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Awaab's Law: addressing issues of damp and mould

1. Purpose

This policy outlines Sutton Housing Society's responsibilities and processes for identifying, investigating, and remediating health hazards in residents' homes in accordance with Awaab's Law, aimed at ensuring reports of damp and mould are taken seriously and addressed promptly.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all homes owned by Sutton Housing Society (SHS) with effect from 27 October 2025. All SHS colleagues involved in the management, maintenance, and repair of the homes, together with our contractors, are aware of this policy and how it should be applied.

3. Definitions

It is important for anyone involved in the management and / or repair of our homes to understand the following terms:

- *Emergency Hazard*: a condition posing an imminent and serious risk to health or safety (e.g., severe mould, gas leak)
- *Significant Hazard*: a condition that presents a serious risk of harm requiring prompt action (e.g., damp, structural issues)
- *HHSRS*: Housing Health and Safety Rating System. This is a risk-based evaluation tool used to assess hazards that could pose a risk to the health and safety of occupants.

4. Legal Requirements

Awaab's Law is to be introduced in three phases, with the first phase effective from 27 October 2025.

Phase 1 effective from 27 October 2025. This introduced the following:

- *Investigation of emergency hazards*: This must take place within 24 hours of notification (including weekends and bank holidays)
- *Investigation of significant hazards*: This must take place within 10 working days
- *Resident notification*: Resident(s) must be advised of the situation within 3 working days of the investigation being completed

- *Remedial Action:* Works to resolve the issue must start within 5 working days for any confirmed health risks.

From 2026, (exact date yet to be advised), a second phase of Awaab's Law is to be introduced that refers to hazards such as excess cold / heat, fire, hygiene and structural collapse. This is to be followed by a third phase from 2027 that covers all remaining HHSRS hazards, excluding overcrowding.

5. Reporting and investigation procedures

Residents may report their concerns relating to damp and mould to us in several ways e.g. via phone, email, resident App, website, or in person. All reports must be logged on our IT (housing management) system. This should ensure more accurate recording oversight.

When a report is received, we will ensure that the initial stage involves an on-site inspection to determine if a hazard exists and if so, the severity of the hazard, in line with the HHSRS system. All actions and outcomes must be recorded and findings shared with the resident(s).

Should the remediation work not be instantaneous, we will develop an action plan to outline how the hazard(s) are to be addressed, which contractors and colleagues are involved, together with their responsibilities. The action plan will be monitored until the completion of the work, with the resident being communicated with on a regular basis.

6. Training and awareness

SHS staff received condensation, damp and mould training in 2023. Since this time, our property colleagues have received online training relating to damp and mould via our HR system and some have undertaken formal training via the Chartered Institute of Housing relating to damp and mould.

The whole SHS team will receive updates on policy changes and best practices relating to condensation, damp and mould, via the Property Services Manager and / or the Operations Director.

We will help to raise awareness of damp and mould with residents via the residents' newsletter, Sutton Scoop. We will also ensure that an awareness leaflet is available on the website. This is attached as appendix 1 for information.

7. Monitoring and compliance

Every month, the Operations Director runs the damp and mould report, which is maintained by the Property team. The outcomes of the monthly review are reported to the Senior Management Team, which includes the "Responsible Person", the Chief Executive. Any issues of concern are highlighted to the SMT for discussion and review.

8. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed annually until the legislation is fully introduced. Following this it will move to a five-year review unless there are further legislative or operational issues that need to be addressed sooner.