



# A FAIRER HOUSING SYSTEM

Why race discrimination in access to social housing must be tackled via the new Competence and Conduct Standard for social housing

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# SECTION 1: THE PROBLEM



Peer Researcher Jamila captures a clock symbolising significance of time when accessing social housing:  
*'hoping for that change, striving for that change because it could be really difficult... as associated [with] this clock...you have to exercise that patience because no matter if you want something to be dealt with at a certain time, I feel like the challenges we face, especially as a Black person, it would most likely take longer than another, non-Black person....I'm just hoping for a positive future.'*

## **EVIDENCE OF RACE DISCRIMINATION IN THE HOUSING EMERGENCY**

In England, Black households, along with some other people facing discrimination on the basis of their 'race' or ethnicity, are more likely to experience homelessness and live in deprived neighbourhoods or poor-quality homes.

This is the result of historic barriers and systemic racism embedded within the housing sector.

### **Black-led households face the highest rates of homelessness**

Shelter analysis of government 2023-24 homelessness data and Census data shows they're 12 times more likely to be stuck in temporary accommodation than White-led households<sup>12</sup>.

Our recent (July 2025) Freedom of Information (FOI) research found, Black-led households are more likely to be stuck in temporary accommodation for a very long time compared with households as a whole, and much more likely to be there for a very long time compared to White-led households.

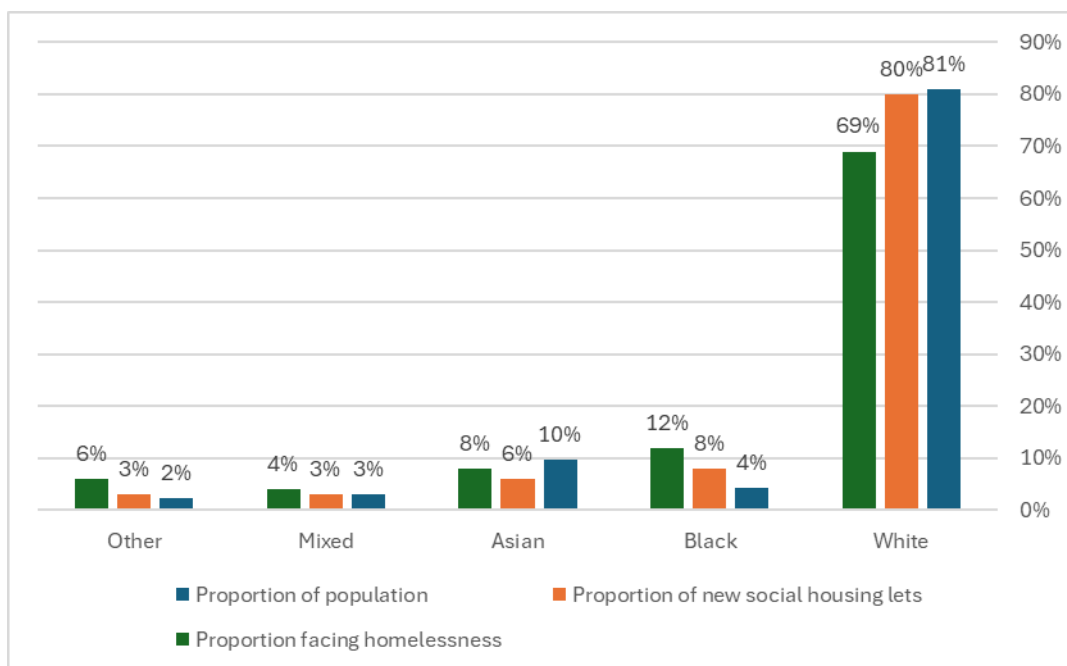
- The majority (63%) of Black-led households in temporary accommodation have been there for more than a year; whereas the majority of White-led households have been there for less than a year (57%)
- 43% of Black-led households in temporary accommodation have been there for over two years. This compares to 39% of all households, and just 25% of White-led households
- Black-led households are more than twice as likely to have been in temporary accommodation for over five years, than White-led households. 18% of Black-led households in TA have been there for this length of time, compared to just 8% of White-led households

As our groundbreaking 2023 *Still Living in Limbo* research showed, temporary accommodation is damaging because it's insecure, costly, often cramped, lacking in basic facilities, in poor condition and frequently out of the home area, far from support networks<sup>3</sup>.

Black and Asian people are also more likely to face discrimination in the housing market, which exacerbates housing insecurity<sup>4</sup>.

### **Black-led households struggle to access to a social home**

While Black-led households are over-represented in new social housing lets relative to the general population, reflecting the unequal impact of the housing emergency, they are actually under-represented when compared to the proportion of Black-led households facing homelessness.



**Figure 1 Ethnicity breakdown of population, social housing lets and homelessness in England.** Source: ONS, [Census 2021](#), MHCLG, [Social housing lettings 2023-24](#) and MHCLG, [Homelessness tables 2023-24](#).

New (July 2025) research from Heriot-Watt University's Institute for Social Policy, Housing, Equalities Research (I-SPHERE) has provided fresh evidence of racism in our housing and support systems. It shows Black people face dramatically worse outcomes when it comes to housing support.<sup>5</sup>

Black families facing homelessness are less than half as likely to get access to social housing in England as White families in similar circumstances. While almost a quarter (24%) of White families in the statutory homelessness system ended up in social housing, this was true of only around one in 10 (10%) Black families.

They found that only around 11-12% of most other racially minoritised groups gained access to social housing in the system at this time.

## OUR RESEARCH

Our new, groundbreaking and innovative, peer-led research *My Colour Speaks Before Me* (July 2025) exposes the discrimination Black and Black Mixed heritage people face in accessing a social home.

The research adopted an anti-racist and participatory approach. From April to December 2024, 16 peer researchers and 46 peer-interview participants sought to answer: how does racism and discrimination affect Black and Black Mixed heritage people's access to social homes in England?

Peer researchers used innovative Photovoice to creatively explore people's social housing journeys, producing and analysing 141 photos in total.

Our research found that Black and Black Mixed heritage people continue to face discrimination when trying to secure a social home.

## **Poorer treatment by housing officers**

Our research found Black and Black Mixed heritage applicants faced poorer treatment by housing officers, with many reporting feeling overlooked and deprioritised. Such poor practice was corroborated by an interviewee who is also a local councillor and has witnessed the poorer treatment of Black and Black Mixed heritage applicants.

- Some witnessed White applicants being allocated housing more quickly despite similar or less urgent needs. This preferential treatment extends to White migrants, who are sometimes favoured over Black migrants.
- Black and Black Mixed heritage applicants frequently reported rude, condescending and unempathetic communication from housing officers.
- Some applicants resorted to code-switching or using White-passing names to avoid racial bias and improve their chances of a successful application.
- Language barriers and unfamiliarity with the application process exacerbated challenges for recent migrants.
- The overall lack of representation and understanding of anti-racism among housing officers perpetuates discriminatory and poor practice.
- Consequently, social housing providers fail to recognise the needs of individuals from different ethnic backgrounds, such as proximity to places of worship or social networks.

## **Low quality and unsuitable homes allocated**

When Black and Black Mixed Heritage applicants were allocated a social home, it was often of poor quality, in undesirable areas or simply unsuitable.

- Safety concerns were frequently overlooked, with households placed in areas where they endured or feared racial harassment.
- Poor housing conditions, such as mould and overcrowding, were common, and complaints about these issues were often ignored or addressed more slowly than those from White tenants.
- Even after being allocated a social home, many Black and Black Mixed heritage tenants continued to face racial discrimination and harassment from neighbours and housing staff, making it difficult to feel secure and settled in their new homes.

## **Resilience**

Black and Black Mixed heritage applicants demonstrated remarkable resilience in navigating the social housing system.

- Many described themselves as 'fighters', showing tenacity and determination to secure a home despite systemic barriers.
- This resilience was deeply rooted in historical struggles against oppression.
- Self-care practices, such as engaging in hobbies, seeking therapy and journalling, helped applicants cope with the stress of the housing process.

- Participants drew strength from their communities, relying on family, friends and local networks for advice and encouragement.
- Despite the challenges, applicants remained hopeful and resourceful, advocating for themselves and striving for a better future in a suitable social home.

These findings are supported by the new Heriot Watt I-SPHERE research, which carried out focus groups. They heard evidence from Black participants and others facing discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity, who had direct experience of homelessness, who also told of experiences with private landlords.<sup>6</sup>

- There was evidence of minoritised people feeling compelled to disguise their ethnic identity and migration status in an attempt to gain fair access to employment, housing and public services.
- This included changing, or hiding, their name, nationality, accent and even aspects of their appearance such as their hair.
- There seemed to be a particular imperative for people to disguise their status as refugees, reflecting the additional and specific forms of discrimination and disadvantage that they faced.



# SECTION 2: THE CONTEXT



Peer Researcher Jamila's photo captures a building which symbolises these intergenerational differences: 'The building has different dates over generations and to me signifies the journey of Black people encountering racism throughout history, highlighting where we have been, where we are now, and what has changed. Racism has definitely changed throughout the years, before racism was more blatant in your face, now it's discreet. However, it appears that racism is very much still a big issue we face amongst the human 'race'



## THE HISTORIC CONTEXT

*'Generations of racialised communities can be disempowered by the housing system, having seen the struggles their elders have faced.'*

Research co-analysis workshop participant

It's important to acknowledge the intergenerational nature and impacts of race and ethnicity discrimination. The discrimination Black, Black Mixed households face in accessing a social home are deeply rooted in historic systemic racism and discrimination.

For example, racial steering by social housing providers led to segregation of people by ethnicity, such as offering accommodation to People of Colour away from White communities in less desirable housing areas.<sup>7 8</sup> This practice can make it harder for people to access quality home in areas where they feel safe today.

Restrictive allocation policies further limited access for People of Colour migrated to England:

- Between 1940-60, this included the introduction of local residence requirements where applicants were required to have been resident in an area for a certain period before qualifying for a social home there. There was increasing differentiation of migrants based on origin, status and rights.
- Between 1970-2000, immigration status was linked to restricted access to public funds, and it became a statutory requirement to exclude people seeking asylum or persons subject to immigration control from housing registers.

The legacy of historic policies continues to impact Black and Black Mixed heritage households today, as they navigate a housing system that has long been shaped by exclusionary practices.

There were also positive developments. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) housing associations emerged to address mainstream discrimination. Some continue today, though others have struggled to remain viable.<sup>9 10</sup>

## THE LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

*'You waste your whole life just waiting...there's nothing for you'*

Research interviewee

The biggest barrier in accessing a suitable social home is the acute shortage of homes, particularly in certain locations (like London) and of certain types (e.g. family-sized homes), as a result of decades of underinvestment. Our research found typically regeneration projects disproportionately impact working-class, Black and other Communities of Colour who have been actively displaced by Whiter, more affluent communities.<sup>1</sup>

The increase to government investment announced in the Spending Review on 11 June 2025 should help with this. It's vital these new social homes are allocated to reduce the number of

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<sup>1</sup> Runnymede and Centre for Labour and Social Studies (2021), [Pushed to the Margins: A Quantitative Analysis of Gentrification in London in the 2010s](#)

households in temporary accommodation and on the basis of need. To ensure everyone has a safe and secure home, the government must ramp up to 90,000 social rent homes a year and support councils to get building.

We also identified further legislative and policy hurdles that applicants must overcome to be allocated a suitable social home in England. These can be directly or indirectly discriminatory to some Black and Black Mixed heritage people:

## **1. National eligibility criteria for 'persons from abroad'**

Statutory eligibility requirements are set by the government and apply across England. If an applicant is ineligible, it's unlawful for local authorities to allocate them a social home.<sup>11</sup>

This includes people who are subject to immigration control or not 'habitually resident' in the UK and Ireland Common Travel Area. The eligibility test for 'persons from abroad' is inherently discriminatory on the basis of nationality. The test is also likely to have discriminatory effects on the basis of 'race' and ethnicity.

## **2. Local housing authority qualification criteria**

Local authorities then publish their own allocation policies to address local housing need.<sup>12</sup> This localist approach has led to a messy patchwork of local entitlements. As there's no comprehensive research on local qualification criteria, it's difficult to assess on a national basis the impact of local allocations policies on Black and Black Mixed heritage applicants, and people of other ethnicities.<sup>13</sup>

A very common requirement<sup>14</sup> is local residency or local connection tests, requiring applicants to have lived in the area (or have a work or family connection) for a certain number of years. Statutory guidance recommends a minimum of two years,<sup>15</sup> though many authorities require five.

The government has recently introduced regulations exempting some households from local connection tests: armed forces and veterans<sup>16</sup>, survivors of domestic abuse and young people who've been in care<sup>17</sup>. This is welcome and may remove barriers for some Black and Black Mixed heritage households and other people who face race and ethnicity discrimination.

However, local residency criteria can exclude households who are homeless in temporary accommodation outside their home area: Black households are over-represented in temporary accommodation, and People of Colour are more likely to be placed out of area<sup>18,19</sup>. They can also exclude recent migrants, including refugees, as well as Gypsy and Traveller communities.<sup>20</sup>

Other common local qualification criteria are:

- No home ownership, other high-value assets or savings<sup>21</sup>
- No history of rent arrears
- No history of anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- Positive behaviour, such as being in employment or undertaking voluntary work.

These can also have discriminatory effects on Black and Black Mixed heritage households.

### **3. Prioritisation on local waiting list**

If people meet the national eligibility test and local qualification criteria, they should be able to get onto the local waiting list for a social home. However, the next hurdle is prioritisation on the list.

Local authorities must give 'reasonable preference' to certain categories of people, including people who are homeless, at risk of violence, occupying unsatisfactory housing conditions (e.g. overcrowding), need to move on medical or welfare grounds (e.g. disability), or at risk of hardship.<sup>22,23</sup> Some applicants with an urgent need are also entitled to 'additional preference'.<sup>24,25</sup> But

Other than this, statutory guidance gives great flexibility to local authorities on how they prioritise applicants.<sup>26</sup> Some councils prioritise based on time spent on the waiting list. And, in practice, even applicants who should have 'reasonable preference' may still have little realistic chance of being allocated a home because, however long they've waited, other applicants will continue to join the list ahead of them.

### **4. Offers of accommodation (direct offers or bids under choice-based lettings)**

Legislation requires that social housing providers offer applicants a degree of choice in their allocation schemes.<sup>27</sup> However, the ability of People of Colour to exercise choice is limited given the scarcity of suitable social homes.<sup>28,29,30</sup>

Some social housing providers operate a choice-based lettings (CBL) scheme as an alternative to making direct offers.<sup>31</sup> Under CBL schemes, vacant homes are advertised and applicants bid for the homes they're interested in. The home is usually allocated to the bidder with the highest priority who meets the criteria for the home.

Evidence suggests that People of Colour are housed in more deprived areas under both direct offer and CBL schemes,<sup>32</sup> but CBL schemes can be more empowering and transparent. However, in recent years local authorities are returning to direct offers.<sup>33</sup> These can lead to discrimination or disadvantage for People of Colour, such as receiving a direct offer of a home in a neighbourhood notorious for racism or without access to essentials, such as Halal food shops or mosques.

### **5. Pre-tenancy checks (to check if people can afford the rent)**

Even when people have overcome the barriers to getting onto the waiting list and being prioritised for, and offered, a suitable home, the individual social landlord may still refuse to let to them. Most social landlords now undertake stringent affordability assessments as part of their routine pre-tenancy checks and will refuse to let to people who fail them.<sup>34</sup> Some require a month's rent in advance at sign-up.<sup>35</sup>

The need for affordability assessments arose from a combination of the welfare reforms introduced from 2012 and reduced government grants for social housing, which made social housing providers more reliant on income from rents. Black people and People of Colour are more likely to be living in poverty and therefore be in receipt of benefits. This means that cuts and sanctions to housing benefit hit harder, increasing chances of failing affordability checks and restricting access to a social home.<sup>36,37</sup>

# SECTION 3: THE SOLUTION



Peer Researcher Uche's photos show joy, comfort and the strength that can be found in community: Our resilience stems from the need to survive despite the odds; the realisation that success cannot be achieved alone but as a group of people with similar goals, values, culture or ideals coming together for a common goal.

## OUR POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Our policy recommendations were co-produced as part of our *My Colour Speaks Before Me* (July 2025) research project by:

- Peer Researchers,
- Stakeholder Advisory Group and
- Shelter staff from our Community Services, Policy and Research teams.

This was primarily at two deliberative policy sessions, where the group collaboratively developed policy solutions to overcome the barriers identified in the research phase.

We produced 10 main recommendations:

1. National and local government needs to prioritise delivering social rent homes and set clear national and local targets to end homelessness with social homes allocated on a needs-based approach.
2. Local authorities must incorporate equity and diversity into local, strategic and neighbourhood plans to tackle racism and inequalities in land, planning and development.
3. The government should establish a national commission on racial discrimination in the housing system, including social housing allocations and access to a social home.
4. The government should introduce and pass a new Housing Act which establishes access to an affordable, decent and safe home as a legal human right.
5. All housing staff (junior to senior) involved in creating and implementing allocation policy and processing applications should have mandatory training on cultural competency that is trauma and racial trauma informed.
6. Local authorities should commit more capacity and resources to anti-racism, diversity and inclusion.
7. Better, more frequent and reciprocal communication between Social Housing providers and applicants – and greater transparency on decisions
8. The Regulator of Social Housing should ensure there are clear expectations on equality, equity and diversity in standards.
9. All local authority housing staff, including allocation, planning and housing strategy teams, (plus all social housing providers), should be required to publicly report and publish complaints on racial discrimination. This can be an anonymised dashboard, or a similar platform, on their website to easily show the number of complaints received and resolved, that are associated with racial discrimination.
10. End discriminatory practices/outcomes in development and regeneration plans.

## FOCUS ON CONDUCT AND CULTURAL COMPETANCE OF STAFF

Three of these recommendations (namely 5, 6 and 8) are directly related to a stronger focus on anti-racism, race equity, diversity and inclusion from staff of both local housing authorities and registered providers of social homes.



Our research found racial stereotyping, culturally insensitive communication and unjust treatment from housing officers. As well as impacts of the legislative context, such as excessive questioning around eligibility in the application process. Our research found this treatment leaves Black and Black Mixed heritage people feeling unheard, neglected and dehumanised.

## **OUR CAMPAIGN CALL**

*"The council's mindset needs to change, perspective needs to change. And I think when it comes to you having a job that can change people's lives, that can impact people's lives, I think you need to be a bit more empathetic towards people's needs, a bit more sensitive and not make your job just a job."*

Uchenna, peer researcher

We're calling on the government to make anti-racism a key feature of the new Competence and Conduct Standard. This standard will apply to all registered providers of social housing, including councils and housing associations. It will be set and enforced by the Regulator of Social Housing.

This is a vital first step in making sure everyone is treated professionally and equitably when trying to access a social home.

## **THE COMPETENCE AND CONDUCT STANDARD**

This new regulatory standard will require senior staff involved in letting, managing and maintaining social homes to be professionally qualified.

### **How did the Competence and Conduct Standard come about?**

The Competence and Conduct Standard was the result of tireless campaigning by Grenfell United following the devastating fire at Grenfell Tower in West London 8 years ago (in June 2017), which killed 72 people, including 18 children. It was also backed by the Awaab's Law campaign, following the death of toddler Awaab Ishak (in December 2020) in Rochdale, as a result of damp and mould in his home.

These deaths were heart-breaking testament to what can happen when staff fail respond professionally to people's complaints. Both the residents of Grenfell Tower<sup>38</sup> and Awaab Ishak's parents, Faisal Abdullah and Aisha Amin, felt their complaints weren't taken seriously because of their ethnicity<sup>39</sup>.

Shelter supported Grenfell United in their campaign for better regulation and management of social homes.<sup>40</sup> One aspect of the campaign was for more professional housing management by requiring senior housing managers to have relevant qualifications and ongoing professional development, in the same way as social workers, nurses or teachers. Managing social homes should be seen as just as an important public service as health, education or social care.

### **The Competence and Conduct Standard in legislation**

As a result of the campaigning the law was changed. The Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023<sup>41</sup> [section 21](#)), amended the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008<sup>42</sup> to require the Regulator of Social

Housing to set standards for registered providers of social housing ‘in matters relating to the competence and conduct of individuals involved in the provision of services in connection with the management of social housing’.

The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 gives a statutory power to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government (currently Angela Rayner) to Direct the Regulator of Social Housing on setting a regulatory standard, their content and to have regard to specified objectives when setting standards.<sup>43</sup> So, a Direction is a mechanism for the government to steer the Regulator's focus and ensure it's working towards specific policy goals related to social housing. The government has confirmed it will be

### **The government will Direct the Regulator of Social Housing this Autumn**

On 2 July 2025, Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook announced<sup>44</sup>:

*We will direct the Regulator of Social Housing this autumn to set new standards for the competence and conduct of staff who work in social housing. The new requirements will improve professionalism within the sector, ensuring that tenants receive a good service and are always listened to and treated with respect and dignity.*

*The new competence and conduct standard will come into force in October 2026. There will be a transition period after this date, giving providers additional time to comply with qualification requirements for senior housing managers and executives. Larger registered providers that own 1,000 or more units of social housing will have three years, and smaller providers that own less than 1,000 units will have four years.*

This standard should set clear, enforceable expectations for social landlords, requiring senior staff involved in allocating letting and managing social homes to be professionally qualified.

### **Timetable for implementation if the Competence & Conduct Standard**

We're pleased the government will soon be Directing the Regulator on the Competence and Conduct standard. This is long overdue. It's been:

- two years since the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 gave the Secretary of State this power;
- over four years since the death of Awaab Ishak and
- eight years since the devastating fire in Grenfell Tower.

But we'd like to see a swifter timetable for landlords to have to comply and make sure their senior staff are trained. When the previous government consulted on the standard in 2024, they proposed the transition period should be two years.

The long transition periods in the Minister's statement mean that senior staff won't even need to be enrolled onto a course until 2029/30. So, it'll take many years for all senior staff to have professional qualifications.

This means change could be a long way off.

## **The Direction must make anti-racism a key part of Competence & Conduct**

Tackling racism in social housing needs political will and bold policies. The forthcoming Directions to the Regulator are an unmissable opportunity, for making our current social housing system fairer.

That's why we're calling on the government to make anti-racism and race equity a key part of the Competence and Conduct Standard. Relevant senior staff of social landlords must be professionally qualified to understand all forms of racism, as well as intergenerational racial trauma. This will ensure they lead their teams to proactively put anti-racism and race equity at the centre of their work - in policies, practice and outcomes.

In February 2024, the previous government consulted on the new standard.<sup>45</sup> Our response to this consultation was informed by our joint working with Grenfell United and the Awaab's Law Campaign. We argued:

*It's important the Competence and Conduct Standard requires relevant staff of social landlords to understand racism, both direct and structural, as well as wider discrimination. They should be expected to take a proactively anti-racist approach to service delivery to treat all tenants with equity, dignity and respect. There should be an overall expectation that qualifications include training on meeting the diverse needs of all tenants and providing a positive outcome and experience for all.*

We also argued the standard should apply to allocations and lettings staff, as well as staff managing and maintaining social homes.

## **The Regulator of Social Housing must make anti-racism a key part of the Competence and Conduct Standard**

Once the Regulator of Social Housing receives its Direction from the government, it will also consult on the Competence & Conduct Standard.

We also want the Regulator to ensure anti-racism and race equality are a key part of the Competence & Conduct Standard, as well as its Code of Practice on the consumer standards.<sup>46</sup>

The Regulator of Social Housing is a public body that regulates registered providers of social housing in England. It's sponsored by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.<sup>47</sup>

Any landlord is eligible to apply to register with the Regulator and those who meet the registration criteria must be registered, whether they make a profit or not. All local authority landlords are automatically registered with the social housing regulator, as are most housing associations. Profit-making private landlords are also registered.<sup>48</sup>

The Competence and Conduct Standard will be added to the consumer standards which are set and enforced by the Regulator of Social Housing. They apply to all registered social landlords: the social homes landlords provide and the tenants living in those homes.<sup>49</sup>

# REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (2024), [Statutory homelessness in England: Financial year 2023-24](#)
- <sup>2</sup> Note: ethnicity data is only gathered for the person making the application for homelessness assistance, so the ethnicity of others in the households may vary
- <sup>3</sup> Garvie, D., Pennington, J., Rich, H. and Schofield, M., 2023, [Still Living in Limbo: why the use of temporary accommodation must end](#), Shelter
- <sup>4</sup> Shelter (2021), [Denied a Right to Safe Home](#)
- <sup>5</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., McIntyre, J., Ayed, N. & Watts-Cobbe, B., 2025, [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK: Final report of a knowledge and capacity building programme](#), Heriot-Watt University. The researchers analysed 750,000 household records of official English statutory homelessness data, covering 2019/20, 2020/21, and 2021/22 and said their study is the most comprehensive of its kind.
- <sup>6</sup> Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., McIntyre, J., Ayed, N. & Watts-Cobbe, B., 2025, [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK: Final report of a knowledge and capacity building programme](#), Heriot-Watt University
- <sup>7</sup> Stott, N. and Fava, M. (2019), [Challenging racialized institutions: a history of Black and Minority Ethnic housing associations in England between 1948 and 2018](#)
- <sup>8</sup> Harrison, M. and Phillips, D. (2017), Housing and Neighbourhoods: A UK and European Perspective. In: Bloch, A. and Solomos, J., eds. [Race and Ethnicity in the 21st Century](#), London: Bloomsbury
- <sup>9</sup> Stott, N. and Fava, M. (2019), [Challenging racialized institutions: a history of Black and Minority Ethnic housing associations in England between 1948 and 2018](#)
- <sup>10</sup> Beider, H. and Netto, G. (2012), Minority ethnic communities and housing: access, experiences and participation. In: G. Craig, K. Atkin, S. Chattoo, and R. Flynn, eds. [Understanding 'Race' and Ethnicity: Theory, History, Policy, Practice](#). Bristol: Bristol University Press, pp. 97-114
- <sup>11</sup> Housing Act (1996), sections [159\(4B\)](#) and [160ZA\(5\)](#) in England
- <sup>12</sup> Localism Act (2011), [Part 7: Housing, Chapter 1: Allocations and Homelessness](#). The changes to allocation legislation were effective from 18 June 2012.
- <sup>13</sup> MHCLG (August 2018) [A new deal for social housing](#) (paragraphs 178-179). In its green paper the previous government acknowledged 'we need to better understand how the system is playing out in local areas in order to understand if it is striking the right balance between fairness, support and aspiration'. It proposed 'an evidence collection exercise to help us understand how the allocations framework is working across the country'. But the findings were not published.
- <sup>14</sup> Government recently confirmed 90% of local housing authorities currently use local connection criteria to determine who qualifies for social homes in their areas: Press release: [Vulnerable people given greater access to social housing](#), 19 June 2025, MHCLG
- <sup>15</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024), [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#), paragraph 3.21
- <sup>16</sup> [The Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Armed Forces\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)
- <sup>17</sup> [The Allocation of Housing \(Qualification Criteria for Victims of Domestic Abuse and Care Leavers\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#)
- <sup>18</sup> Inside Housing (2023), [Discrimination in out-of-area housing placements](#)
- <sup>19</sup> Shelter (2023), [Still Living in Limbo: Why the use of temporary accommodation must end](#)
- <sup>20</sup> [Ward & Ors, R \(on the application of\) v The London Borough of Hillingdon & Ors](#) (2019) EWCA Civ 692
- <sup>21</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024), [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#), paragraph 3.29
- <sup>22</sup> Housing Act (1996), [section 166A\(3\)](#)
- <sup>23</sup> Local Government Ombudsman (2016), [Full house: Councils' role in allocating social housing: Focus report: learning lessons from complaints](#)
- <sup>24</sup> 2012 regulations require local housing authorities to give 'additional preference' to applicants with an urgent housing need, who are former members of the Armed Forces; serving members or reservists with a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service; or bereaved partners who have to leave services accommodation.

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- <sup>25</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024), [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#), paragraph 4.13 This statutory guidance recommends housing authorities consider giving 'additional preference' to applicants: who need to move urgently because of a life-threatening illness or sudden disability; whose severe overcrowding poses a serious health hazard; who are homeless and require urgent rehousing as a result of violence or threats of violence, including intimidated witnesses, and those escaping serious anti-social behaviour or domestic violence.
- <sup>26</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024), [Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England](#), paragraph 4.15
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