

Awaab's Law-Landlord Compliance Guide



Awaab's Law was introduced after the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who passed away due to prolonged exposure to severe mould in his home. The new law is designed to ensure landlords respond quickly and effectively to damp and mould hazards.

Although it is **primarily aimed at social landlords**, private landlords are expected to follow very similar standards under existing housing legislation (including HHSRS).

This guide explains the core duties, timelines, and expectations under Awaab's Law.

1. From Complaint to Investigation

Landlords must treat tenant reports of damp and mould as potential *serious health hazards*, not just cosmetic issues. The process typically includes:

- Tenant report of damp, mould, condensation or leak-related issue
- Landlord logs the report immediately and prioritises investigation based on risk factors (children, elderly, health vulnerabilities)
- Inspector/contractor visits the property promptly to assess root cause

2. Timelines and Response Standards

Under Awaab's Law style requirements:

- **Inspection within 14 days** of tenant report (sooner if risk identified)
- **Written findings within 48 hours** of inspection: summarising cause, risk rating, action plan and expected timescale
- **Repair works commencement within 7 days**, unless complex scaffold/structural work is needed — in which case interim actions must be taken

- **Emergency hazards** (e.g., saturated walls, leaks near electrics, visible mould on sleeping walls) require immediate action — often within 24–48 hours

3. Root Cause Identification

Effective management means identifying the underlying cause of damp or mould, which may include:

- Poor ventilation or extractor fan failure
- Faulty or absent heating systems
- Leaks from plumbing, roof or external drains
- Cold bridging and inadequate insulation
- Condensation build-up due to tenant behaviour or property design

4. Health & Safety Implications

Excessive damp and mould have proven links to respiratory illnesses, asthma, and other health conditions – particularly in children. Landlords who fail to act may face liability through the HHSRS, regulatory enforcement, or civil action.

5. Communication, Documentation & Transparency

Throughout the process you must:

- Notify tenants of inspection date/time and purpose
- Provide your written findings, risk assessment and remediation plan
- Maintain a log of all inspections, communications, contractor visits, costs and outcome
- Retain records for a minimum of 6 years (or per your insurer's recommendation)

6. Temporary Accommodation & Alternative Solutions

If the property becomes uninhabitable due to damp/mould risk, landlords may need to provide alternative accommodation, cover removal of belongings, or undertake rapid specialist remediation. In social housing this is mandatory; in private renting it is best practice and expected by regulators.

7. Enforcement and Penalties

Regulators and local authorities may:

- Carry out proactive inspections using property portal data
- Issue enforcement notices requiring immediate works
- Impose civil monetary penalties (up to £30,000 or more)
- Refer landlords to the national database of sanctioned agents or landlords
- Tenants may raise complaints via Environmental Health or Ombudsman if private rent

8. Private Landlord Implications

Even though Awaab's Law was designed for social housing, private landlords must assume equivalent standards because:

- HHSRS hazards apply regardless of tenure
- Local authority housing teams will use similar criteria for private stock
- Insurers increasingly demand proactive damp/mould management
- Market expectations now view damp/mould as a high-risk compliance failure

9. Best Practice Checklist for Landlords

- Create a Damp & Mould Policy specific to your portfolio

- Provide tenants with a simple reporting route and clear guidance
- Train staff or agents to recognise damp/mould signs early
- Ensure serviceable heating, working extractors, good insulation and ventilation
- Schedule annual inspections and pre-winter checks
- Maintain logs of all tenant reports, inspections, contractor works and photos
- Review insulation, ventilation and structural risk in older stock
- Communicate transparently with tenants about timescales and what you will do



What Landlords Must Do Now

- Audit all properties for known damp and mould issues: review past complaints, inspection notes and insurance claims.
- Update your tenancy documentation to include clear tenant reporting procedures for damp/mould and clarification of your remediation responsibilities.
- Create or procure a Damp & Mould Policy and disseminate it to tenants.
- Train your property managers/agents and contractors on the Awaab's Law style timelines (14-day inspection, 48-hour report, 7-day action) and integrate these into your workflow.
- Confirm all extractors, heating systems, insulation and ventilation in your properties are checked and working before winter.
- Implement a tenant awareness campaign: provide tenants with a simple **Condensation & Moisture Guide** and explain how to report issues.
- Maintain a central log for all damp/mould reports and remediation works; ensure you keep photographic evidence, dates, communications, contractors and outcomes for at least 6 years.
- Review your insurance policies and speak with your insurer to ensure you're covered for damp/mould liability and ensure you're doing everything reasonable to reduce risk.
- Communicate clearly with your tenants: send a bulletin or letter explaining how you are responding to these changes and what they should expect.

