

Awaab's Law

Awaab's Law is a UK housing law aimed at protecting social housing tenants from dangerous conditions like damp and mould.

Why it's called that

It's named after Awaab Ishak, a 2-year-old boy who died in 2020 after prolonged exposure to severe mould in his family's social housing flat in Rochdale. His death led to major public concern and changes in the law.

What the law does

Awaab's Law places strict legal duties on social landlords (like councils and housing associations):

1. Time limits to act

Landlords must:

- Investigate hazards within a set timeframe after tenants report them
- Fix serious issues promptly (especially those posing health risks)
- Exact timeframes are being phased in, but the core principle is:

No more indefinite delays on damp/mould complaints.

2. Covers serious health hazards

It applies to things that could harm health, such as:

- Damp and mould
- Structural hazards
- Dangerous electrics
- Poor ventilation causing illness

3. Applies to social housing

It currently covers:

- Council housing
- Housing association properties
- (Not private rentals — though other laws apply there.)

(Private Rentals: Under Different laws: Landlord and tenant act 1985)

(Laws regarding private landlords are legally required to ensure rental properties are free from damp and mould that pose health risks, adhering to the Landlord and Tenant act 1985.

Landlords must maintain the structure and exterior, ensuring the home is fit for human habitation. Tenants must report issues and use ventilation properly. – under section 11 of

landlord and tenant act 1985, landlords must fix structural issues causing damp, such as leaking roofs, broken guttering, or damp-proof course failures.

Fitness for Habitation: The homes (fitness for human habitation) act 2018:

requires homes to be free from hazards, including severe damp and mould.
landlords must ensure adequate ventilation, such as working extractor fans.

Housing health and safety rating systems (HHSRS) Housing act 2004:

Local authorities can enforce actions against landlords if damp/mould constitutes a category 1 Hazard. Environmental protection Act 1990: if damp is a “statutory nuisance” (prejudicial to health) legal action can be taken.)

4. Legal enforcement - If landlords fail to act:

- Tenants can take legal action
- Landlords can face court orders and compensation claims

When it started - Introduced via the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

Implementation began rolling out from 2024 onward, with full duties coming into force in stages.

Why it matters - Before this law:

Tenants often waited months or years for damp/mould fixes. There were few strict deadlines

Now: Landlords must treat these problems as urgent health risks, not minor maintenance issues.

Steps to take:

Firstly, write a letter/ Email to your landlord to notify your landlord or housing association, keeping a record is key. Describe the issue in detail, note when you first noticed it, and ask for the timeline of their action. If they do not respond promptly – or if it’s a severe health risk – you can contact your local council’s environmental health team. They have the power to step in, inspect the property, and enforce repairs.