

Awaab's Law – managing damp and mould In-person & digital focus group – 12 customers attended

Top 3 priority actions

1. Enhance communication and accessibility

- Provide clear, accessible guidance on early reporting of damp and mould, including visual aids and a traffic light severity system.
- Ensure information is available through multiple channels (digital, print, in-person) and tailored for non-digital and visually impaired customers.

Suggested action: Update communications, website, and leaflets to reflect these needs, and ensure all customers know how and when to report issues.

2. Empathetic and supportive customer interaction

- Train staff to ask the right questions with empathy, avoid blame, and provide non-judgemental support.
- Make sure customers feel comfortable reporting issues, removing stigma and reassuring them that damp and mould are common and not their fault.

Suggested action: Incorporate this feedback into staff training and customer service scripts and monitor customer satisfaction with reporting processes.

3. Robust monitoring and follow-up

- Implement ongoing monitoring and performance reporting to assess compliance with Awaab's Law and the effectiveness of remedial actions.
- Ensure customers receive confirmation and updates after reporting, and that outstanding repairs are tracked and closed promptly.

Suggested action: Develop and maintain performance dashboards and establish clear follow-up procedures for all reported cases.

Key points raised from the focus groups

- **Awareness and communication**
 - Most participants were aware of Awaab's Law, but some were unclear about its implementation date, especially in the digital group.
 - There is a strong desire for clear instructions on how to report issues and what to expect from Selwood Housing.
 - Participants want information to be available in multiple formats (online, leaflets, posters in communal areas).
 - Some advice from Selwood Housing about what customers can do - i.e. article in the newsletter and a seasonal highlighted article as we do with servicing your boiler, being careful about Christmas lights etc
- **Reporting and support**
 - Attendees emphasised the importance of early reporting and receiving immediate acknowledgement and confirmation when issues are reported.
 - Have a dedicated phone line for reporting damp and mould.
- **Prevention and education**
 - Participants highlighted the need for practical advice on preventing damp and mould, such as ventilation, heating, and moisture control.
 - There is a call for education in plain English, with visual aids and clear explanations, to help customers understand causes and prevention.
 - Some suggested using climate change context to normalise the issue and reduce stigma.
- **Process and resources**
 - Concerns were raised about whether Selwood Housing has enough resources to manage increased

reporting, whether staff are adequately trained, and where we were in the process.

- Questions were asked about how personal profiles and customer circumstances will be considered, especially for vulnerable or disabled tenants.
- Attendees want a consistent process, with one staff member assigned per case and clear timescales for investigation and remediation.

- **Repairs and follow-up**

- There is a desire for faster action on repairs, clear communication about what will happen and when, and a “clean slate” approach for outstanding cases when new processes start.
- Suggestions included providing information at tenancy start, making the website easier to navigate, and using case studies to show successful outcomes and reduce stigma.

- **Monitoring and accountability**

- Participants want to know how Selwood Housing will monitor the effectiveness of its response and ensure compliance with Awaab’s Law.
- There were questions about analysing trends in property types and preparing for peaks in reporting.

- **Inclusivity and accessibility**

- The need for tailored support for non-digital customers and those with visual impairments was highlighted.
- Attendees want assurance that all customers, regardless of circumstances, will be able to access support and information.

Managers summary

- **Positive Observations**

Attendees were informed and aware of Awaab’s Law, which is expected to enhance the impact of future Selwood communications.

There was good awareness among attendees about:

- Root causes of damp and mould.

- Factors that worsen these issues.
- When damp and mould become hazardous to health.

Attendees felt the proposals align well with Awaab's Law requirements.

- **Actions and Improvements**

A triage form with visual cues has been developed for use by operatives, customers, and surveyors to ensure consistent categorisation of investigations. Staff training will support proper triage and process adherence.

Communications will include:

- Reporting processes and timescales for investigations and remedial works.
- Guidance for customers on managing damp and mould in their homes.

Valuable feedback from focus groups will inform staff training and customer communications.

- **Customer Information**

A leaflet is emailed at initial sign-up, alongside others (e.g. asbestos, fire safety).

Damp and mould will only be discussed if visible during viewing.

The tenancy agreement mentions tenants' responsibility to prevent damp and mould.

- **Data and Reporting**

Efforts are underway to improve data analysis for long-term trends by property type.

Customer profiles will be updated with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) data once the paused EDI project resumes in 2026.

Performance reporting is being introduced to monitor compliance with Awaab's Law.

- **Communication Channels**

A direct phoneline will not be introduced at this stage to avoid missed contacts. All calls will continue to go through customer support, which has a logging process.

- **Customer Advice**

The team will explore ways to advise customers on small actions they can take (e.g. managing condensation), while making clear that major issues are not their responsibility.

- **Readiness**

The organisation is well prepared and making detailed plans ahead of the 27 October deadline, including handling a potential peak in reporting.

#CreatedWithCustomers #YourVoiceMatters

If you would like more information on this report, please contact makeadifference@selwoodhousing.com