

**Briefing Paper to Northern Area Committee**27<sup>th</sup> November 2025**Wards: Beverley and Newland,  
Bricknell, University, Orchard  
Park, Kingswood, North Carr,  
West Carr, Avenue, Central****Introduction of Awaabs Law****Briefing Paper of the of Corporate Director for Legal Services and Partnerships****1. Purpose of the Paper and Summary**

- 1.1 To update Northern Area Committee on the introduction of Awaabs Law, the requirements behind the legislation and what impact this will have on Neighbourhoods and Housing, the KWL partnership and the wider local authority and proposals on how we intend to track/monitor performance.
- 1.2 Furthermore, based on the information set out in this briefing paper, we are seeking approval from the Corporate Senior Team to make Awaab's Law, (Damp and Mould) eLearning mandatory for all Hull City Council officers who visit Council owned and managed properties. This mandatory status will demonstrate to the Regulator of Social Housing that Hull City Council are taking the important steps to become regulatory, legally and morally compliant.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 Awaabs Law is a new Law that will come into force on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025. This new legislation requires all social landlords to attend and remedy all reported instances of damp, mould and other stated emergency and significant hazards within strict mandatory timeframes, along with increased customer communication and case management. This piece of legislation is in response to the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who tragically died in 2020 as a result of severe respiratory condition due to prolonged exposure to mould in his home. If the Hull City Council fail to comply with the new requirements this could lead to serious legal and regulatory consequences including;
- Legal action by a customer
  - Referral to the Housing Ombudsman Service
  - Regulatory enforcement by the Regulator of Social Housing such as fines, compliance notices and improvement plans.
  - Significant reputational damage

- 2.2 It is anticipated that law firms will actively encourage tenants to report disrepair claims relating to the delivery of Awaab's Law, which could potentially lead to an increase in disrepair claims. Therefore, it is imperative that timescales and expectations are fully met by the HCC/KWL Partnership. HCC Legal department are fully sighted on this, and the number and nature of these claims will be monitored and discussed on a monthly basis to identify potential issues and trends. There is also an intention to introduce a new KPI to KWL partners, which will monitor response times of all urgent 5 days repairs that were introduced in June 2025. This will cover the newly created urgent 5 day 'clean and treat' repair category. The introduction of this KPI will then complete a comprehensive suite of responsive repair performance figures and measures which will then feed into the monitoring of overdue repairs. This will allow HCC to monitor and evidence compliance of the regulatory requirements of Awaabs Law. This will be presented to Core Group on 8 October 2025.
- 2.3 The Law will focus on damp and mould and completion of emergency repairs initially, before covering further housing hazards from 2026 which are formally yet to be determined.
- 2.4 The Housing Ombudsman has welcomed these new measures stating *"it is a basic human right to live in a safe and decent home. This Law is an important step towards helping the millions of people who do not – including one million children"*.

### 3. Issues for Consideration

- 3.1 In the wake of Awaabs death, Neighbourhoods and Housing started to put systems in place to clearly identify all orders raised for damp and mould and developed a process to monitor and respond to reports, with the priority being to remove the hazard. These processes have generally been successful, but the monitoring of repair progress primarily relies on manual processes and is extremely time consuming.
- 3.2 In response to the increase in media coverage, along with staff awareness in identifying potential damp and mould through Routine Tenant Visits (RTV's) and other visits to customers' homes, Housing Investment Service (HIS) have seen a steady increase in the number of reports of potential damp and mould. This number has further significantly increased due to the introduction of the Stock Condition Surveys (SCS) programme, where reports in Jan 2025 peaked at 586 per month compared to 398 in Jan 2024 representing a 38.2% increase. Since the peak in January 2025, HIS have consistently received between 280 and 350 PDM a month, averaging approximately 75 reports of PDM each week.
- 3.3 Currently, all possible damp and mould orders (PDM) are raised with a target completion date of 28 days, with a partnership agreement that KWL attend within the first 14 days to undertake a clean and treat to all affected areas, to remove the hazard, which requires KWL to take photographs and carry out a basic risk assessment. There is an escalation route through to HIS should the damp and/or mould be of a significant/substantial nature, and/or in more than one room, resulting in the potential for decanting the customer.

3.4 From 27 October 2025, there are a number of clearly defined landlord requirements, set out in Awaabs Law, as detailed below:

- Use the information of the hazard and the circumstances of the customer to determine whether the hazard is an emergency or significant hazard.
  - Emergency hazard – a risk of harm to the occupier’s health and safety that a reasonable landlord with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe within 24 hours.
  - Significant hazard – a risk of harm to the occupier’s health or safety that is a reasonable lessor with the relevant knowledge would take steps to make safe as a matter of urgency.
- **For all Emergency hazards**
  - Investigate and take emergency action to make safe within **24 hours**.
  - If unable to resolve emergency hazard and make property safe within 24 hours, the landlord must provide temporary accommodation until the hazard is resolved.
  - Provide a written summary of investigation and conclusion to the household within 3 days working days of the investigation conclusion.
  - Make the property safe and begin to take steps to begin preventative work within **5 days working days** of the investigation concluding.
- **For all Significant hazards**
  - Investigate any potential significant hazards within **10 working days of the issue being flagged/escalated..**
  - Produce a written summary of investigation findings and provide this to the named tenant within **3 working days** of the conclusion of the investigation.
  - Make the property safe and begin to take steps to begin preventative work within **5 days working days** of the investigation concluding.
  - Further work must be started as soon as reasonably practicable and within **12 weeks**.
- Individual circumstances of the customer – the landlord must determine whether the hazard has a material impact on their health i.e. difficulty breathing. This has the potential to cover mental health in addition to physical health. The landlord needs to consider the customers vulnerabilities and other circumstances i.e. number of children, limited mobility etc.
- All works must be completed within a reasonable time period.
- Keep the named tenant updated throughout the process and provide information on how to maintain a safe environment.

3.5 As expected, the current HHC/KWL partnership processes and level of performance, which has historically delivered sound outcomes, would not meet all the expected regulatory requirements, stipulated in Awaab's Law.

4. Progress Update

4.1 The table below details the key requirements of Awaab's Law, HCC's current position against these requirements (including the KWL partnership), actions in progress to address current performance and associated risks.

	Requirements	Current position	Actions and outstanding risks
1.	<p>All potential reported hazards need to be triaged into the following categories with new response times:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emergency (24hrs)</li> <li>2. Significant (10-day)</li> <li>3. Outside of scope of Awaab's Law</li> </ol>	<p>All possible damp and mould orders (PDM) are not triaged and receive the same repair priority (i.e. 28-day routine)</p>	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCC have implemented a triage system at the point of the report of the potential hazard. This will gather more specific detail about the potential repair, including any vulnerabilities within the household which will then determine the required response time.</li> <li>• Creation of a new team within Housing Investment Services to will specifically deal with qualifying hazards.</li> </ul> <p><u>Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers exaggerate the level of repair and vulnerability which will create more emergency response requirements.</li> <li>• HIS/KWL partnership – unable to respond within specified timescales based on current resource.</li> </ul>
2.	<p>Requirement to provide temporary accommodation if hazard cannot be removed within 24 hours for emergency hazards and 5 days for significant hazards.</p>	<p>Current decant policy and performance is not currently regulatory complaint.</p>	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decant policy and procedure being reviewed, which will provide clear guidance to all teams involved with decanting a customer.</li> <li>• Clear timescales will be provided to the customer, detailing work required and estimated completion dates.</li> <li>• Cross team agreement for use of temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• HCC/KWL agreement to allocate a single point of contact to project manage the return of the damaged property.</li> </ul>

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			<p><u>Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of customers being decanted.</li> <li>• Pressure on availability of temporary accommodation.</li> <li>• HCC/KWL not able to turn around repairs to properties within the recommended timescales.</li> </ul>
3.	Preventative works to commence within 5 working days and within 12 weeks (where reasonable and practicable)	In general, preventative works would carry a routine repair priority (i.e. ventilation work)	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCC/KWL developing a partnership approach on how to deliver this requirement including the offering of more flexible appointments for customers i.e. evening/weekend appointments.</li> </ul> <p><u>Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The partnership will not be able to meet these response times due to limited resources, compared to workload.</li> </ul>
4.	Social landlords are required to keep clear and accurate records, including details of reasonable steps to gain access.	Information provided by KWL in terms of progress of work orders and attempts on access is limited.	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Access procedure currently with KWL to approve and implement which will allow greater visibility on access attempts to maintain accurate case records.</li> <li>• Changes have been made to HCC Housing Management System (NEC) to track the journey of a repair.</li> <li>• Case management systems currently being built within NEC to track all reported cases and to ensure HCC are regulatory compliant.</li> <li>• Changes required to Commit (KWL's ICT systems) to ensure all relevant information is routinely transferred to HCC so clear and accurate records can be maintained,</li> </ul>

			<p>including the transferring of photographs and documents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approval gained to recruit additional officers within HIS who will be responsible for case management.</li> </ul> <p><u>Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HCC Case Management System will not be ready for 27<sup>th</sup> October 2025.</li> <li>• Changes to Commit (KWL's ICT system) cannot be facilitated due to delay of the implementation of Total Mobile (Commit replacement)</li> </ul>
5.	<p>Council-wide responsibility for reporting emergency hazards, including damp and mould and ensuring all officers are competent and knowledgeable.</p>	<p>Limited knowledge wider than Neighbourhood and Housing in terms of reporting hazards.</p> <p>KWL operatives who currently assess the severity of the hazard are not suitability qualified to carry out this function under Awaab's Law.</p>	<p><u>Actions</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request to CST to ask that Awaabs Law (Damp and Mould) eLearning module be mandatory for all Hull City Council officers, including KWL operatives, who visit Council owned and managed properties. The eLearning content covers what Awaab's Law includes, the responsibility it places on officers visiting customer homes and provides practical advice and signposting, should a hazard be discovered by an officer. Monitoring arrangements to be agreed and implemented.</li> <li>• KWL/HCC partnership jointly agreed the responsibility for assessing hazards which fall under Awaab's Law will sit with HCC Housing Investment Team from October to achieve consistency in decision making.</li> <li>• For non-housing staff, there will be a single point of referral for any concerns raised whilst visiting customer's homes.</li> <li>• Training packages are being developed and will be delivered throughout October 2025 to Council wide</li> </ul>

			<p>services to any officer that visits customers in their homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All non-technical staff including KWL staff will receive similar training to ensure a consistent message is delivered. Specific, more technical training will be delivered to HIS Surveyors that will cover the complexities of Awaab's Law. The training will be delivered throughout October 2025</li><li>• Full communications plan for the launch of Awaab's Law is being developed to ensure the importance and need for action is communicated to all.</li></ul> <p><u>Risks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Far reaching message will be diluted due to current roles and responsibilities of other officers.</li></ul>
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## 5. Resources

- 5.1 A new team is being recruited to within Housing Investment Services to manage the requirements of Awaab's Law. The team will have its own core resources consisting of Surveyors, Customer Care Officers and Contract Officers and will sit in the maintenance arm of the HIS team, under the management of the Maintenance and Improvements Manager. These are considered as minimum core requirements, with workload peaks (seasonal) being supported by the wider existing maintenance team. The team will be responsible ensuring all key requirements are undertaken. Before we can fully established this team, existing teams will be charged with meeting the legal requirements and prioritisation of works considered.
- 5.2 KWL are in the process of recruiting additional resources to carry out the 'clean and treat' process within the revised timescales and are currently assessing the possible requirement for additional back office support.

## 6. Project Plan and Governance

- 6.1 A project plan has been developed detailing the key deliverables required within Ns&H and the wider local authority. The plan has been developed in conjunction with the Ns&H Practice Management team, the KWL partnership and other stakeholders and is split into six sections as follows:
- Policy and Procedure Task and Finish
  - Learning and Development Task and Finish, including KWL.
  - Recruitment Task and Finish
  - KWL and HCC Task and Finish
  - Communication Task and Finish, to include customer communications.
  - NEC and other ICT system requirement, including KWL Commit system Task and Finish
- 6.2 Each task and finish group has a named lead, with individual actions being split across a number of named officers. The task and finish groups feed into the Awaabs Law Housing Steering Group, chaired by the Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods and Housing where a risk register will be presented and reviewed. This Steering Group will then ultimately then feed into the Service Improvement Board / CST for assurance, as well as Member/Portfolio Holder briefings, as required.

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Officer Interests: None

Background Documents: - None

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