

# Jordan Toulson



## **Aico/HomeLink Product Manager Environmental monitoring for homes**

Since joining Aico|HomeLINK in 2020, Jordan has become a SME in the role of IoT in Social Housing, specialising in damp and mould, GDPR and realising value. Holding a First Class BSc(Hons) in Physics, Jordan looks after HomeLINK's key software products: the HomeLINK Portal for Landlords, which enables data driven decision making using HomeLINK's data insights, and the HomeLINK App for Residents, giving households access to their own data alongside recommendations of how they can manage and improve their own living environment.



# Environmental monitoring for homes – Damp and mould

Jordan Toulson



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# Damp and Mould In UK Housing

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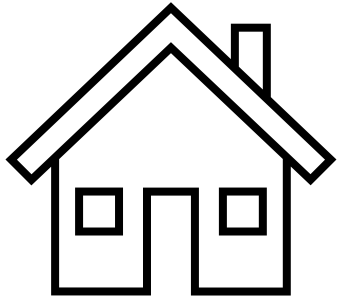
# Damp & Mould

## A future area of compliance?





## Indoor Environment & Health



**26%** self-report mould

**46%** with mould report poor health

**90%** of our time indoors

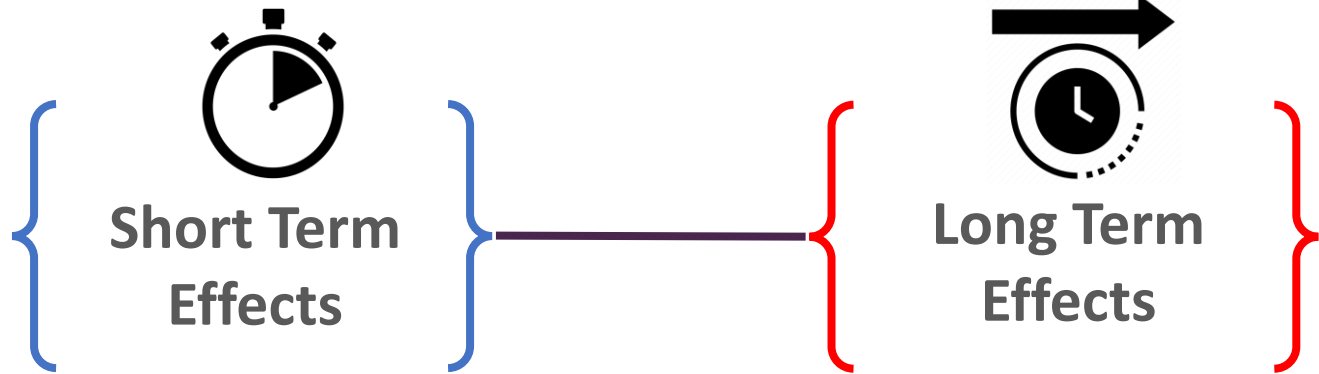
**x3-5 worse** than outside

**Unnatural** environment

[https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press\\_release/health\\_of\\_one\\_in\\_five\\_renters\\_harmed\\_by\\_their\\_home](https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/health_of_one_in_five_renters_harmed_by_their_home)

<https://www.beama.org.uk/resourceLibrary/guidance-for-improving-indoor-air-quality-in-existing-homes.html>

<https://www.epa.gov/report-environment/indoor-air-quality>



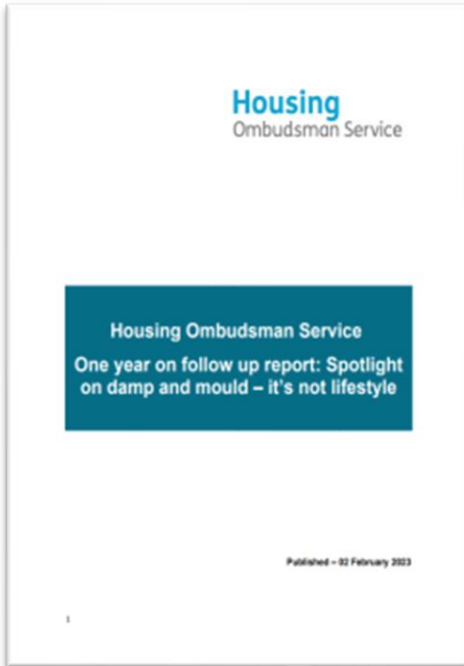
- Memory loss
- Tiredness
- Aches and pains
- Asthma attacks
- Skin problems
- Mental health issues

- Chronic fatigue
- Organ damage
- Development of mould allergy
- Development of Asthma
- Lung scarring
- Dementia





February



July



July



Department for  
Leveling Up,  
Housing &  
Communities

Department  
of Health &  
Social Care

UK Health  
Security  
Agency





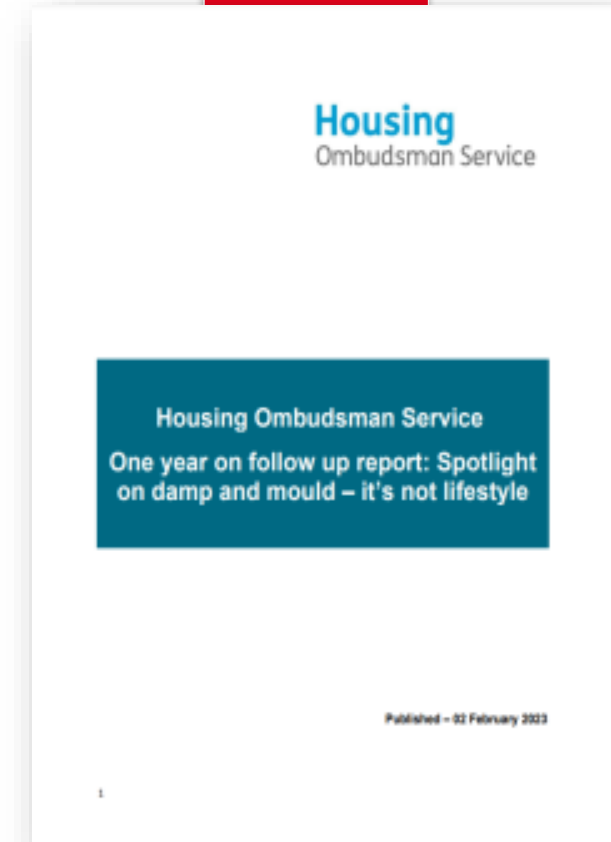
## Report – February 2023

### Good practice

- Removes resident action
- Dedicated app to report issues
- Humidity and temperature sensors
- Root cause analysis
- Dedicated damp and mould dashboard

### Poor practice

- Still focuses on 'lifestyle issues'
- Consider advice to tenant sufficient action

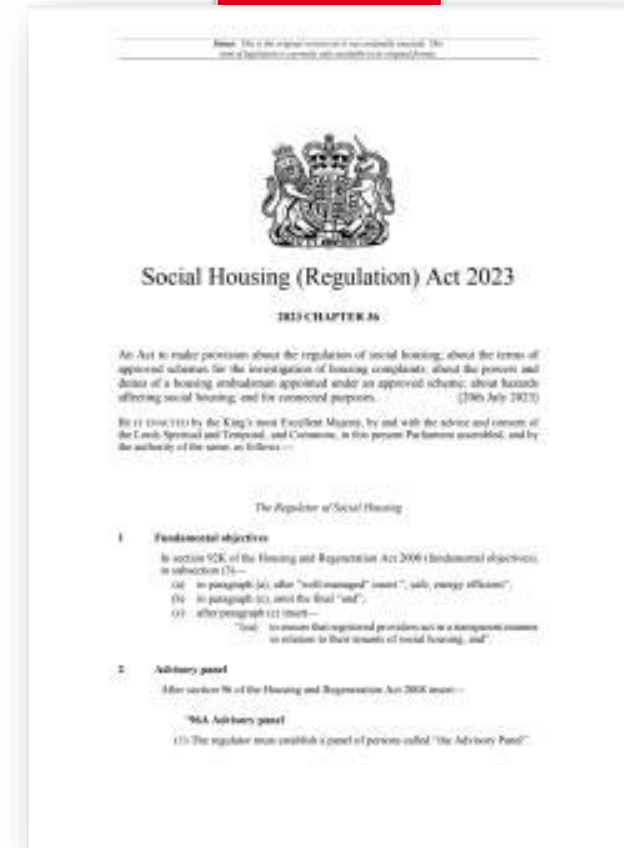






## Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023

- Enables the regulator to **set standards**
- Power to issue **unlimited fines** to rogue social landlords
- Additional power to **Housing Ombudsman to issue guidance**
- Time **limits** for social landlords to address damp and mould
- New **qualification** requirements for social housing managers

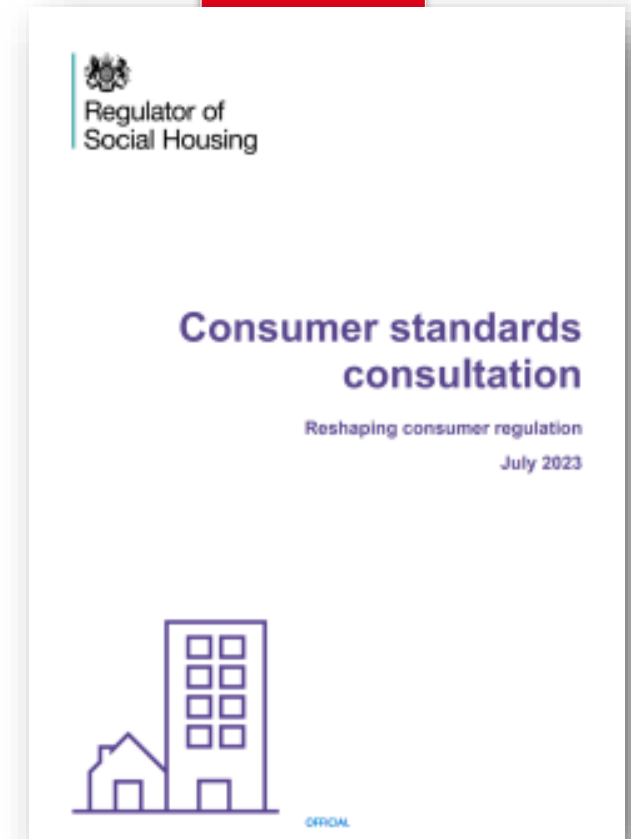




## RSH Consumer Standards

### Safety & Quality Standard

- Consultation closed Oct 2023
- Current regulation includes:
  - RPs must have accurate, up to date, evidence of condition of their homes based on **physical inspection**
  - Compliance with the **Decent Homes Standard**





## Government Guidance

- Released 7<sup>th</sup> September 2023
- When responding to damp & mould:
  - Identify severity and risk to tenants
  - Inform tenants at all stages
  - Photograph prior to removing visible mould
  - Tackle underlying cause such as building deficiencies
  - Inspect at least 6 weeks later to confirm problem resolved
- ‘Smart sensors’ are a useful aid to monitor temp, RH and IAQ



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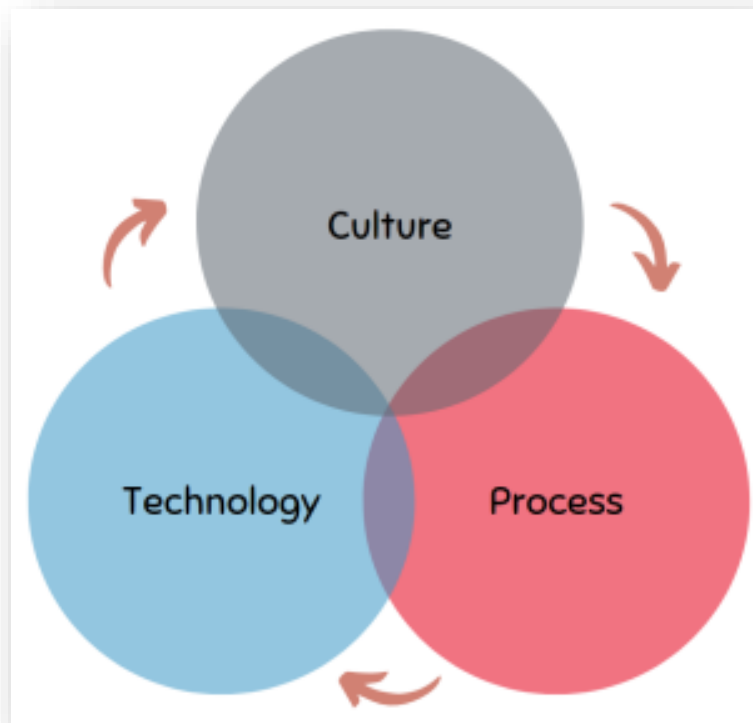
Guidance

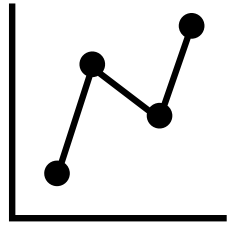
### Understanding and addressing the health risks of damp and mould in the home

Published 7 September 2023



What are the keys to a safer future?

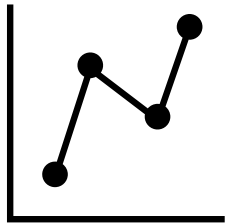




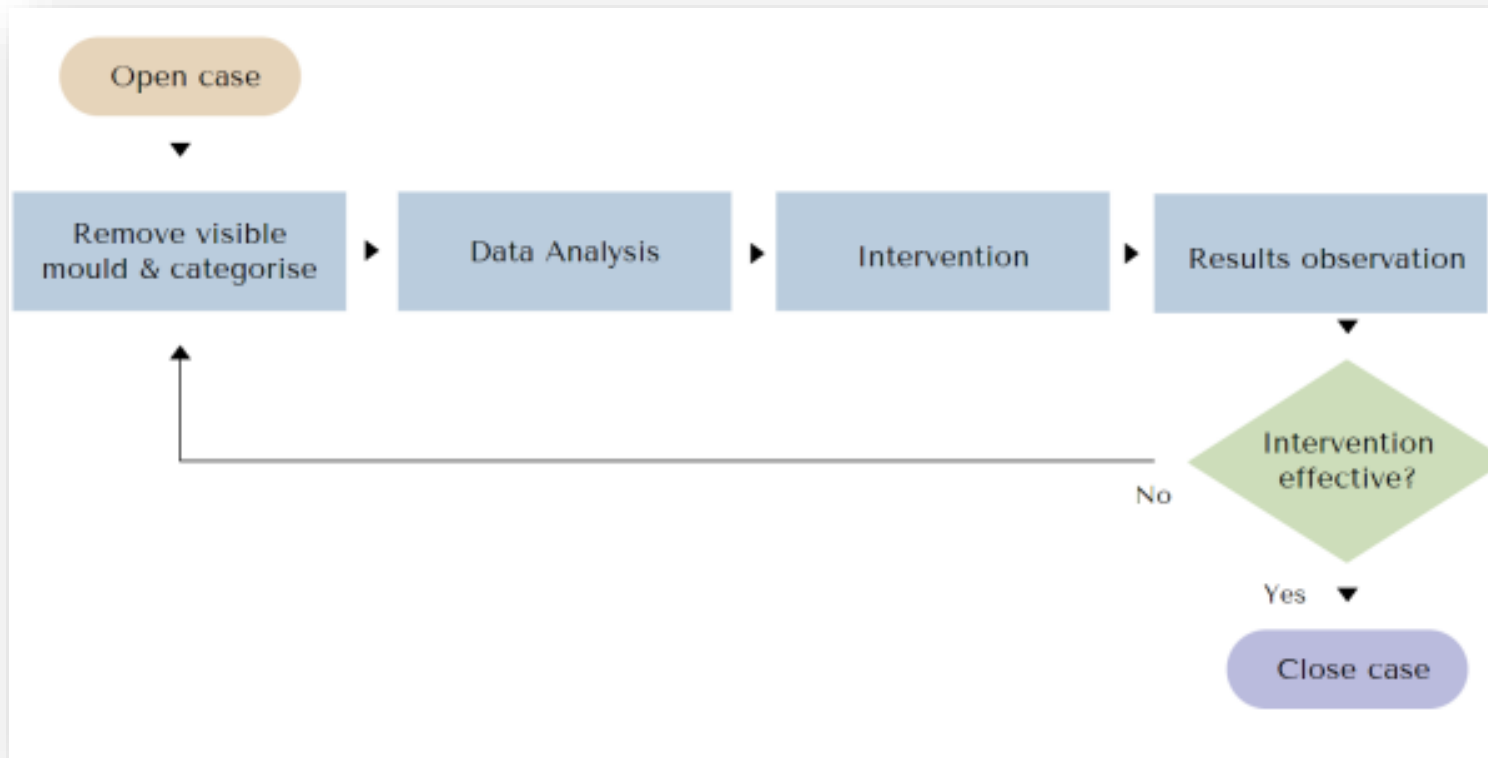
## Culture

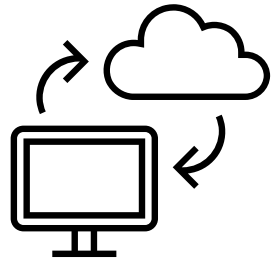
- Accountability - not just blaming on lifestyle
- From reactive to proactive – finding silence
- From complaints to learning culture
- More empathetic communications with residents





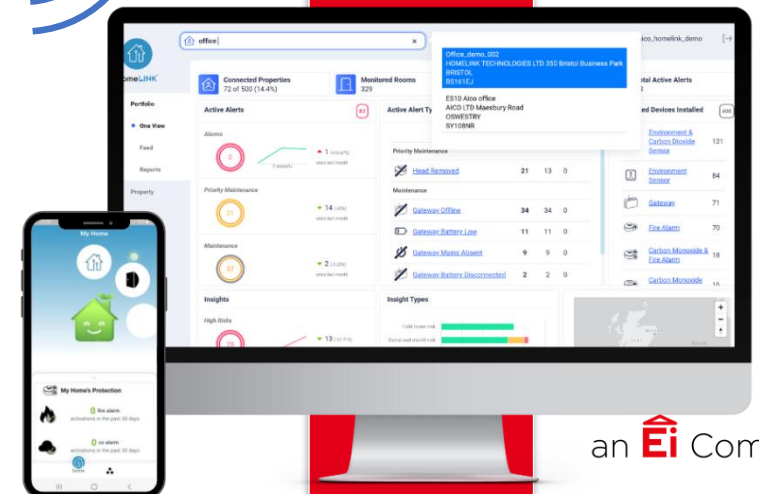
## Technology Driven Process

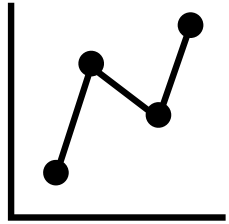




## Technology

- Case management
- Root cause analysis (multi room)
- Intervention analysis
- Integrations with client systems
- Proactively identify issues
- KPIs
- Resident engagement





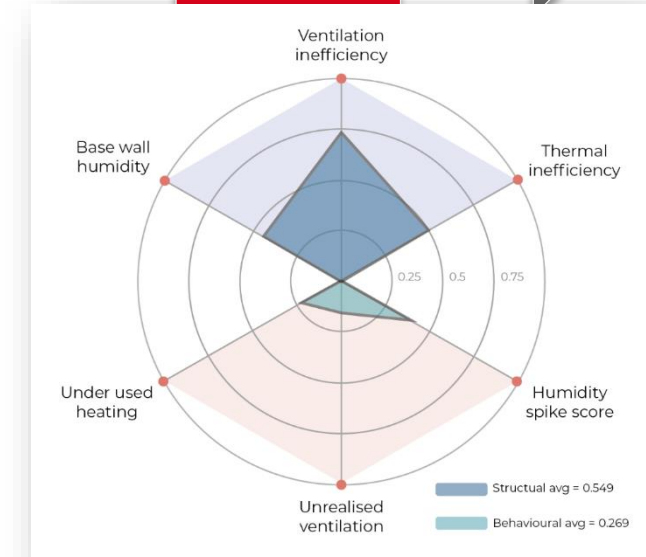
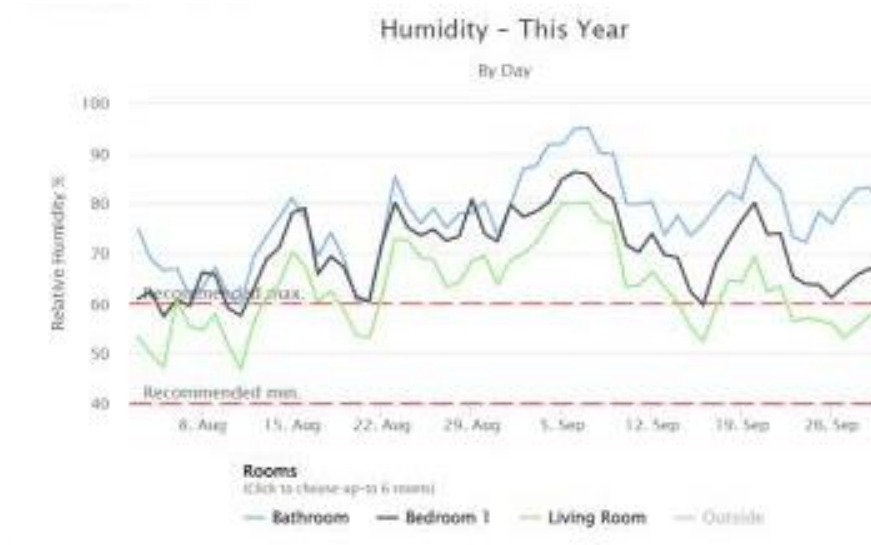
# Root Cause Analysis



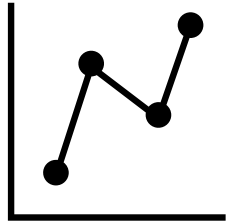
INTERESTING

USEFUL

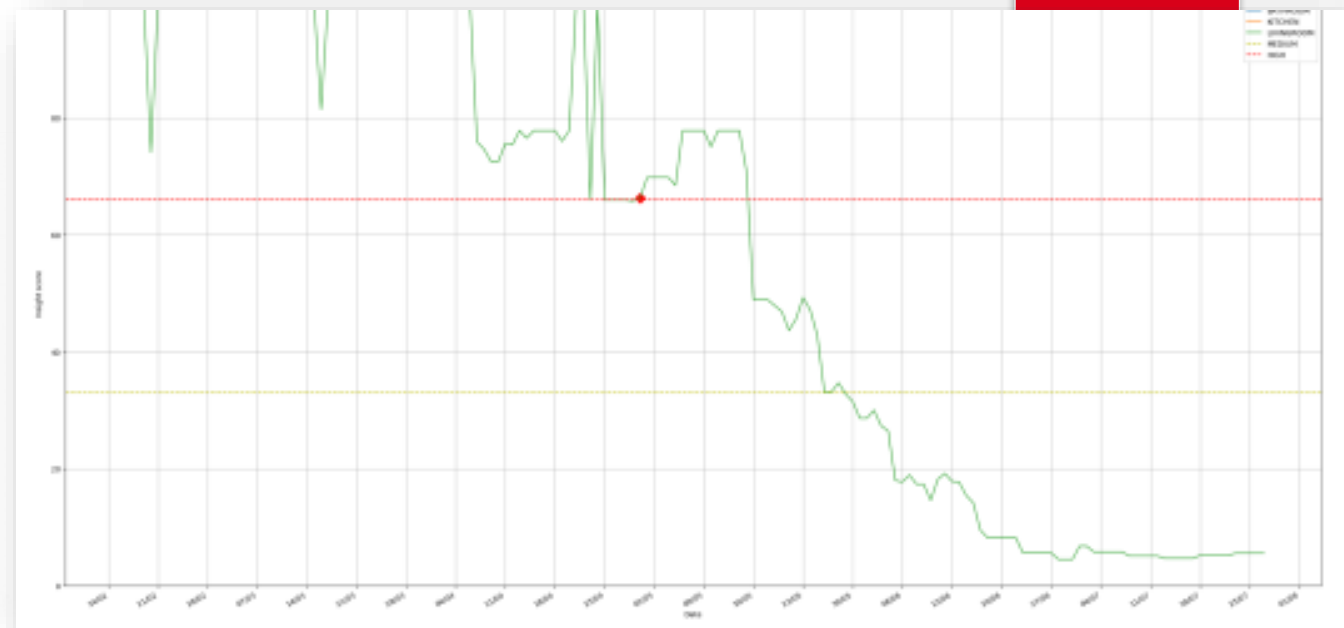
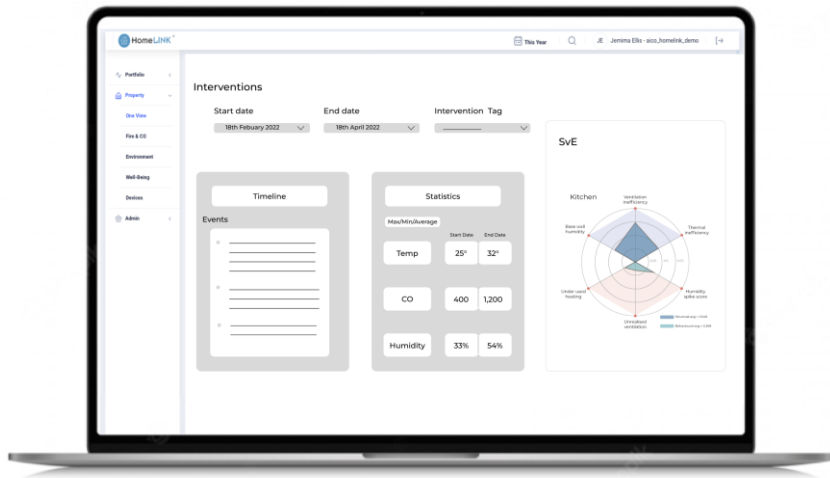
Avg. Humidity	Avg. Temperature	Avg. Carbon Dioxide	Max Carbon Dioxide
Value >= 0 <input type="range"/>	Value <= 50 <input type="range"/>	Value >= 0 <input type="range"/>	Value >= 0 <input type="range"/>
58.97%	20.60C	540PPM	4,683PPM
55.50%	21.29C	608PPM	2,903PPM
69.43%	17.93C	363PPM	1,946PPM
75.77%	17.94C	384PPM	2,396PPM

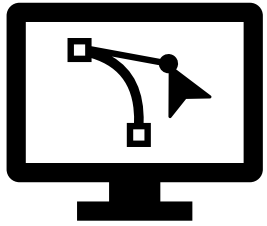






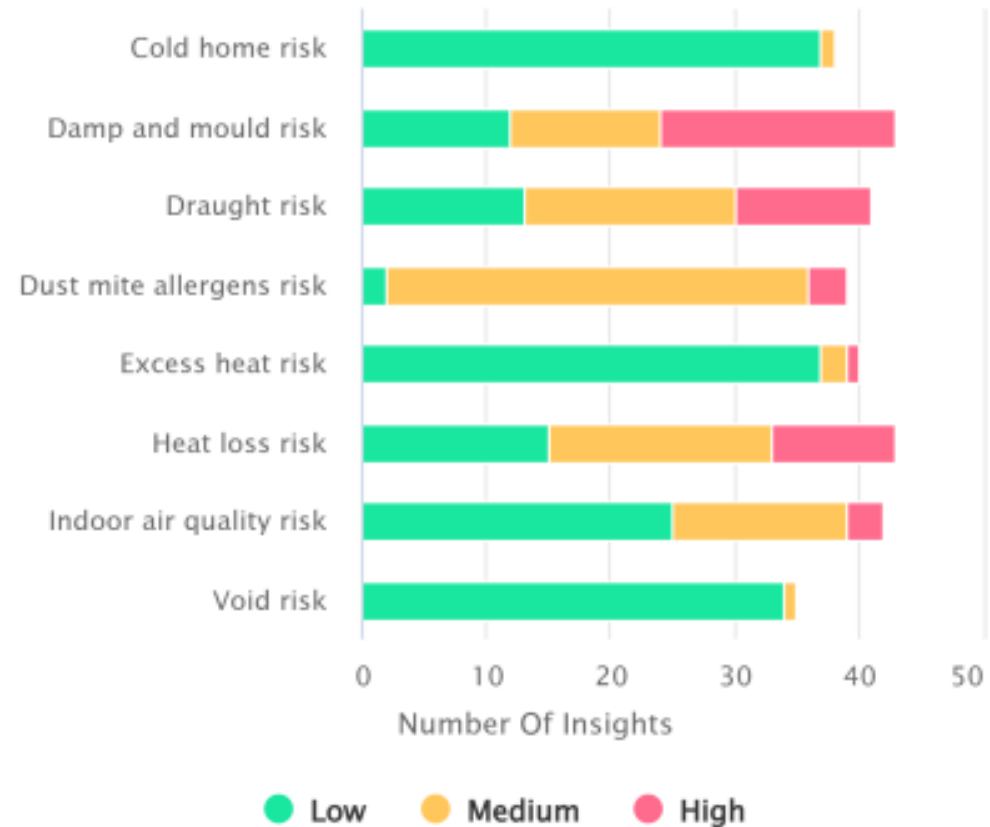
# Intervention Analysis





## HomeLINK's Insights

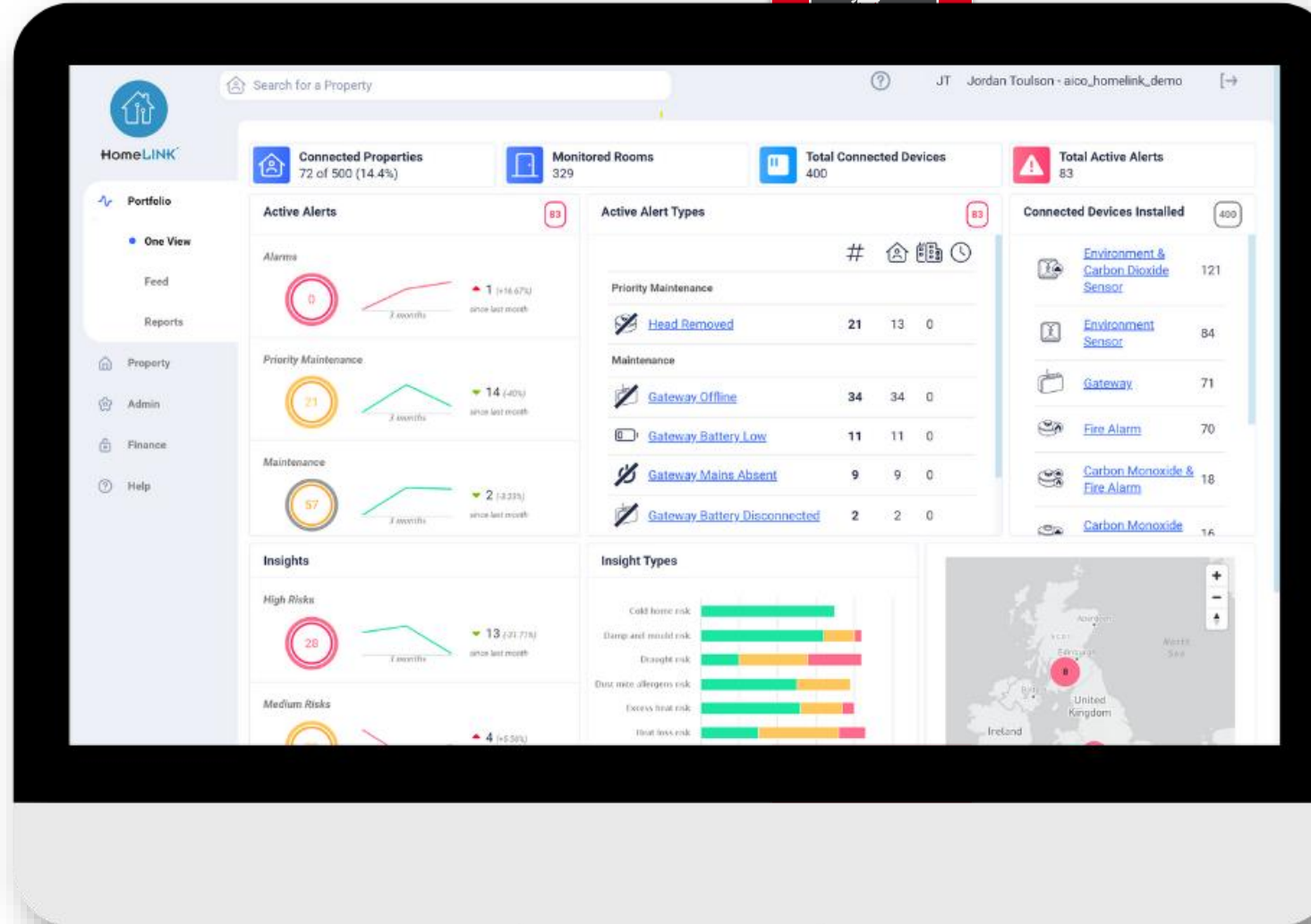
- Damp and Mould
- Cold Home
- Heat Loss
- Indoor Air Quality





## HomeLINK Portal

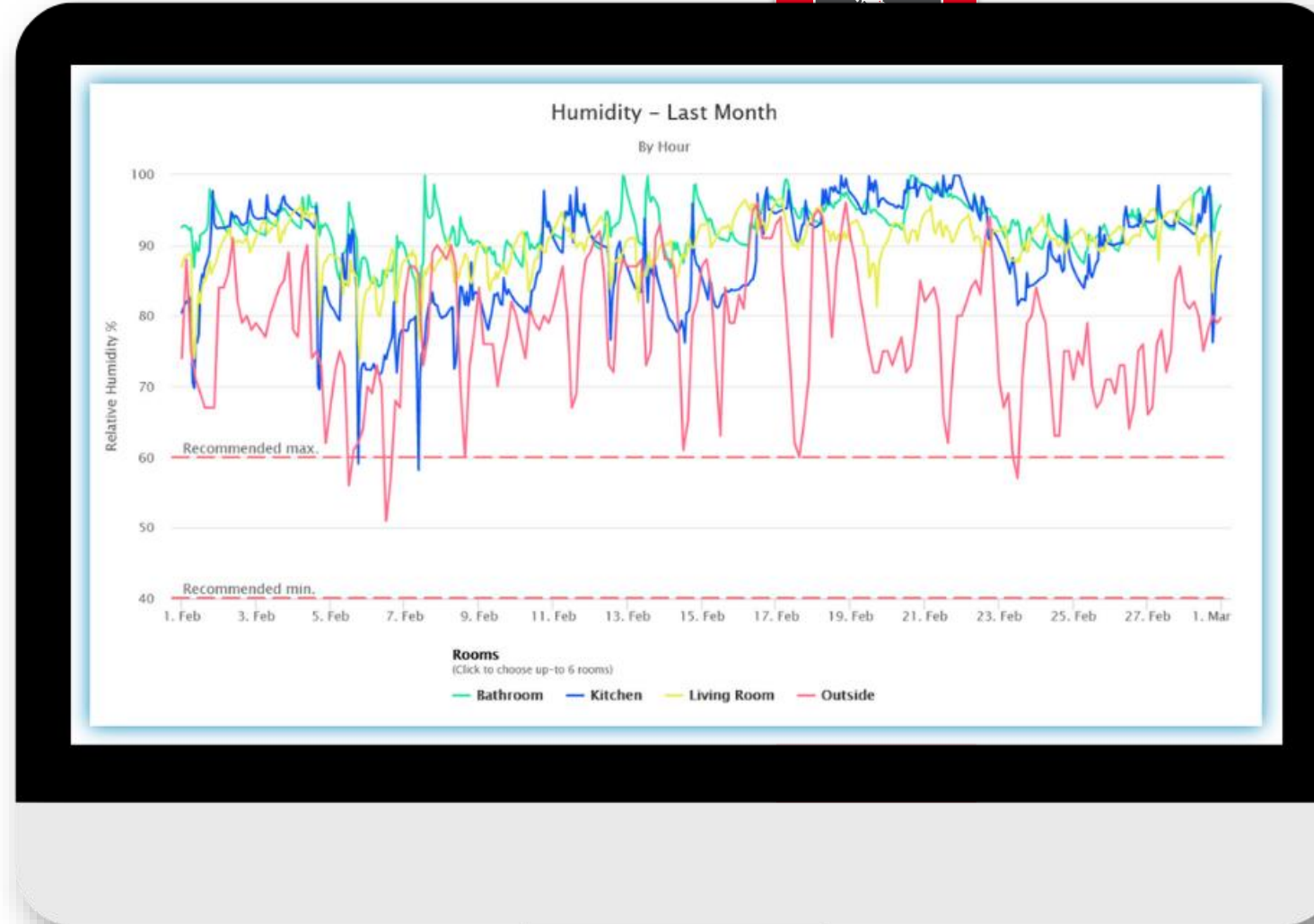
- Real-time Fire & CO events
- Temperature, Humidity & CO2 data
- Records of compliance
- Insight levels and components
- Notifications, reports and integrations





## HomeLINK Portal

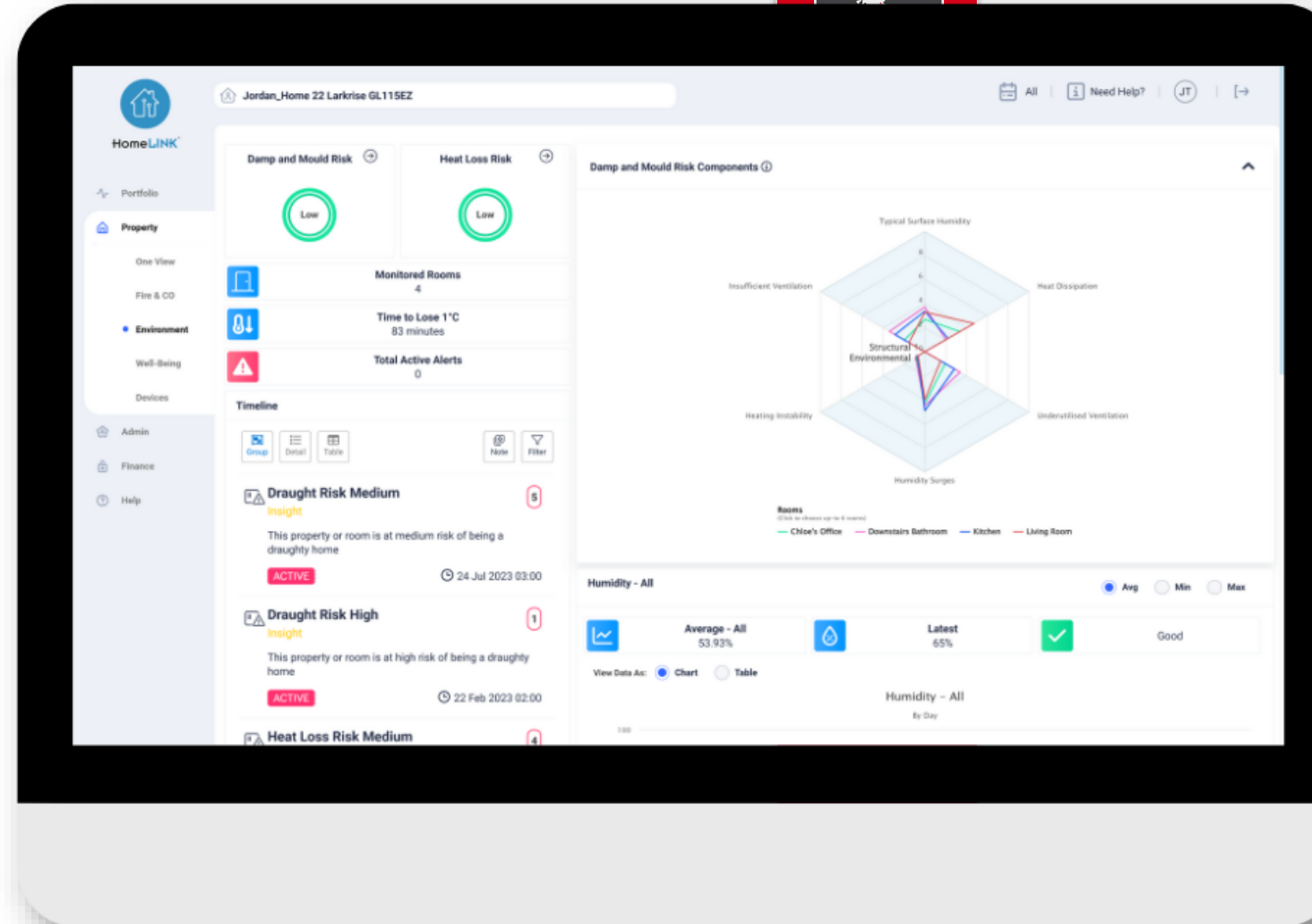
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## HomeLINK Portal

- Real-time Fire & CO events
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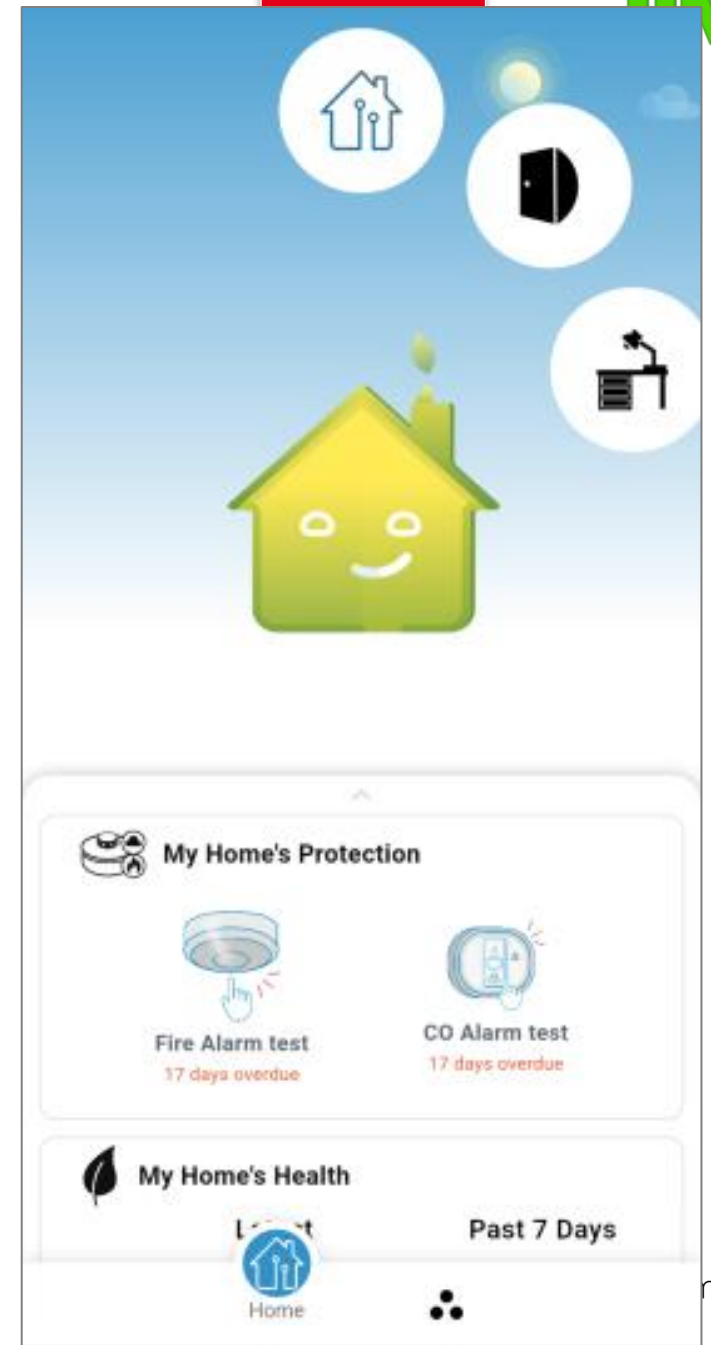






## The HomeLINK App for Residents

- Provides data to the Resident directly
- Gives notifications and recommendations
- Simple, at-a-glance information
- Engaging







### Linky's Moods



**Linky's happy!** Good job. Your home's in great condition;



**Look at that smile!** Your home's got some kinks to work out but overall, you're doing a good job.



**Oh dear, your home's a little grumpy.** Something's up (to no good). Let's work together to get Linky smiling again.



**Oh no, your home is frustrated!** We know you're trying to fix it. Please don't give up!



**Linky is sad.** There's always hope at the end of the tunnel, so let's get to work. It could take a while, but we'll get Linky up the scale soon enough!

### Linky's Insights



**Hmm, Linky's pouring!** This means your room is humid.



**Dry skin?** Your room might have low humidity. Your room's humidity is a bit low.



**Is it Linky or is it getting hot in here?** This room's temperature is definitely getting too high.



**Brrr.. Linky needs a jumper!** This room is getting too cold.



**Uh oh, mould might be loving this room.** Mould tends to grow when rooms have high humidity and the temperature drops or is high.

### Linky's Alerts



**Safely leave your home.** Linky has noticed your fire alarm is sounding.



**Open your windows, turn off all appliances and quickly leave your house.** Linky has noticed your Carbon Monoxide alarm is sounding.



**Linky's noticed it's time to test your alarm!** Once done Linky will remind you again in a month.



**Ouch, your alarms head has been removed!** This means your alarm cannot keep you safe.



**Oh dear, your environmental sensor's head has been removed.** Linky won't be able to tell if there's an environment problem.



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Thank you

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# Hugh Greenwood

**Department for Levelling up Housing and Communities**

Hugh Greenwood, has worked within government departments since 2021 and is the Policy Adviser at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. He works in the Private Rented Sector Division and is part of the team which looks after the existing Database of “Rogue Landlords” and Property Agents and is developing the forthcoming Privately Rented Property Portal, which will be legislated for in the Renters (Reform) Bill.

Hugh is going to take us through the journey of how we got here and what is in the bill.



# Understanding the Renters Reform Bill

Hugh Greenwood

# The Renters (Reform) Bill

Private Rented Sector Division – November 2023

# Introduction and Contents

A guide to understanding the Renters (Reform) Bill

<b>Part 1</b>	<b>How did we get here?</b>	The context and background to the Bill
<b>Part 2</b>	<b>What's in the Bill?</b>	An explanation of the key policies
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>What next?</b>	An overview of next steps

How did we get here?

# PRS Key Facts & Figures

The context for reform



## Landlords and Letting agents

- The PRS is the second largest housing tenure in England.
- There are at least 2.3 million landlords and c.19,000 letting agents in England.
- The majority of landlords are responsible but there is poor awareness of legislation and mixed compliance amongst some.



## Tenants

- There are 4.6 million households, which is an estimated 11 million tenants.
- The PRS is home to many families with children (32% of the sector), over-65s (6% or 400,000 households, up 46% since 2010), and those in receipt of benefits (25%).
- Private renters spend an average of 33% of their income, including housing support, on rent.



## Standards

- 23% of homes in the sector are non-decent and 14% contain Category 1 Hazards
- The proportion of non-decent homes is highest in Yorkshire and the Humber, at 38% of private rented homes, and lowest in the South-East, where 12% of privately rented homes are non-decent.
- Illnesses and injuries caused by non-decent housing costs the NHS £340 million annually.

# Commitments to reform the PRS

Change has been a long time coming

## Conservative Manifesto 2019

- The 2019 manifesto committed to deliver ‘a better deal for renters’, including by abolishing section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions and reforming landlord possession grounds.

## Queen’s Speech

- Abolishing S21 was mentioned in the 2020 and 2021 Queen’s Speech
- It was also referenced last year in the Queen's Speech 2022

## Consultation Phase

- A new deal for renting: resetting the balance of rights and responsibilities between landlords and tenants
- Call for evidence to consider the case for a Housing Court

## A Fairer Private Rented Sector White Paper

- Published in June 2022
- Contains a 12-point plan of action
- Focuses on quality, security and improving the renting experience
- Balanced reforms for both landlords and tenants



What's in the Bill?

# Key measures in the Bill

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- The Renters (Reform) Bill will:
  - **Abolish section 21 'no fault' evictions**
  - **Introduce more comprehensive possession grounds**
  - **Provide stronger protections against backdoor eviction**
  - **Introduce a new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman**
  - **Create a Privately Rented Property Portal**
  - **Give tenants the right to request a pet in their property.**
- The White Paper also committed to further reforms to support both landlords and tenants. We remain fully committed to implementing these reforms and will bring forward legislation at the earliest opportunity to:
  - **Apply the Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector**
  - **Make it illegal for landlords and agents to have blanket bans on renting to tenants in receipt of benefits or with children and**
  - **Strengthen local councils' enforcement powers.**

# Tenancy Reform

## Abolishing Section 21 and reforming possession grounds

### Overview of policy

- The Bill will deliver the manifesto commitment to end section 21 'no fault' evictions and will move to periodic tenancies, allowing either party to end the tenancy when they need to.
- Fixed terms will be abolished and all tenancies will be periodic in the new, simplified system, meaning the tenant can choose how long they stay in the property.
- Landlords will need to use one of the section 8 grounds end a tenancy. Landlords will need to serve the notice on the prescribed form to their tenant with the required notice period. Landlords will need to go to court if a tenant does not leave.
- Changes to grounds include: new ground for selling property, extended ground to move in family, reduction in notice period for severe ASB and new ground for repeated serious arrears.



# Tenancy Reform

## Abolishing Section 21 and reforming possession grounds

### Overview of policy

- The Renters (Reform) Bill will remove section 21 evictions, while strengthening landlords' other rights of possession.
- Landlords will be able to end a tenancy in specific circumstances covered by the grounds in Section 8. For example, if a landlord or their family wants to move back into their property; to sell the property or if a tenant causes serious ASB or is in persistent rent arrears.
- Landlords will need to serve the notice on the prescribed form to their tenant with the required notice period. Landlords will need to go to court if a tenant does not leave.



# Tenancy Reform – right to request a pet

Landlords must consider pet requests

## Overview of policy

- Private landlords must not unreasonably withhold consent when a tenant requests to have a pet in their home and we will give tenants the right to challenge unreasonable refusals.
- The aim of this policy is to support responsible pet ownership and encourage landlords to allow pets where appropriate.
- Landlords will be allowed to require insurance covering pets. This will provide landlords with reassurance that any damage caused by a pet is covered.





# Private Rented Property Portal (PRPP)

Better information supports effective regulation

## Key functions of the PRPP

- The Property Portal will provide a single ‘front door’ to help landlords understand, and demonstrate compliance with, their legal requirements.
- It will support the government’s aim to reduce the number of non-decent rented homes by 50% by 2030 and provide local councils with the tools to drive out criminal landlords from the private rented sector.
- It will also increase the information available to a tenant before they decide to rent a property, and throughout their renting journey.



# PRS Ombudsman

An Ombudsman can require landlords to put things right and avoids court action

## Key functions of the PRS Ombudsman

- All PRS landlords will be required to join.
- The PRS Ombudsman will enable all private tenants to escalate issues where their landlord has failed to resolve a legitimate complaint. This may relate to property standards, repairs or poor landlord practice.
- The Ombudsman will provide swift and impartial decision maker having the final say over their tenant's issues, maintaining tenant-landlord relationships and ultimately sustaining tenancies.
- The Ombudsman will have powers to put things right for tenants, including being able to compel a landlord to take or cease taking an action, issue an apology or explanation, and/or award compensation. The intention is to limit compensation to £25,000.



# The Decent Homes Standard (DHS)

Improving quality in the PRS

## The Latest on the DHS

- The *A Fairer Private Rented Sector* white paper (June 2022) committed to introducing a legally binding DHS in the private rented sector for the first time.
- The *DHS in the private rented sector* consultation ran from the 2 September –to the 14 October 2022.
- We received 1,032 responses to the consultation and also conducted extensive engagement with stakeholders through roundtable discussions and workshop sessions
- We are finalising our approach and will publish the consultation response in due course



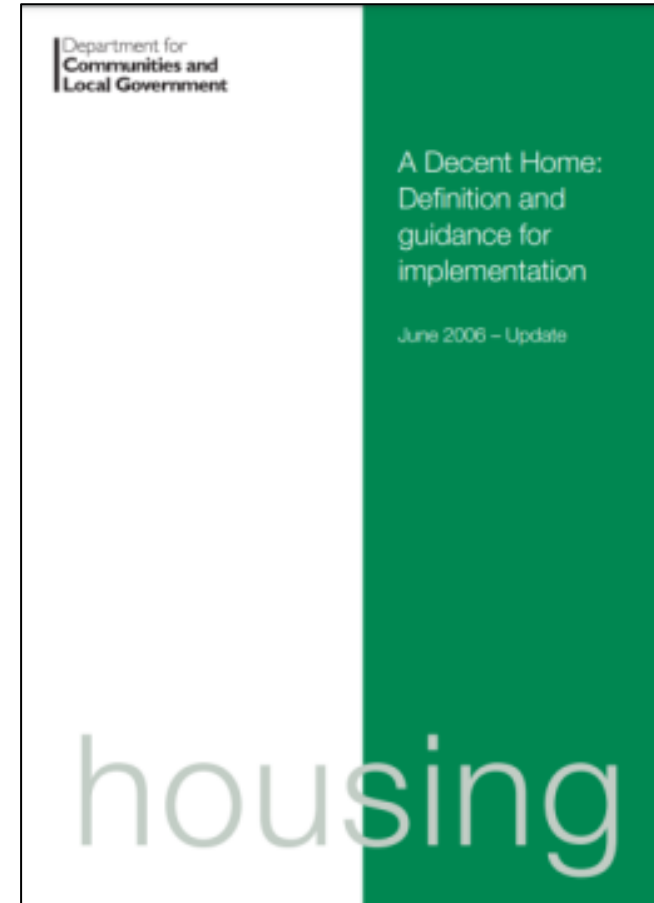


# The Decent Homes Standard Review

Reviewing the DHS

## Update on the DHS Review

- We are reviewing the DHS to make sure that it is up to date and fit for purpose.
- Part 1 of the Decent Homes Review concluded in autumn 2021
- Part 2 of the DHS Review will consider how best to deliver on government's ambition on reducing non-decent homes for both social and private rented sectors.
- We will set out our next steps on the DHS review in due course.



# Enforcement

Ensuring the effective implementation of our reforms

## Overview

- New duty on LAs to enforce the legislation
- Powers to create Lead Enforcement Authorities to provide support, information and a backstop enforcement function
- Stepped civil penalties across our reforms and extending for the first time to illegal evictions, whilst escalating enforcement approach when proportionate to do so
- Alternative of criminal prosecution for new offences
- New Rent Repayment Order offences
- Exploring enhanced investigatory powers for LAs to better enable effective enforcement against criminal landlords



# Enforcement – Place Based Projects

Collaboration with Local Authorities to test models of enforcement



## Overview

- Budget - £16m
- Length – 2.25 Financial Years
- Stakeholders – 10 Lead Local Authorities, 32 participating Local Authorities



## Objectives

- Improve enforcement of existing standards and create financially sustainable enforcement regimes in the areas of greatest need;
- Prepare key LAs for the introduction of the DHS and wider PRS reforms;
- Learn what works ahead of reform implementation; and,
- Targeted support for specific regional pressures, as identified by LAs.

### Westmorland and Furness

Main Theme – Engagement

### North Yorkshire

Main Theme – Talent Pipeline

### Blackpool

Main Theme – Market Disruption

### Leeds

Main Theme – Self-regulation

### Greater Manchester CA

Main Theme – ‘Polluter Pays’ Principles

### Liverpool

Main Theme – Intelligence Led Enforcement

### Derbyshire Dales

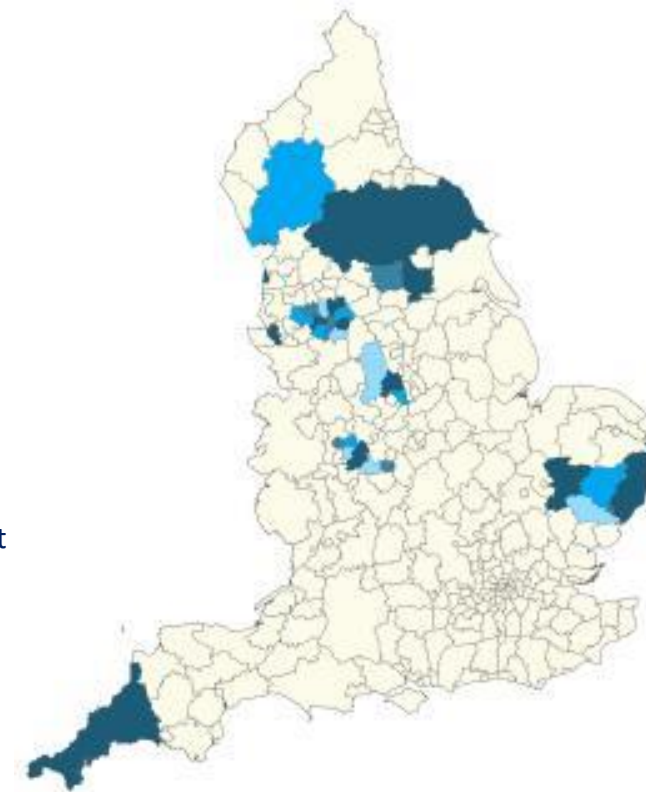
Main Theme – Proactive Enforcement

### Suffolk

Main Theme – Proactive Engagement

### Cornwall

Main Theme – Sector Intelligence



What next?

# Key concerns voiced by landlords

We are continuing to engage



## Students

Many landlords say the student market works differently to the wider PRS. Changes are needed to maintain the current business model and manage tenancies in line with the academic year.



## Court reforms

Landlords need confidence in the court system to regain possession once S21 is abolished. Digitalisation of the court process and a reduction in the backlog of cases needs to be achieved to ensure there is an efficient process.



## Implementation

There needs to be sufficient transitional time and guidance in place to prepare landlords before the reforms are implemented.

# Key concerns voiced by tenants

We are continuing to engage



## No Loopholes

The government must ensure that there are no 'loopholes' landlords can use to take advantage of tenants once S21 is abolished which will lead to 'backdoor evictions'.



## No 'watered down' Bill

As the Bill progresses through parliament, policies must not be watered down.



## Implementation

S21 is the leading cause of homelessness and it must be implemented as soon as possible.

# Next steps

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## Introduction of the Bill

- First Reading took place on Wednesday 17 May.
- Second Reading took place on Monday 23 October.
- Engaging stakeholders and parliamentarians
- Widespread media coverage

## Implementation

- Secondary Legislation required
- Implementation will be managed carefully
- Working with MoJ and HMCTS on court reform

## Stages of the Bill

- Committee stage will take place mid-November
- Clauses and amendments are considered in Committee and at Third Reading
- Bill moves to House of Lords. Any HoL amendments are considered by the Commons before Royal Assent.

## Non-legislative work continues

- Overhaul of guidance working with stakeholders
- Supporting over 30 councils through 10 enforcement pathfinder projects
- Continuing to develop and test Property Portal
- Formulating a robust monitoring and evaluation plan