

Property and housing. The clock starts before the job does.

A guide to planning software for repair intake, property records and contractor coordination, under a law that now counts in working days.

PROPERTY AND HOUSING



A guide to the administration, not the repair.

Awaab’s Law has done something unusual to housing software. It has taken a set of operational habits and given them statutory deadlines, measured in working days, starting from a moment most repairs systems do not record.

This guide is about designing around that. Every figure in it is traced back to the body that published it, and where two official sources disagree it gives both rather than choosing.

Written for repairs and asset managers, heads of housing operations, and the people who choose and pay for their systems.

C O N T E N T S

What the law actually says	3
The repairs that do not finish	4
A report, and when it counts	5
Every deadline, in one place	6
Four answers to one question	7
What has to be written down	8
Established, and evaluated elsewhere	9
Asserted, and sold	10
What a small pilot needs to show	11
Questions for a first project	12
Sources and scope	13

What this guide is not

It is not legal advice. It describes what the regulations and the published guidance say, with references, so that a reader can check them. Where a duty turns on judgement, the guide says so rather than resolving it.

It is not a case study. No landlord is described, named or implied, and the photographs are illustrative. It makes no claim that any software improves compliance, because no published evaluation supports one.

It is not a product comparison. BespokeWorks builds software, and readers should weigh the guide accordingly. The questions on page 12 are as useful against our work as against anyone else’s.

What the law actually says.

A great deal of the material circulating about Awaab's Law describes a set of deadlines that were never enacted: investigate within fourteen calendar days, issue a written summary within forty-eight hours, begin repairs within seven calendar days. Those were the proposals in the consultation that closed in March 2024. None of them survived into the regulations.

What came into force on 27 October 2025 is different in three ways at once.



The unit changed. Every period is counted in working days, excluding weekends, Christmas Day, Good Friday and bank holidays. The government said plainly why: the sector had told it that calendar days would mean renegotiating contracts to cover weekends and out-of-hours working.

The verb changed. The consultation duty was to begin work. The enacted duty is to complete relevant safety work, meaning work needed to make a home safe other than cladding, within five working days of the investigation concluding, or as soon as reasonably practicable where the landlord rehouses instead.

The trigger changed. The clock no longer runs from the written summary. Investigation runs from the day after the landlord becomes aware, the summary runs from the day after the investigation completes, and the repair runs from the same point rather than from the summary.

Becoming aware reaches furthest into software design. The guidance treats a landlord as aware when a tenant first mentions damp to a maintenance officer, because that officer is an employee, and extends the same reasoning to managing agents, to officers in other council departments and, in some circumstances, to contractors. An intake design that starts the clock at job creation is starting it late by default.

The repairs that do not finish.

The tenant satisfaction measures are the best operational data the sector has, and the headline drawn from them is usually the wrong one. Landlords report the proportion of repairs completed within their own target. That measure covers only the repairs that finished.

The regulator says so directly, and publishes the rest of the picture alongside it. Across 2024 to 2025 the gap between what was raised and what was completed came to roughly 3.6 million jobs.

RESPONSIVE REPAIRS, 2024 TO 2025

18.7m	15.1m	2.5m	1.2m
Repairs raised across the sector	Repairs completed, which is what the 79 per cent is measured against	Closed without completion, cancelled by landlord or tenant	Still work in progress at the year end

The median landlord cancelled eleven per cent of what it raised and carried five per cent unfinished into the next year. The regulator observes that landlords with high cancellation or work-in-progress numbers may show strong completion figures alongside weak tenant satisfaction, which is the arithmetic working exactly as it should.

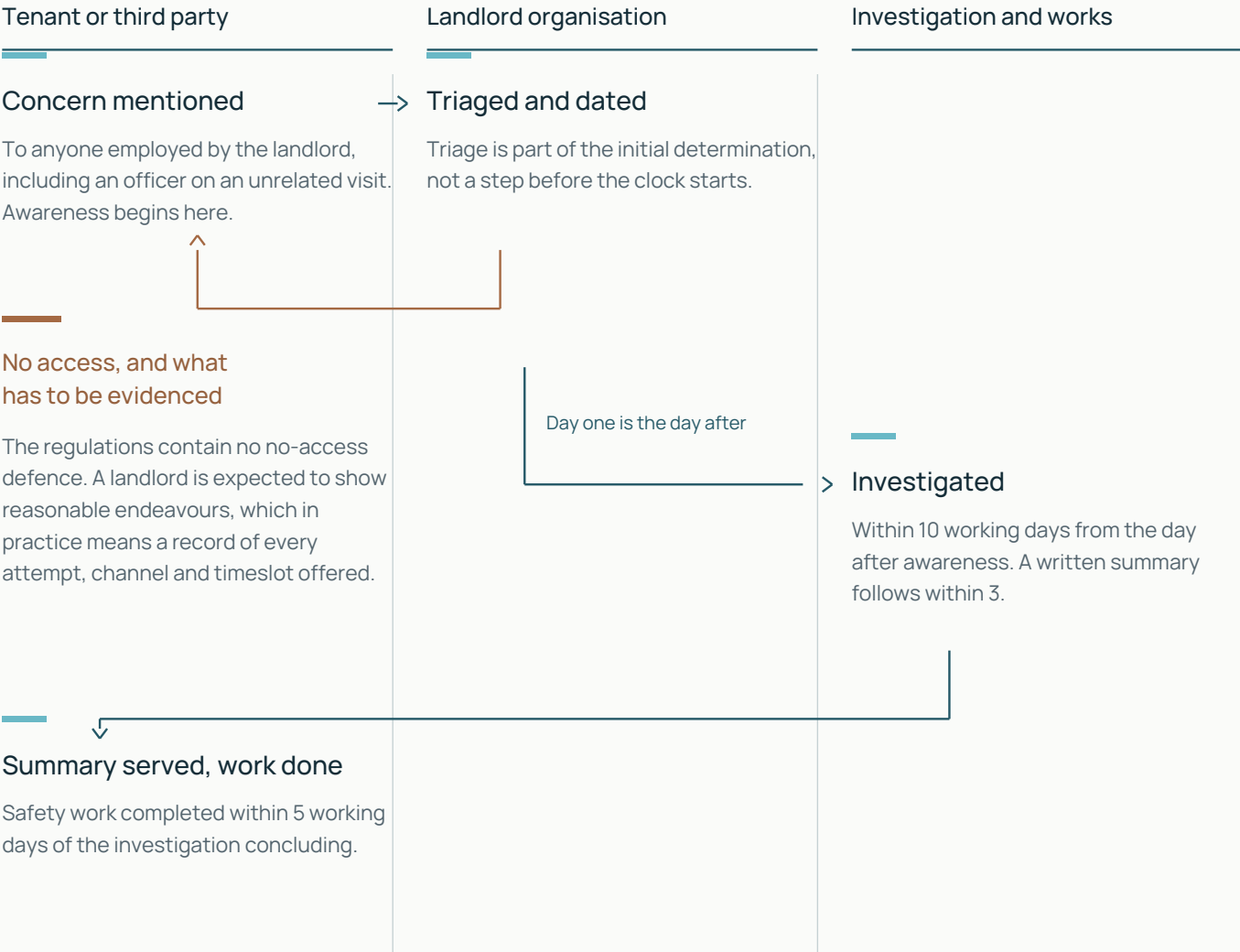
One caution on the same release. Satisfaction rose slightly across every measure, and the regulator attributes that rise at least partly to small changes in how the survey was collected. It is not reported as sector improvement, and it should not be repeated as one.

A cancelled repair leaves no trace in the completion figure. It leaves a considerable trace in the household.

A report, and when it counts.

This fictional report of damp follows the statutory clock rather than the job. The point of the diagram is the first box: awareness begins at the conversation, not at the record. The route in copper is the one that decides most disputes.

ILLUSTRATIVE SERVICE BLUEPRINT



Design implication

The deadline runs from a conversation. If the system cannot record when that happened, it cannot evidence compliance.

Every deadline, in one place.

One boundary comes before all of these. In this first phase the periods reach emergency hazards and, among significant hazards, damp, mould and fungal growth only. This is not a general repairs regime and will not become one until the extension is made. Note also that two of the periods below have no fixed deadline at all, which is worth knowing before a supplier offers to automate them.

Duty	Period	The clock starts
Emergency action	As soon as reasonably practicable, and within 24 hours.	When the landlord becomes aware, or when an investigation identifies the work.
Investigation	10 working days.	The day after the day the landlord becomes aware of the issue of concern.
Written summary	3 working days. Not required if the work itself is finished inside that window.	The day after the investigation completes. The period is for sending, not for receiving.
Making safe	5 working days, or as soon as practicable where the landlord rehuses instead.	The day after the investigation is completed.
Preventative work	Begin within 5 working days, or as soon as practicable and within 12 weeks. Completion has no fixed deadline.	The day after the investigation that found the hazard.
Temporary rehousing	Suitable alternative accommodation at no cost until the work is done, unless refused.	The end of the initial remediation period: 24 hours, or 5 working days.

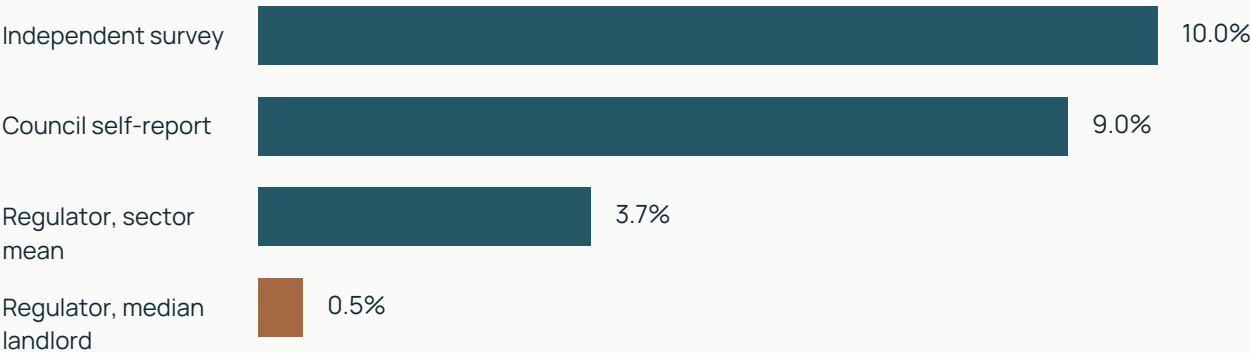
A competent investigator is whoever the landlord reasonably thinks has the skills and experience to judge the hazard. The regulations set no qualification.

Four answers to one question.

How many social homes fail the Decent Homes Standard is published four ways by three bodies, and the answers differ by a factor of twenty. All four are correct within their own method. Averaging them would produce a number that means nothing.

The difference is not statistical noise. It is the difference between what an independent surveyor finds in a random sample of all stock, and what landlords know about their own.

NON-DECENT SOCIAL HOMES, BY METHOD



English Housing Survey 2024-25, published 29 January 2026, by physical inspection of a random sample. Local Authority Housing Statistics, council self-report at 31 March 2025. Regulator of Social Housing tenant satisfaction measure RP01, published 4 November 2025, landlord self-report.

The regulator has published the explanation, and it is worth quoting rather than paraphrasing. Providers inspect some but not all properties in a year, and appear to report only the units positively identified as failing rather than extrapolating from the sample to the whole stock. The survey extrapolates, and does not net off later remediation.

The Housing Ombudsman adds the other half: landlord figures rest on what landlords are directly aware of, which varies with how many stock condition surveys have been done, and exclude cases where tenants refused the work. Landlords may simply not know about homes the survey found.

That twenty-fold gap is the best-evidenced measure of the stock condition data problem available, and it comes from the regulators rather than from anyone selling a remedy.

What has to be written down.

Here is a nuance worth stating plainly, because it cuts against how the duty is usually described. The regulations impose no express record-keeping duty. Every record-keeping requirement sits in guidance, and in the evidential burden of defending a claim. The guidance is specific enough to read as a specification.

What	What the guidance says	What that means for a system
Awareness	Keep clear records of all engagement, investigations and communications, including where a third party reported the issue.	Capture who was told, when, and through which channel, including conversations that never became a job.
The household	Maintain accurate information about properties and the people in them, including details suggesting increased vulnerability, preferred contact methods and reasonable adjustments.	Health information is special category data. Collecting it engages restrictions the guidance itself points at.
Access attempts	Keep detailed records of attempted visits, inspections and communication, so they can evidence reasonable endeavours.	Log every timeslot offered, every channel tried and every card left, not only the outcome.
The summary	Keep a record of when the written summary was given, as this may be needed to evidence compliance.	Timestamp despatch. Permitted methods include electronic transmission to an address the tenant gave for this purpose.
The hazard	Before beginning work, make clear records of the issue, including photographs, for example of mould before it is removed.	Evidence is destroyed by the repair. Capture has to happen at the visit.

On entry, the regulations imply a covenant by the tenant to permit access, but only at reasonable times and on at least 24 hours' written notice. Contracting out of Awaab's Law is void, and a court may order specific performance.

Established, and evaluated elsewhere.

Four kinds of claim circulate in this sector at once and they are not the same kind of thing. The two on this page are the ones a landlord can rely on. The two overleaf are the ones to ask questions about.

Established

The statutory duties and their periods, which are in the regulations and can be read there. The extension to further hazards in November 2026 changes the test for a significant hazard from one a reasonable landlord would treat as urgent to one they would make safe within fifteen working days, which is the first time the threshold has carried a number.

The Housing Ombudsman created a dedicated artificial intelligence complaint category in 2025 to 2026, under information and data management. It covers the use of such systems to make decisions about residents, tools used by staff visiting homes, and chatbots.

Evaluated, but not here

One genuine published government evaluation of an artificial intelligence system applied to housing stock exists: a computer vision tool used to estimate building heights and external wall materials, which reported 86 per cent accuracy for in-scope buildings against 44 per cent for the existing data, with mandatory human review.

It estimates building characteristics from street imagery. It is not repairs triage, and it is not damp and mould detection.

Peer-reviewed work on damp detection does exist, from Leeds Beckett University in 2025 and from Salford. What does not exist is any evaluation published by the department, the regulator or the ombudsman, and the government's own transparency register holds no record for damp or mould at all. Awaab's Law is driving procurement regardless.

Asserted, and sold.

The claims most often made in a procurement conversation, and the ones least often accompanied by anything a buyer could check.

Not established

That sensors prevent damp and mould. Government guidance recommends them as an aid, warns they must not become a way to blame tenants, and says they should augment rather than replace other procedures. An alert does not on its own make a landlord aware of a hazard, but consistent readings should prompt timely investigation. The duty is triggered by a pattern rather than an event, so a deployment needs a written rule for when an alert becomes an investigation.

That tenant consent settles the data protection question. Government guidance says sensors should be installed only with the consent and understanding of tenants, while the Information Commissioner warns that an imbalance of power makes freely given consent harder to obtain, particularly for public authorities. No central government source reconciles the two. Local government has: guidance published by the London Office of Technology and Innovation in September 2024 separates consent to install a sensor from the lawful basis for processing what it records, and concludes that consent is unlikely to be the right basis for the second.

Self-reported

A supplier figure inside a government record is still a supplier figure. One transparency record carries a vendor claim of accuracy typically above 95 per cent, validated by more than 230 landlords. That is the supplier speaking, in a government document.

Unverified is not the same as false. It is a reason to ask for the workings, and to write the answer into the contract.

What a small pilot needs to show.

Agree the evidence before building anything. Under a statutory clock a pilot has a second job: it has to produce the record that would be needed if the deadline were missed and the reason mattered.

Question	What to observe	Accountable role	Release condition
Awareness	Can the system record a concern raised in conversation, by a contractor, or by another department?	Repairs manager	Awareness date captured separately from job creation.
The clock	Does the count exclude weekends and bank holidays, and start on the day after?	Compliance lead	Working-day arithmetic tested against a bank holiday.
Access	Does a failed visit record what was offered and tried, or only that it failed?	Operations lead	No appointment closable as no access without evidence.
Evidence	Is the hazard captured before the repair destroys it?	Supervisor on site	Photographs attached at the visit, not afterwards.
Handover	When a contractor becomes aware of something, how long before the landlord does?	Contract manager	Measured in hours, and written into the contract.

Keep the first release narrow enough that every missed deadline can be looked at individually.

Questions for a first project.

These are the questions BespokeWorks would ask before proposing anything. They work as well against our work as against a supplier already in the building.

01 Where does your organisation first hear about a hazard, and does anything record that moment?

The clock starts at first mention to anyone employed by the landlord or working in its supply chain. Most repairs systems begin at job creation, which is later, sometimes by days. That gap is a design problem rather than a training one.

02 How are properties, households and jobs identified across the systems already in use?

The law attaches duties to a home and to the people in it. If the asset register, the housing management system and the contractor's scheduling tool disagree about what a property is, the duty has nowhere consistent to attach.

03 What happens when an appointment fails, and what does the system let someone record?

There is no no-access defence in the regulations; what protects a landlord is evidence of reasonable endeavours. The Ombudsman has found appointments recorded as no access that were not. A system offering one closure reason produces one kind of record.

04 What would have to be true in two years for this to have been worth it, and who is measuring it?

No published evaluation shows that any of this technology works. A landlord can still measure it for itself, against its own baseline, and that is the only evidence that will exist for some time.

If a supplier cannot answer the first two without talking about their product, that is information as well.

Theo Coleman

Chief Technology Officer, BespokeWorks. September 2026

Sources and scope.

Every figure is traced to the body that published it rather than to coverage of it, and nothing about artificial intelligence predates 2025. Claims were checked a second time by a pass whose only purpose was to refute them. Retrieved 16 September 2026.

The Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025, SI 2025/1042, in force 27 October 2025. All periods and definitions are taken from the regulations themselves.

Awaab's Law: government response. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 25 June 2025. The consultation ran from 9 January to 5 March 2024 and drew 1,028 responses.

Awaab's Law Phase 1 guidance for social landlords, last updated 16 July 2026, and Phase 2 guidance, last updated 31 July 2026. Every record-keeping expectation quoted here comes from these, not from the regulations.

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2026, SI 2026/571, in force 23 June 2026, which reduced the hazard descriptions from 29 to 21.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures 2024/25: headline report. Regulator of Social Housing, 4 November 2025. 360 landlords with 1,000 homes or more.

English Housing Survey 2024-25. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 29 January 2026. Physical inspection of a random sample.

Private registered provider social housing stock in England: stock profile 2024/25. Regulator of Social Housing, October 2025. Source of the explanation for the gap between reported and surveyed non-decency.

Spotlight on: Knowledge and Information Management, On the record. Housing Ombudsman Service, May 2023, and its follow-up report of 23 January 2025.

Repairing Trust. Housing Ombudsman Service, May 2025. Source of the finding on how no access is recorded.

Annual Complaints Review 2025-26. Housing Ombudsman Service, 15 September 2026. Source of the new artificial intelligence complaint category.

Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government with the Department of Health and Social Care and the UK Health Security Agency, last updated 1 April 2026.

Guidance on AI and data protection, and guidance on when consent is appropriate. Information Commissioner's Office. The artificial intelligence guidance was last updated in March 2023 and its page states that it is under review.

Algorithmic Transparency Recording Standard records for Camden Council RentSense, Barnet Council, and the Ministry of Housing's building image recognition tool, all published in 2025.

Sector Risk Profile 2025, Regulator of Social Housing, 6 November 2025, and Value for Money Metrics and Reporting 2025, 5 March 2026.

Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, and the consumer standards in force from April 2024.

Awaab's Law Phase 2 impact assessment. Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 13 July 2026.

Photographs are illustrative and show no BespokeWorks client, member of staff or premises. Cover: photograph by William V on Unsplash. Page 3: photograph by Axville on Unsplash.

What could not be established

No national figure is published for no-access or missed-appointment rates in social housing repairs, and none for average repair completion time in England; the regulator measures performance against each landlord's own target rather than elapsed time. Scotland publishes averages on a different basis, and the two cannot be compared. The extension of Awaab's Law to further hazards was still a draft instrument when this guide was written. Where sources disagree the guide gives both rather than choosing.