

Awaab's Law – Person-Centred Housing & Fire Safety Advisory Note

1 Background and Purpose

Awaab's Law is being introduced following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, a young child who died after prolonged exposure to toxic mould in his rented home. His case highlighted serious failings in how social housing hazards were managed and the devastating impact poor housing conditions can have on health.

The law represents a major change in housing safety regulation, placing a clear legal duty on social landlords to identify and fix serious hazards quickly, rather than relying on discretionary repair decisions or complaint-driven action.

The central aim of Awaab's Law is to protect tenants' health and wellbeing, particularly for vulnerable groups such as children, older people, disabled tenants, pregnant individuals, and those with pre-existing health conditions. It introduces strict statutory timescales requiring landlords to assess and address hazards — including damp, mould, fire risks, electrical faults, burns, scalds, and other serious dangers — within defined periods.

The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025, due to come into force in April 2026 (subject to final approval), place further obligations on social landlords. These regulations align with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which identifies 29 categories of housing hazards. Landlords must act within set timeframes, ensuring responses are proportionate to the level of risk and properly documented.

Awaab's Law is person-centred in design. Landlords must take account of each tenant's individual health, mobility, and living needs when assessing and responding to hazards. For example, a hazard may be reclassified as significant or emergency if a tenant's vulnerability increases the potential for harm.

This person-centred duty also extends to fire safety, where landlords must prepare Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) for residents who require assistance to escape safely in an emergency.

To support full compliance, the law includes a phased rollout, giving landlords time to adapt systems, train staff, and strengthen inspection, reporting, and record-keeping processes — while ensuring that urgent risks are prioritised and enforcement mechanisms are in place across the social housing sector.



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2 Phased Rollout

Phase	Date	Scope of Application	Key Hazards Covered
Phase 1	27 October 2025	Awaab's Law comes into force for the social rented sector . Landlords must address all emergency hazards and all damp and mould hazards that present a significant risk of harm within fixed timeframes.	- Emergency hazards - Damp and mould hazards
Phase 2	2026	Regulations extend to include additional hazards where they present a significant risk of harm .	- Excess cold and excess heat - Falls associated with baths, showers, level surfaces, stairs, and between levels - Structural collapse and explosions - Fire and electrical hazards - Domestic and personal hygiene - Food safety
Phase 3	2027	Regulations extend to cover all remaining HHSRS hazards (except overcrowding) where they present a significant risk of harm.	- All other HHSRS hazards except overcrowding

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3 Hazard Categories & Statutory Timescales

HSRS Category	Example Hazard	Awaab's Law Hazard Category	Required Action / Timescale (Working Days)	Person-Centred Considerations
Fire	Blocked or locked fire exits	Emergency Hazard	Make safe within 1 working day	Residents with mobility, sensory, or cognitive impairments may need assisted evacuation or temporary accommodation
Fire	Faulty or disconnected smoke or heat alarms	Emergency Hazard	Make safe within 1 working day	Fit temporary detectors immediately; provide reassurance visits to vulnerable tenants
Fire	Damaged or non-fire-resistant doors in escape routes	Significant Hazard (can escalate to emergency)	Assess within 10 working days; repair as soon as practicable	Tenants with limited mobility or children may increase priority to emergency response
Electrical	Exposed wiring or damaged sockets causing sparks	Emergency Hazard	Make safe within 1 working day	Vulnerable tenants may require immediate relocation until safe
Electrical	Faulty consumer unit or burning smell from circuits	Emergency Hazard	Make safe within 1 working day	Tenants with medical equipment depending on electricity need urgent protection or alternative supply
Electrical	Missing cover plates or loose fittings not posing immediate	Significant Hazard	Assess within 10 working days; repair as soon as practicable	Monitor risk; consider quicker action if young children or vulnerable adults are present danger

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4 Fire Safety, Means of Escape, and PEEPs

Government estimates indicate that in buildings over 18 storeys with simultaneous evacuation plans, **28.4% of residents living in social housing, and 16.3% of tenants have impairments affecting evacuation**. Other multi-storey residential buildings are likely to house similar proportions of disabled or mobility-impaired tenants.

Safe and Accessible Escape Routes

- Escape routes must be kept clear and unobstructed at all times.
- Routes must be suitable for tenants with mobility or sensory impairments.

Fire Safety Equipment

- Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms must be installed and tested on every floor.
- Fire doors and emergency lighting must be maintained where required.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs)

- Individualised evacuation plans must be developed for tenants who may need assistance.
- Plans must include safe exit routes, support arrangements, and temporary relocation if required.
- PEEPs should be reviewed and updated regularly, particularly if tenant circumstances change.

Vulnerable Tenant Prioritisation

- Children, elderly, disabled, pregnant, or immunocompromised tenants must receive priority action for hazard remediation.
- Repairs and safety measures should be delivered with minimal disruption to wellbeing.

Communication and Training

- Tenants should be informed about escape procedures.
- Housing staff must be trained to assist vulnerable tenants in evacuation.

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5 Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable people include children, elderly people, disabled individuals, pregnant tenants, and those with underlying health conditions. Landlords have person-centred responsibilities:

- Prioritising hazard repair that affects health and safety.
- Tailoring communication and scheduling to individual needs.
- Carrying out risk assessments that consider medical, sensory, or mobility challenges.
- Preparing and maintaining PEEPs for tenants requiring evacuation support.

6 Landlord Obligations

- Document all repairs, requests, and actions.
- Maintain clear communication with tenants on hazards and timescales.
- Carry out proactive inspections, particularly where vulnerable tenants are present.
- Comply with statutory timescales and HHSRS enforcement by local authorities.
- Embed person-centred practice in all housing safety responses.

6.1 Key Principles

- Tenant health and safety must come first.
- Communication and transparency are essential.
- Repairs and interventions should be adapted to tenant needs.
- Support, including temporary relocation and PEEPs, must be offered where required.
- Prevention through regular inspection and hazard identification using HHSRS is key to compliance.

7 Conclusion

The HHSRS, Awaab's Law and the Fire Safety (Residential PEEPs) (England) Regulations (RPEEPS) sit uneasily alongside one another in their treatment of housing safety responsibilities.

The HHSRS and Awaab's Law create a clear duty on landlords to identify and remedy hazards within strict statutory timescales. This duty applies regardless of the tenant's financial means or willingness to contribute. Its purpose is to ensure that no resident is left at risk from hazards such as damp, mould, electrical faults, burns, scalds, or fire safety and evacuation planning failures.

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By contrast, the RPEEPs Regulations, as currently drafted, adopt a narrower approach. They place responsibility on building owners and managers to identify fire safety hazards and prepare evacuation plans for residents who cannot self-evacuate, but they allow fire safety measures to remain unimplemented if the tenant cannot or will not pay towards them. This risks leaving vulnerable residents without safe means of escape in practice.

The result is a direct conflict. The HHSRS and Awaab's Law requires landlords to mitigate hazards as a matter of legal duty, while the RPEEPs framework permits hazards linked to fire safety and means of escape to remain unaddressed unless the tenant pays for the mitigation. It is difficult to reconcile these positions. From the perspective of tenant safety, it is hard to imagine anything worse than living in a building with no safe means of escape.

This contradiction undermines the person-centred principle that underpins Awaab's Law. If landlords are obliged to address mould but allowed to leave fire hazards unmitigated, the integrity of the housing safety framework is called into question. In practice, housing providers will need clear regulatory guidance to resolve this conflict and to ensure that the right to a safe home is consistently applied across all hazards.