

Plenary 3

Creating Healthy Homes by Working and Learning Together

Speakers:

- Nadhia Khan, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing
- Jenny Danson, Healthy Homes Hub
- Isobel Ames, MHCLG

Chaired by: Peter Long

Room: Plenary Hall



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Our Journey to improving services

Speaker: Nadhia Khan, RBH



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What Happened?

Exclusive Housing body that ran flat where Awaab Ishak died received 106 formal complaints about damp or mould in a year

One former Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) employee, who resigned because of a "toxic culture" within the organisation, claims there will be "hundreds more complaints" than what has been recorded.

Inzham Rashid
News correspondent @inzhamrashid
Tuesday 22 November

Boy, 2, died after being exposed to mould in his home since birth

Comment
Liam Coleman
Tuesday 15 Nov 2022 11:53 am
1.5k SHARES

Share

Awaab Ishak died in December 2020 after suffering from horrific mould in his house (Picture MEN Media)

The death of a toddler who suffered prolonged exposure to mould 'defining moment' for the housing sector, a coroner

Awaab Ishak: Mould in Rochdale flat caused boy's death, coroner rules
15 November

Mother pleaded for help with mouldy flat before toddler Awaab Ishak dies, inquest hears
GRANADA | AWAAB ISHAK | INQUEST | ROCHDALE | Wednesday 9 November 2022, 5:00pm

Awaab Ishak died just over a week after his second birthday.
Credit: MEN Media

The mother of a little boy who died from 'mould exposure' pleaded for help with their home the day before his death, an inquest has heard.

Awaab Ishak died just over a week from his second birthday, after his parents had raised multiple concerns about damp and mould at their Rochdale home.

At his inquest a doctor told the court mould was 'the most plausible, or only, explanation' for the child's breathing difficulties.

The Coroner's Outcome



- Breakdown in communication between statutory organisations
(Northern Care Alliance, GP's, Health Visitors, Midwives, Hospitals)
- Language barriers resulting in lack of understanding
- Misguided practises in disrepair



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The Discussion of Causes of Damp, Mould and Condensation



The Science – Professor Malcolm Richardson

- Numerous studies have demonstrated an association between penicillium and the lung function of children (reviewed in Bundy et al.,2009; Sharpe et al.,2015). **The true effect of Penicillium and other fungi on the airway hyperresponsiveness of asthmatic patients is not known....**
- Exposure to indoor fungal allergens is important because of both the high percentage of time spent indoors and data suggesting the importance of fungal antigens across a variety of allergic diseases.
- In children specifically visible mould and mould order were associated with the development and exacerbation of asthma, providing sufficient evidence of a causal relationship based on analysis of 61 studies that reported on visible mould or mould order or quantitative assessment of culturable fungi or mould species



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The Coroner's Outcome

It Wasn't Lifestyle



la) Acute airway Oedema with severe granulomatous tracheobronchitis

lb) Environmental Mould Exposure

“Awaab Ishak died as a result of a severe respiratory condition caused due to prolonged exposure to mould in his home environment. Action to treat and prevent this was not taken. His respiratory condition led to a respiratory arrest. The medical advice given to his parents led to Awaab receiving sub-optimal ventilation of his airway which was unable to prevent his cardiac arrest”



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The Impact for RBH

What Happened Next?



- Regulatory downgrade to G3 for failings in governance
- Para 49 Investigation into systemic failings and Severe Maladministration from Housing Ombudsman
- The response in the media was intense
- Our people were frightened to be associated with RBH
- Our customers told us they too felt unsafe
- The reputation impact



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Lessons Learnt to Improve Services



Lessons Learnt



Service Delivery

- Lack of focus on core landlord services
- Tenant Contact/Empathy
- Making assumptions about cultural behaviours
- Blaming lifestyle
- Inadequate intelligence about people and homes

Information and technology

- Too many standalone systems
- Data

C U L T U R E



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Equality and Respect



Race and Culture



- Family felt discrimination against
- Issue of bathing and cultural differences explored
- Housing Ombudsman P49 found 'othering'
- Use of language
- Re-establish links with local organisations
- Understand trauma
- Professional curiosity
- Profiling cases of complaints, disrepair, safeguarding, ASB etc



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Preparing for AWAAB's Law



To Summarise

- Detailed knowledge of our homes – SCS at 94%
- Customer Census and Tenancy Audits – to collect and verify data about individual circumstances
- Dedicated damp and mould taskforce
- Overhaul of disrepair processes
- Address repairs backlog over 12-month period
- Understand trends in demand by month and by trade to allow resource management
- Damp and Mould reporting and triaging of cases
- Review of Repairs Policy to match timescales
- Trained inspectors in HHRS hazards
- Review of nomination agreements and allocation policy
- Injunctions for no access



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Healthy Homes Hub

Speaker: Jenny Danson, Healthy Homes Hub



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A lack of adequate, warm, and safe housing is strongly linked to higher rates of **depression, anxiety, and social isolation** - Public Health England 2021

58% renters are struggling with damp, mould or excessive cold in their home - Netrent

Impact on Elderly Health: Homes with inadequate heating and insulation can increase the risk of hypothermia, strokes, and heart attacks - Age UK 2020; NHS Digital 2021

5.5m people live with **asthma** in the UK, with an 80% rise lined to **indoor air pollution** - NHS

Poor housing conditions contribute to **lost productivity** due to illness, with working-age adults in substandard housing experiencing higher rates of sickness and **absence** from work - Public Health England 2021



What's the Problem?

Approximately **3.6 million children** live in substandard housing in the UK, including 975,000 in social housing - Shelter 2021

An estimated **10% of excess winter deaths** in the UK can be attributed to **fuel poverty**, and approximately 21.5% are due to cold homes - ONS

Sleep disturbance costs the UK economy **£34bn per year**, with noise pollution a significant factor - University of Leicester

Poor quality housing results in **£2bn of NHS costs** every year through negative health impacts - NHS



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Collaboration is Key.

Your trusted platform for **sharing information and best practices** in the housing sector

In-person events

Webinars

Podcasts

Case Studies

Newsletters

Round Tables

Immersive Learning

Blogs



Healthy
Homes Hub

Partner to NHMF



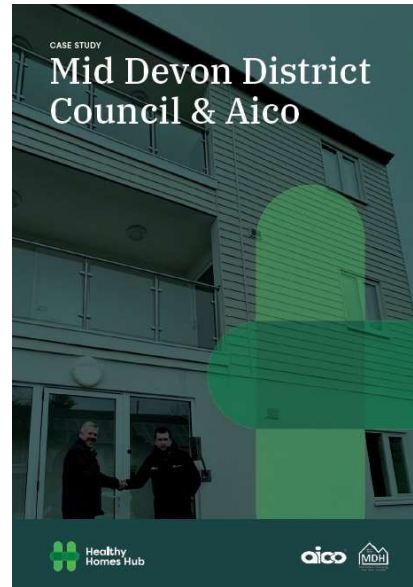
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Case Studies.



With a lot of the homes we were able to say the ventilation all looks fine because we've put in a lot of mechanical ventilation, but we can see that your temperature, for example, is on average 16 or 17 degrees, and that's not warm enough. And that then enables us to say maybe don't keep your windows open for quite so long - just open them for shorter periods and rely on the mechanical ventilation and focus on increasing the temperature by two degrees, and then you will reduce that mould risk.

Rosie Wills, Mid Devon District Council Technical Support and Repairs Manager



THE SOLUTION

These were popular with HomeLINK's clients because they were relatively low cost and they drove significant value when it came to help with issues such as fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

Chris even admits that some landlords were "put off" by the idea of using sensors to check for damp and mould. "They'd say, 'if we roll this out and can see where the mould is, we'd be legally required to do something about it, and most of the time it's lifestyle issues.'"

For Mid Devon, however, it has been a very different story. By deploying the kit in a small number of homes, starting around a year ago, Rosie and her colleagues have specifically been looking to establish the environmental factors that may be causing damp and mould issues. By installing sensors both in homes with damp and mould and homes without any problems, patterns have begun to emerge that has given new insight when it comes to the search for causes.

It has also allowed the council to offer more bespoke, tailored advice to those tenants that had been experiencing problems.



With a lot of the homes we were able to say the ventilation all looks fine because we've put in a lot of mechanical ventilation, but we can see that your temperature, for example, is on average 16 or 17 degrees, and that's not warm enough. And that then enables us to say maybe don't keep your windows open for quite so long - just open them for shorter periods and rely on the mechanical ventilation and focus on increasing the temperature by two degrees, and then you will reduce that mould risk.

Rosie Wills, Mid Devon District Council Technical Support and Repairs Manager



Podcasts.





Podcasts

New Episode

Join us in this insightful episode as we explore the transformative strategies of Believe Housing, featuring Ruth Dent, Director of Asset and Compliance. Ruth shares the innovative methods Believe...

[Read More](#)

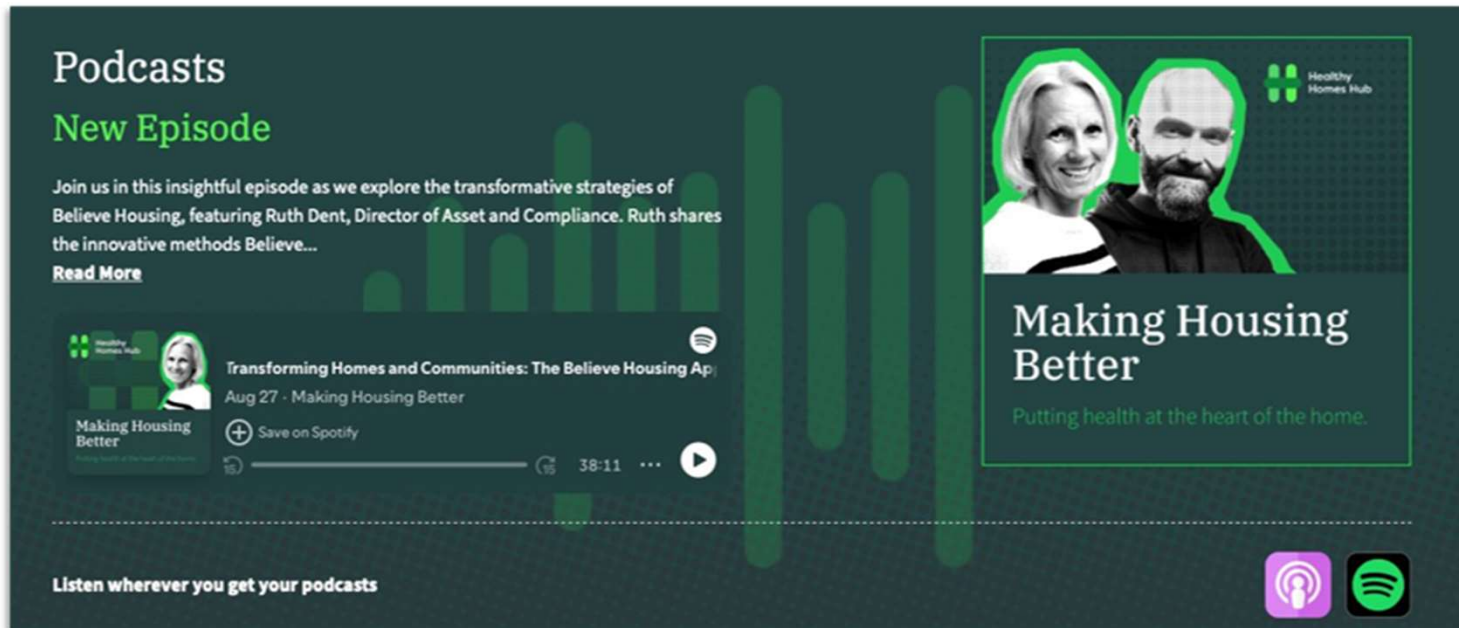
  **Transforming Homes and Communities: The Believe Housing Ap**
Aug 27 · Making Housing Better

Making Housing Better
Putting health at the heart of the home.

Save on Spotify

38:11

Listen wherever you get your podcasts



Events.



Masterclass - Why it's not a question of borrowing as much as possible.

Explore alternatives to debt and discover sustainable funding strategies in this essential, non-finance masterclass for housing leaders.

4 February, 2025: 2pm
Online

Healthy Homes Hub
CPD CERTIFIED

Our partner
FUSION

The image features a hand holding a blue stamp over a document, with a small house model and a row of colorful icons at the bottom.



Healthy Homes Hub

UKRI Science and Technology Facilities Council
Hartree Centre

Innovating Health Through Housing

The Hartree Experience

Tuesday 11th February
10am - 3pm

FUSION 21

The image shows a modern building at night with a glowing green outline.



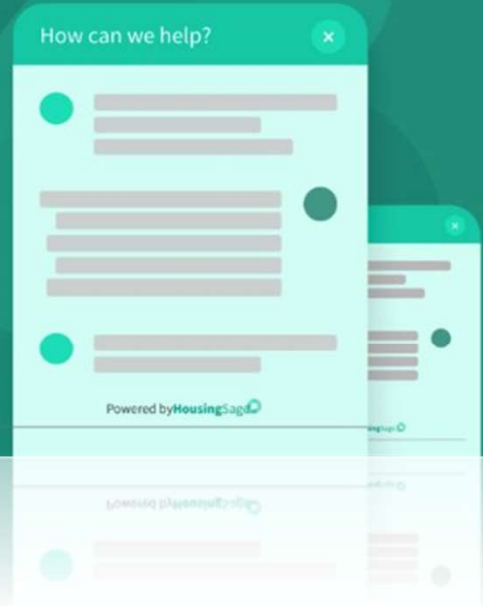
'Goes beyond generic AI tools'

HousingSage

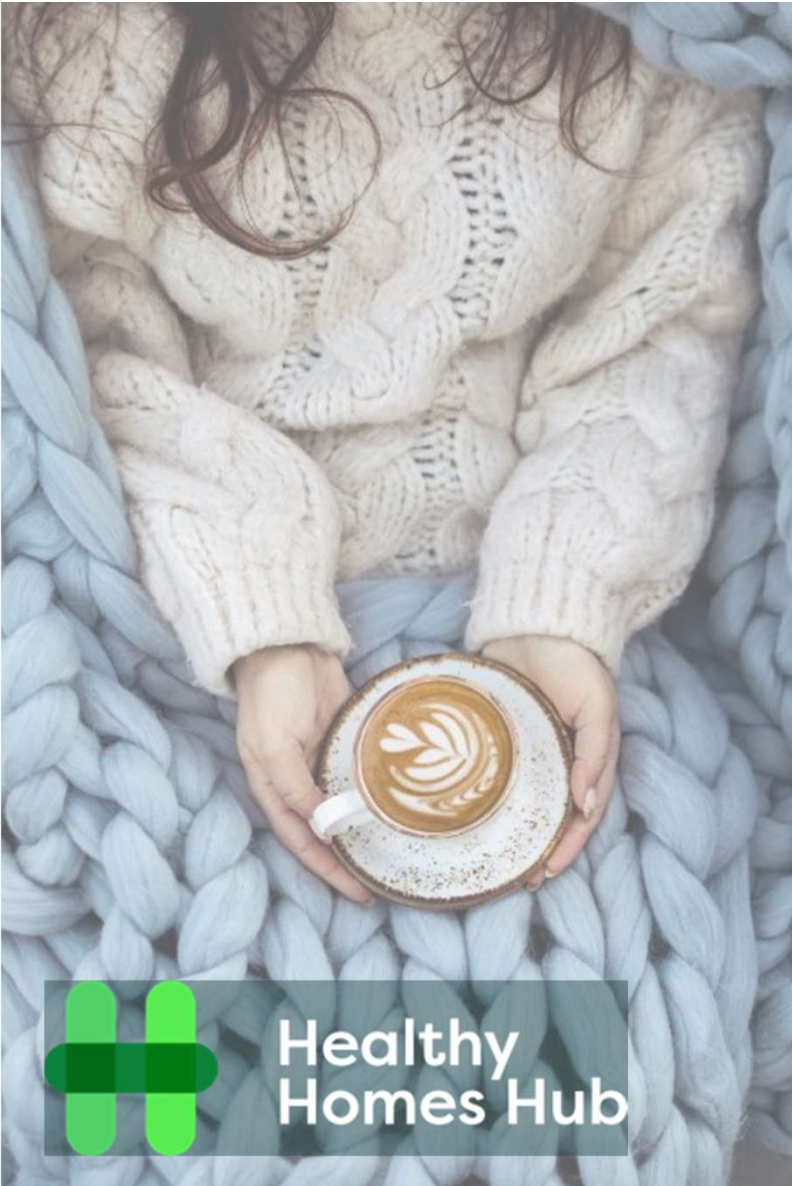
Meet Housing Sage, the revolutionary AI assistant designed to elevate the UK social housing sector. It offers curated content that goes beyond what generic AI tools or search engines can provide, ensuring you receive high-quality, relevant information.

Combining advanced AI with industry expertise, Housing Sage offers tailored support for housing professionals, from regulatory compliance to strategic planning. Our platform is enriched with a vast repository of research and best practices contributed by academic's industry experts, and housing providers. By collecting and sharing these best practices, Housing Sage helps social housing professionals save time, share learnings, and develop effective strategies and policies.

Save time and resources, enhance decision-making, and join a community committed to making housing better. Interested? You can find out more in our Housing Sage Brochure.



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Warm Rents Project.

- ⌘ **Collaboration** – Switchee, HHH and Sero
- ⌘ **2 years** – 110 homes, 250+ homes
- ⌘ **Heat** to 18c/16c
- ⌘ **Landlord** pays £500 per home – Switchee energy vouchers
- ⌘ **Resident behaviours** on temperature, effect on the resident health and wellbeing and the property – and do we need change in rent policy?
- ⌘ **Energy Systems Catapult**



WARMRENTS

powered by switchee



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Data Assets Project.

- Health and Housing Data Asset
- Prima HA and MerseyCare NHS Trust
- Outcome based interventions
- Innovate UK project – social housing



Healthy
Homes Hub



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Gamification in housing uses game-like elements, such as rewards and progress tracking, to engage residents and promote positive behaviors, enhancing community and property management.



Healthy
Homes Hub

Gamification.



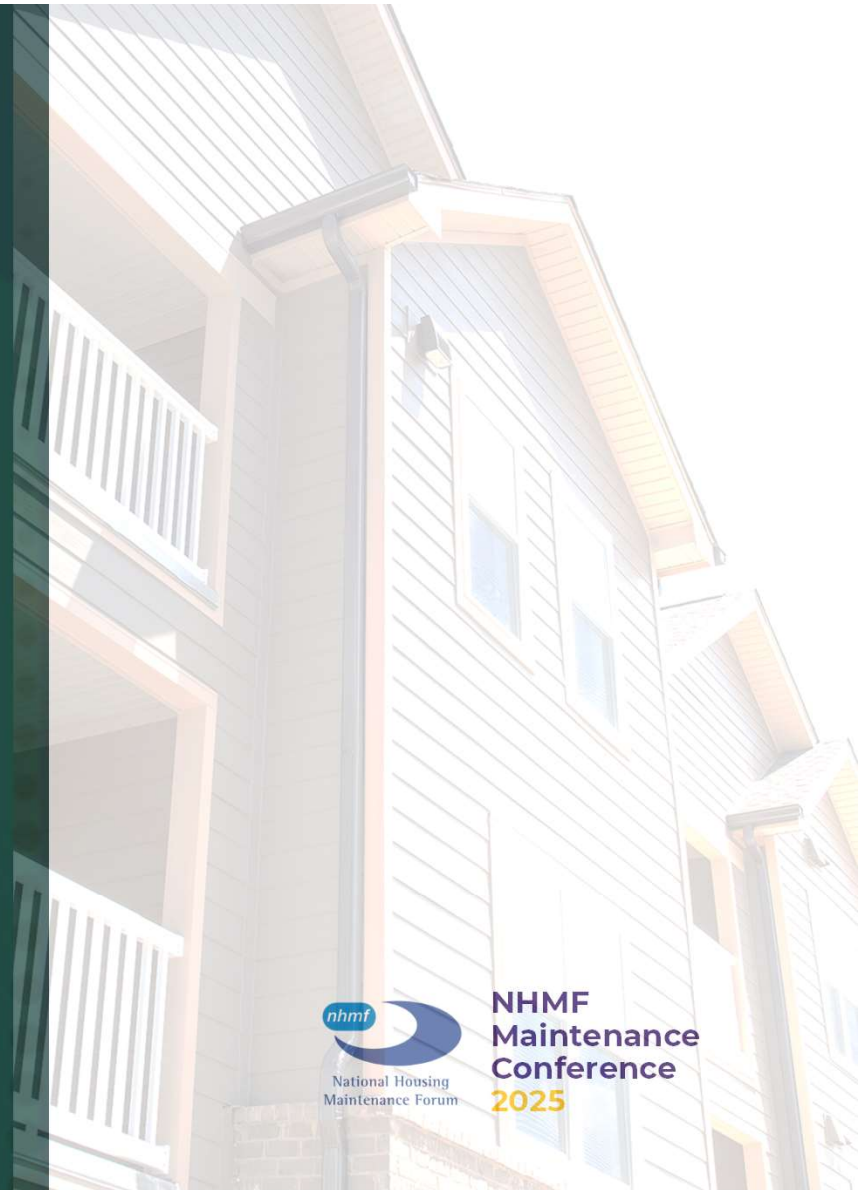
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"The UK health system spends millions treating symptoms of poor housing the trend is getting worse. As a nation we are in the early stages of upgrading 28m homes to meet UK net zero targets. There is a risk if not done right we make the health situation worse. There is an opportunity to improve building related health if it is an outcome for retrofit. To do that we need to coordinate and educate on how building physics impacts on health and wellbeing. The Healthy Homes Hub is critical in ensuring our future housing system provides benefits to all."

Dr Mike Pitts, Deputy Challenge Director,
Transforming Construction and Net Zero Heat,
UK research & innovation



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Thank you.

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Awaab's Law in the Social Rented Sector

Speaker: Isobel Ames, MHCLG



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Consultation

Awaab's Law: Timescales for repairs in the social rented sector

A consultation on Awaab's Law was launched on 9 January 2024. It was open for 8 weeks and closed on 5 March 2024.



Implied terms: The clause in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 amends the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 and implies terms into all social tenancy agreements. This means all registered providers will have to meet these requirements, and if they don't, tenants can hold their landlord to account.



Challenging through the courts: If a social landlord fails to comply with Awaab's Law requirements, tenants will be able to challenge their landlords through the court for a breach of contract. If the court finds the landlord in breach, they will be able to order the landlord to make repair works and/or rehouse the tenant and/or pay compensation.



Formal complaints: If a social landlord fails to comply with Awaab's Law requirements, tenants may wish to complain to their landlord, which could then be escalated to the Housing Ombudsman. The Housing Ombudsman has the power to order landlords to undertake repairs and pay compensation to the resident.



Hazards as defined by HHSRS



Investigations



Written summary of findings



Beginning repairs and making safe



Completing repairs



Emergency repairs



Suitable alternative accommodation

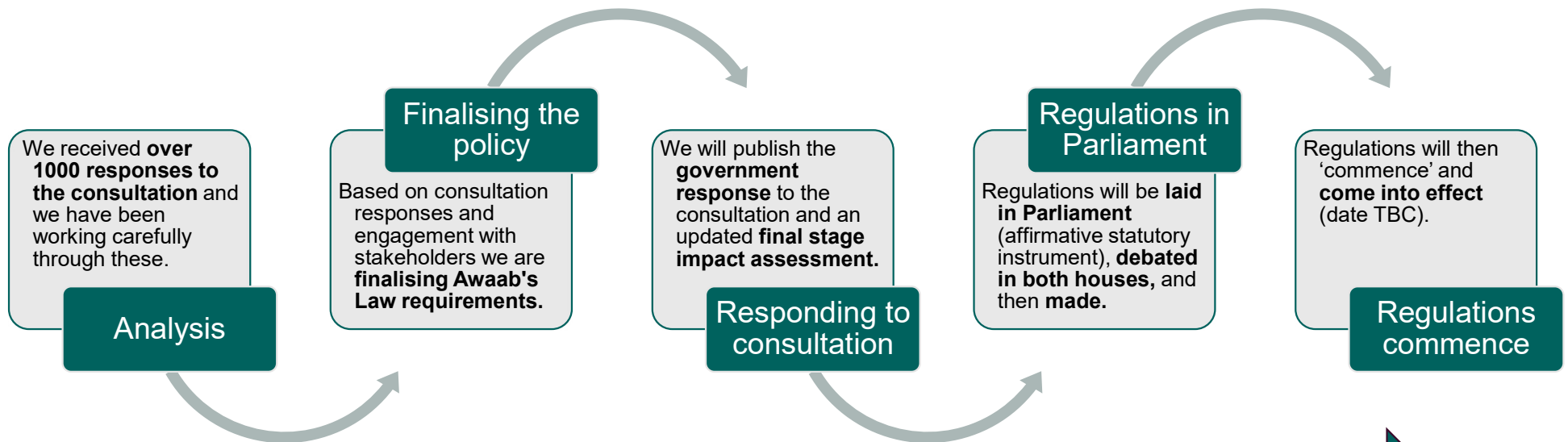


Defence provisions and record keeping



Next steps

Awaab's Law: Timescales for repairs in the social rented sector



Alongside the legislative process, we are developing guidance to accompany regulations which will be published in full before regulations commence.



Upcoming guidance

Awaab's Law: Timescales for repairs in the social rented sector

Guidance*

Detail underpinning requirements	Information on hazards in scope and relevant vulnerabilities	Significant risk of harm	FAQs	Defence provisions
Third party evidence	Examples and case studies	Responsibilities of landlords and tenants	Information on redress	Interaction with other legislation

*Please note that the topics listed above are intended to provide an early indication of what the department expects Awaab's Law guidance to cover and is not confirmed government policy.

Guidance for **social housing landlords** will be detailed and comprehensive. It will include information on how to comply with Awaab's Law, how Awaab's Law relates to other requirements, and information on the defence provisions under Awaab's Law.

Guidance for **social housing residents** will be less technical and more accessible. It will include clear information on the options they have for seeking redress if their landlord fails to comply with Awaab's Law.

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Q&A



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