

Date received:	4 th January 2026
Date responded:	27 th January 2026
Subject:	Douglas City Council's Housing Stock – Cavity Wall Insulation

Question:

"How much public money was spent on pumping cavity beads in to Douglas Councils housing stock? What is the estimated cost on damages for this? What damages have occurred? Has it been accurately assessed by engineers and surveyors? Why was the decision made to pump them into unsuitable properties?"

Response:

The Council confirms that a total of £1,160,142.80 has been spent on the installation of cavity wall insulation using cavity beads within its social housing stock.

The Council acknowledges that in some properties, some underlying issues including damp penetration and wall tie corrosion have been exacerbated. However, the Council does not consider cavity wall insulation to be the sole or primary cause of these issues, which are attributable to the general condition, age, and construction of certain properties at the time of installation.

The Council confirms that no data is held that quantifies or estimates the cost of damage specifically attributable to cavity wall insulation installations.

Engineers/Surveyors were appointed to procure a project to externally refurbish properties at a specific estate since identification that polybead cavity wall insulation had 'exacerbated' damp ingress at some properties. Whilst damp issues had increased, due to age and condition, there were fundamental issues with the external envelope of the properties that had contributed to dampness such as porous render, poor-quality roofs and failed damp proof courses. The appointed Engineers/Surveyors had specified appropriate works to remedy damp affected living conditions as part of the overall external refurbishment strategy after assessment. Ultimately, the estate was due an external refurbishment to upgrade weathertightness to modern standards, affording an opportunity to also attend to internal damp issues under that same scheme.

The Isle of Man Government implemented a programme to improve insulation standards across public sector housing, adopting a 'polybead' full fill cavity wall injection system, which at the time was considered appropriate in terms of expediency, energy efficiency improvement, and value for money. All Local Authorities were invited to participate in the Government's established framework with the objective of improving tenant living conditions and reducing heating costs.

The Government appointed, and industry approved framework contractor, was entrusted by all Local Authorities to undertake the work according with its 'BBA Certification' (British Board of Agrément) which was to include identification of unsuitable properties.