

# Guide to Tackling **MOULD**

Following on from the Icon Care of Collections Group 2023 Annual General Meeting on the 26<sup>th</sup> April on 'The Recurring Issue of Mould', below is a condensed version of the current practices and thinking based on the presentations provided by the following speakers:  
Claire Dean, Lisa O'Hagan, Niamh Hanlon, Elaine Hallet, Emily Watts, Colyn Hunt and Haizea Salazar-Basañez

## Is it Mould?

It is important to first decide whether it is or isn't mould to decide on the appropriate actions to take. There are many other causes of damage that may look like mould such as

- Materials previously treated with PEG can leach out
- Old rubber objects get a surface bloom as they age
- Pest activity such as webbing clothes moth
- Salt efflorescence
- Paint or other chemical residue
- General dust and fibre debris

## Low tech methods for identification:

- Use a raking light to inspect the object
- USB microscope or handheld magnifying lens
- Does it dissolve in water? Mould will not
- Does it smear? Active mould will

## Initial response:

- Communication to others
- Restrict access to area
- Dry out the room - reduce the RH with a dehumidifier to 50% if safe to do so
- Reduce risk of spreading contamination - seal doors, windows, chimneys

## PPE required:

- FFP3 Masks or face fitting masks
- Goggles
- Tyvek suits
- Gloves

This is essential to protect yourself and reduce the risk of contaminating other areas. Why not put together a mould response box to be on hand to all staff.

## Cleaning:

- Use appropriate brushes for the material type
- No netting for your nozzle? Use 40 Denier tights
- Widen your nozzle to capture all the spores - funnel attached to end of vacuum or create a vacuum box
- Keep all equipment clean including dehumidifiers
- Fit vacuum with HEPA filters
- Work in teams for quicker remediation - production line for vacuuming and swabbing

Solvent treatment can be effective but may need to be repeated several times - monitor every 7 days for regrowth

## Long Term Solutions:

Understand what mould needs to grow and identify the cause of the mould outbreak:

- Map affected areas
- Look at environmental monitoring
- Microclimates can be created by lack of airflow
- Building leaks?
- Dust and dirt and poor housekeeping

## Solutions:

- Improve airflow
- Conservation heating or dehumidification - choose the appropriate method for improving RH
- Keep on top of building maintenance and housekeeping
- Regular inspection and record keeping
- Keep photo records to monitoring growth/ changes

## Finally:

Be open about the problems and ask for help. Don't underestimate the time and resources that will be needed to get on top of the issue.