

Awaab's Law and the Hidden Health Crisis: Mould as the Silent Grenfell

Jeff Charlton Principal Consultant, Building Forensics

Summary

If you asked a building owner why they wrapped their property in what was effectively solid petrol, flammable cladding, they would likely say they trusted the experts. Those 'experts' included: The Association of British Insurers (ABI), the Fire Brigade, British Standards, the manufacturers, and Warrington Fire Research. All saw the cladding burst into flames during testing. All agreed it should not be used on buildings with windows or doors. So what changed? See the paper on our Blog.

Now Enter Awaab's Law

In 2020, Awaab Ishak died at just two years old. The walls of his home were visibly covered in mould, and public outrage led to the creation of Awaab's Law. But like Grenfell, this law is founded on misinformation and ignorance of the actual hazard. It mandates speed, not safety, and lacks any requirement for scientific assessment or competent remediation.

What Really Killed Awaab?

The coroner reported: 'Environmental Mould exposure,' 'Acute airway oedema,' and 'Severe granulomatous tracheobronchitis.' Awaab didn't die from visible Mould, but from inhaling invisible microscopic hyphal and biological fragments, known as inflammagens. These caused an inflammatory response, which quickly closed his throat, and he suffocated

Critical Failures in the Investigation

The flat was cleaned and redecorated before inspection. No forensic testing was done. The *Aspergillus* species was not identified. The flat may have been relet without decontamination or even risk assessment. These oversights suggest potential gross negligence by all involved, both before and after Awaab's death.

Mould: An Ancient and Ongoing Threat

Leviticus 14:33–53, written over 3,000 years ago, outlines detailed procedures for inspecting and clearing a mould-contaminated home. Interestingly, the procedures of 3000 years ago are in line with today's professional approach. So these issues are not new but have historically been ignored

No Standards. No Safety.

There is still no UK standard for mould remediation. The HHSRS relies on visual assessments even though mould's most significant dangers are invisible. It even states that visual evaluations should not be used for biological hazards.

A Silent Betrayal

PAS 64 was the UK's only attempt at proper mould clearance. It was replaced by BS 12999—a cosmetic 'white glove' approach under insurance pressure. PAS 64 remains largely ignored, although it is now in its appendix.

Awaab's Law: A Legal Deadline Without a Safety Standard

Imagine a driving test where the only rule is to pass in one day. That's Awaab's Law. It provides no criteria for competence or clearance, only speed.

The Grenfell Parallels

Just as Grenfell failed due to subverted standards, Awaab's Law fails due to absent standards. Experts involved may lack training or have commercial interests.

Conclusion: Mould is the Slower Grenfell

It won't kill 72 people overnight—but it will damage thousands over the years. Behind freshly painted walls, Awaab's Law risks becoming another silent betrayal.

For verified mould investigation, expert opinion, and training, see:

www.buildingforensics.co.uk or visit our Pod cast