

Should I Rely on Trickle Vents to Stop Mould in My Refurbished Home?

The conversation surrounding home ventilation, especially in the UK, often circles back to one ubiquitous, yet frequently misunderstood, feature: the humble trickle vent. Online forums and community discussions, like the recent one on /r/AskUK/ about preventing mould, reveal a genuine desire for practical solutions mixed with persistent misconceptions.

The common advice shared by many homeowners—to simply open trickle vents, even in winter, and air rooms briefly by opening a window—highlights an attempt to manage moisture and condensation, which are notorious precursors to mould and fabric damage. However, for a home undergoing a renovation or one that has been deliberately sealed for better energy efficiency, this advice often falls short of a long-term, high-performance solution.

The Fix That Isn't a Finish: Why Trickle Vents Are Reaching Their Limit

The prevailing wisdom, often repeated in online discussions, is that “modern double-glazed windows and doors have trickle vents. They are designed to keep a constant trickle of outside air, which prevents mould.” This isn't entirely inaccurate, but it is incomplete, especially for today's airtight dwellings.

The issue stems from a fundamental mismatch between the capabilities of a passive vent and the demands of a modern, energy-efficient home. Modern UK Building Regulations (specifically Approved Document F) have progressively pushed for more airtight construction. As a result, when trickle vents *are* used, the required size of the openings has effectively doubled in the latest edition of the Approved Document.

This has created three major problems for homeowners and specifiers in the UK:

1. **Aesthetic and Practical Clash:** The required larger vents are often visually unsightly and, critically, simply cannot be installed into the popular, slimline window frames currently favoured in design and renovation projects. Homeowners rightly fear any addition that will ruin their home's aesthetic.
2. **Lack of Control and Certainty:** A trickle vent is a passive system. It relies entirely on the householder keeping it open, and its performance is dictated by external factors like wind pressure. In a rental property or a busy family home, the landlord or homeowner has no *guarantee* that the property is achieving adequate, consistent air exchange, leading to condensation and mould issues.
3. **The Energy Penalty:** Allowing cold, uncontrolled outside air to trickle in is essentially throwing heated air straight out, which undermines the energy-saving goals of the new windows in the first place. The core goal of a refurbishment is often to secure comfort and energy efficiency.

Myth vs. Mechanism: Making the Invisible, Visible

One of the greatest psychological barriers to proper ventilation is the belief that “if I can't see it, it can't hurt me”. Air is invisible, and its quality is typically odourless and silent until problems like

damp or persistent respiratory issues appear.

Homeowners often feel they don't need an engineered solution because "I can open a window," ignoring the noise, pollution, security, and heat loss associated with this method. Furthermore, a common suggestion for resolving mould is the use of a Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) unit, which attempts to push air out through gaps and trickle vents. While this can offer some relief, it can also feel "a little chilly" in winter and doesn't offer the crucial benefit of recovering heat.

The Myth-Bust: Modern, airtight homes need a mechanical system that is not only regulated but also provides **heat recovery**. Opening a window or vent lets in cold air, wasting money and creating drafts; it is the ventilation equivalent of driving a car without a seatbelt—you don't notice the safeguard until you desperately need it. A mechanical system, especially one with heat recovery, is a proven way to ensure you consistently receive the right amount of fresh, outside air while extracting stale, moisture-laden air, all without discarding expensive heat.

The Long-Term Fix: Engineered Air, Not Guesswork

Ventilation should be a source of quiet confidence—an understated, essential, and trusted system, much like the engineering precision of a premium car. For homeowners undertaking a refurbishment, renovation, or extension in the UK, the focus must shift from 'passive' hope to 'active' certainty.

VENTI specialises in providing exactly this shift, moving ventilation from an afterthought to a performance asset. Our approach is tailored to the retrofit and renovation market through a ductless, whole-house ventilation strategy:

- **Decentralised Ventilation with Heat Recovery:** For habitable rooms (bedrooms, living rooms), we supply high-performance, single-room MVHR units—such as **ARIA**, **FLUXO**, and **AUREN**. These alternate-flow systems are perfectly suited to refurbishment projects due to their minimal, ductless installation. They ensure consistent, fresh air while recovering up to 90% of the heat that would otherwise be lost.
- **Continuous Mechanical Extract:** Wet rooms (bathrooms, kitchens) are served by decentralised Mechanical Extract Ventilation (dMEV) fans, designed for continuous operation to manage the high moisture spikes that cause condensation.

Together, these form a system that delivers certified comfort and predictable performance.

A Bespoke Strategy for Your Home

Crucially, one-size-fits-all ventilation is inadequate. Every property is different, and the best solution must be tuned to your home's specific geometry and your family's usage patterns.

This is why VENTI offers **Ventilation Strategy Services** with the proprietary **Air Passport**. By reviewing your floorplans and understanding your living style, we translate the complexity of Building Regulations (Part F and Part L) into a bespoke, room-by-room design. The Air Passport then documents this entire process—from design and rationale to performance verification—providing a clear asset that future-proofs your property's value, energy rating, and compliance.

Do you want to secure your home's long-term comfort and protect its fabric?

VENTI is here to help you move beyond the guesswork of open windows and passive vents. We are your partner in securing a certified, healthy, and energy-efficient living environment.

Contact us today for a consultative discussion, whether you require **supply-only decentralised ventilation with heat recovery** (ARIA, FLUXO, AUREN), or a full **Centralised MVHR: design, supply, install, and commission** service. Ask about our Ventilation Strategy service and how your **Air Passport** can guarantee confidence in every breath.