

# Communicate effectively with all your tenants

How language services help  
housing providers

# Summary

## DISCLAIMER

This document provides general information based on UK statutory regulations. For specific legal guidance, housing management advice, or individual case compliance, please seek qualified legal advice or refer to the Regulator of Social Housing.

Under **Awaab's Law**, registered providers of social housing, including Local Authorities and Housing Associations, must comply with both the laws and associated regulations covering the provision of social housing.

In addition, housing providers should act in compliance with the guidelines issued by the Regulator of Social Housing in respect of their communications and engagement with tenants.

The primary legislation generally referred to as 'Awaab's Law' entered into force on 27 October 2025 through the Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025.

It embeds specific communication duties directly into social housing tenancy agreements, making communication failure an actionable breach of contract.



# How language services help housing providers communicate effectively with all their tenants

## Effective and understandable communication

In general, social housing providers are responsible for ensuring that tenants are informed of their rights under Awaab's Law. They should always maintain open and transparent communication with tenants, using a range of accessible methods and channels, including digital and non-digital tools. This may include the provision of information via their website, in-person meetings, noticeboards, as well as outreach by email and post.

In addition to the requirements under Awaab's Law, the Regulator of Social Housing's Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard requires registered providers to offer tenants accessible information about their rights, in respect of both their landlords' legal obligations, as well as the relevant regulatory requirements that landlords must meet in connection with their homes.

The regulator also requires that communication with and information for tenants is clear, accessible, relevant, timely and appropriate to the diverse needs of tenants. It cannot be passive, overly technical, or dismissive.

Communication should be understandable for all tenants and must cater for those who may not be proficient in English, or who have special needs. This may require:

- Plain language explanations
- Translated documents
- Interpretation services to support conversations

- Accessibility services such as...
  - o BSL interpretation for those with hearing impairment
  - o Easy Read versions of content for people with learning difficulties
  - o Braille, large print or alternative formats for tenants with visual impairments

Consistent and clear communication builds trust and encourages tenants to raise issues promptly. This helps providers address hazards swiftly, supporting safer and healthier homes for tenants.

**Some aspects of the communications framework are a legal requirement directly related to Awaab's Law, including:**

- **Provision of mandatory written summaries**
  - o Within 3 working days of concluding a hazard investigation, the provider must provide the tenant with a written report. This cannot be vague. It must clearly detail what the investigation found, what actions will be taken to fix the problem, and the precise expected timescales for the repairs.
  - o Landlords should consider their tenants' preferences and needs, as well as requirements under the Equality Act and Consumer Standards when deciding which method of communication to use, for example providing information in their language, in an accessible format, and so on.
- **No 'tenant behaviour' blame shifting**
  - o Landlords are explicitly barred from using communication to deflect blame onto tenant lifestyles, for example dismissing mould as a result of tenant behaviour without investigating any underlying structural flaws.

- **Accessible and translated materials**
  - o To meet the requirement that communication is 'effective and understandable' statutory guidance emphasises that information must be accessible.
  - o If a tenant does not speak English as a first language, has a learning disability, or has a visual/hearing impairment, landlords are expected to provide plain language explanations, translated written materials, or alternative formats like Easy Read versions or large print.
- **Proactive alternative accommodation dialogue**
  - o If a hazard cannot be made safe within the statutory window and the home is deemed unsafe, landlords must coordinate alternative accommodation. They must maintain constant and clear communication with the tenant throughout this process.

## **What Phase 2 introduces**

**The legislation was designed with a phased roll-out. Phase 2 of Awaab's Law comes into force on 30 November 2026.**

Phase 2 does not change the communication rules or the baseline timeframes (such as the 24-hour emergency response or the 10-day investigation window).

Instead, it significantly expands the scope of what providers must apply those communication and repair rules to. This means tenants may require increased access to translated updates, interpreted conversations and accessible formats.

## **Scope expansion under Phase 2**

While Phase 1 strictly focused on damp, mould, and generic emergency

hazards (like gas leaks or total loss of water), Phase 2 pulls several other major Category 1 and serious Category 2 hazards under the same strict timeline and written-reporting rules:

| Hazard category    | Specific issues included in Phase 2                                                                                       |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thermal comfort    | Excess cold and excess heat                                                                                               |
| Physical safety    | Structural collapse risks (for example sagging ceilings) and falls (on stairs, level ground, or between levels)           |
| Utilities and fire | Fire and explosion hazards, plus broader electrical faults                                                                |
| Hygiene            | Domestic hygiene issues, including severe pest infestations or broken personal sanitation and food preparation facilities |

## What this means for communication in Phase 2

Because the list of hazards grows, landlords must ensure their front-line staff and contact centres are trained to recognize these new hazards immediately. For example, if a tenant reports a broken radiator in freezing weather, it can no longer be handled as a routine or low-category maintenance issue.

The communication system must immediately register it under Awaab's Law protocols, triggering the same 24-hour make-safe window or 10-day formal inspection track, accompanied by a written summary. Again, the provider is expected to meet the requirement for 'effective and understandable' communications.

It is worth noting that a final Phase 3 is planned for 2027, which will bring all remaining health and safety hazards (except overcrowding) under these identical legal requirements.

## **Overcoming communication barriers**

Whilst the legislation does not explicitly state that communications must be provided in different languages, it's clear that they should be 'effective and understandable'.

It's hard to see how that bar can be reached without the use of translation and interpreting services that take into account the preferred language of the tenant and deliver critical conversations or communications in that language.

However, this is not necessarily an onerous requirement for the provider.

Clear Voice is a language specialist that supports housing providers with translation and interpretation services, enabling them to meet their obligations under Awaab's Law.

Interpretation can be provided in-person, or by pre-booked or on-demand telephone or video services such as Teams or Zoom. This is a remarkably cost-effective way to implement reliable language support.

Translation of documents, in any format, can be provided in a timely, effective manner for over 260 languages. Clear Voice relies on a 'human-in-the-loop' translation service, where technology provides efficiency and our linguists provide the oversight and cultural awareness to ensure accurate and meaningful translations.

Accessibility services support those with sight and hearing challenges. British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting, Easy Read versions and Braille adaptations ensure that no-one is excluded.

Together, this suite of services helps housing providers to communicate effectively with their tenants irrespective of language or accessibility need.



# We make services accessible in **every language**

Everyone should be able to access the services they need, in the language they require. We are here to help you make this a reality.

Talk to us about your language requirements

findoutmore@clearvoice.org.uk · 0800 817 4777