Part 9 | Decent Homes Standards and Awaab's Law



In the 9th instalment of our 10-part series examining the Renters' Rights Bill, we explore two reforms that will have a significant impact on housing quality and property management: Awaab's Law and the new Decent Homes Standard. Both are driven by a simple principle: every tenant deserves a safe, healthy, and well-maintained home.

Although no implementation dates have been confirmed, these reforms are set to transform how agents and landlords respond to hazards, manage maintenance, and demonstrate compliance.

How Things Work Today

At present, housing quality standards in the private rented sector are enforced through a mixture of:

- Housing Health and Safety Rating System guidance.
- Local authority inspections.
- General repair obligations under Section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

However, these mechanisms are reactive. Landlords are expected to act once a hazard is reported, but there are no statutory timeframes for investigation or repair.

The Grenfell tragedy, and later, the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak from prolonged exposure to damp and mould, highlighted the life-threatening consequences of poor housing conditions. Awaab's Law is named in his memory, and the aim is to ensure that reported hazards are investigated and made safe within strict, legal deadlines.



The decent homes standard will apply to the private rented sector and be enforceable for the first time. This will ensure that privately rented homes are safe, secure and hazard free, tackling the blight of poor-quality homes. The Bill will also extend the application of Awaab's law to the private rented sector, enabling the setting of clear legal expectations about the timeframes within which landlords must make homes safe when they contain serious hazards.

Baroness Taylor of Stevenage

What Awaab's Law Will Introduce

Awaab's Law will first apply to social housing landlords – a Law which comes into effect on 27th October - but it will later extend to the private rented sector. When it does, agents and landlords will need to operate under a defined set of response times, covering everything from emergency hazards to damp and mould. Landlords must:

- Investigate emergency hazards within 24 hours.
- Provide written findings within three working days of inspection.
- Start works within five working days (or as soon as possible, and no later than 12 weeks).
- Remove serious damp or mould within 10 working days.

The intention is to remove the delays and uncertainty that too often leave tenants in unsafe homes.

How The Decent Homes Standards Fit In



Alongside Awaab's Law, the Government is modernising and extending the Decent Homes Standard. Originally designed for social housing, the updated standard will apply to the PRS for the first time, setting a universal benchmark for rented properties. The goal is to ensure all homes meet minimum criteria for repair, facilities, thermal comfort, and do not have serious hazards like damp and mould.

While Awaab's Law creates specific time-based obligations, the Decent Homes Standard focuses on property condition at the point of letting. Together, they shift responsibility firmly onto landlords to maintain homes proactively rather than reactively.



There are many things that the Bill gets right, including, the introduction of a private rented sector landlord ombudsman service; the expansion of provisions supporting tenants with pets; and the extension of Awaab's law to the private rented sector. These are in line with the vision of the Archbishops' Commission on Housing, Church and Community, which argued that good housing should meet the following standard and be "sustainable, safe, stable, sociable and satisfying".

The Lord Bishop of Lincoln

Why It Matters For Agents And Landlords

The direction of travel can't be avoided: higher standards, faster response times, and clearer accountability. Once these reforms are in force, landlords who fail to comply may face enforcement action, compensation claims, and reputational damage.

For letting agents, this means greater responsibility for managing repairs efficiently, recording tenant communications, and ensuring contractors meet new response expectations. It will no longer be acceptable to simply log a repair request. You will need to evidence when it was received, when it was inspected, and what action followed.



As for unsatisfactory homes in the PRS, that is exactly the reason for the Decent Homes Standard, Awaab's Law, the ombudsman, the database and rent repayment orders. Any bad landlord providing sub-standard accommodation will find themselves subject to up to £40,000 in fines and swingeing rent repayment orders, payable to the local authority or the tenants themselves.

Lord Truscott



The impact on local authorities is principally one of resourcing. They have a big role to play in this Bill; there are going to be legions of surveyors having to be trained up in the Decent Homes Standard and the implications of the ability to operate Awaab's Law.

Lord Thurlow

USING FIXFLO TO MONITOR COMPLAINTS AND ENSURE COMPLIANCE

Letting agents could consider using the digital repairs and maintenance platform – Fixflo - to monitor and respond to tenant complaints about damp and mould. And thanks to its integration into BOX, tenants can report issues in their tenancy portal.

Fixflo could help you stay compliant with the new requirements under Awaab's Law by ensuring issues are tracked, managed, and resolved, whilst also keeping a detailed log of the reported issues and actions taken



Practical Advice For Agents

1

AUDIT YOUR PORTFOLIO

Identify any properties with recurring damp, mould or thermal issues. Document findings and take pro-active remediation work where possible.

2

SET INTERNAL TARGETS

Even before dates are announced, adopt your own 'Awaab's Law' style response times for responding to issues.

3

EDUCATE TENANTS

Provide clear reporting instructions and explain what they can expect once an issue is logged.

4

STRENGTHEN CONTRACTOR RELATIONSHIPS

Ensure your preferred trades understand the urgency expectations; you may want to re-visit any service agreements with them to ensure they can deliver within new shortened timescales.

5

IMPROVE VENTILATION AND MOISTURE CONTROL

Check extractors, trickle vents, gutters and insulation; ensure tenants know how to use systems properly.

6

KEEP DETAILED RECORDS

You will need to keep date-stamped reports, photos, work orders and communications for audit and compliance purposes.

Looking Ahead

Although Awaab's Law and the new Decent Homes Standard do not yet have confirmed implementation dates, both are central to the Government's housing reform agenda and are expected to follow closely behind the implementation of the Renters' Rights Bill.

Agents who prepare now - by auditing homes, tightening repair processes and documenting every step - will be well placed when the new requirements take effect.

The message from government is clear: the days of slow repairs, poor record-keeping, and outdated property standards are numbered. Every tenant deserves a decent home, and every landlord must prove they're providing one.