

G U I D E

The golden thread in practice.

From the Building Safety Act to Awaab's Law Phase 2, one operating requirement. A guide for housing associations, local authorities and principal contractors.

Two regulatory regimes, one underlying demand: accurate, current, retrievable information about every home. This guide sets out what the Building Safety Act golden thread requires from build to handover, what Awaab's Law Phase 2 requires from 30 November 2026, and how the same operating model can satisfy both.

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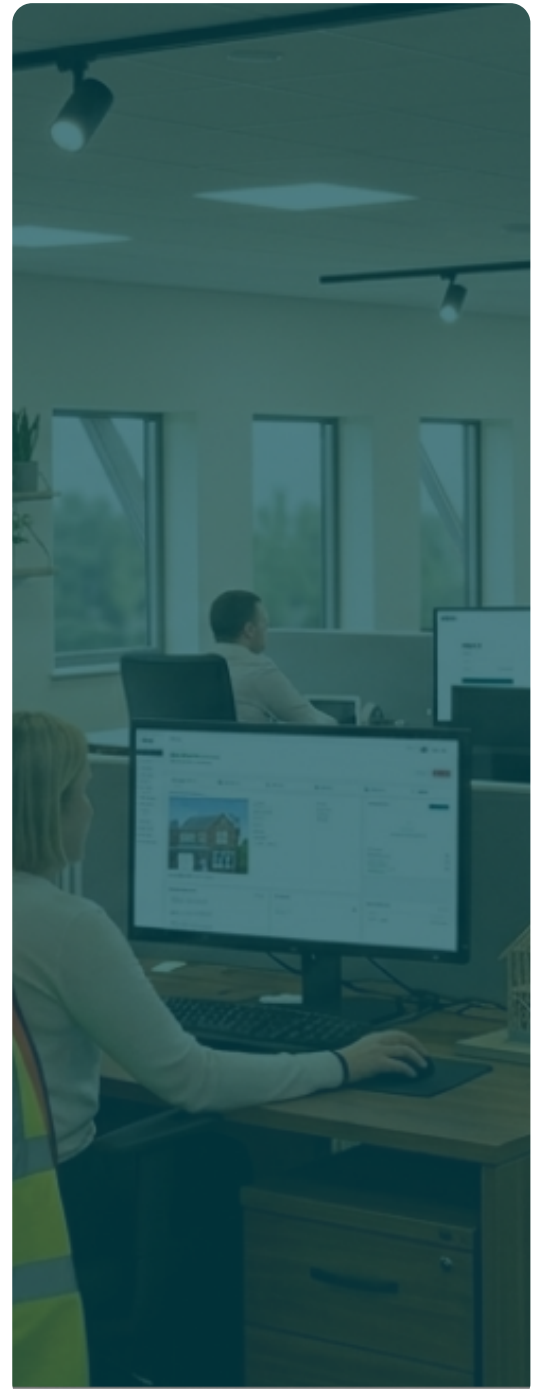
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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Building Safety Act and Awaab's Law were written for different problems. The first is about how higher-risk buildings are designed, built and safely occupied. The second is about how social landlords respond when a hazard is reported in a home they manage. Read separately they look like two compliance workstreams: one for the build side, one for the housing side.

Read together, they describe a single operating requirement. Both regimes assume that accurate, current, retrievable information exists about every home, at every stage, from design through construction and into occupation. The golden thread names it directly. Awaab's Law relies on it implicitly: a statutory investigation clock cannot start without a home record, and a Phase 2 investigation with 10 working days on it cannot succeed without a service history.



Who this guide is for

The people who own the operating requirement: development directors, asset directors, building safety leads, principal contractors, compliance leads and the operations directors who have to make both regimes fit inside one day-to-day workflow.

SECTION 01

Executive summary.

The Building Safety Act 2022 introduced the golden thread of information for higher-risk buildings, defined as buildings of at least 18 metres or seven storeys containing at least two residential units. During design and construction the duty falls on the client, the principal designer and the principal contractor, with the client ultimately responsible for providing the electronic facility on which the golden thread is held. At handover, the golden thread passes to the Principal Accountable Person, who maintains it through the life of the building. Failure to transfer the golden thread is a criminal offence, punishable by fine and up to two years' imprisonment.

Awaab's Law was introduced through the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and places statutory time-bound duties on social landlords to investigate and fix serious hazards. Phase 1 came into force on 27 October 2025, covering all emergency hazards and significant damp and mould hazards.

Phase 2 comes into force on 30 November 2026, extending the fixed timescales to a wider range of Housing Health and Safety Rating System hazards, including excess cold and heat, falls, structural collapse, fire and explosions, electrical hazards, and hygiene and food safety. Phase 3, expected in 2027, will complete the framework by covering all remaining HHSRS hazards except overcrowding.

The two regimes intersect at the level of the individual home. The golden thread is the information that arrives with a new home at handover. Awaab's Law is the operating discipline that home information must support once the home is occupied. Organisations that treat these as separate workstreams end up building the same information twice, in two different systems, with the join between them made by email. Organisations that treat them as one problem carry a single plot-level record from build into occupation, and use it to serve both regimes at the same time.

30 Nov 2026

Awaab's Law Phase 2 comes into force

24 hours

to make an immediate-danger hazard safe under both phases

12 weeks

to commence longer-term remedial works under Phase 2

One record, two regimes

You are not building two evidence systems. You are building one home record that satisfies the golden thread at handover and Awaab's Law in occupation. The organisations that see this now will run both regimes on one operating model.

SECTION 02

What the golden thread actually requires.

The golden thread is the digital record of a higher-risk building, held by the client during design and construction, handed to the Principal Accountable Person at handover, and maintained through occupation. Its scope, format and duty holders are set out in the Building Regulations etc. (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023, the Higher-Risk Buildings (Keeping and Provision of Information etc.) (England) Regulations 2024, and the Building (Higher-Risk Building Procedures) (England) Regulations 2023.

Who holds the duty

During design and construction, three duty holders share the golden thread. The client, under Regulation 31(1), arranges the electronic facility on which the information is held, sets the version control, and shares the information with every designer and contractor on the project. The principal designer maintains and updates the design information as the design develops. The principal contractor takes on the golden thread through the construction phase and hands it over to the client at practical completion. Delegation is permitted, but the client remains ultimately accountable.

At Gateway 3, when the completion certificate is applied for, the application must be accompanied by a statement to the Building Safety Regulator that a copy of the golden thread

information has been provided to the relevant person: the Principal Accountable Person for a higher-risk residential building, or the responsible person for a non-residential building. Without that statement, the completion certificate cannot be issued and the building cannot be registered or occupied.

During occupation, the golden thread transfers to the Principal Accountable Person and to each Accountable Person for their part of the building. They must hold, maintain and update the information, and on request provide it to the Building Safety Regulator, to residents, and to subsequent duty holders. A failure to transfer the golden thread on a change of duty holder is a criminal offence.

What the record must be

The regulations require that the golden thread is held in a form that is secure, accessible and understandable to those who need to use it. That means digital, version-controlled, retrievable on demand, and structured to allow both fine-grained lookup and whole-building review. A shared drive of PDFs is not a golden thread. Nor is an as-built binder handed over on a memory stick.

The practical test is whether, on any given day, the duty holder can produce the current, correct information about the building for the person asking. That includes the Building Safety Regulator, the accountable person for a subsequent stage, a resident asking about their own home, and an emergency service responding to an incident.

Not a document, a live record

The golden thread is a live operating record with a duty holder, a legal transfer at handover, and criminal consequences for losing it. It has to be built into how work is done, not assembled at the end.

SECTION 03

Awaab's Law, Phase 1 to Phase 2.

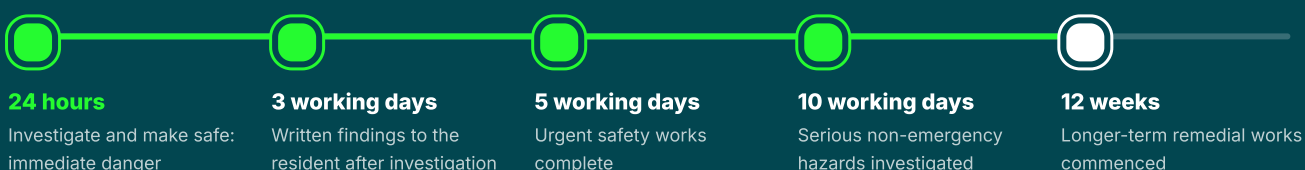
Awaab's Law places statutory, time-bound duties on social landlords to investigate and fix serious hazards. It applies to registered providers of social housing in England: local authorities, housing associations and other registered providers. It does not currently impose the same regime on private landlords, though the Renters' Rights Act 2025 extends Phase 1 protections into the private rented sector.

Phase 1, from 27 October 2025, covers all emergency hazards, and significant damp and mould hazards. The landlord must investigate any potential emergency hazard and, if the investigation identifies one, undertake the relevant safety work within 24 hours of becoming aware of the hazard. Significant damp and mould must be investigated within a fixed timescale, with findings reported to the tenant. Phase 1 guidance remains operative until 11:59pm on 29 November 2026; the Phase 2 guidance takes over the following day.

Phase 2, from 30 November 2026, extends the fixed-timescale duties to a much wider range of HHSRS hazards: excess cold and heat, falls (on stairs, from height, on the level, between levels), structural collapse and falling elements, fire and explosions, electrical hazards, and domestic and personal hygiene and food safety. MHCLG published its Phase 2 landlord guidance and hazards annex on 13 July 2026, alongside the draft amendment regulations, which require parliamentary approval; 30 November 2026 is the government's stated intention subject to that approval.

Phase 3, expected in 2027, will extend the same timescales to all remaining HHSRS hazards, except overcrowding. This completes the framework and brings essentially every HHSRS hazard in social housing under statutory response duties.

THE PHASE 2 STATUTORY CLOCKS · FROM THE LANDLORD BECOMING AWARE



Four clocks per report

Every hazard report becomes a running clock the moment the landlord becomes aware of it. The operational question is not whether the timescales are achievable in isolation. It is whether they are achievable when hundreds are running at once.

SECTION 04

Where the two regimes converge.

The Building Safety Act asks how a building's information is built and kept from design through occupation. Awaab's Law asks how a landlord acts on that information when a resident reports a hazard. Both depend on the same primary asset: a live, accurate, retrievable record of the home. Three points of convergence matter operationally.

GOLDEN THREAD ASKS

Is the building's information secure, current, version-controlled and retrievable, and did it transfer, legally, at handover?

BOTH REQUIRE

One live plot record

carried from build into occupation, with a full activity history against the home.

AWAAB'S LAW ASKS

When a hazard is reported, can the landlord investigate, act and evidence it inside statutory clocks, per home?

The record has to survive handover

The golden thread handover is a legal transfer of duty and information; the incoming asset team needs the home record from day one to meet response timescales. The record the principal contractor built during construction must be the record the asset team uses in occupation, without a translation step. Organisations that hand over a folder rather than a record spend the next year rebuilding it.

Response performance is evidenced against the home

Meeting a 24-hour timescale is not enough if the response record does not sit against the home, timestamped, with actions and resident communication logged. Both regimes require the same underlying object: a home record with a full activity history, not a case file separated from an asset record.

Systemic failures are visible at organisation level

The Regulator can require the golden thread on demand and prosecute failures at transfer. Under Awaab's Law, repeated failures on the same hazard type, estate or contractor indicate an operational problem. Landlords cannot show their response operation is compliant if the underlying data cannot be aggregated across homes.

**Two vocabularies,
one requirement**

Build a single home record that supports both, and you get the golden thread and Awaab's Law readiness at the same time. Build two, and you carry the join between them as risk.

SECTION 05

What good looks like operationally.

The organisations that will run both regimes cleanly share a small number of operating characteristics. None of them is technology-first. Each is a discipline about how information is created, held and used.

One record per home, from build to end of life

Each home carries a single record. During construction that record is the golden thread scope for a higher-risk building, or the equivalent per-plot compliance and specification file for any other new home. At handover, ownership transfers with the home, but the record itself does not fork. The same object continues into asset management, aftercare and hazard response.

Duty and access at the level of the home

Named individuals hold responsibility for the record and for each stage of activity against it. Access is scoped: residents see what belongs to their home, contractors see what belongs to the job, the accountable person and the Regulator see what belongs to the building. Every read, write and transfer is auditable.

Evidence captured at source

Photographs, certificates, commissioning sheets, inspection outcomes, resident communications and defect resolutions attach to the home and the activity they belong to, at the moment they are produced. Site teams capture on the day. Aftercare teams log actions in the workflow, not in retrospect. Nobody reconstructs a record afterwards.

Timescales enforced by the workflow

Awaab's Law timescales sit inside the workflow, not on a separate spreadsheet. The 24-hour, 10-working-day, 3-working-day, 5-working-day and 12-week clocks start automatically when a hazard is triaged and are visible to everyone whose action they depend on. Exceptions are surfaced early, in time to act, not after the timescale has been missed.

Reporting that answers the Regulator's question

Both regimes produce Regulator-facing questions that require aggregate answers: how many hazards of each category, at what stage, meeting which timescales, resolved how. Reporting sits on the same underlying home records that carry the daily work, so the numbers reconcile without a separate reporting build.

Simple model, hard at scale

One record per home, held to a duty, worked on in the moment, with timescales that live inside the workflow. What is difficult is running that model consistently across thousands of homes. That is what the operating layer has to do.

SECTION 06

The 12-month readiness plan.

The window before Phase 2 commences on 30 November 2026 is short. Most of this work is operational rather than technical.

WINDOW	ACTION
Now – Q3 2026	Map the Phase 2 hazards against your current triage. Identify which categories your current workflow cannot process inside statutory timescales, and why.
Now – Q3 2026	For any higher-risk buildings in delivery, confirm with each principal contractor how the golden thread is being maintained, in what system, and how it will transfer at Gateway 3.
Q3 2026	Consolidate home records: for each home, identify the current single source of truth. Where there is more than one, choose one and retire the others.
Q3 2026	Rework triage scripts and out-of-hours cover against the Phase 2 categories. Confirm named responsibility for each timescale.
Q4 2026	Bring the 24-hour, 10-working-day, 3-working-day, 5-working-day and 12-week clocks into the workflow. Test with live cases before commencement.
Q4 2026	Confirm contractor SLAs and out-of-hours arrangements against the Phase 2 timescales. Update contracts where needed.
From 30 Nov 2026	Run Phase 2 reporting: hazards by category, by stage, by timescale status, per estate, per contractor. Exceptions surfaced weekly.
Ongoing	For higher-risk buildings in occupation, review the golden thread against the Regulator's information requirements at least annually and after any material change.

The five-minute test

Pick any occupied home at random and, in five minutes, retrieve its record, its current hazard status, its most recent inspection, and the responsible officer. If that takes longer, the November 2026 operating model is not yet in place.

SECTION 07

What this means for principal contractors.

For principal contractors delivering higher-risk buildings, the golden thread is the primary compliance product of the construction phase. The Building Safety Regulator sees the golden thread at Gateway 3, and a completion certificate cannot be issued without the accompanying statement that the golden thread has been provided to the accountable person. In practice, the quality of the golden thread you hand over defines the risk profile of the project on the day you leave site.



What the client will ask for

The client is under a statutory duty to arrange the electronic facility for the golden thread and to ensure that all designers and contractors use it. Expect the client to specify a system, a data structure, and a set of information categories. Contractors working across multiple clients will encounter multiple systems, but the underlying content requirements converge on the Higher-Risk Buildings Regulations 2024 and the Building Safety Regulator's information requirements.

What to control on your side

Regardless of the client's system, three things sit on the principal contractor's side of the line. Source records: the photographs, certificates and commissioning documents produced by site teams, subcontractors and the supply chain. Version control: the ability to identify the correct version of every specification and drawing at every point in the build. Handover evidence: the statement, per building, that the golden thread has been maintained and provided, tying into the client's Gateway 3 application.

Why the same discipline helps on non-HRB projects

Not every project is a higher-risk building. But the operating discipline behind the golden thread (one live record per plot, evidence captured at source, sign-off with named responsibility) is the same discipline that protects programme, retentions and client relationships on every project. The clients who move fastest on plot-level records for HRBs will bring the same expectation to their non-HRB developments. Contractors already operating that way will absorb the shift without a step change in cost.

Handover starts on day one

The golden thread is not a document anyone can build for you at the end. It is a discipline the site operates from day one. Handover starts with the first delivery ticket, not the practical completion certificate.

One record per plot.

Ubrix is the plot lifecycle platform for UK housebuilding: build to end of life. For housing associations, local authorities and principal contractors delivering higher-risk buildings, the plot record extends into occupation and becomes the operating layer for the golden thread and Awaab's Law together.

A plot record that survives handover

The same object that carries specification, compliance stages, evidence and approvals during build carries the golden thread into occupation. No translation step at Gateway 3.

Triage, routing and self-service built in

Smart Triage reads inbound reports and prioritises them. Auto-Assign sends jobs to the default contractor with human confirmation. Home Assist lets residents resolve simple issues themselves. Every action attaches to the home record.

Awaab's Law timescales in the workflow

The 24-hour, 10-working-day, 3-working-day, 5-working-day and 12-week clocks start on triage and travel with the case. Exceptions surfaced weekly, not weeks after they matter.

Reporting the Regulator will ask for

Response performance by hazard category, by estate, by contractor, aggregated on the same records that hold the daily work. From SME housebuilders to 4,000-plus-unit programmes; for housing providers, priced per plot under management.

[See Ubrix in action](#)

[Visit ubrix.co.uk](https://ubrix.co.uk)

Sources: Building Safety Act 2022; Higher-Risk Buildings (Keeping and Provision of Information etc.) (England) Regulations 2024; Building Regulations etc. (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2023; Building (Higher-Risk Building Procedures) (England) Regulations 2023; Hazards in Social Housing (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2025 as amended for Phase 2; MHCLG Phase 2 landlord guidance and hazards annex, 13 July 2026; BuildUK Golden Thread guidance; Wedlake Bell, Mishcon de Reya, Devonshires and OTS Solicitors commentary. Verified July 2026.

Last updated July 2026. General guidance, not legal advice. Verify requirements for specific projects with your professional advisers.