

# DAMP AND MOULD POLICY

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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that ISHA (Islington and Shoreditch Housing Association) complies with Awaab's Law, which comes into force on 27 October. This legislation mandates that social housing providers, including ISHA, must take robust, timely action to address emergency hazards and hazards related to damp and mould. The policy outlines ISHA's approach and responsibilities, ensuring residents' health, safety, and well-being by eradicating the risk and impact of damp and mould in all ISHA homes.

## 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Tenanted properties owned or managed by ISHA.
- All ISHA staff, contractors, and agents involved in property maintenance or management.

This Policy does not apply to: (under Awaab's these sit outside of scope)

- Leaseholders.
- Shared owners.
- Residents who have not looked after their property in a tenant-like manner.

## 3. LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Awaab's Law amends the Social Housing (Regulation) Act. It requires landlords to investigate and address emergency hazards and cases of damp and mould within strict legal timescales. The law is a direct response to the tragic death of Awaab Ishak and aims to prevent similar incidents by holding landlords to clear, enforceable standards. ISHA is legally bound to:

- Respond to reports of damp and mould within specific timeframes
- Investigate and resolve reported hazards
- Prioritise resident safety and communicate effectively

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

ISHA is committed to providing safe, healthy homes free from damp and mould. The association will:

- Take all reports of damp, mould, or condensation seriously.
- Investigate and resolve hazards within the legal timeframes set by Awaab's Law.
- Engage with residents transparently and respectfully throughout the process.
- Embed a zero-tolerance approach to damp and mould in all its homes.

## 5. DEFINITIONS

- Damp: Excess moisture in a property, resulting from leaks, rising damp, or condensation.
- Mould: Fungal growth caused by persistent damp, posing risks to health, especially for children and vulnerable residents.
- Hazard: Any condition in the property likely to cause harm to the physical or mental health of residents.
- Resident: Any person living in a tenanted property owned or managed by ISHA.

## 6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ISHA Board: Monitors compliance with policy and law, reviews performance and outcomes.
- Executive Team (LT): Ensures resources and training are available to deliver legislative and policy obligations.
- Repairs and Maintenance teams: Investigate, record, and address all reports of damp and mould within policy timescales and communicate with residents.
- Damp and Mould Coordinator: Communicates with residents, provides support, and follows up on satisfaction.
- Residents: Promptly report any signs of damp, mould, or condensation in their homes.

## 7. REPORTING AND RESPONSE PROCEDURES

### 7.1 Reporting damp and mould

Residents can report issues via:

- telephone
- email
- in writing or in person at ISHA offices or to ISHA staff visiting ISHA properties
- through a third-party, advocate, or support worker.

## 7.2 Response timescales

- Initial response: Within 24 hours of report receipt, ISHA will acknowledge the issue and provide advice where needed.
- Investigation: Within 10 calendar days, ISHA will conduct an assessment and investigation of the root cause in person.
- Action plan: Within 3 working days of the investigation being concluded, a written report of the inspections findings and ISHA's remediation plan will be communicated to the resident, including expected timelines and contact details.
- Remediation: within 5 working days of the conclusion of the investigation, ISHA will have allocated resource to the works or commenced works on site.
- Completion of works: Remedial work will be complete within 28 calendar days of works starting. Where extensive works are required, ISHA will provide temporary accommodation or alternative arrangements as appropriate.
- All actions will be tracked, and extensions beyond these timescales will only occur where unavoidable, with full resident communication and justification.

## 7.3 Emergency situations

- Hazards posing imminent risk to health (e.g., severe leaks, black mould in children's bedrooms, vulnerable occupants) will be treated as emergencies, with response and mitigation initiated within 24 hours.

## 8. INVESTIGATION AND REMEDIATION

- All reports will be logged and investigated by qualified staff or contractors.
- Root causes (structural, plumbing, ventilation, etc.) will be identified and addressed, not just cosmetic symptoms.
- Where further investigation is needed (e.g., surveying, environmental testing), residents will be kept updated during this period.
- Follow-up visits will be conducted to ensure the issue has been fully resolved. This will be 3 months post completion of works.

## 9. COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENTS

- Residents will receive updates on assessment, planned works, and completion status of the works required to their homes.
- All communication will be accessible and tailored to language or capacity needs.
- ISHA will provide advice on managing condensation and ventilating homes to help prevent recurrence.

## 10. SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

ISHA recognises that damp and mould can have especially severe impacts on children, older people, pregnant individuals, and those with pre-existing health conditions. The association will:

- prioritise cases affecting vulnerable residents
- liaise with health and social care professionals where appropriate
- ensure safeguarding is at the forefront of all interventions.

## 11. ZERO TOLERANCE AND PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- ISHA will check homes for signs of damp and mould as part of the stock condition survey at five-year intervals.
- Properties at particularly high risk of damp and mould or where there have been previous incidents may be inspected more frequently.
- Staff and contractors will be trained to identify, report, and address damp and mould proactively.
- Properties will be maintained to the Decent Homes Standard and all relevant legal requirements.
- Lessons learned from incidents will inform future maintenance, design, and procurement choices.

## 12. RECORD KEEPING AND MONITORING

- All reports, investigations, actions, and outcomes will be centrally recorded within Rubixx.
- Performance against response and resolution times will be monitored monthly (for Leadership Team) and reported to the Board on a quarterly basis.
- Annual reviews of policy and practice will ensure continued compliance with Awaab's Law and evolving best practice.

## 13. RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT, FEEDBACK, AND LEARNING

- Residents will be encouraged to provide feedback on the handling and resolution of their cases.
- Complaints will be managed according to ISHA's standard procedures, with learning outcomes shared across the organisation.
- ISHA will consult and co-design with residents to develop and improve damp and mould-related policies and procedures.
- Information and advice for residents will be published on ISHA's website and in newsletters.

## 14. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

- All staff will receive mandatory training on Awaab's Law, relevant to their role, alongside this policy, and the health impacts of damp and mould. This will also form part of new starter induction.
- Refresher training will be provided when there are legal or best practice updates.

## 15. MANAGING AGENTS

Where a property is managed by a third-party managing agent, ISHA will continue to take all reasonable steps to resolve any issues reported by residents, including those related to damp and mould. ISHA remains committed to ensuring that its residents receive timely and effective responses, in line with ISHA's wider policies, procedures, and applicable legislation.

ISHA will:

- Liaise directly with the managing agent to ensure prompt investigation and resolution of reported hazards.
- Monitor the agent's compliance with legal obligations under Awaab's Law and other relevant housing regulations.
- Maintain clear records of all communications, actions, and outcomes related to managing agent involvement.
- Escalate concerns where managing agents fail to act within expected timeframes or standards, ensuring residents are not disadvantaged by third-party arrangements.
- Emergencies – ISHA will always take prompt mitigating actions and carry out necessary repairs in line with its Emergency Service standards. This also includes addressing failures by managing agents whenever our tenants or properties are at risk.

This approach ensures that ISHA's duty of care to residents is upheld, regardless of property management arrangements.

## 16. REVIEW AND UPDATES

This policy will be reviewed annually, and sooner if there are any legislative changes, major incidents, or findings from resident feedback. Updates will be communicated to all staff, contractors, and residents.

## 17. REFERENCES AND FURTHER INFORMATION

- Social Housing (Regulation) Act, as amended by Awaab's Law
- Housing Ombudsman's guidance on damp and mould
- ISHA's complaints policy
- Chartered Institute of Housing best practice

This policy is effective from 27 October. For questions or advice, residents should contact ISHA's customer service team or visit the ISHA website.

| Reference                       | Version | Created       | Author    | Review     | Board Approved |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Awaab's (damp and mould) policy | 1.1     | November 2025 | Rob Welsh | April 2027 |                |