

Why was Awaab's Law introduced for social housing?

Awaab's Law was introduced to prevent tragedies caused by unsafe living conditions in social housing, following the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020 due to prolonged exposure to mould. The law mandates strict timeframes for landlords to address hazards like damp and mould, ensuring tenants' health and safety are prioritised.

The Catalyst: Awaab Ishak's Tragic Death

In December 2020, two-year-old Awaab Ishak died from a respiratory condition directly linked to severe mould in his family's Rochdale flat. Despite repeated complaints, the social housing landlord failed to act, exposing systemic neglect in housing maintenance. This case became a national scandal, prompting calls for legal reform to hold landlords accountable.

Systemic Failures in Social Housing

1. **Chronic Underinvestment:** Decades of underfunding in social housing left many properties with unresolved structural issues, including leaks, damp, and inadequate ventilation.
2. **Landlord Accountability Gaps:** Pre-Awaab's Law, tenants had limited recourse for delayed repairs, allowing landlords to ignore hazardous conditions without legal consequences.
3. **Health Impacts:** Poor housing conditions disproportionately affect vulnerable groups, with damp and mould linked to respiratory illnesses, allergies, and developmental issues in children.

Key Provisions of Awaab's Law

- **Strict Time Limits:** Landlords must investigate hazards within 14 days and complete repairs within 7 days for emergencies or 30 days for non-urgent cases.
- **Tenant Empowerment:** Tenants can escalate complaints to housing ombudsmen if landlords fail to comply, ensuring accountability.
- **Inclusion of Temporary Housing:** The law applies to supported and temporary accommodation, closing loopholes for vulnerable tenants.

The Role of Ventilation in Preventing Hazards

Poor ventilation is a leading cause of damp and mould. Solutions like **continuous mechanical ventilation systems** (e.g., MVHR units) are critical for maintaining air quality. For instance:

- **Decentralised Systems** (e.g., VENTI's ARIA): Ideal for retrofitting older properties, these systems extract moist air from high-humidity areas like bathrooms.
- **Centralised Systems** (e.g., VENTI's RESPIRO): Suited for new builds, these ducted systems provide whole-house ventilation with heat recovery, reducing energy costs.

By addressing airflow, these systems prevent condensation and mould growth, aligning with Awaab's Law's preventive goals.

Awaab's Law is a lifeline for social housing tenants—ensure compliance by prioritising timely repairs and investing in ventilation solutions that safeguard health.