

Your Contractor Knew *First*. Your System Knew *Last*.

Closing the visibility gap causing housing providers
to fail compliance requirements



Foreword

Every day, hazards are being spotted in social housing properties that never make it into a landlord's system on time. Not because contractors aren't doing their jobs - but because the gap between what's known on site and what's recorded in your system is structural, not accidental.

A worker photographs mould on a Tuesday. But there's no structured step that connects that conversation to a logged record. By Friday, the clock has been running for three days - and you don't even know it yet.

**Compliance doesn't start when data is added to your system.
It starts when the hazard is first identified.**

That gap is where compliance risk lives. Under Awaab's Law, the question regulators are asking isn't whether you fixed the problem. It's when you knew about it, what you told the resident, and whether you can prove it. For providers working through multi-tier contractor models, which is most of the sector, that evidence is rarely where it needs to be.

This report is about that gap: why it exists, what it costs, and what it takes to close it.



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About this report

This report examines two material compliance risks that many housing providers inadvertently retain:

- The gap between when damp and mould hazards are first identified and when the landlord is formally notified, and
- The absence of a clear, auditable record of what residents were told, when they were told it, and by whom.

The statutory requirements under Awaab's Law are set out in government guidance. Drawing on delivery experience across social housing and multi-tier contractor environments, we explain why these gaps arise, why they increase regulatory and legal exposure, and the practical steps providers can take to close them.

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Why compliance expectations have shifted, when the clock really starts, and what Awaab's Law now covers

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Why this matters now, the discovery gap, communication as compliance, and the cost of getting it wrong

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The Oneserve Approach

How the platform closes the gap, and the compliance workflow in practice

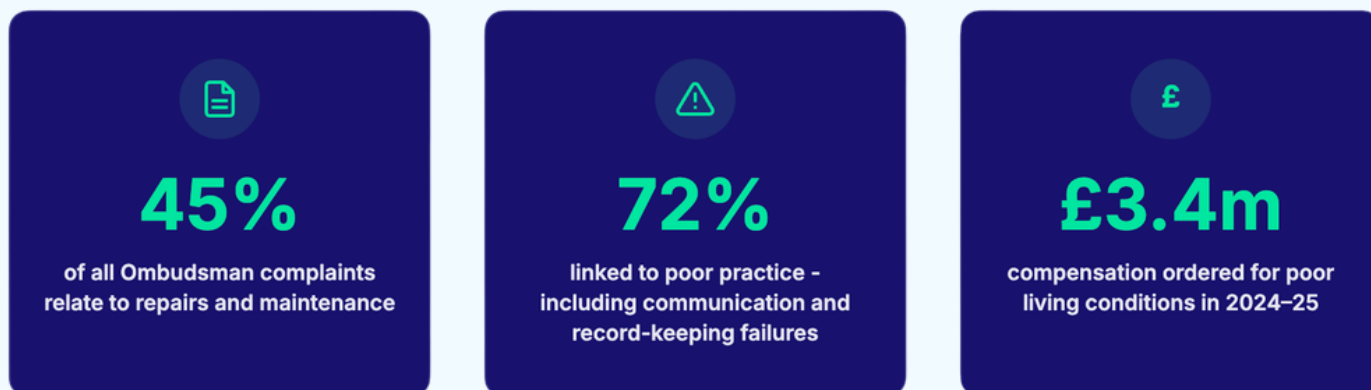
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How compliance has changed



Housing Ombudsman, Repairing Trust, May 2025

Over the past two years, regulatory expectations in social housing have shifted fundamentally. Under Awaab's Law, alongside increased scrutiny from the Regulator of Social Housing and the Housing Ombudsman, compliance is no longer judged simply on whether repairs are completed.

It is now judged on **when risks were first identified, who was aware of them, how quickly appropriate action followed and how effectively residents were communicated with.** Many housing providers may be carrying compliance risk they haven't yet identified. The data shows the sector is already struggling to keep pace.

Awaab's Law is the first step in a broader tightening of regulation, including expansion to all HHSRS hazards by 2027, Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards by 2030, and the Reformed Decent Homes Standard across social and private rented housing by 2035.

The compliance model being established now will define expectations for the next decade.

The Building Safety Act 2022 established the "golden thread" - continuous, digital, auditable safety information throughout a building's lifecycle. Awaab's Law now applies that same expectation to every social home.

Awaab's Law: beyond damp & mould



What to expect

Towards the end of 2026, the same requirements set against Damp and Mould Hazards will apply to excess cold and heat, structural hazards, electrical hazards, gas safety risks, fire risks, water supply & sanitation and asbestos.

What the Housing Ombudsman expects

The Housing Ombudsman expects you to evidence that you knew about an issue, acted on it, and kept the resident informed throughout. Doing the work isn't enough - if you can't show the resident was told, it's still a failure. Complaints about substandard living conditions surged by 474% between 2019–20 and 2024–25, with 72% linked to poor practice. [1]

The Consumer Standards (C Grade)

The Regulator of Social Housing grades landlords from C1 to C4 against the Consumer Standards [2] based on how well they deliver for residents - not just whether the right policies are in place. That means looking at safety, home quality, repairs, tenant engagement, and complaint handling. The question isn't "do you have a process?" It's "can you show us what happened, when, and what the resident was told?"

Why this matters in practice

The clock doesn't wait. Under Awaab's Law, landlords must investigate within 10 working days of becoming aware of a hazard - and act on emergencies within 24 hours [3]. Any delay between discovery and system entry eats directly into that window. Under the Building Safety Act, this kind of gap represents a break in the golden thread.

[1] [Housing Ombudsman, Repairing Trust, May 2025.](#)

[2] [Regulator of Social Housing, Consumer Standards.](#)

[3] [GOV.UK, Awaab's Law Guidance, 2025.](#)

The cost of non-compliance

THE OLD QUESTION

***Did you
fix it?***



THE NEW QUESTION

**Can you
evidence it?**

And what you did within the required timeframe.

The cost of getting it wrong

Regulatory grading and scrutiny

A C3 or C4 Consumer Standards grade from the Regulator of Social Housing means closer monitoring, improvement plans, and re-inspection. Repeat breaches can lead to regulatory action and fines are unlimited.

Personal liability

Senior leaders and board members now face personal accountability under the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023. When compliance fails, the question regulators ask is: what did you know, and when?

Reputation and trust

Public judgements make headlines. Once board members, councillors, and residents start asking questions, rebuilding trust takes years - not months.

Funding and credit impact

Poor regulatory standing can make borrowing more expensive and reduce funding flexibility. Compliance failures have a direct financial cost.

Ombudsman pressure

Every maladministration finding comes with learning requirements. These stack up, consume management time, and create a cycle that's hard to break out of.

Procurement and partnerships

A weak compliance record makes you less attractive to clients. It triggers tougher due diligence, and can lead to lost bids and contract exclusions.

When does the compliance clock really start?



STEP 1 — DISCOVERY

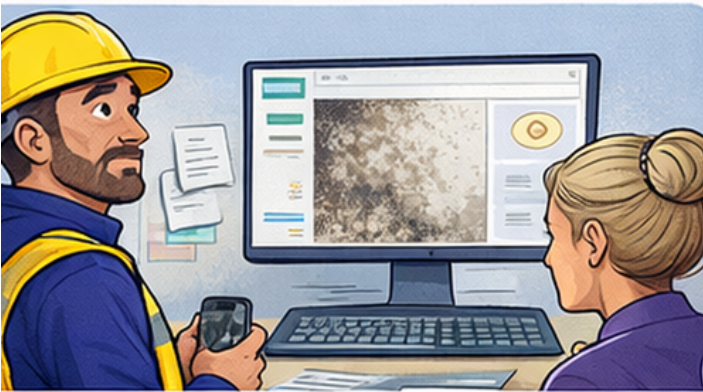
Hazard identified on site

Worker spots and photographs mould during a site visit.

 **CLOCK STARTS HERE**

 **+2–5 days pass**

before the system is updated



STEP 2 — LOGGED IN SYSTEM

Report submitted & reviewed

The hazard is recorded in the system — days after it was first seen.



STEP 3 — ACTION TAKEN

Repairs begin

Remediation is approved and scheduled. The clock has been running since Step 1.



Compliance doesn't start when the data is added to your system. It starts when the hazard is first identified.

Track it or risk it

This challenge is compounded by low data maturity across the sector. Research from the Housing Technology - Data Quality in Social Housing Report 2025 [4] indicates that:

54%

of housing providers do not have a formal data quality strategy

71%

acknowledge that compliance failures are linked to poor data governance

42%

do not have nor plan to use data management software

When awareness is fragmented across systems, organisations, and informal channels, reconstructing a defensible timeline, including what residents were told, becomes extremely difficult.

Taken together, this means compliance risk is no longer just about whether work eventually gets done. It is about whether providers can clearly evidence when issues were first identified, who knew about them, how quickly action followed and what residents were informed of - even when multiple contractors are involved.

This is the same challenge the Building Safety Act's golden thread was designed to solve - ensuring safety-critical information is captured digitally at source, not reconstructed days later.

What this means for you?

If you were graded against the Consumer Standards tomorrow, could you evidence how every reported hazard was handled - *from first awareness through to resident communication?*

[4] Housing Technology, Data Quality in Social Housing 2025.

The discovery gap

This risk does not arise from negligence or poor intent. It arises from the way housing repairs and maintenance are delivered in practice.

Multi-tier contractor environments

Most housing providers now work through layers of contractors - from main suppliers to multiple subcontractors and specialist trades. Yet 65% of procurement executives lack visibility beyond their tier one suppliers [5]. Issues surface far from the landlord, reducing visibility and delaying action.

Informal communication in the field

Hazards found on site are often shared between operatives and landlords via calls, WhatsApp, verbal handovers, or end-of-day notes - quick in practice, but rarely producing timestamped, auditable evidence.

Fragmented systems

Housing providers and their contractors often operate across multiple software platforms - separate systems for scheduling, compliance, asset management, and communications. When a subcontractor logs a hazard in one platform but the landlord's compliance team works in another, critical information doesn't flow automatically. The result is a discovery-to-notification gap where most time-based compliance risk now sits.

Compliance is a team effort

This gap isn't about landlords or contractors getting it wrong, it's built into the system. With mixed delivery models, compliance relies on everyone spotting risk and escalating it as soon as it appears. Landlords may require time-stamped evidence from contractors, but without a shared system to make that happen, those rules often live on paper rather than in day-to-day practice. The information exists, but it isn't digitally connected, timestamped at source, or accessible to the people who need it to act in time.

[5] Deloitte, Global Chief Procurement Officer Survey.

Communication is compliance

The Five Evidence Gates: What Regulators Now Expect You to Prove

59.8/100

How the UK rates complaint handling — the lowest-scoring aspect of customer satisfaction⁶

6.6pt

Drop in satisfaction when customers are passed between channels to get a resolution⁶

73.1/100

Customer satisfaction in utilities — the worst-performing sector in the UK⁷



GATE 1

Acknowledgement

Resident told the issue was received and recognised



GATE 2

Risk communication

Resident informed of severity and any interim safety advice



GATE 3

Action plan

Resident told what happens next, by whom, and by when



GATE 4

Progress updates

Evidence of updates during investigation and works



GATE 5

Outcome & closure

Resident informed of completion and next steps

✓ Each gate must be evidenced, timestamped, and audit-ready

"Poor communication is the most common concern I have heard expressed by residents at public events."

Richard Blakeway, Housing Ombudsman, April 2025⁸

[6] Institute of Customer Service, UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI), July 2025.

[7] Institute of Customer Service, UK Customer Satisfaction Index (UKCSI), January 2026.

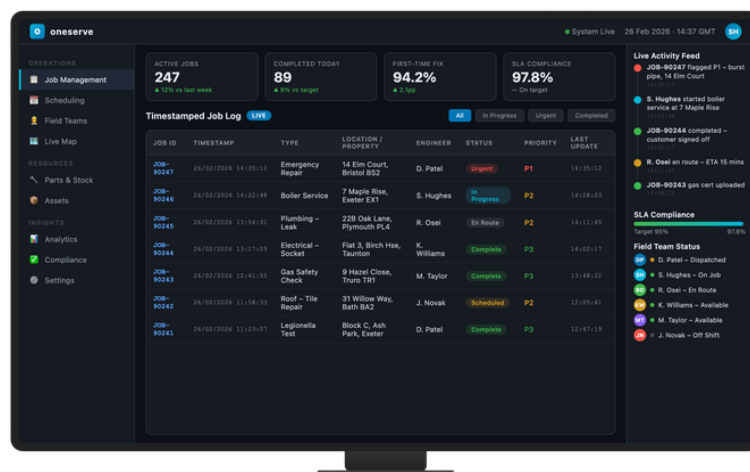
[8] Housing Ombudsman, Learning from Severe Maladministration, April 2025.

The Oneserve approach

This gap isn't theoretical - we see it repeatedly across housing providers running complex contractor models. Policy alone won't fix it. You need compliance built into everyday workflows, so evidence is captured the moment something is found - not reconstructed days later. That's what Oneserve is designed to do. Instead of relying on contractors to remember to report, the system makes compliance part of completing the job.



-  **Hazard capture at the point of work** - Mandatory checks are embedded into every job. No hazard record, no job closure - so every visit generates timestamped, documented evidence by default.
-  **Timestamped evidence across all contractor tiers** - Date, time, GPS, user ID - every action is recorded the moment it happens. When regulators ask "when did you know?", you can answer with precision.
-  **Automated escalation based on hazard type** - The system categorises each hazard, sets the response timeline, and notifies the right people. Approaching a deadline? It escalates to senior staff automatically. Compliance is built into the workflow - not reliant on someone remembering.
-  **Automated resident communication** - Branded, compliant updates are sent to residents automatically at every stage - populated with case details, delivered via their preferred channel, and fully tracked.
-  **End-to-end audit trail** - One defensible timeline from discovery to resolution - exportable as a complete case file for regulators or the Ombudsman. Proof you acted within required timelines, throughout.



The Compliance Workflow

Closing the gap between discovery and compliance doesn't require more people or more oversight - it requires the right workflow. Oneserve embeds compliance into everyday operations, so evidence is captured at the point of discovery, timelines are enforced automatically, residents are kept informed at every stage, and everything feeds into a single audit trail. Here's how it works in practice.



✓ **Single audit trail — regulator-ready evidence from discovery to resolution**

The result: when anyone holding you to account asks what happened, you can quickly and confidently access the evidence you need to demonstrate compliance in a single place.



Capture at discovery



Timestamped evidence



Automated escalation



Resident communication



Audit-ready timeline

A simple self-check

- 1** Can we evidence when the resident first reported the hazard?
- 2** Are hazard reporting steps enforced by workflow or reliant on policy?
- 3** How quickly can we move from discovery to formal notification?
- 4** Do we have visibility across all contractor tiers?
- 5** Could we produce regulator-ready evidence of awareness within hours, not days?
- 6** Can we evidence when residents were first informed about a hazard — and what they were told?
- 7** If a compliance deadline is about to be missed, does the system automatically escalate to senior staff?
- 8** Could we produce a complete, exportable case file for an Ombudsman response within 24 hours?

How to score

Mostly Yes (6–8)

Well positioned — but keep monitoring as regulation expands.

Mixed (3–5)

Gaps exist in your discovery-to-notification process. Common across the sector — but addressable.

Mostly No or Unsure (0–2)

Your organisation may be carrying material compliance risk. This needs attention now.

About Oneserve

Oneserve provides compliance and operational management software purpose-built for housing providers navigating complex contractor environments.

What we do

Our platform connects landlords, contractors, and subcontractors through a single system, ensuring compliance-critical information flows in real time - from the moment a hazard is identified to the point of resolution and resident confirmation.

Core capabilities include

- Work order management and scheduling
- Multi-tier contractor coordination
- Hazard identification and escalation workflows
- Compliance tracking against Awaab's Law requirements
- Mobile apps for field-based capture and evidence collection
- Automated, branded resident communications with delivery tracking
- Audit trail generation for regulatory submissions

Who we work with

Oneserve is trusted by housing providers across the UK to manage responsive repairs, planned maintenance, and compliance programmes. Our clients range from local authorities to large housing associations managing complex, multi-contractor delivery models.

Quick wins

- Review how hazards are captured during routine works
- Reduce reliance on informal communication channels
- Identify where discovery currently sits outside landlord systems
- Audit how and when resident communications are sent during hazard cases

Next steps

Book a compliance assessment — we'll map your discovery-to-notification timeline, identify where evidence gaps exist across your contractor tiers, and show you where the compliance clock is running without your knowledge.



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