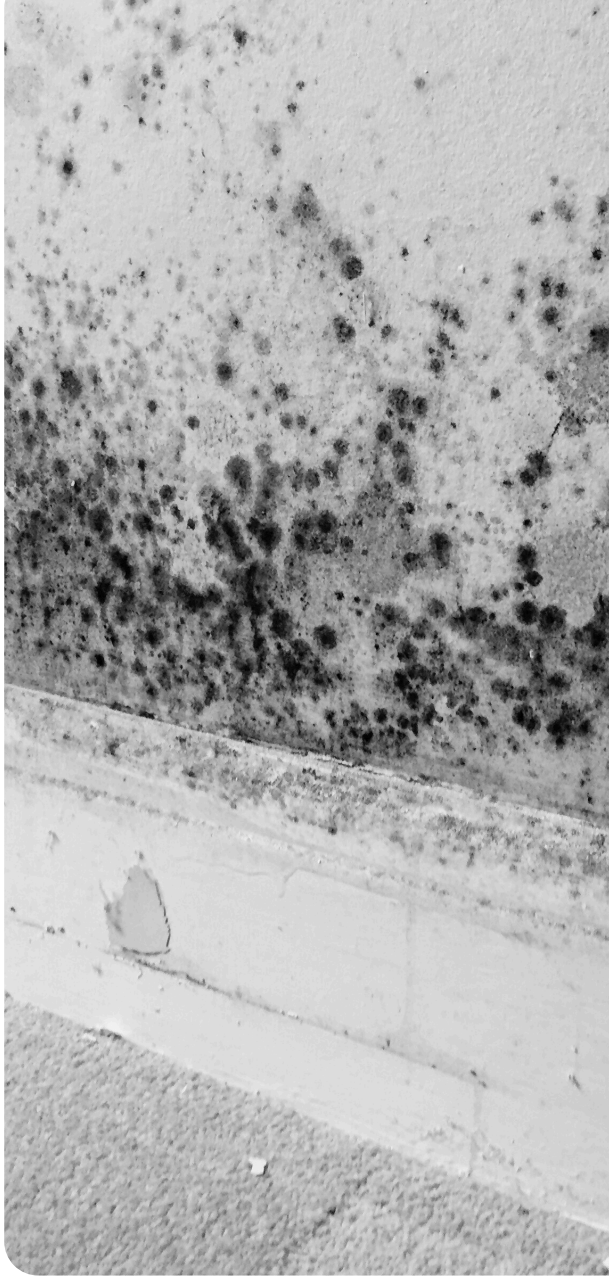
THE LETTINGS HUB

Infosheet | Decent Homes Vs Awaab's Law



Letting Agents are already preparing for a raft of new rules and regulations from the implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill – but alongside this, agents should also start to prepare for the implementation of the new requirements which concern managing the standards of rental homes, and ensuring tenant concerns are appropriately responded to.

From October this year, Awaab's Law will be applicable to social housing only, and it will set strict, and legally binding timeframes to investigate and fix dangerous damp and mould, as well as deal with emergency hazards. However, Awaab's Law is also set to become applicable to the PRS – although the date implementation date is still unclear.

Meanwhile the current Decent Homes Standard is being reformed for the Social Housing sector, and is being extended to cover the private rented sector.

There seems to be a lot of crossover; so in this infosheet we take a look at both pieces of legislation, side by side – to see what agents need to prepare for.



What's Changing?

Awaab's Law will mean landlords have to investigate and fix hazards within fixed timeframes, starting with damp, mould and emergency hazards. A failure to comply could lead to court action, compensation, and provision of temporary accommodation if the home can't be made safe in time.

Meanwhile, the Decent Homes Standard is being reformed; the plan is to modernise the current standards, and to apply them to the private rental sector. This would create a universal minimum standard for all rented homes.

The table below outlines the purpose of each reform and explains what they mean. With so many changes taking place, it's essential for agents to understand exactly what is included in each one.

	AWAAB'S LAW	DECENT HOMES (REFORMED)
Who it applies to today	The Social Housing sector; but it will extend to the PRS in the future.	Currently the reforms are proposed, but both social housing, and private landlords will need to comply.
Purpose	To create firm time limits for landlords to investigate hazards – including damp, mould and emergencies.	To ensure minimum there are standards in a property, covering repairs, thermal comfort and damp and mould.
Timeframes	Emergency hazards must be investigated and made safe within 24 hours; meanwhile other issues should be investigated and work needs to start within defined timescales.	The reforms will set out a minimum criteria for a property to be rented out, rather than set specific timeframes.
Scope of hazards	The reforms will set out a minimum criteria for a property to be rented out, rather than set specific timeframes	The reforms will set out a minimum criteria for a property to be rented out, rather than set specific timeframes
Tenure	Registered social housing providers are in scope initially, but the rules will be extended to the private rental sector. However, it is not expected to cover shared ownership.	The consultation covers both the social housing and the private rental sector, and it may also be applicable to some temporary and supported housing.

Why Agents And Landlords Should Care

1 | Enforcement pressure is rising - Awaab's Law creates firm deadlines, and the Decent Homes Standard will raise and standards and expectations for rental homes.

2 | Damp and mould must be eliminated - The new Decent Homes Standards are expected to make it explicit that a property will be free from damp and mould.

3 | Health risks - The Government guidance highlights the serious health risks which can arise from damp and mould.

Anticipated Timelines For Awaab's Law



Day 0 | You become aware of a potential hazard.

Within 24 hours | If an emergency hazard is reported, it should be investigated and make safe

Within 10 working days | If there are potential significant hazards, for example serious damp and mould, they must be investigated.

Within 3 working days of the investigation | The written findings following the investigation must be provided to the named tenant.

Within 5 working days of the investigation | You need to start (or take steps to start) the work to remedy the issue. If you can't start work within five working days, then begin as soon as possible; but physically start within 12 weeks. You should be prepared to explain the reasons for the delays.

What Agents And Landlords Should Do Now

1

UNDERSTAND YOUR PROPERTIES

Complete an audit to check for damp and mould. Check the thermal comfort. Establish if there are any window restrictors. And more generally, gauge the state of repair and facilities of each home – noting the likelihood of future potential issues.

2

PREPARE TO ADOPT RESPONSE TARGETS

You will need to be ready to comply with the new response expectations for significant hazards. Make sure your team are aware of the new requirements, and add these targets into their job descriptions and KPIs.

3

STRENGTHENING MOISTURE MANAGEMENT

Consider investigating mechanical extraction options to better ventilate the homes you manage. You could also check trickle vents, repair any issues with gutters, and tackle any insulation/thermal bridges. You should also inform your tenants about how to use any adjustments, and ensure they understand how to manage moisture.

4

EVIDENCE EVERYTHING

You should prepare to be date-stamp reports, photos, work orders, contractor logs – plus have a detailed log of all tenant communications.

5

PREPARE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Currently, the dates for both are uncertain. Therefore, keep an eye out for announcements over the autumn and winter.

DAMP AND MOULD ARE JUST LIFESTYLE ISSUES, AREN'T THEY?

No. The Government's health guidance and Awaab's Law places the onus on landlords to find and fix building-related causes of damp and mould first. Crucially, moisture from daily living isn't automatically a tenant breach.

Compliance Checklist

Even though Awaab's Law currently applies only to social landlords, the direction of travel is clear; so, getting ahead of the compliance requirements starts now.

1. **RESPONSE TIMES**

   Set your own internal targets to mirror Awaab's Law. Unless it is an emergency issue, you will need to investigate reports within 10 working days, provide written findings quickly, and start work promptly.

2. **PREPARE SIMPLE TEMPLATES**

   Have a ready-to-go investigation log and a short tenant update letter/email which you can send after inspections.

3. **LINE UP CONTRACTORS**

   Make sure you have trades who understand your urgency expectations.

4. **COMMUNICATE WITH TENANTS**

   Consider a short guide detailing how to report hazards, what you will do, and include the timescales you will be working to.

5. **KEEP DETAILED RECORDS**

   Log the date you were first told about an issue, what you found, and what actions you took. Include contractor reports and tenant communications.

6. **PLAN IN SOME ADDITIONAL PRE-LET CHECKS**

   These should include extract fans, trickle vents, seals and gutters.

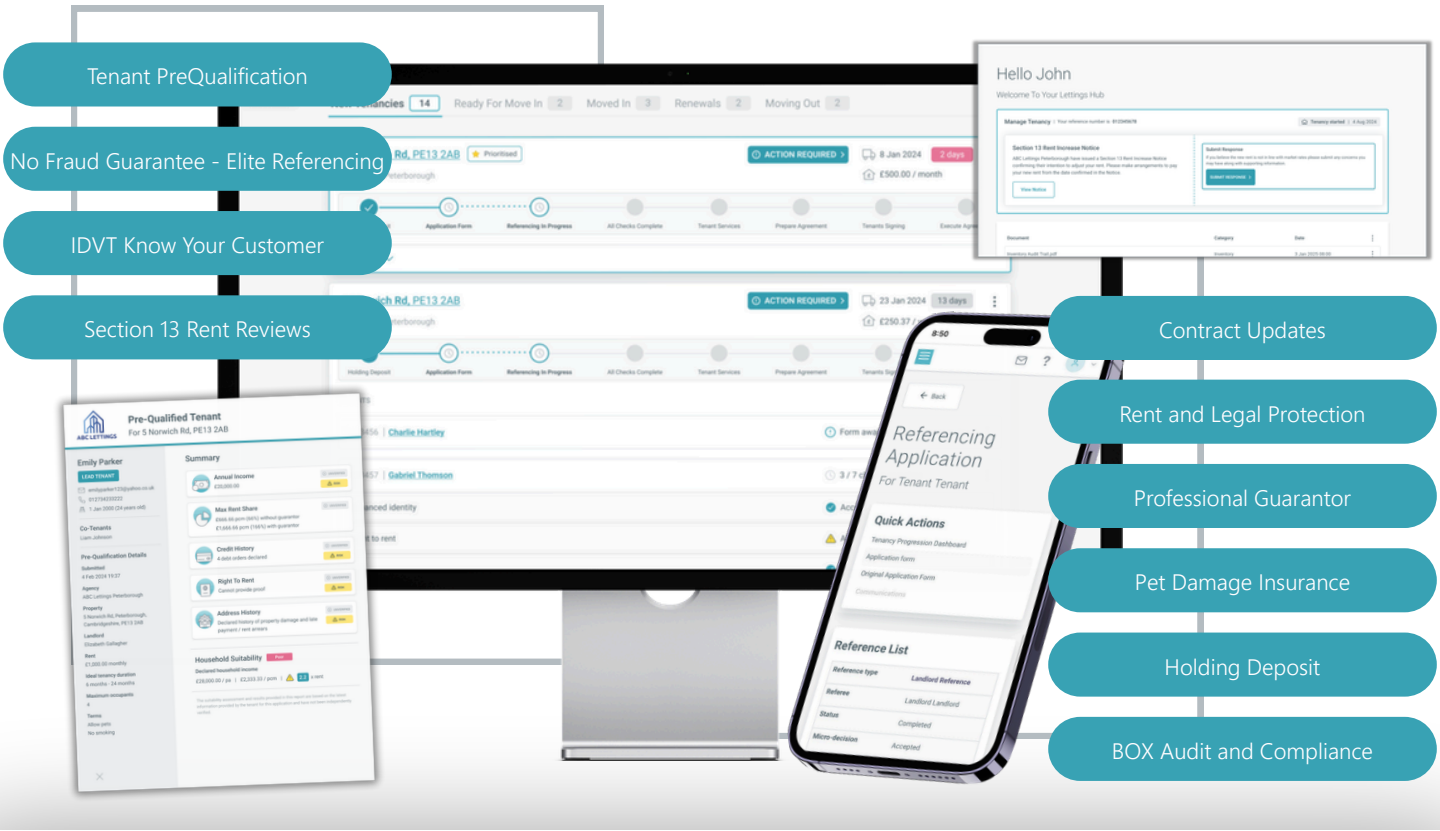
7. **MOULD-PREVENTION GUIDANCE**

   Create a simple mould-prevention guide aligned to government health guidance.

The Private Rental Sector should provide safe and comfortable homes for all tenants, and so our sector should welcome these new minimum standards. However, we also recognise the challenges which need to be navigated and that everyone needs time to understand the requirements, so make sure you take the time to implement them within your teams.

BOX

YOUR COMPLETE TENANCY MANAGEMENT PLATFORM



Infosheet |

Decent Homes Vs Awaab's Law

At The Lettings Hub, we're always here to support you through the ever-changing lettings landscape. With the Renters' Rights Bill introducing new regulations, staying updated is crucial. That's why we offer a variety of resources to help you navigate these changes smoothly. From webinars and blogs to tailored guides, our platform is packed with expert insights.

Be sure to follow us on LinkedIn and bookmark our Renters' Rights Hub for the latest updates, tips, and advice.

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