

Media release

Nearly half of Kiwis experience mould and damp at home, renters disproportionately affected

A new report commissioned by The Warehouse shows 46% of Kiwis are living with mould and damp in their homes, and young people^[1] and renters are disproportionately affected by unhealthy housing.

The survey was conducted as part of [The Warmhouse](#) initiative lead by The Warehouse. It found more than half (57%) of respondents experienced issues in their home related to mould, dampness, heating, and insulation, with young people more likely to live in accommodation which needs improvement.

Renters are twice as likely to report the presence of mould in their home compared to homeowners and are twice as likely to rate their home as not being warm or dry or as having efficient lighting or heating.

Kiwi homes are awash with condensation, with 37% reporting regular condensation on windows during winter (45% for renters) and 29% of respondents needing to remove water from their windows daily.

In addition, 39% of Kiwis are also living with someone who has a pre-existing condition, such as a respiratory illness or skin infection which can often worsen in unhealthy home conditions.

Nik Gregg, co-founder of Sustainability Options, an organisation which works with the Ministry of Health's 'Healthy Homes Initiative' says, "The findings of this survey echo what we see every day as we seek to help improve the housing conditions for our most at-risk families.

"Sadly, children without beds, bedrooms at below 10 degrees, families sleeping in the lounge to stay warm, homes with damp carpets, mouldy curtains and draughty windows are all too common."

"The research highlights the difficult reality for many Kiwis trying to keep themselves dry, warm and healthy during the winter," says David Benattar, Chief Sustainability Officer at The Warehouse Group.

"We know that budget is a major consideration in addressing healthy home problems with 36% of people reporting cost as their reason for inaction. There are many low-cost or no-cost actions that Kiwis can take to stay dry and warm, we want to show them how small changes can make a big difference to their home. We also need to think about the impact of poor insulation on energy consumption and carbon emissions. All in one, this is a complex issue with numerous areas of impact we as a country should prioritise."

The Warehouse has developed an online content portal, called [The Warmhouse](#), to educate Kiwis on affordable ways to make homes healthier. The hub features information and advice sourced from Gen Less, an Energy, Efficiency & Conservation Authority (EECA) initiative, as well as a series of animated videos, commissioned by The Warehouse, to bring problems and solutions to life.

"In addition to sharing easy ways to improve Kiwi's living conditions, we will be supporting our charity partners Whānau Āwhina Plunket and Variety to help vulnerable families keep warm over winter," adds David.

The Warehouse has launched *The Warmhouse* fundraising campaign across its 90 stores, to help families in need keep cosy over the cooler months. The Warehouse is kick-starting the initiative by providing \$20,000 in gift vouchers to Variety and Whānau Āwhina Plunket to be distributed to families around New Zealand. Customers can further add to this by choosing to make a donation with any purchase at the checkout.

With the support of the Warehouse Group and its Warmhouse campaign, Variety and Whānau Āwhina Plunket can provide much-needed funding to families living in hardship around New Zealand.

“We know that more than one in three children will be hospitalised due to preventable respiratory illness this winter. Funds raised through this initiative will help to provide beds and warm bedding to Kiwi kids who need it most,” says Variety chief executive Susan Glasgow.

Whānau Āwhina Plunket CEO, Amanda Malu says, “We are out in the community every day and see first-hand how cold and unhealthy many of the homes our precious pēpi and tamariki are living in during this absolutely critical time in their development. We are grateful for the support from The Warehouse and its customers to help us help these families stay warm and healthy this winter.”

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Notes to editors:

***Key findings from the research**

- 57% of Kiwis are living with one or more of the following: presence of mould, poor or no insulation, gaps in floorboards, walls, windows, no heating in the main living area or bedrooms, no hot water
 - 65% of under 35s are living with one or more of these issues in their home
- 21% of renters reported the presence of mould in their homes, compared to 11% of homeowners.
- 20% of respondents in Wellington reported experiencing mould, as opposed to 14% of the whole population.
- 17% of people in urban areas say their home is neither dry, warm, safe or efficient (21% of renters say this). As opposed to 10% of the whole population, and 5% of homeowners.
- 21% of renters answered “None of the above” when presented the statements “My home is dry,” “My home is warm,” “My home has safety measures in place,” and “My home uses efficient lighting, heating and power,” compared to 5% of homeowners.
- 39% of Kiwis live with someone who has a respiratory illness, cardiovascular disease, asthma, or skin infection. 22% live with someone who has asthma.
- Looking ahead, 87% of people will be balancing working from home and working in the office. 44% plan to work from home as often as possible in the coming months. 43% will juggle working from home and working in the office.

The survey of 1,002 New Zealanders was conducted by PureProfile on behalf of The Warehouse from 6th – 10th May 2021.

^[1] Under 35 years old.