

How Can Social Landlords Budget for Awaab's Law Compliance Costs?

Social landlords can budget for Awaab's Law compliance costs by reframing the challenge as an opportunity, leveraging behavioural insights, and implementing low-cost, high-impact solutions. By focusing on tenant cooperation, creative interventions, and collaborative resource-sharing, landlords can achieve compliance while enhancing tenant wellbeing and property value.

Reframing Compliance as an Opportunity

Awaab's Law, introduced to prevent tragedies like the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak due to mould exposure, is often seen as a financial burden. However, **reframing it as an opportunity** can shift perspectives. Addressing damp and mould not only ensures legal compliance but also improves tenant satisfaction, reduces long-term maintenance costs, and enhances property value. This mindset makes budgeting feel like a **strategic investment** rather than an expense.

Leveraging Behavioural Insights

Behavioural psychology offers powerful tools to reduce costs and improve outcomes:

- **Nudge Theory:** Simple, low-cost interventions like reminder stickers near windows or hygrometers to monitor humidity can encourage tenants to ventilate their homes effectively.
- **Social Proof:** Sharing success stories of tenants benefiting from improved ventilation creates a positive feedback loop, fostering cooperation and compliance.
- **Empowerment:** Providing tenants with easy-to-follow guides for basic maintenance, such as cleaning vents or identifying early signs of damp, reduces the need for costly professional interventions.

Low-Cost, High-Impact Solutions

Creative, affordable interventions can deliver significant results:

- **Ventilation Hacks:** Installing trickle vents, extractor fans, or dehumidifiers in high-risk areas like kitchens and bathrooms is cheaper than full-scale system upgrades but still effective.
- **DIY Maintenance:** Encouraging tenants to take simple steps, like regularly airing out rooms, can prevent damp and mould without significant expenditure.
- **Pilot Programmes:** Testing small-scale ventilation solutions in a few properties before scaling up ensures cost-effectiveness and identifies the most effective strategies.

Collaboration and Resource Sharing

Pooling resources with other landlords or housing associations can reduce costs:

- **Bulk Purchasing:** Negotiating discounts on ventilation systems by buying in bulk with other landlords lowers expenses.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Creating a community of practice where landlords share best practices and cost-saving tips fosters innovation and efficiency.
- **Grant Applications:** Actively seeking government grants and funding schemes, such as the

Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, can offset compliance costs.

Long-Term Financial Planning

Developing a multi-year budget ensures sustained compliance and prevents financial strain:

- **Prioritisation:** Assessing properties to identify high-risk areas allows landlords to allocate resources effectively.
- **Maintenance Budgets:** Including ongoing maintenance costs in financial planning ensures that ventilation systems remain effective over time.
- **Tenant Engagement:** Educating tenants about the importance of ventilation and encouraging them to report issues promptly minimises long-term costs.

Beyond Compliance: Creating Value

Compliance with Awaab's Law is just the starting point. By going beyond the minimum requirements, landlords can create additional value:

- **Health and Wellbeing:** Positioning ventilation upgrades as part of a broader strategy to improve tenant health and wellbeing attracts positive attention and funding.
- **Sustainability:** Framing compliance as a step towards greener, more energy-efficient housing aligns with broader environmental goals and enhances property appeal.

Final Thought

By adopting a **creative, tenant-focused approach**, social landlords can transform the challenge of Awaab's Law compliance into an opportunity to create healthier, happier homes. Leveraging behavioural insights, low-cost solutions, and collaborative strategies ensures compliance is achieved efficiently and effectively.

Compliance isn't just a legal obligation—it's a chance to rethink how we create healthier, happier homes while making smart, cost-effective investments.