

Awaab's Law: Your Compliance Roadmap

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Tragic Recent Events: Awaab Ishak



Awaab Ishak's death is a deeply tragic and heartbreaking case that brought national attention to the dangers of poor housing conditions in the UK.



Awaab was just two years old when he died in December 2020, from a respiratory condition caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his family's housing association flat in Rochdale, Greater Manchester.



Awaab's Law



His parents, originally from Sudan, had raised serious concerns about the mould growing in their home - black mould that was visible on the walls and ceilings.



Despite their repeated complaints to Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH), the organisation responsible for managing their home, no effective action was taken.

Awaab's Law



Awaab's father, Faisal Abdullah, had even submitted evidence to the housing association, including photographs, but was told to paint over the mould.



Shockingly, their requests for proper treatment of the issue were dismissed or delayed, with the housing association allegedly assuming that cultural practices like drying clothes indoors were to blame, rather than acknowledging and fixing the underlying ventilation problems.

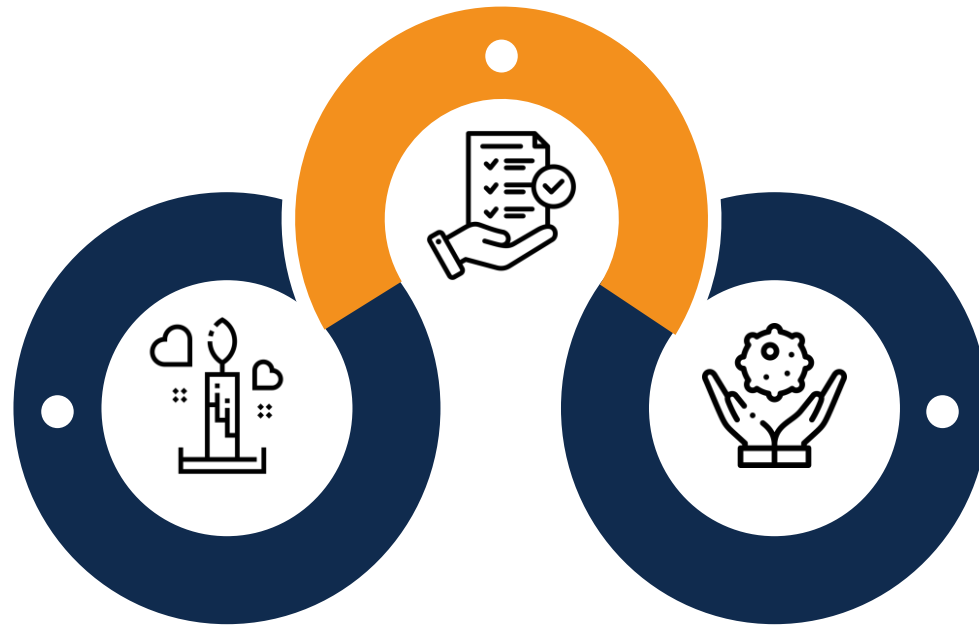


Above: Pictures from the Ishak's home.

Awaab's Law

A coroner's report later found that the mould in the flat was directly responsible for the inflammation in Awaab's airways that led to his death.

After Awaab fell seriously ill, he was taken to hospital but sadly passed away shortly after being discharged, and just days before his second birthday.



What makes this tragedy even harder to bear is how avoidable it was. The coroner called it a “defining moment” for the UK housing sector, and it sparked widespread calls for accountability and reform.

Awaab's Law



The case laid bare the consequences of systemic neglect and highlighted how families, especially those from minority or immigrant backgrounds, can be failed by the very systems meant to protect them.



Awaab's death led to the implementation "Awaab's Law," part of a movement to ensure that social housing providers are legally required to respond to reports of damp and mould in a timely and effective manner.

Awaab Ishak



ASCP
in Housing
& Communities

2018-2020



Navigating Awaab's Law

Legal Foundation



Introduced via Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023



New Section 10A of the Landlord & Tenant Act 1985



First phase comes into effect on 27 October 2025



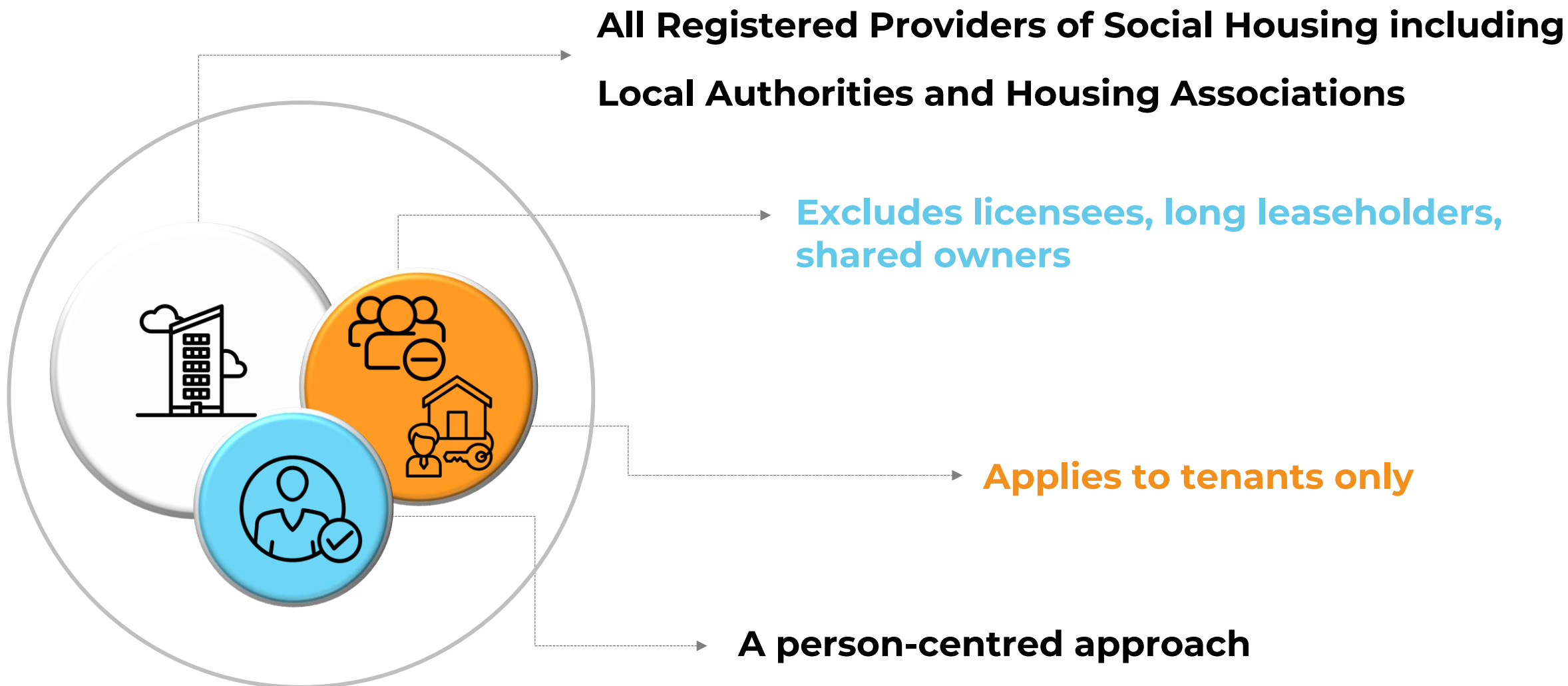
Creates an implied term in all social housing tenancy agreements



England only at this stage



Who is Covered?



3 Phase Rollout

Phase 1: 27 October 2025

- **Damp and mould**

Phase 2: 2026

- Excess cold & heat
- Falls (baths, level surfaces, stairs/between levels)
- Structural collapse & explosions
 - Fire & electrical
- Domestic, personal hygiene, food safety

Phase 3: All Remaining HHSRS Hazards

- **All remaining HHSRS hazards**
- **Except overcrowding**

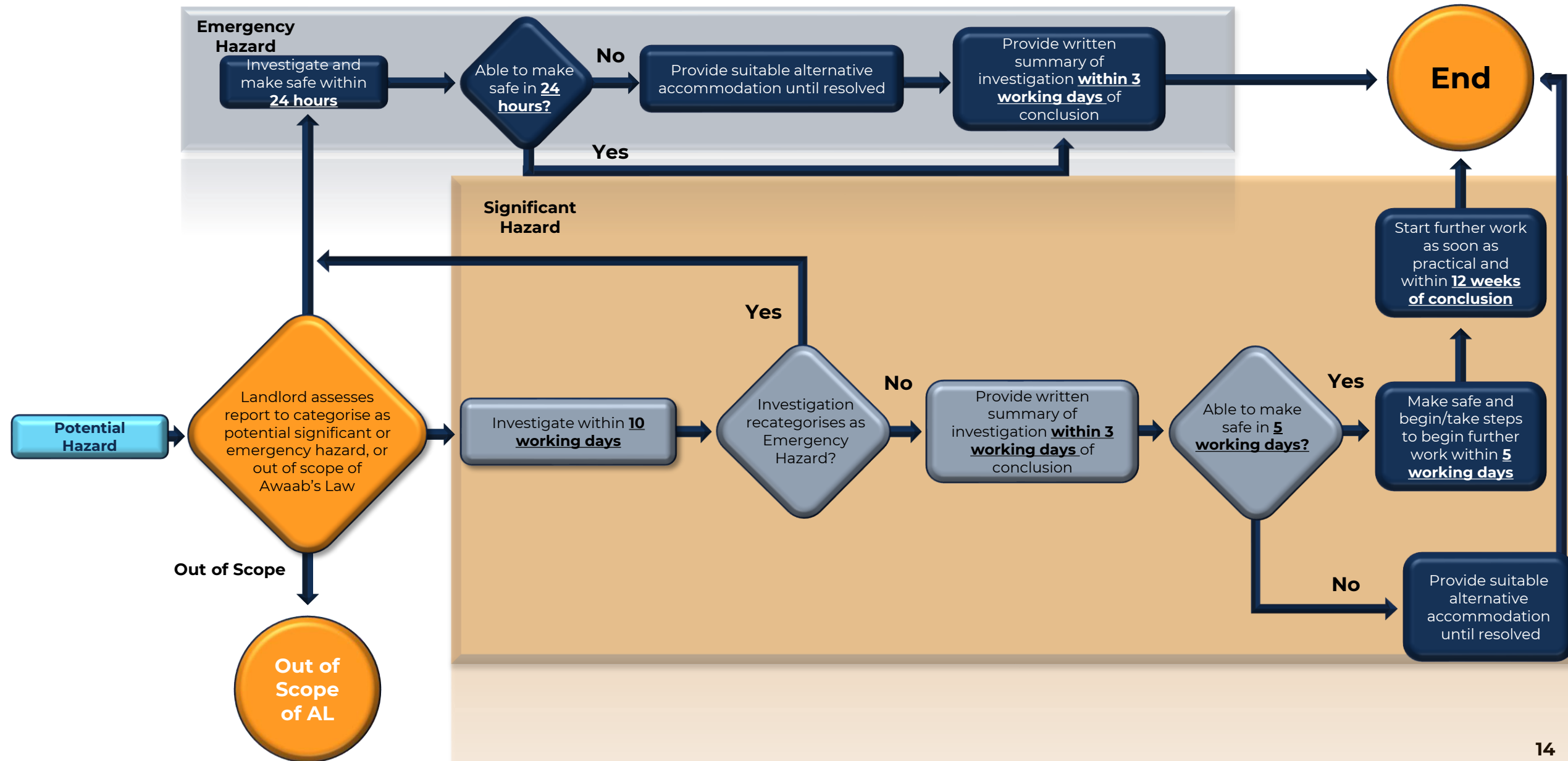
Key Time Frames: At a Glance

Significant Hazards

- ✓ **Investigate:** within 10 working days
- ✓ **Written Summary:** within 3 working days of investigation conclusion
- ✓ **Works:** Complete within 5 working days of conclusion
- ✓ **Supplementary Works:** e.g. to prevent reoccurrence of hazard, as soon as reasonably practicable and within 12 weeks

Emergency Hazards

- ✓ **Make Safe:** within 24 hours
- ✓ **Written Summary:** within 3 working days



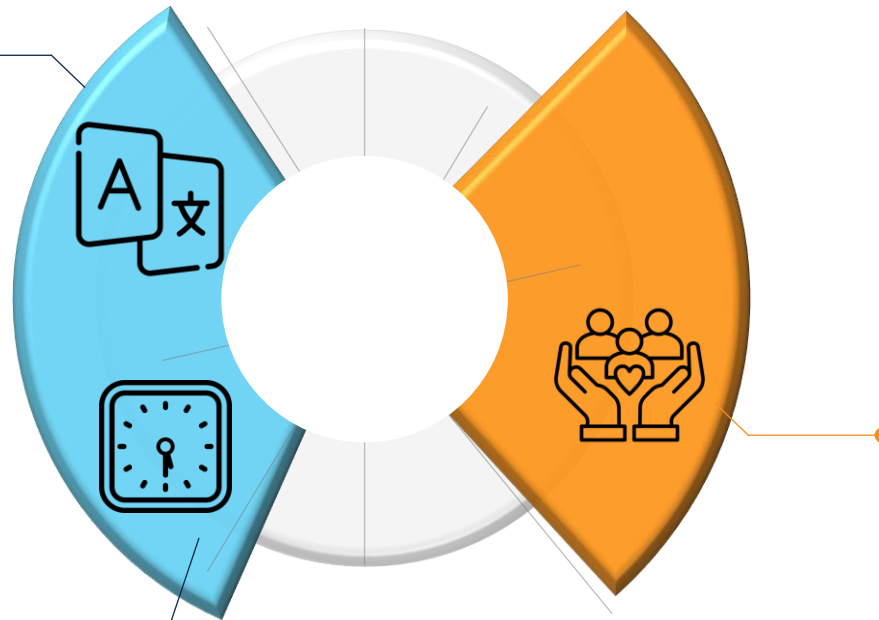
Hazard Triage: Significant or Emergency?

Situation	Required Action
Initially deemed non-emergency , later reassessed as emergency	24-hour clock starts from the moment you realise it's an emergency
Landlord unaware until inspection or further evidence	Clock begins when new information received or hazard reassessed
Written summary still required?	Yes — within 3 working days of the updated investigation's conclusion

Written Summaries & Communication

**Must be provided
to tenant in clear
language**

**Sent within 3
working days of
investigation closure**



**Tailored to
tenant needs
(e.g. language,
format,
vulnerabilities)**

Alternative Accommodation



- Required if hazard cannot be made safe within set timeframes
- Part of compliance duty, not discretionary
- Document decision-making and offers made
- What is suitable?

- **Space including number of bedrooms given the family make up**
- **Location considering distance from workplaces or schools**
- **Disability or medical needs to ensure accommodation is accessible**
- **Length of stay in alternative accommodation**

Understanding “All Reasonable Steps”

The law uses “all reasonable steps” — but the draft guidance clarifies that this does not mean landlords must go to unreasonable lengths.

Instead, courts will likely expect well-documented, timely, and proportionate actions, akin to reasonable endeavours, but applied seriously and consistently.

Legal Term / Standard	Definition	Level of Duty	Notes
Best endeavours	Must do everything possible, even at significant cost or inconvenience	 Very High	May include sacrificing own interests; courts interpret this strictly.
All reasonable steps	Must take all actions a reasonable person would take in the same position	 High	Must be proactive, thorough, and evidenced; not limited to “usual practice.”
Reasonable endeavours	Must take reasonable efforts, but can balance against own interests	 Moderate	Often used in contracts; allows discretion if cost or practicality is an issue.
Due diligence	Must act with care, attention and standard of a competent person	 Moderate	Common in professional, financial and safety contexts.
Take into account	Must consider a factor in decision-making	 Low	No obligation to act upon it, just to acknowledge or review it.

Timelines and Defence

- **The timelines set under Awaab's Law are the maximum statutory timeframes in which landlords must act. Landlords can and should act more quickly if circumstances require, especially in situations where other legislation requires a faster response and/or according to their policies and procedures.**
- **Under Awaab's Law, social landlords have a defence if they have taken all reasonable steps to comply with the requirements (Section 10A(5) of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985).**

Practical Steps for Landlords

- Review internal repair, access and triage policies
- Train staff on new hazard categories and timeframes
- Ensure contractor and resource capacity for compliance
- Ensure clarity in your organisation for accountabilities
- Prepare templates for written summaries
- Embed record-keeping and evidence-gathering including considerations for GDPR
- Review complaints handling policies and processes, and engage in communications with residents

Scotland?

The new Cabinet Secretary for Housing has recently announced to parliament that the Scottish Government will raise the standard and quality of all rented accommodation in Scotland by bringing Awaab's law into force in the social and private rented sectors from March 2026.

It is expected that this will require all landlords to address damp and mould that presents a significant risk of harm to tenants within fixed timeframes. It is possible that this requirement will extend to other types of dangerous disrepair, but SAL is still awaiting clarity on the scope of this proposal.

Source: Scottish Association of Landlords 16th October 2025

Summary & Key Messages

- **Statutory duty begins 27 Oct 2025**
- **Phase 1 covers damp, mould & emergency hazards**
 - **Strict timeframes now legally enforceable**
- **Defence relies on robust evidence of "all reasonable steps"**
- **Tenants can enforce rights directly; regulators can impose sanctions**

Thank You