

An interactive guide to the regulatory changes in social housing since Grenfell.



BY DEWBIEN PLUMMER

(Vol. 1 as at March 2024)

Grenfell Tower Fire

The Grenfell Tower tragedy, a devastating fire that claimed 72 lives in June 2017, exposed critical deficiencies in building safety and resident welfare within social housing.

This catastrophe prompted an extensive examination of UK housing regulations beginning with the the Grenfell Tower Fire Inquiry and the Hackitt Review. These investigations unveiled systemic failures and laid the groundwork for comprehensive changes.

Awaab Ishak

Awaab Ishak, a two-year old died tragically in 2020 after prolonged exposure to mould. He lived in a social housing property with his family. His death led to a campaign for Awaab's Law by Shelter, Manchester News & Awaab's parents. It sought to mandate timescales for landlords to address damp & mould properly. It has been incorporated into the Social Housing Regulation Act.

Key Investigations

The Hackitt Review and the Grenfell Tower Inquiry were key independent reviews following the Grenfell tragedy. The Hackitt Review, led by Dame Judith Hackitt, focused on building regulations and fire safety, while the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, chaired by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, examined the causes of the fire and related issues. Both identified systemic failures in building safety, oversight, and resident engagement. They highlighted the need for regulatory reform and better standards, kickstarting a journey towards significant sectoral changes.

The Findings

There was an urgent need for a more effective regulatory and accountability framework. Problems included a lack of transparency & accountability, poor record keeping, institutional indifference to residents and a lack of professionalism.

Regulatory Bodies



The Regulator for Social Housing oversees standards for social housing providers, focusing on organisational aspects like management and financial viability and ensuring homes are decent and safe. The Housing Ombudsman Service deals with individual complaints about landlords, mediating disputes and recommending improvements. Together, they ensure compliance with housing standards, with the Ombudsman referring systemic issues to the Regulator for broader action. They have issued guidance on their relationship.

Building Safety Act 2022



The Building Safety Act 2022 emerged as a direct response to the systemic flaws in building safety exposed by the Grenfell tragedy and the subsequent Hackitt Review. It enacts significant reforms in building safety standards, particularly for high-rise buildings. Key changes include:

- A more rigorous regulatory framework for building safety.
- Enhanced accountability for building owners and managers.
- Improved resident engagement and complaint handling processes.

Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023



The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, catalysed by the Grenfell tragedy, the Social Housing White Paper, and the tragic death of Awaab Ishak, brings pivotal changes to social housing regulation. It aims to enhance tenant safety and wellbeing by:

- Strengthening the Regulator of Social Housing for more frequent inspections and issuing fines to non-compliant landlords.
- Expanding the Housing Ombudsman's powers for guidance post-investigations.
- Setting deadlines for landlords to rectify hazards like damp and mould.
- Introducing new qualifications for housing managers.
- Implementing a new, proactive consumer regulation regime

Reading List



The Acts

Building Safety Act 2022

Social Housing Regulation Act 2023

Quality Measures

Revised consumer standards

Competence and conduct standards (consultation)

Awaab's Law (consultation)

Complaints Handling Code 2024

Inspections

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Decent Homes Standard Review

Housing Ombudsman Spotlight Reports

Attitudes, respect and rights – relationship of equals

Knowledge and Information Management (KIM)

Damp and mould – it's not a lifestyle



TIMELINE: The Journey So Far...

