



17 SEPTEMBER 2025

PREPARING FOR AWAAB'S LAW



ENSURING HOMES ARE FIT AND SAFE

FINDINGS PAPER

30 Euston Square,
London,
NW1 2FB



jkirkwood@chicltd.co.uk
0121 759 9990
www.chicltd.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

CHIC recently brought together members from across London and the South East to host a discussion on the sectors readiness for the introduction of **Awaab's Law on the 27th October 2025.**

Awaab's Law is new legislation designed to improve living conditions for residents in social housing. It compels landlords to act swiftly on damp and mould issues in the home. The name is taken from Awaab Ishak, a two year old boy who sadly died in 2020 due to prolonged exposure to mould in his family's social housing flat in Rochdale.

The legislation is the government's response to this tragedy. Something needed to be done, but we should recognise that damp and mould is nothing new. It has been around for a long time. Remedies are available but it is the process (and most importantly the timescales) of dealing with occurrences that this legislation will address.

The premise of the day was to bring together landlords, the supply chain and professional services providers to have an open discussion about how prepared the sector is for the new legislation and to identify best practices that could be employed to comply with the new requirements.

Before the roundtable discussion began, participants heard presentations from Kieran Colgan of ARK Consultancy, Josephine Morten from Brabners, James McClelland of Mapei UK and Tom Sowerby of event sponsors WPS to provide context on how we have arrived at this point, the legal responsibilities of the legislation, an insight into the causes of damp and mould in the home, together with a contractors view.

For the roundtable itself participants were split into groups to discuss four questions around the upcoming legislation based on the themes of – repairs policies and procedures, supporting tenants, sector culture and service delivery.



FINDINGS

Repairs policies and procedures: Do current repairs policies and procedures focus on property condition and on residents health and wellbeing?

From those debating this question, the consensus was that presently not enough focus is placed upon the health and wellbeing of residents and rather the focus of policies and approach remains on the condition of the property itself.

Individual groups involved in housing upkeep understand their own responsibilities but there was a sense that an opportunity exists to involve contractors more closely with an acceptance that successful delivery of this legislation will require close collaboration and partnership working. It will involve clear and united communication between each party, and it was felt that communication on this subject needs to be more proactive than they are at present.

Participants felt there was a need to help educate tenants about their responsibilities whilst being mindful that their lifestyles cannot be blamed for the quality of the property they live in. This is why an emphasis was placed on introducing an education process and not simply focusing on just telling people what to do.

A regular review of policies is required to ensure they remain relevant and fit for purpose. The links between several areas (repairs, maintenance, safety) overlap and it was felt there is an opportunity for a more holistic approach which would also have wider resource (financial and people) benefits as well.

Recognition was given to the sector being very compliance driven, with some reflection that sometimes we are not ambitious enough in our thinking and that we use the compliance standard as a minimum where there remains the potential to go further in our provision for residents. This presents an opportunity to the sector to go above and beyond on this and other legislation to improve residents lives.

Supporting Tenants: What can we do to help tenants prevent (and manage) damp and mould?

It goes without saying residents really are at the heart of this new legislation.

The participants felt there was no one clear answer or direction on this question, but all recognised there is a need to help educate residents in the cause of and mitigation of damp and mould issues. This comes through clear communication practices to help tenants understand their own responsibilities.

Some raised the question of using technology and AI to help with communication. This was aligned to an idea that training could be provided to tenants as well as staff about the new legislation and what it will mean for them. It was felt that technology could act as a prompt for residents' concerns acting as an identifier of issues as they occur. The discussion really highlighted the need for increased knowledge provision for tenants in this area.

All agreed on the need for communications in this area to move from a state of reactivity into one of being proactive, helping to put the resident in control. And it was felt that any communication needs to embrace new trends and channels and not simply be reliant on written content. This is because all were clear that the silent voice of the resident needs to be heard.



FINDINGS

Sector culture: Are organisational leaders ready to make sure we are getting this right?

Participants felt that readiness depends on having the right resources such as people and funding in place to meet the levels the legislation will require. Organisations therefore need to take a joined up approach to damp and mould as part of their broader strategic asset management responsibilities.

Many felt that landlords were still in reactive mode and need to be more on the front foot. One observation was that contractors believe they are generally ready, but their impression was that their clients are not. This was because it is contractors that have been leading the discussion in this field.

Awareness of the damage that a blame culture can inflict was complemented by the worry that this legislation could lead to a new claims culture in the sector. This means organisations must put effort (and resource) into building the right culture to address this issue and remain close and connected to their residents.

It was acknowledged that a strategic approach to asset management will help, and that we cannot afford to work in silos on individual housing issues. The more joined up, the bigger impact that can be made. Participants wanted the sector to avoid any forced change that is not delivered in a planned and collaborative way.

Answering the question directly, the discussion concluded that leaders are not there yet and more work needs to be done. One area of common concern is how well data is managed in the sector to help prepare and execute change effectively. It was felt that the sector is data rich but intelligence poor, highlighting that more emphasis needs to be put into this area, because successful data interpretation could lead to improved proactive interventions in the home.

It was highlighted that there is a role for contractors to be truly embedded in the process and not just involved in the end delivery. This will require the fostering of true partnership working.

Service Delivery: Are contractors and their contracts ready to deliver the right outcomes for residents?

This is where success will ultimately be determined. As the question frames it, will the right outcomes be delivered.

It was recognised that the role of triage is fundamental and indeed will either make or break the success of dealing with damp and mould issues the way the legislation intends. To succeed in this endeavour it needs people, and competent people at that. Given that people do not know quite how big the demand will be, the question was raised that to succeed this needs significant resource putting behind it, and that means money. A concern was raised that depending on how many issues come to light, there might be rediverting of some already finite budgets, but this is where good strategic asset management can help manage the resource question, whilst also incorporating responses to other regulations as well.

It was felt that there is a shortage of skilled people available to the sector at present, and this will need to be addressed. Once again this will require additional financial resources not only for recruitment but for training as well. This is something that is not just specific to the question of damp and mould but applies across other challenges facing the whole sector. It was noted earlier in the day that part of the push for the legislation was because of a lack of trust in the sector to deliver and the response of the sector to this new legislation now needs to be to show it can respond effectively and ultimately rebuild that trust.

It was highlighted that for success front line staff will need to be empowered to make quick and effective decisions but once again the resources to deliver on and fund those solutions must be in place to back up this authority to remedy issues.

In summary it was felt a successful proactive approach to this issue should help to mitigate ongoing repairs and maintenance demands so the ability to invest in resource upfront can provide longer term economic benefit for housing providers.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

It was an enthusiastic and wide reaching discussion, and through the different topics some core themes to ensure successful adoption came through:

1. Increased education for residents, frontline staff, contractors, and leaders.
2. Focused communication that is more proactive, accessible, and resident-centered.
3. Recognising resources must be in place to support from both a human (adequate numbers of competent staff) and financial perspective (recognising that the sector has finite budgets).
4. Managing effective delivery will require stronger governance, audits, and greater holistic policy reviews.
5. A culture shift for the sector moving from being compliance-driven to a proactive resident centric approach.
6. Better use of technology and data to focus on better integration and the smarter use of data to enable staff empowerment.

There was also a sense of the unknown. Noone knows what will happen come the implementation. Is there a latent demand that will show its face? Only time will tell.

But one thing for sure is that we should not view this as an individual housing provider or landlord challenge. This is very much a sector challenge. That means we need to learn with each other. It is a collective challenge that will require collective solutions. We should be prepared to share our knowledge freely to allow us all to do that.

As a membership organisation this is why we host such events, to ensure our members have access to knowledge and a network that can help. Don't be afraid to use the expertise that is available as we all seek to make our residents homes better places to live.

