

# HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## building & maintenance

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### ISSE backs mould campaign

Aspergillus sufferer receives the backing of the ISSE in her campaign to highlight the dangers of damp and mould.

**A** woman dying of a lung condition she believes was caused by damp in her home has secured the support of a leading industry body in her campaign to improve living conditions. Former nurse Deidre Lodge, 57, of South Ockendon, Essex, who has lived in her Thurrock Council-owned property for 20 years, was diagnosed with aspergillus – a lung condition caused by mould spores – in 2006. Since then her condition has become terminal, leaving her almost unable to breathe and in need of full-time care from husband Simon, 48.

Aspergillus spores breed in damp, moist conditions and the grandmother of three believes inadequate ventilation in her home has caused the building to become damp and mould spores to develop. Now, Deidre is calling for greater awareness of the potential problems faced by people living in poorly ventilated homes and her campaign has received the backing of industry experts at the Institute of Specialist Surveyors and Engineers (ISSE).

"More people – homeowners, landlords and tenants – need to be aware that lack of ventilation leads to damp, which in turn leads to mould – and that can, as I have found out, destroy health," she said. "I knew there was mould in my home but I didn't know the harm it could cause. Mould is a Category One hazard – the same as asbestos – and, with the help of ISSE, which has donated its services for free, I intend to devote the time I have left to making people aware of the damage it can cause."

The ISSE – formed to improve standards and training within the specialist surveying industry – has created a pioneering scheme aimed at identifying and addressing ventilation problems in properties. Its Home Log Book provides the

most in-depth, detailed examination of a property ever available to uncover hidden internal, as well as external, problems, such as mould, not covered in standard surveyors' reports.

The ISSE believes that if the Home Log Book reports were implemented by public and private sector landlords throughout the country they could safeguard the health of tenants and reduce the management and maintenance costs of properties. Experts from ISSE now plan to meet with Thurrock Council in the hope of implementing the Log Book scheme throughout the borough's social housing stock.

William Kidd, chairman and fellow of the ISSE, said: "The Home Log Book enables landlords to identify ventilation issues in their properties and to address them – and that could save the NHS billions of pounds a year.

"Damp can have horrendous consequences on people's health and by working with councils and with tenants we are hopeful we can go some way to improving living conditions for generations to come."

For information about the ISSE and the Home Log Book call 0800 136779 or visit: [www.isse.org.uk](http://www.isse.org.uk)



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