

BESA welcomes pledge to strengthen Awaab's Law

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The [Building Engineering Services Association](#) (BESA) has welcomed the new government's commitment to reinforce the rules that require landlords to improve living conditions for tenants.

Private landlords will become subject to the same building safety rules that already apply to social housing providers under a new Renters' Rights Bill unveiled during Wednesday's King's Speech that marked the opening of Parliament.

King Charles announced that all landlords would now be required to address mould and damp conditions within 24 hours of being notified of the problem as set out in legislation [known as Awaab's Law](#) in memory of two-year-old Awaab Ishak who [died from mould exposure](#) at his Rochdale home in 2020.

The legislation requires landlords in England to carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours, fully investigate issues within two weeks, and begin repairs within a further seven days. Failing to meet the deadlines leaves landlords liable to legal action by tenants and having to pay compensation.

Landlords will also be expected to keep records showing they have made attempts to comply with the time limits.

"The promise to extend the reach of Awaab's Law is something we called for during the election campaign. It goes to the heart of efforts to tackle a growing health crisis caused by appalling conditions in far too many homes," said BESA's chief executive officer David Frise.

"The prevention and eradication of mould and damp continues to be a source of great frustration for our industry," he added. "We understand the problem, which often comes back to inadequate ventilation, but too often the investment is not forthcoming despite this being such a crucial health issue."

The Association also welcomed the government's commitment to "repair our broken planning system" to smooth the path of infrastructure, housing and renewable energy projects through a new Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

BESA added that it was also encouraged to see that the new government was framing the debate about renewables and green engineering in terms of economic growth.

The speech confirmed the government will introduce a Bill to set up Great British Energy, with the new venture headquartered in Scotland to help achieve "energy independence".

"My government recognises the urgency of the global climate challenge and the new job opportunities that can come from leading the development of the technologies of the future," the King said. "It is committed to a clean energy transition which will lower energy bills for consumers over time."

"The previous administration seemed to regard addressing climate change as a bit of an expensive inconvenience rather than an opportunity to create wealth and employment opportunities. As a result, they flip flopped on policy which left us in the slow lane," said Frise.

"Hopefully, the tenor of the new policy announcements represents a change of mindset."

The Association also offered its support to the planned Skills England Bill, which aims to bring together businesses, training providers, unions and industry bodies to give added momentum to technical training, including apprenticeships, in a bid to tackle skills shortages.

The new legislation will seek to simplify the skills system by transferring responsibilities from the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) to a new Skills England organisation, to make the skills sector more efficient, according to the King's Speech.

"Clearly, the devil will be in the detail as there have been many attempts to address the widening skills gap," said Frise. "And while this is a national policy, it is often a regional problem with different parts of the country facing their own specific challenges when it comes to accessing training and funding."

BESA was also pleased to see that the new Audit and Corporate Governance Bill referred directly to the Carillion scandal and the need to avoid similar corporate failures in the future, but it noted there was no timeframe mentioned for addressing ongoing late payment problems in construction supply chains.