas of the dwelling in order to establish comparative environmental conditions and eliminate isolated or systemic causes. This included:

- Ground floor rooms, including kitchen and living areas
- First floor bedrooms
- Main bedroom with ensuite
- Bathroom facilities
- External elevations and roof junctions

The inspection comprised:

- Visual assessment of internal surfaces for staining, mould growth, salt deposits and material deterioration
- Non-invasive moisture meter readings to internal wall surfaces
- Hygrometric measurements (air temperature, relative humidity and dew point)
- Consideration of heating strategy and ventilation provision
- External visual inspection of accessible elevations, mortar joints and roof junctions

No destructive investigation was undertaken, and the inspection was limited to accessible areas at the time of survey.

The objective of extending the survey beyond the ground floor was to determine whether the reported “damp feeling” was localised to a specific structural element or reflective of wider internal environmental conditions within the dwelling.

## TECHNICAL DEFINITIONS

### Relative Humidity (RH)

The percentage of moisture present in the air compared to the maximum amount the air can hold at a given temperature. High relative humidity increases the risk of condensation forming on cooler surfaces.

### Dew Point

The temperature at which air becomes saturated and moisture begins to condense into liquid water. When internal surface temperatures fall at or below the dew point, condensation will occur.

### Condensation

The process by which water vapour in the air converts into liquid water when it contacts a surface at or below dew point temperature. Condensation may be visible (water droplets) or invisible (intermittent surface moisture).

### Surface Condensation Risk

A condition where internal surface temperatures are close to dew point temperature, creating an elevated likelihood of moisture deposition even if active droplets are not observed.

### Interstitial Condensation

Condensation occurring within the structure of a building element (e.g., within insulation or cavities), rather than on visible internal surfaces.

### Rising Damp

Moisture drawn upward from the ground through porous masonry materials via capillary action, typically characterised by tide marks, salt deposits and a defined vertical moisture profile.

### Penetrating Damp

Moisture entering a building laterally through defects in the external envelope, such as defective pointing, cracked render, failed flashings or roof defects.

### Hygrothermal Conditions

The combined environmental relationship between temperature, humidity and material moisture content within a building.

### Background Heating

A consistent low-level heating strategy intended to maintain stable internal temperatures and reduce condensation risk.

### Mechanical Extraction

Powered ventilation designed to remove moisture-laden air from high-humidity areas such as bathrooms and kitchens.

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## DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The property comprises a detached two-storey residential dwelling of traditional construction, forming a single-family home. The building appears to date from the late 20th century and is of conventional cavity wall construction with brick external elevations beneath a pitched tiled roof incorporating dormer projections.

The ground floor provides typical residential accommodation including living areas and kitchen facilities. The first floor comprises multiple bedrooms, including a principal bedroom with ensuite bathroom. Sanitary facilities are provided at first floor level, with mechanical extraction present to the ensuite.

External walls are constructed in facing brickwork with mortar joints in generally serviceable condition, albeit with localised areas of weathering and minor pointing deterioration consistent with age. The roof covering appears to consist of interlocking concrete or clay tiles with lead flashings at abutments and junctions. No significant structural distortion or movement was observed at the time of inspection.

The property is fitted with gas-fired central heating controlled via a programmable thermostat. Internal finishes include plastered and painted wall surfaces, tiled finishes within bathroom areas and conventional floor coverings.

The dwelling is understood to be owner-occupied and used as a family home.

## EXTERNAL OBSERVATIONS

A visual inspection of the accessible external elevations was undertaken at the time of survey.

The property is of traditional cavity wall construction with facing brickwork elevations. Brickwork generally appears in fair condition consistent with age. Localised areas of mortar weathering and minor pointing deterioration were noted, particularly at lower levels and exposed corners. These defects are typical of age-related wear and do not currently present as active moisture ingress pathways.

No significant cracking, structural movement or distortion was observed to the external walls. There was no evidence of stepped cracking, open joints or displacement suggestive of subsidence or structural instability.

The roof covering comprises pitched tiled construction with dormer projections. Lead flashings at abutments and junctions appear intact and serviceable from ground-level observation. No slipped tiles or obvious defects were visible at the time of inspection.

Ground levels appear appropriate relative to the internal floor level, and no obvious bridging of the damp proof course was observed in accessible areas. Localised debris accumulation at wall bases was noted and should be cleared as routine maintenance to prevent prolonged moisture retention.

Rainwater goods were not observed to be actively leaking at the time of inspection. No staining or tracking patterns indicative of prolonged water discharge were evident on external wall surfaces.

Overall, no external defect was identified that would reasonably account for internal dampness, elevated moisture readings, or the perceived "damp" atmosphere reported by the client.

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## ADEQUACY OF VENTILATION

Ventilation provision within the property comprises intermittent mechanical extraction to the ensuite bathroom and natural ventilation via opening windows. No significant passive ventilation systems (e.g., whole-house mechanical ventilation or positive input ventilation) were noted.

The ensuite mechanical extractor fan was observed to be operational at the time of inspection and appears to provide adequate localised moisture removal for that room. Notably, no mould growth or condensation-related symptoms were observed within the principal bedroom or ensuite, which supports the effectiveness of this extraction provision.

A separate bathroom was noted to lack dedicated mechanical extraction. In the absence of active moisture removal, humidity generated from bathing and showering activities is likely to migrate to adjacent areas of the dwelling, contributing to elevated internal relative humidity levels.

Trickle ventilation was not confirmed to be consistently utilised at the time of inspection. Reliance solely on intermittent window opening may be insufficient to manage background moisture levels, particularly where internal temperatures are maintained at lower levels.

Environmental readings taken throughout the dwelling recorded relative humidity levels in the low–mid 70% range. While not indicative of structural dampness, these levels are elevated above ideal comfort thresholds and may contribute to the perception of a cold or damp atmosphere.

In summary, ventilation provision is functional in part but inconsistent across the dwelling. The absence of mechanical extraction in one bathroom, combined with low background heating, is likely contributing to sustained elevated internal humidity levels.

## STRUCTURAL TIMBER

The roof void and associated structural timbers were not inspected as part of this survey.

The scope of investigation was directed primarily toward the client's reported concern regarding a perceived damp and cold atmosphere at ground floor level. As no symptoms indicative of roof leakage, ceiling staining or moisture ingress from above were reported or observed, access to the roof space was not considered necessary within the agreed scope of inspection.

The survey was therefore limited to visible and accessible internal areas, primarily at ground floor level and within occupied rooms throughout the dwelling for comparative environmental assessment.

No evidence of active moisture ingress, staining, or conditions suggestive of structural timber decay was observed within the inspected areas.

This assessment is limited to non-invasive observations only.

## INTERNAL DAMP & PLASTER

A visual inspection of internal wall and ceiling surfaces was undertaken throughout the property, with particular attention given to ground floor areas as identified by the client.

Within the principal living areas and bedrooms, no visible mould growth, tide marks, salt efflorescence, blistering paintwork, or plaster breakdown indicative of rising damp or penetrating damp were observed. Wall and ceiling finishes generally appear sound and in serviceable condition.

Localised mould growth was observed within the family bathroom, primarily affecting upper wall and ceiling areas. This room does not benefit from dedicated mechanical extraction. The pattern and distribution of mould are consistent with condensation-related moisture accumulation due to elevated humidity and inadequate ventilation, rather than structural water ingress.

Staining was observed to the ceiling within the porch area. The appearance and pattern of staining are consistent with water ingress from above. This is considered separate from the broader internal environmental conditions identified elsewhere in the dwelling and is indicative of a localised defect requiring further investigation and repair at roof or flashing level.

Non-invasive moisture meter readings were taken to representative wall surfaces at ground and first floor levels. Readings did not demonstrate a consistent vertical moisture gradient or defined saturation profile typically associated with rising damp. No evidence was identified of lateral moisture penetration to habitable areas.

Environmental measurements recorded internal temperatures averaging approximately 15°C with relative humidity levels in the low–mid 70% range. These conditions elevate condensation risk, particularly in poorly ventilated spaces.

In summary:

- No evidence of rising damp was identified.
- No evidence of widespread penetrating damp was observed.
- Mould within the family bathroom is condensation-related and attributable to inadequate mechanical ventilation.
- Staining within the porch ceiling is consistent with a localised active leak and should be investigated independently of the wider internal environmental conditions.

## ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS

Environmental readings were taken using a calibrated Protimeter HygroMaster 2 at representative locations throughout the property.

At the time of inspection, internal air temperatures were recorded at approximately 15.1–15.4°C, with relative humidity readings averaging 73–75% RH. The calculated dew point temperature was approximately 10.7–10.8°C.

These readings indicate elevated internal humidity levels combined with comparatively low ambient air temperatures. While no active surface condensation was observed during the inspection, the environmental conditions recorded significantly increase condensation risk, particularly at colder building elements such as:

- External wall junctions
- Window reveals
- Ceiling perimeters
- Uninsulated or thermally bridged areas

When internal air temperatures are maintained at approximately 15°C and relative humidity exceeds 70%, surface temperatures only need to fall modestly below room temperature to approach dew point. This creates conditions where condensation can intermittently form, particularly overnight or during colder external weather.

For optimum internal comfort and condensation control, typical guidance suggests:

- Internal air temperature: 18–21°C
- Relative humidity: 40–60% RH

Maintaining higher background heating levels and reducing internal moisture load through effective ventilation will significantly reduce the risk of condensation-related dampness and the perception of a “cold, damp” atmosphere.

No evidence was found during inspection to indicate structural water ingress contributing to the elevated humidity levels recorded internally. The environmental conditions appear primarily related to internal moisture generation combined with modest background heating levels.

## **DAMP SURVEY METHODOLOGY**

The inspection was undertaken as a non-invasive damp and environmental assessment, focused primarily on the ground floor areas as identified by the client, with comparative readings taken throughout the remainder of the property including first floor accommodation.

The methodology included:

### Visual Inspection

A systematic visual assessment of all accessible internal rooms was carried out to identify:

- Surface mould growth
- Staining or tide marks
- Plaster deterioration
- Salt efflorescence
- Evidence of penetrating or rising damp
- Signs of condensation-related moisture

External elevations were also visually inspected to identify potential building defects that may contribute to moisture ingress.

### Environmental Monitoring

Ambient air temperature, relative humidity, and dew point were recorded using a calibrated Protimeter HygroMaster 2. Measurements were taken in representative locations to establish internal environmental balance and condensation risk profile.

Environmental data was assessed against accepted condensation risk parameters.

### Moisture Profiling

Non-invasive moisture meter readings were taken to internal wall surfaces at low, mid, and high levels where appropriate. This was undertaken to identify:

- Vertical moisture gradients associated with rising damp
- Localised saturation indicative of penetrating damp
- Surface moisture consistent with condensation

Where elevated readings were recorded, distribution patterns were analysed to differentiate between structural moisture ingress and surface hygroscopic activity.

### Ventilation Assessment

Mechanical extraction within wet rooms was assessed for presence and apparent functionality. Background ventilation and general air movement were considered in relation to recorded humidity levels.

### Limitations

The inspection was non-destructive. No floor coverings were lifted and no intrusive opening-up works were undertaken. Roof void timbers were not inspected, as the client's concern related specifically to perceived dampness at ground floor level.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

### EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

Temperature: 15.0°C  
Relative Humidity: 60%  
Vapour Pressure: 1.02 kPa  
Dew Point: 7.3°C  
Absolute Humidity: 7.67 g/m<sup>3</sup>  
Water Activity: 0.599 (aw)

### INTERNAL CONDITIONS (AVG)

Temperature: 15.7°C  
Relative Humidity: 69.4%  
Vapour Pressure: 1.24 kPa  
Dew Point: 10.1°C  
Absolute Humidity: 9.30 g/m<sup>3</sup>  
Water Activity: 0.696 (aw)



**The water activity within the property registered; 0.696 aw to indicate that in real time the home is approaching thresholds for elevated moisture and condensation risks.**

Advisory – this is a snapshot study of the atmospheric vapour pressure and without data loggers over a three week period, the differential vapour pressure can change.

## WEATHER & PROPERTY ORIENTATION

### Property Images:



## EXTERNAL ANALYSIS

### FRONT OF EXTERNAL PROPERTY

Water Activity: 0.000 (aw)



#### Observations:

visual inspection of the front elevation and readily accessible external elements was undertaken.

The property is a detached dwelling of traditional brick cavity wall construction beneath a pitched tiled roof. The general external condition appears serviceable and well maintained.

#### Masonry & Mortar

Brickwork to the principal elevation appears generally sound. Localised mortar deterioration and minor open joints were observed at low level and at isolated bed joints. While these defects may permit minor water penetration during periods of driving rain, no evidence was identified to suggest significant or sustained moisture ingress affecting internal habitable areas.

Repointing of isolated open joints would be considered routine maintenance rather than remedial damp works.

#### Damp Proof Course & Ground Levels

External ground levels appear appropriately set relative to internal finished floor levels. No obvious bridging of the damp proof course was observed to the front elevation at the time of inspection.

There is no visible evidence of rising damp externally such as persistent saturation, low-level salt staining, or spalled masonry.

#### Rainwater Goods

Rainwater goods to the front elevation appear present and operational at the time of inspection. No active overflow or discharge defects were observed. Ongoing routine maintenance (clearing of gutters and downpipes) is recommended as standard practice.

## Driveway & Surface Drainage

The driveway surface is of block paving construction. No significant ponding or drainage defects were observed to the front approach at the time of inspection.

## Roof Covering (Visual from Ground Level)

The pitched tiled roof was inspected from ground level only. No slipped tiles were visible from the front elevation at the time of inspection. The porch area, however, exhibits internal staining consistent with localised water ingress, suggesting a defect to the porch roof covering, flashing, or junction detail. This should be investigated further at roof level.

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## Summary of External Findings

- No evidence of structural rising damp identified.
- No obvious façade defects consistent with widespread penetrating damp.
- Localised mortar deterioration noted — routine maintenance item.
- Porch roof area likely source of ceiling staining — separate localised defect.

## Recommendations:

The ceiling staining observed within the porch area is consistent with active water ingress.

A competent roofing contractor should undertake a close-up manual inspection of the porch roof covering, flashings, abutments, and junction details. Any defective tiles, coverings, or flashings should be repaired or replaced as necessary to prevent further moisture penetration.

Following repair and confirmation of dryness, internal finishes may be redecorated.

This defect is considered localised and unrelated to the wider internal environmental conditions noted elsewhere in the dwelling. Manual inspection required.

## SIDE ELEVATION

Water Activity: 0.000 (aw)



### Observations:

Side Elevation

Localised mortar erosion and open bed joints observed at low level.

These defects are consistent with natural weathering and are considered maintenance-related.

Extension Corner – Moisture Retention

Brickwork at the corner of the extension was visibly damp at the time of inspection.

A substantial bush positioned opposite this elevation restricts airflow and reduces solar gain, resulting in slower drying following rainfall.

The moisture pattern is consistent with transient external wetting and restricted evaporation, not rising damp.

No corresponding internal dampness was identified adjacent to this location.

Proxy analysis failed: Image data is missing

### Recommendations:

#### 1. Repoint Localised Mortar Defects

Localised open bed joints and mortar erosion should be repointed using an appropriate mortar mix compatible with the existing masonry. This is considered routine external maintenance to preserve weather resistance and prevent progressive deterioration.

#### 2. Improve Airflow to Extension Corner

It is recommended that the substantial bush/shrubbery positioned opposite the extension corner be reduced or pruned back to:

- Improve natural airflow

- Increase solar exposure
- Promote more efficient drying of the brickwork following rainfall

### 3. Monitor External Ground Levels

Ensure paving remains below damp proof course level and that debris is regularly cleared to minimise splash-back and prolonged surface wetting.

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#### Important Note

No structural damp remediation is recommended.

Chemical damp-proofing treatments are not required.

The condition observed is consistent with environmental wetting and restricted evaporation rather than rising damp or penetrating damp.

Manual inspection required.

## INTERNAL ROOM FINDINGS

### EXTENTION

Vapour Pressure: 1.17 kPa | Relative Humidity: 50% | Temperature: 20.0°C | Dew Point: 9.3°C | Absolute Humidity: 8.65 g/m<sup>3</sup> | Water Activity: 0.501 (aw)



## KITCHEN

Vapour Pressure: 1.17 kPa | Relative Humidity: 50% | Temperature: 20.0°C | Dew Point: 9.3°C | Absolute Humidity: 8.65 g/m<sup>3</sup> | Water Activity: 0.501 (aw)



## LIVING ROOM

Vapour Pressure: 1.18 kPa | Relative Humidity: 68.2% | Temperature: 15.6°C | Dew Point: 9.8°C | Absolute Humidity: 9.08 g/m<sup>3</sup> | Water Activity: 0.683 (aw)



## HALLWAY + PORCH

Vapour Pressure: 1.20 kPa | Relative Humidity: 67.4% | Temperature: 15.8°C | Dew Point: 9.8°C | Absolute Humidity: 9.07 g/m<sup>3</sup> | Water Activity: 0.674 (aw)



## MASTER BEDROOM + ENSUITE

Vapour Pressure: 1.28 kPa | Relative Humidity: 73.4% | Temperature: 15.4°C | Dew Point: 10.7°C | Absolute Humidity: 9.61 g/m<sup>3</sup> | Water Activity: 0.732 (aw)



## BEDROOM 2

Vapour Pressure: 1.32 kPa | Relative Humidity: 70.6% | Temperature: 16.4°C | Dew Point: 10.1°C | Absolute Humidity: 9.88 g/m<sup>3</sup> | Water Activity: 0.708 (aw)



## BEDROOM 3

Vapour Pressure: 1.22 kPa | Relative Humidity: 70.4% | Temperature: 15.2°C | Dew Point: 9.8°C | Absolute Humidity: 10.00 g/m<sup>3</sup> | Water Activity: 0.707 (aw)



## BATHROOM

Vapour Pressure: 1.26 kPa | Relative Humidity: 73.7% | Temperature: 15.0°C | Dew Point: 10.3°C | Absolute Humidity: 10.50 g/m<sup>3</sup> | Water Activity: 0.739 (aw)



## ESSENTIAL SUMMARY OF COSTS

### INDEPENDENT SURVEYOR DISCLOSURE

This report has been prepared following a non-intrusive visual inspection of the accessible areas of the property at the time of the survey. No opening up of the building fabric, lifting of floor coverings, or destructive testing has been undertaken unless specifically stated.

Findings and recommendations are based on the conditions observed on the day and on the information available at that time. Hidden defects, concealed services, or issues within inaccessible areas may exist and cannot be ruled out.

Moisture readings, thermal imaging and humidity measurements provide indicative results only and should be interpreted in conjunction with building construction, occupancy, ventilation and environmental conditions. These readings do not constitute laboratory analysis.

This report is provided for the sole use of the named client and must not be relied upon by any third party without written consent. It does not constitute a valuation, structural survey, or guarantee of future performance of the building.

Any cost estimates provided are indicative only and should be confirmed by suitably qualified contractors prior to works being undertaken. No liability is accepted for remedial works carried out by others.

Description	Status	Cost
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## ESSENTIAL SUMMARY OF COSTS (CONT.)

Description	Status	Cost
Bathroom – Ventilation Upgrade	Standard	£1250.00
2p – Mould Treatment & Redecoration (Bathroom Ceiling)	Standard	£450.00
3p – Additional Ventilation Improvements (If Required)	Standard	£400.00
		<b>TOTAL: £2100.00</b>

## IMPORTANT NOTES

This inspection was undertaken as a non-invasive damp and environmental assessment in response to the client's concern regarding a perceived cold and damp atmosphere at ground floor level.

The findings of this report are based upon visual inspection and surface moisture profiling only. No intrusive investigations were carried out, and no finishes were removed. Areas concealed by fixed floor coverings, fitted furniture, insulation, or structural linings were not inspected.

Environmental readings reflect conditions present at the time of inspection only. Internal temperature and relative humidity levels fluctuate depending on occupancy patterns, heating regimes, ventilation use, and external weather conditions.

The absence of visible condensation or mould growth at the time of inspection does not preclude intermittent condensation formation during colder periods or overnight when surface temperatures reduce.

Roof void timbers were not inspected as part of this assessment, as the client's concern related specifically to ground floor environmental conditions. A separate dedicated roof void inspection can be undertaken if required.

The staining identified to the porch ceiling appears consistent with active water ingress and should be addressed promptly to prevent further deterioration. This issue is considered separate from the broader internal environmental balance identified within the main dwelling.

This report differentiates between:

- Structural moisture ingress
- Condensation-related environmental conditions
- Localised defects

Any remedial works should be proportionate to the diagnosed cause rather than symptom-led treatment.

## DECLARATION

In preparing this report I would make the following declaration.

Although great care has been taken during the survey to diagnose the damp and timber issues within the building, it must be appreciated that the survey was limited owing to it being a surface inspection only, as destructive surveying was not carried out, the survey is restricted.

If hidden defects are found once the fabric of the building is exposed, I cannot be held responsible as the inspection was surface only. I will make all attempts to find damp and timber issues within the property on the day of inspection. I have informed the client throughout this report the limitations I encountered.

If a separate Homebuyers Report or building survey has been prepared, this should also be taken into consideration. It is important that the client makes me aware of any such reports and allows me access to read the surveyor's findings before my report is finalised.

Should I not be made aware of a third-party report, I cannot be held responsible if the surveyor requested investigation of a particular area for damp and timber defects that was not disclosed to me.

I trust this meets with your approval and should you wish to discuss this further, please contact us.



Ed Harrison

**Accreditations:**

FODCS Certificated Damp Surveyor