

Women and Equalities Committee

Black people's experiences of homelessness

First Report of Session 2026–27

HC 517

Women and Equalities Committee

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Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Women and Equalities Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The Committee's email address is womeqcom@parliament.uk.

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Summary

Black people are almost four times more likely to experience homelessness than people who are White; they are at the highest risk of statutory homelessness in most regions of England and experience worse outcomes as they progress through the homelessness system. They are more likely to be in temporary accommodation and to be in that situation for longer. Black-led households are also much more likely than White-led households to experience forms of “hidden homelessness”. For example, they are six times more likely to be overcrowded and over three times more likely to contain “sofa surfers”. Black rough sleepers are more likely to face abuse, violence and arrest. These racial disparities reflect a combination of structural factors, such as lower home-ownership rates and labour market inequalities, the effects of housing and welfare policy, and experiences of racial discrimination in housing and other services.

The government’s National Plan to End Homelessness and its focus on prevention is very welcome but there is a lack of recognition of racial inequality in the homelessness system and an absence of specific measures to address it. The delivery of the National Plan should explicitly acknowledge and seek to tackle the excess risks of homelessness faced by Black people and the disproportionately worse outcomes they experience. The plan should seek to embed understanding, transparency and accountability in relation to the impact of race on homelessness at national, regional and local levels.

Statutory services should be required to play a stronger role in tackling homelessness. The lack of an explicit link between the Plan’s proposed “duty to collaborate” and tackling racial disparities in homelessness risks is a missed opportunity which the government should address. In bringing forward the “duty to collaborate” the government should set out a clear ambition to tackle the poorer outcomes, including increased risks of homelessness, that racially minoritised groups experience in leaving the care of public services. To ensure well-targeted policies the government should collect and publish data on social housing applications, outcomes, use and duration of temporary accommodation, and exits from statutory homelessness that can be disaggregated as a minimum by both race/ ethnicity and gender.

The government should increase and sustain Local Housing Allowance rates at the 30th percentile of local private rents. Doing so will help to prevent people from being pushed into homelessness due to private rent increases, will immediately unlock more homes to help councils move families on from temporary accommodation, and help stop people from becoming trapped in the cycle of homelessness. Such an intervention would benefit all groups, but particularly Black-led households, given they are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

The government should work with local authorities to ensure that their staff are fully equipped to work with vulnerable households in a racially informed way and take steps to increase accountability in decision-making. The government should develop a national performance management framework for homelessness assessments and allocation policies which specifically includes monitoring of outcomes by race and gender and compliance with the Equality Act 2010. It should collate and publish a summary of findings at least annually and report significant patterns of racial and other biases in local decision-making to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, for investigation and enforcement.

Domestic abuse is a key driver of homelessness and women of Black Caribbean and mixed White / Black backgrounds experience the highest rates of it. The government has increased the funding available to support victims into safe accommodation, but it falls far short of what is needed. We are concerned that this shortfall is putting people's lives at risk. Tackling violence against women and girls is one of the government's key missions. We therefore call on it to urgently review the level of funding it is providing to support victims of domestic abuse.

We welcome the government's commitment to halve rough sleeping and the additional funding to support that objective. Given the particular challenges that Black rough sleepers face around personal safety and access to support, the government should ensure that some of its funding to tackle rough sleeping is allocated to frontline organisations working particularly with Black homeless people. Government strategies to end rough sleeping must include women who manage their homelessness by making themselves less visible and who can often be overlooked. Women who adopt this coping strategy may put themselves at higher risk. They merit attention equal to that given to more visible forms of homelessness.

No one should be criminalised for sleeping rough. We welcome the government's repeal of the Vagrancy Act.

1 Introduction

1. Black people are disproportionately more likely to be homeless and they experience worse outcomes in the housing and homelessness system than other groups.¹ A recent study by Heriot-Watt University of official homelessness data across 750,000 households (the I-SPHERE study) found that Black people experienced the “very highest” levels of homelessness. It showed that Black people “are almost four times as likely to face statutory homelessness as White people”, “are at the highest risk of statutory homelessness in most regions of England”, and receive poorer levels of support.² Black-led households are more likely to live in overcrowded conditions, twice as likely to be in temporary accommodation for over five years than White-led households, less likely to gain social housing, and more likely to be housed out-of-area.³
2. Black people are equally likely to experience homelessness whether or not they are born in the UK, though the challenges may differ between groups, with Black African households often encountering immigration-related challenges while barriers for Black Caribbean households are more likely to include intergenerational housing disadvantage.⁴ The stark disproportionality across multiple data sets indicates structural, rather than incidental, causes of homelessness.⁵ The I-SPHERE study concluded that ethnicity exerts an “independent influence over homelessness risk”.⁶
3. In this report we examine Black people’s experiences of homelessness and how the disparities in outcomes might be tackled. We are grateful to everyone who has assisted us in this work, but particularly those who have shared their lived experiences of homelessness.

1 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#))

2 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p9

3 Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati, University of Nottingham ([BLH0012](#)); UK Women’s Budget Group ([BLH0017](#)); Global Policy Network ([BLH0025](#)); Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([BLH0024](#))

4 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p7; Bramley et al., [Homelessness Amongst Black and Minoritised Ethnic Communities in the UK: A Statistical Report on the State of the Nation](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, November 2022 ; Race on the Agenda (ROTA) ([BLH0022](#))

5 UK Women’s Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

6 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p9

What is homelessness?

4. In English law, a household or person is legally (statutorily) homeless if they have no accommodation, if their current accommodation is not reasonable to continue to occupy (for example, due to unaffordability or domestic abuse), or if they are threatened with homelessness within 56 days.⁷ While rough sleeping is the most visible, there are several types of homelessness which we set out below.

Rough sleeping

5. Rough sleeping is defined as someone sleeping, about to bed down or actually bedded down in the open air or in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, car parks etc.).⁸ Each year, the government provides an estimate of the number of people sleeping rough on a single night in autumn. In 2025 this figure was 4,793. This marked the fourth consecutive year of an increase in rough sleeping; it is a record high and a 171% increase from 2010 when the snapshot approach was first introduced.⁹
6. Rough sleeping can be characterised in terms of ‘flow’, ‘stock’ and ‘returners’: people who flow in and out of rough sleeping; those who have remained in this situation for a long period; and those who have returned to it. This means that, while 4,793 people were identified as rough sleeping on a single night, the number of people who have experienced it over the course of a year will be much higher.¹⁰

Overcrowding and sofa surfing

7. Overcrowding is legally defined with standards based on the number of rooms, number and age of people and available space.¹¹ A person can apply to be considered homeless if they live in overcrowded accommodation. Sofa surfing refers to someone staying with family or friends through lack of choice. These situations are more “hidden” aspects of homelessness. They are often not captured in official statistics and people may therefore not

7 House of Commons Library, [Statutory homelessness \(England\): the legal framework and performance](#), Research Briefing 01164, 30 July 2024; Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2025](#), accessed 12 January 2026; Global Policy Network ([BLH0025](#))

8 Homeless Link, [Definition of rough sleeping](#), accessed 12 November 2025

9 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2025](#), 26 February 2026

10 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Rough sleeping snapshot in England: autumn 2025](#), 26 February 2026

11 For example see Shelter, [Check if your home is overcrowded by law](#), access June 2026

be offered help by the relevant services but people experiencing them may be nonetheless vulnerable. Many people in hidden homelessness will have slept rough at some point.¹² The I-SPHERE study found that Black households are six times more likely than White households to be overcrowded and over three times more likely to contain sofa surfers.¹³ Women are more likely to experience hidden forms of homelessness, in part due to heightened safety concerns around rough sleeping.¹⁴

Temporary accommodation

8. Temporary accommodation is emergency housing provided by local councils to people who are facing homelessness. It can include a room in a shared house, a flat or house from a private landlord, a hostel, refuge or other housing with support or a short-term council or housing association tenancy. It acts as a safety net for many people facing homelessness, who would otherwise be forced into rough sleeping or unsuitable housing. While some people may be placed in short-term emergency accommodation such as a hostel or refuge for a few nights or weeks, people in temporary accommodation can end up staying there for five years or more.¹⁵
9. Black households are overrepresented in temporary accommodation, accounting for 21.9% of these households and are more likely to be there longer.¹⁶ A 2025 study by Shelter found 18% of Black households had been in temporary accommodation for more than five years, longer than any other group, and more than double the 8% of White-led households.¹⁷ Prolonged stays in temporary accommodation are linked to poorer outcomes for

12 Crisis, [The hidden truth about homelessness: Experiences of single homelessness in England](#), May 2011

13 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p23

14 UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

15 Crisis, [What is Temporary Accommodation?](#), accessed 3 November 2025

16 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#)); Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) data indicates longer stays in temporary accommodation for Black households: 43.4% spend over 2 years in temporary accommodation (vs 24.9% White households) and 18.3% spend over 5 years (vs 8.5% White households), with associated knock on effects for health, education and employment - see Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#)); Black and Mixed Black/White people make up 5.3% of the population of England and Wales; 8.2% of households renting privately in England are Black or Mixed Black/White: Gov.uk, [Population of England and Wales](#), 22 December 2022; Gov.uk, [Renting from a private landlord](#), 7 April 2025

17 Shelter, [Three charts that reveal the inequalities in temporary accommodation](#), December 2025; Shared Health Foundation, Professor Katherine Brickell and Dr Melanie Nowicki ([BLH0015](#)); Shelter, [My Colour Speaks for Me - Research Report](#), 15 July 2025; Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, [Statutory homelessness in England: Financial year 2023–24](#), 6 November 2025

health, education and wellbeing.¹⁸ Two thirds of people in temporary accommodation report that the situation has had a negative impact on their physical or mental health.¹⁹

10. The use of temporary accommodation is increasing. At the end of 2025, 134,210 households were in temporary accommodation, an increase of 5% from the end of 2024 and a 94% increase over the last 10 years. 85,800 of those households contained children.²⁰ The cost of temporary accommodation to English councils has doubled in real-terms in ten years, from £1.3 billion to £2.8 billion.²¹

Duties on housing authorities

11. Local housing authorities have a duty to “take reasonable steps” to prevent or relieve homelessness for all eligible applicants under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.²² In 2024/25, 330,410 families and individuals in England were accepted as being owed support by their local council because they were likely to become homeless (within 56 days) or were already homeless. Black households are overrepresented among those owed a homelessness duty: in December 2025, they accounted for 13.5 % of households owed a homelessness duty while making up 3.9 % of the general population.²³
12. If an applicant is eligible, unintentionally homeless and in “priority need”, the housing authority has a legal obligation to provide accommodation—this is known as the “main housing duty”.²⁴ In practice, this process often starts with temporary accommodation and continues until the duty is

18 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#))

19 [Q19](#); In England, social housing is delivered by local authorities and private registered providers, such as housing associations, within a statutory framework underpinned by the Housing Act 1996 and associated regulations. Access is governed by local allocation schemes operating under national guidance, with the schemes typically using banding to prioritise need (e.g. statutory homelessness, medical/welfare needs, overcrowding/unsafe conditions).

20 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Statutory homelessness in England: October to December 2025](#), 30 April 2026

21 Resolution Foundation, [Housing Outlook Q4 2025](#), 25 October 2025

22 The prevention duty applies when a person is at risk of losing their current accommodation within 56 days, the relief duty applies when a person is already homeless and requires immediate assistance to secure new housing; House of Commons Library, [Research briefing: Statutory homelessness \(England\): the legal framework and performance](#), 30 July 2024; Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government, [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2025](#), accessed: 12 January 2026

23 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Statutory homelessness in England: October to December 2025](#), published April 2026

24 Priority need may include pregnant women, families with children, people who are vulnerable - for example due to old age, mental illness or disability - and those who are homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse or due to an emergency such as a fire or flood.

lawfully ended, usually through the offer of a settled home.²⁵ Of the 330,410 households owed support in 2024/25, 72,260 were accepted as being owed a main housing duty.²⁶

13. Having been found to be owed a homelessness duty, Black families are less likely than White families to secure social housing. From 2019/20 to 2021/22 only 10% of Black families secured social housing compared to 24% of White families from those that applied.²⁷ Black families are more likely than White families (41% and 28% respectively) to leave the homelessness system to an unknown destination—an indicator that homelessness has not been resolved via the statutory system and may therefore continue in a different setting.²⁸
14. Contributors to our inquiry described how these racial disparities cannot be explained by poverty and geography alone but, as we explore in the next chapter, instead reflect a combination of structural factors—such as the historical and current effects of housing and welfare policy, lower rates of homeownership, labour market inequalities, and experiences of racial discrimination in housing and other services.²⁹

25 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities 2025](#), accessed: 12 January 2026; Global Policy Network (BLH0025)

26 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Statutory homelessness in England: financial year 2024–25](#), 27 November 2025

27 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p9

28 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025; Hleb Buziuk (BLH0002)

29 Hleb Buziuk (BLH0002); BME National (BLH0010); UK Women’s Budget Group (BLH0017); [Q3](#) [Jasmine Basran]

2 Drivers of higher homelessness risk for Black people

15. Contributors to our inquiry argued that historical, racialised barriers to housing and employment for minority ethnic groups, particularly Black communities, were key factors in understanding increased risks of homelessness. Witnesses explained how such barriers have helped to embed a structural disadvantage that means Black people face increased precariousness through lower average earnings (which contribute to higher relative housing costs),³⁰ lower rates of home ownership (resulting in increased reliance on insecure accommodation) and lack of access to household wealth.³¹ Mariam Ayinla, an individual with lived experience of housing insecurity, observed:

disproportionate Black homelessness is produced through the interaction of unequal labour market positioning and unequal access to secure housing, whereby vulnerability to income shocks is more likely to translate into eviction and homelessness.³²

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- 30 Over a fifth (23%) of people from Black, Black British, Caribbean or African groups spend more than a third of their income on housing. This compares with only 8% of White people; The Health Foundation, [Inequalities in housing affordability](#), 25 July 2025
- 31 A 2025 Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion report highlighted increasing household wealth gaps, with Indian, White British, Asian Other, and White Other ethnic groups experiencing steady increases in wealth and Black African, Black Caribbean, and Bangladeshi ethnic groups showing no change. From 2012/14 to 2021/23 the median household wealth for the White British group rose from £125,000 to £177,000, over the same period the median wealth remained at or near zero for Black and Bangladeshi groups. Home ownership is declining among these groups, while it is increasing among White and Indian groups (see Eleni Karagiannaki, [The Ethnic Wealth Divide in the UK: Mapping Disparities Across Time, Age and Immigrant Generations](#), Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, LSE, December 2025); The Government's evidence highlighted higher rates of low income amongst Black communities as a structural pressure that increases the risk of homelessness, with Black households having the highest proportion of low income across any ethnic group at 39% (vs White at 18%) ([BLH0020](#)). Data from the Annual Population Survey shows lower levels of employment for Black and Mixed ethnicity individuals, both at 69% (vs 77% White individuals). Unemployment among young people (16–24) who identified as Black is more than double the rate of those who identified as White.
- 32 Mariam Ayinla ([BLH0013](#))

16. However, unequal access to housing is not solely rooted in historical disadvantage. The I-SPHERE study found that ethnicity increases homelessness risks, even once demographic, housing, poverty and wider factors are considered.³³ A key concern raised across the evidence we received was the prevalence of racial discrimination in the private and public housing sectors as well as other services. Contributors to our inquiry also argued that specific government policies had, directly and indirectly, adversely affected Black households' ability to secure accommodation and, in some cases, increased the potential for discriminatory behaviours. We discuss these policies and the prevalence of discrimination below.

Right to Buy

17. The Right to Buy scheme, first introduced in the 1980 Housing Act, allows council tenants to purchase their homes at a discount. The policy has made a huge difference to the lives of millions of households, giving people who might otherwise not have been able to do so the opportunity to secure a permanent home. However, the majority of homes sold under the scheme have not been replaced and the benefits of the scheme have not been felt equally.³⁴ The government notes:

The failure to replace the homes which have been sold under the scheme is a contributor to the urgent and rising need for social and affordable homes in most communities across the country. The cost of this has been borne not only by those low-income families unable to secure a social home, but by the taxpayer in the form of a rapidly rising housing benefit bill.³⁵

18. Shelter drew attention to Black households' unequal ability to purchase their homes due to having lower incomes. Right to Buy, they argued, has exacerbated economic disparities, particularly as house prices have risen. Black African, Black Other, and Mixed White and Black African households have the lowest home ownership rates (22%, 16%, and 14% respectively), while White British households have the highest rates (70%).³⁶ Studies of

33 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p8

34 Fewer than 40% of council homes sold off under Right to Buy since 2012 have been replaced - see Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Delivering a decade of renewal for social and affordable housing](#), 28 January 2026

35 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Government response to the consultation on Reforming the Right to Buy](#), 2 July 2025

36 Shelter, [Summary Report: My colour speaks for me: How racism and discrimination affect Black and Black Mixed heritage people's access to social homes](#), 15 July 2025; Single Homeless Project, [How racism causes homelessness](#), (accessed 20 November 2025); Katherine Johns, University of Warwick ([BLH0014](#))

Right to Buy have shown that White households have disproportionately benefitted from the sale of social housing in part because they were living in the best-quality properties in the highest-value locations.³⁷

19. The Single Homeless Project (SHP) observed how the loss of social housing stock has been felt more by Black families, who are nearly three times more likely than White families to need it.³⁸ This puts Black households at greater risk of homelessness, since poverty and instability in the private rented sector—characterised by short tenancies, limited security, higher risks of eviction and volatile rents—are among the most significant causes of homelessness. It also increases the risk of being subject to discrimination, which we discuss below.³⁹
20. The government has said it remains committed to Right to Buy but has announced that it plans to put in place restrictions to protect the availability of social housing stock (through the Social Housing Bill currently progressing through Parliament) and to build 180,000 new homes for social rent over the next 10 years.⁴⁰

Discrimination in the private sector

21. A third of Black people with experience of homelessness anticipate being treated less favourably by landlords on account of their ethnicity, with overt racism reported to be a key barrier to accessing housing across minoritised communities.⁴¹ There is evidence of estate agents and landlords being prejudiced against Black prospective tenants through actions such as rejecting applications and creating additional administrative barriers.⁴² 14% of Black respondents to a Shelter study reported experiencing housing discrimination.⁴³
22. Landlords are not obliged to take particular tenants or to explain their decisions, but with demand outstripping supply, discrimination (intended or not) can affect who secures accommodation and who becomes homeless.⁴⁴

37 Joseph Rowntree Foundation, [Ethnicity and homeownership](#), 12 December 2025

38 Single Homeless Project, [How racism causes homelessness](#) (accessed 20 November 2025)

39 Mariam Ayinla homelessness ([BLH0013](#)); Shared Health Foundation, Professor Katherine Brickell and Dr Melanie Nowicki ([BLH0015](#))

40 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Delivering a decade of renewal for social and affordable housing](#), 28 January 2026

41 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p3 and p36; Katherine Johns, University of Warwick ([BLH0014](#))

42 Crisis ([BLH0023](#)); Greater Manchester Law Centre ([BLH0019](#))

43 Shelter, [Denied the right to a safe home](#), 26 May 2021

44 Greater Manchester Law Centre ([BLH0019](#))

Race on the Agenda noted that exclusion at the point of access increases reliance on informal or rogue landlords, heightening the risk of poor treatment and eviction.⁴⁵

23. The I-SPHERE report included accounts of explicit racism on the part of private landlords, who either refused to house ethnic minorities or acted in overtly discriminatory ways towards their tenants from minority ethnic groups. Their researchers found that:

Some unscrupulous landlords seemed to feel that they could act with impunity towards tenants from minoritised communities, and in particular to refugees and other migrants, given the difficulties that they may face in defending their housing rights.⁴⁶

24. Multiple contributors to our inquiry raised concerns over the treatment of Black tenants by landlords.⁴⁷ Jasmine Basran explained that in research undertaken by Crisis:

People told us about experiencing racist language from landlords about who could and could not live in their properties, and were sometimes told that certain properties were just for certain ethnic groups—they were explicitly told that. Sometimes people felt the landlords were making discriminatory housing decisions after judging the name on the application or from the colour of that person's skin.⁴⁸

Martha Schofield, Senior Research Officer at Shelter, described to us the results of a survey of private landlords, in which:

over a quarter of the private landlords that we spoke to said, "It's natural that stereotypes and prejudice come into it when I decide who to let to." Clearly, that is going to make it harder for black people and people of colour to access homes [...]⁴⁹

25. In 2024/25, there were over a 1,000 people owed a homelessness duty due to being illegally evicted from their home, and over 13,000 owed a duty due to their landlord seeking to re-let the property.⁵⁰ Black households are the most likely ethnicity to report having to move house due to their landlord

45 Race on the Agenda (ROTA) ([BLH0022](#))

46 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p38

47 Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#)); akt ([BLH0008](#)); Shelter ([BLH0009](#)); Katherine Johns, University of Warwick ([BLH0014](#)); Greater Manchester Law Centre ([BLH0019](#)); Runnymede Trust ([BLH0021](#)); Race on the Agenda (ROTA) ([BLH0022](#)); Crisis ([BLH0023](#))

48 [Q15](#)

49 [Q15](#)

50 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Statutory homelessness in England: financial year 2024–25](#), 27 November 2025

ending their tenancy or evicting them.⁵¹ The Greater Manchester Law Centre (GMLC) told us that its housing caseload had a disproportionately high number of clients from minority ethnic backgrounds, with the disparity being highest of all in homelessness cases.⁵²

- 26.** Challenging discrimination in the private sector is theoretically possible but currently difficult in practice, with the onus on the individual to bring a claim—often when they are at a time of crisis and lacking resources.⁵³ The GMLC explained:

The lack of Legal Aid providers and capacity available across the country, alongside the difficulty providing explicit evidence of racial discrimination in most cases, limits tenants’ ability to enforce their right not to be discriminated against on the basis of their race/nationality.⁵⁴

- 27.** In 2025, the government announced the first increase in Legal Aid rates for housing cases since 1996. However, over 40% of local authority areas now lack a housing legal aid provider and the eligibility criteria for support have narrowed.⁵⁵ A lack of access to housing Legal Aid increases the burden on local authority homelessness teams as well as leaving people without legal protection. It is widely accepted that the Legal Aid system requires reform. Such reform merits more extensive scrutiny than we were able to undertake in this inquiry. Instead we draw attention to the extensive and ongoing work of colleagues on the Justice Committee on the Legal Aid system, including their concerns that “civil legal aid providers are facing major sustainability challenges [...] with the result that in many areas there are advice deserts” and related impacts on access to justice.⁵⁶

51 Gleeson, J., 2022. [Housing and race equality in London: An analysis of secondary data](#). London: Greater London Authority, p10; Katherine Johns, University of Warwick ([BLH0014](#)); Runnymede Trust ([BLH0021](#)) states that research by Generation Rent found that renters of colour were 36% more likely to have been threatened with an eviction than White renters. Almost one in 10 (9%) people of colour had been evicted compared to 4% of their White counterparts. Compounding this, people of colour are more likely to be evicted informally without due process - being twice as likely as White respondents to have been served an informal notice (as opposed to a formal s21 or s8 notice under the 1988 Housing Act).

52 Greater Manchester Law Centre ([BLH0019](#))

53 Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#))

54 Greater Manchester Law Centre ([BLH0019](#))

55 The Law Society, [Homelessness threat as millions face an uphill struggle for justice](#), 12 May 2026

56 Justice Select Committee, [Justice Committee launches new inquiry into access to justice](#), 23 July 2025; Justice Select Committee, [Future of Legal Aid](#), Third Report of Session 2021–22, HC 70, 27 July 2021

- 28.** The Renters' Rights Act 2025 includes measures that will increase protections for tenants and make it easier for them to challenge poor conduct. It abolishes 'no-fault' evictions, limits rent increases and outlaws discrimination against benefits claimants.⁵⁷ Research by Crisis found that more than 30,000 households were threatened with homelessness through no-fault evictions from July 2024 to August 2025. Crisis notes, "With no-fault evictions now abolished, the Act has put a stop to this preventable pathway into homelessness."⁵⁸
- 29.** The Act also introduces a new ombudsman service for the private rented sector, which all private landlords will be required to join. The new Private Rented Sector (PRS) Ombudsman aligns the private rented sector with the social housing sector and the letting agent sector, which already operate under mandatory ombudsman arrangements. The ombudsman will investigate complaints about landlord conduct though equalities-based discrimination is not specifically cited as within its remit. The government expects the new ombudsman service to be ready in 2028.
- 30.** The Equality Advisory Support Service (EASS) can offer advice about what to do if people have suffered discrimination but lacks enforcement powers. Such powers are available to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) whose duties include investigating compliance with the Equality Act 2010. However, as we discussed with the EHRC in our annual scrutiny session in June 2026, the EHRC has seen its budget reduced dramatically, from £70.3 million after establishment in 2007/08 to around £17 million in 2013. The EHRC's budget has remained broadly static in cash terms ever since. Its budget for the current year is £17.6 million. Adjusted for inflation this represents a budget cut of around 30% since 2013 i.e. had the Commission's budget risen in line with inflation since 2013, it would now be around £24.2 million.
- 31.** The EHRC told us that the reduction in its funding has "made it increasingly challenging to fulfil [their] statutory duties". The EHRC received a small uplift for 2026–27 to reflect inflation. While welcoming the modest uplift, the EHRC told us "this is sufficient only to manage existing cost pressures and does not enable us to increase activity or absorb new responsibilities". The EHRC said that a sustained increase of 10% in its budget would enable them to act in areas that meet their core criteria but which they are currently prevented from pursuing, including work on access to justice. It noted, "with relatively modest additional annual funding, we could run a legal support fund clarifying law and securing justice for people experiencing discrimination."⁵⁹

57 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Historic Renters' Rights Act becomes law](#), 27 October 2025

58 Crisis, [Renters' Rights Act: what it means for renters in England](#) (accessed June 2026)

59 [Correspondence from the Equality and Human Rights Commission](#), dated 2 July 2026

Right to Rent scheme

32. Many contributors to our inquiry raised concerns about the operation of the Right to Rent scheme, describing it as enabling and encouraging discrimination by private landlords and their agents.⁶⁰ Introduced under the Immigration Act 2014, the Right to Rent scheme requires landlords to check that prospective adult tenants who do not hold a UK passport have valid immigration status and are permitted to rent accommodation. Landlords' non-compliance can result in fines of up to £20,000 or a prison sentence of up to five years.⁶¹ A 2024 Shelter survey of a representative sample of 2,000 landlords found that:

- 24% of landlords erroneously believe that they cannot rent to people with a non-UK passport;
- 56% of respondents who said they were unable to rent to people without a UK passport said it was due to the risk of a civil penalty for failing to comply with the Right to Rent regulations;
- 47% of landlords claimed that they found Right to Rent checks too difficult or time-consuming.⁶²

Research by Crisis found that British nationals of colour with “foreign-sounding names” had been refused properties due to false assumptions regarding their immigration status.⁶³

33. Following the scheme's initial implementation, the government commissioned a two-year study to determine whether it had affected levels of racial discrimination in the housing market. Whilst some clear examples of racially discriminatory attitudes were found, the evaluation uncovered little or no systematic unlawful discrimination as a result of the scheme itself.⁶⁴ It did note, however, that mystery shoppers with an ethnic minority background were significantly less likely to be sent details of rental property but that there was no evidence that this was a result of the scheme.

60 Greater Manchester Law Centre ([BLH0019](#)); Black Equity Organisation ([BLH0026](#)); Crisis ([BLH0023](#))

61 Shelter, [Right to Rent: entrenching discrimination in the private rented sector](#), April 2025; Black Equity Organisation ([BLH0026](#))

62 Shelter, [Right to Rent: entrenching discrimination in the private rented sector](#), April 2025

63 Crisis, [“Where do I belong? Where is home?” Experiences of racism and homelessness](#), October 2024; Research by the Joint council for the Welfare Migrants found that 42% of landlords said that the Right to Rent requirements had made them less likely to consider someone who did not have a British passport, while 27% were reluctant to engage with those with ‘foreign accents or names, see JCWI, [“No Passport Equals No Home”: An independent evaluation of the ‘Right to Rent’ scheme](#), September 2015

64 Home Office, [Right to Rent scheme: Phase two evaluation](#), 9 February 2023

34. The scheme has been challenged in the courts, with the High Court finding it to be discriminatory, only for that judgment to be overturned in the Court of Appeal which found any such discrimination to be justified by the aims of the policy.⁶⁵

35. **CONCLUSION**

Evidence of prejudice against Black tenants in the private rented sector makes it crucial that support and pathways to challenge illegal behaviour are available and accessible. We welcome the increased rights for tenants delivered by the Renters' Rights Act, which will help people to remain in their home, including Black households who are more likely to be threatened with eviction, and make it easier for tenants to challenge poor conduct by landlords.

36. **RECOMMENDATION**

The new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman should support individuals who have been subject to racial discrimination and where appropriate, for example in cases involving multiple complaints about larger housing providers, escalate cases to the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

37. **RECOMMENDATION**

The Equality and Human Rights Commission saw its budget slashed in 2013 and has experienced year on year reductions in funding in real terms since then, preventing it from pursuing sustained programmes of work in key areas including supporting people to secure justice in cases of discrimination. The Government should provide and sustain a 10% uplift to the EHRC's budget.

Local Housing Allowance rates

38. Local Housing Allowance (LHA) sets the amount that private renters receive in benefits to help with rent. It has been frozen in eight of the last 13 years, with rates last reset in April 2024, based on the 30th percentile of local rents in the year to September 2023. Since the midpoint of that assessment period, rents in the UK have increased by around 19% (to October 2025), creating significant shortfalls between claimants' rent and the support for which they are eligible.⁶⁶ As Black, Asian and other minority ethnic

65 Liberty, [Legal Intervention: Right to Rent scheme](#), accessed June 2026

66 Failing to uprate LHA rates since then has resulted in an average loss of almost £1,500 for the more than 1 million households in receipt of housing benefit and affected by the freeze (in that their rent exceeds current LHA rates) - see Institute for Fiscal Studies, [Freezes in housing support once again widen geographic disparities for low-income renters](#), 21

households are more likely to rely on LHA, the freezing of LHA rates makes these households more vulnerable to homelessness by contributing to rent arrears and evictions.⁶⁷ Current levels of LHA also mean that only 2.7% of private rentals in Great Britain are affordable to people relying on housing benefit.⁶⁸

39. The Resolution Foundation, an independent think-tank dedicated to lifting living standards, found that the extra pressure on renters from the LHA freeze was pushing households into temporary accommodation and making it harder for councils to find them a suitable home meaning they stay in temporary accommodation for longer.⁶⁹ It noted that the cost of temporary accommodation to English councils had doubled in real-terms in 10 years, with widening LHA shortfalls over the coming years risking more households entering temporary accommodation. It observed:

With the gap between Local Housing Allowance rates and the 30th percentile of rent expected to pass the previous record of 17 per cent next year, and on track to reach 25 per cent by the end of the Parliament, the government needs to re-link housing support to local rents before the gap does further damage to living standards.⁷⁰

40. The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) described the pattern of resetting rates every few years, then freezing them indefinitely and only uprating them on an ad hoc basis, as “incoherent policy design”, which “creates unnecessary volatility and uncertainty for both tenants and the public finances” and “generates arbitrary inconsistency in the level of support available across different parts of the UK”.⁷¹ The IFS estimates that regular uprating to the 30th percentile would present an initial cost of £1.5 billion of which some could be offset by lower spending on temporary accommodation—the cost of which is increasing significantly.⁷² The Resolution Foundation put the cost of relinking LHA at £2.5 billion by the end of this Parliament.⁷³

November 2025; Runnymede Trust ([BLH0021](#))

67 Black Equity Organisation ([BLH0026](#)); Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#)); Local Government Association, [Temporary Accommodation costs to councils - LGA Response](#), 18 September 2025

68 Crisis, [Local housing allowance \(LHA\) rates freeze](#) (accessed June 2026)

69 Resolution Foundation, [Affordability gap between Local Housing Allowance and local rents set to reach record level next year](#), 25 October 2025

70 Resolution Foundation, [Affordability gap between Local Housing Allowance and local rents set to reach record level next year](#), 25 October 2025

71 Institute for Fiscal Studies, [Freezes in housing support once again widen geographic disparities for low-income renters](#), 21 November 2025

72 Institute for Fiscal Studies, [Freezes in housing support once again widen geographic disparities for low-income renters](#), 21 November 2025

73 Resolution Foundation, [Housing Outlook Q4 2025](#), 25 October 2025

41. In 2025, the government announced a number of initiatives to tackle constraints in housing supply, including a £39 billion Social and Affordable Homes Programme, which included plans to build 180,000 new social and affordable homes, and a National Plan to End Homelessness. Giving evidence ahead of the publication of the National Plan (see later in this Report), Jasmine Basran of Crisis argued for the inclusion of increasing LHA:

There is an opportunity with the homelessness strategy [...] to really set out how to address these issues around race, and Black households and ethnic minorities being disproportionately at risk. We would argue that a key factor in that is the welfare system and the freeze on Local Housing Allowance rates, which is driving levels of homelessness.⁷⁴

Martha Schofield, Senior Research Officer at Shelter agreed:

[...] we would absolutely support what Jasmine has mentioned around unfreezing LHA and abolishing the household benefit cap. We need to unlock homes now for those households who are disproportionately stuck in temporary accommodation to go to, and to stop children from encountering homelessness.⁷⁵

42. Published in December 2025, the National Plan to End Homelessness did not include action on local housing allowance. The Chartered Institute of Housing described the Plan as missing a “key issue” of “growing affordability pressures in the private rented sector”.⁷⁶ Shelter said:

[We] applaud the government’s £39bn investment in social and affordable homes, but until a lot more of these social homes are built, one of the only ways to escape homelessness is if you can afford to pay a private rent.

We know from our frontline services this is almost impossible to do when housing benefit remains frozen, and that is where the homelessness strategy falls short.⁷⁷

43. We pushed the Minister on the government’s approach to local housing allowance rates but received no commitment to their increase. When asked if raising the rates would help to address the racial disparities in homelessness risk, given that Black-led households were more likely to claim the allowance, the Minister replied:

74 [Q13](#)

75 [Q26](#)

76 Housing Digital, [National plan to tackle homelessness misses key elements](#), December 2025

77 Shelter, [Shelter responds to government’s Homelessness Strategy by calling on it to wipe out homelessness in its entirety](#), 11 December 2025

It is definitely my view that social security has a significant impact on people's incomes and that the cause of homelessness is not having enough money to be able to afford a roof over your head. The question is what you do about it. I want to build more social homes because that enables people to often have an affordable tenancy, and there are also quality issues and the security of tenancy. We also want to improve the quality of the private rented sector as we do it, and we will keep LHA under review.⁷⁸

44. CONCLUSION

Local Housing Allowance provides vital support for people on lower incomes. The ad hoc approach of freezing and resetting rates creates uncertainty, pushes people into further poverty and increased risks of homelessness. This in turn forces local authorities to increase their use of temporary accommodation, at substantial cost.

45. RECOMMENDATION

The government needs to increase and sustain Local Housing Allowance rates at the 30th percentile of local private rents. Doing so will help to prevent people from being pushed into homelessness due to private rent increases, will immediately unlock more homes to help councils move families and individuals on from temporary accommodation, and help stop people from becoming trapped in the cycle of homelessness. Such an intervention would benefit all groups, but particularly Black households, given they are disproportionately affected by homelessness. We acknowledge that such a measure is not cost free, though some costs will be offset by reductions to the cost of temporary accommodation, but the increasing affordability gap between LHA and private rents and its negative impact on living standards is unsustainable.

Discrimination in the social housing sector

- 46.** As already noted, there is a chronic shortage of social housing stock. While constraints on access affect people of all ethnic groups, the government told us that “Black households owed a homelessness duty face greater barriers in accessing social housing.”⁷⁹ Black and other racially minoritised families accepted as statutorily homeless are less likely to gain access to social housing, and spend longer in temporary accommodation than

⁷⁸ [Q61](#)

⁷⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#))

White families accepted as homeless.⁸⁰ Only 10% of Black families who are statutorily homeless gain social housing, compared to 24% of White homeless families.⁸¹

47. Contributors to our inquiry observed that Black applicants are more likely to encounter ‘gatekeeping’ difficulties, such as delayed assessments, inappropriate evidence being demanded of them, incorrect advice issued regarding their eligibility and biased decision-making.⁸² In its research, Shelter found that Black applicants for social housing were also often allocated poor quality, undesirable, or simply unsuitable accommodation and that complaints about these issues were often ignored or addressed more slowly than those from White tenants.⁸³

Decision-making

48. There is a reliance on discretionary decisions within the homelessness system, including assessments of priority need, local connection, risk and suitability, which can lead to unequal outcomes without explicit discriminatory intent.⁸⁴ Shelter, however, described some housing officers as exhibiting preferential treatment of White applicants, with Black applicants “experiencing poorer communication, such as rudeness and lack of empathy, and an impatience with language barriers”.⁸⁵ It noted that many Black applicants felt “dehumanised and neglected” by social housing staff, with examples of frontline staff “perpetuating harmful stereotypes of Black people”.⁸⁶ They described how some applicants resorted to “code-switching” or using White-sounding names to avoid racial bias and improve their chances of a successful application.⁸⁷
49. Black peer researchers working as mystery shoppers for Crisis’s ‘No One Turned Away’ project, an examination of the quality of advice and information provided to single homeless people, described how they experienced racism and hostility in their research that their White peers

80 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p43

81 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025

82 Mariam Ayinla ([BLH0013](#)); ([ROTA & Heriot-Watt, 2022](#)); Race on the Agenda (ROTA) ([BLH0022](#)); BME National ([BLH0010](#))

83 Shelter, [Summary Report: My colour speaks for me: How racism and discrimination affect Black and Black Mixed heritage people’s access to social homes](#), 15 July 2025, p18

84 Written evidence from Diane Thompson ([Blh0005](#))

85 Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

86 Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

87 Shelter, [Summary Report: My colour speaks for me: How racism and discrimination affect Black and Black Mixed heritage people’s access to social homes](#), 15 July 2025, p14

did not, even when attending the same services.⁸⁸ In oral evidence to us, one of the peer researchers, Danielle Celeste, reported a housing officer telling her, “You’re too Black to be seen right now, so you have to come back tomorrow.”⁸⁹ Crisis said that similar concerns had been observed by their frontline staff, with Black members receiving “consistently harsher and more punitive treatment than White members exhibiting similar behaviours.”⁹⁰ Other evidence we received noted housing officers telling Black people to go back to their country even when born in the UK.⁹¹ Professor Bramley, of the I-SPHERE study, observed that although the perception of discrimination was strongest in the private sector it also occurred in social housing, including where decision-makers were themselves from racially minoritised groups:

Sometimes it was actually ethnic minority officers who themselves were being discriminatory towards their own group. They were quoted as saying, “This is better than you would get treated in your own country”.⁹²

50. Challenging such behaviour is difficult. Crisis’s peer researchers argued that complaints mechanisms in social housing are weak, and that people are often reluctant to complain to the same services from whom they have experienced racism and discrimination.⁹³

Out of area placements

51. Black households are more likely to be placed in temporary accommodation away from their local area compared to White households.⁹⁴ Research by Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati at the University of Nottingham on out of area placements made in 2022/23 and 2023/24 found that 92% of local authorities which made more than 100 out of area placements disproportionately placed Black and other racially minoritised households out of area compared to local demographic data; for two thirds of the local authorities the rate was more than double the percentage of the Black population in the area.⁹⁵

88 Shelter, [Literature review exploring access to social housing for People of Colour](#), February 2024

89 [Q36](#)

90 Crisis ([BLH0023](#))

91 Carolin Hess ([BLH0011](#))

92 [Q16](#)

93 Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#))

94 Runnymede Trust ([BLH0021](#))

95 Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati, University of Nottingham ([BLH0012](#))

52. Overall, latest figures show 43,040 households are in temporary accommodation out of area. In many cases the receiving authorities are not notified that families are being moved into their areas despite it being an obligation under s208 of the Housing Act 1996.⁹⁶ This can make it more challenging for those families to access any support they need.
53. In April 2025, the Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee concluded that out of area placements “have a devastating impact on families, leaving them far from their extended family, friends, and support network, and causing disruption to children’s education.”⁹⁷ Shelter told us that women had reported that their experience of domestic abuse had been used as a reason to house them out of area, removing them from support networks.⁹⁸
54. In its National Plan to End Homelessness the government noted, “we are aware of instances of poor practice [in out of area placements] and will engage with stakeholders early next year to set out how we will address this.” The government has committed to increasing the data available on out-of-area placements to improve transparency in their use.⁹⁹

Improving equity in decision-making

55. To tackle the barriers Black people face in decision-making processes, many contributors advocated for the use of anti-racism or anti-discrimination training among housing professionals.¹⁰⁰ Martha Schofield explained:

we believe that anti-racism needs to be included in the Competence and Conduct Standard, which is the new standard being introduced next October and enforced by the Regulator of Social Housing. It will require the senior housing management staff of social housing providers to have professional qualifications, and we believe a specific module on anti-racism should be included. It is good that it will cover EDI—equity, diversity and inclusion—but anti-racism specifically needs to be in there.¹⁰¹

96 Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati, University of Nottingham ([BLH0012](#))

97 Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee, [England’s Homeless Children: The crisis in temporary accommodation](#), First Report of Session 2024–25, HC 338

98 Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

99 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), December 2025

100 For example, Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#)); Shelter ([BLH0009](#)); UK Women’s Budget Group ([BLH0017](#)); Crisis ([BLH0023](#)); Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#)); Global Policy Network ([BLH0025](#))

101 [Q9](#)

56. The Competence and Conduct Standard is a regulatory framework being introduced in October 2026 in England. Its introduction was consulted on by the previous government as part of its response to the Grenfell disaster. Enforced by the Regulator for Social Housing, the Standard will require social housing providers to ensure their staff are appropriately skilled, exhibit the right behaviours, and, for senior roles, hold relevant housing management qualifications.¹⁰²

57. Philippa Davies, Director of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, emphasised that the set of requirements for housing management staff being introduced under the new Competence and Conduct Standard will include “equalities and diversity, and awareness of need and vulnerabilities.”¹⁰³ Shelter told us that “it was disappointing that anti-racism wasn’t explicitly mentioned”.¹⁰⁴ The University of Nottingham’s research on out of area placements noted that “moves towards ‘cultural competency’ alone were insufficient, and that Black people in particular often experienced racism at the hands of “culturally competent” services”.¹⁰⁵ One of participants in that research observed:

People want anti-racist services, not culturally competent ones [...]
Just having a more diverse workforce doesn’t fix the problem [...]. We
need transformation not tokenism.¹⁰⁶

58. In our recent evidence sessions on the effectiveness of equality, diversity and inclusion initiatives, witnesses were cautious about adopting practices that may be considered a “legitimate solution” rather than an effective one. Dr Louise Ashley, Reader and Associate Professor at Queen Mary University London, explained:

The policy that I would probably pick out as particularly representative of that issue is unconscious bias training, which has been very widely introduced without any evidence of its effectiveness. It probably does not have much of an effect but it became almost problematic because if you did not provide unconscious bias training it would look like you did not care about the issue.¹⁰⁷

102 Ministry for Housing and Local Government, [Consultation outcome: Competence and Conduct Standard for social housing: government response](#), 30 September 2025

103 [Q58](#)

104 Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

105 Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati, University of Nottingham ([BLH0012](#))

106 Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati, University of Nottingham ([BLH0012](#))

107 Oral evidence taken on 25 March 2026, [Q13](#)

Dr Zoe Young, Founder and Director, Half the Sky, emphasised the need for interventions to be “based on a clear diagnosis of what to focus on”, and on “building the capability—particularly of the manager—to set the tone”.¹⁰⁸

59. CONCLUSION

The chronic shortage of social housing places enormous pressure on council staff to find appropriate housing for people who are often extremely vulnerable. They do crucial work in trying circumstances. However, official data suggests that decisions in the social housing system result in bias against Black people for a range of reasons and contributors to this inquiry highlighted shocking reports of explicitly racist behaviour by some housing officers.

60. CONCLUSION

We welcome the introduction of the new Competence and Conduct Standard for housing management staff but, given long-standing issues of discrimination against Black people, we believe the government should introduce specific steps aimed at tackling racial bias.

61. RECOMMENDATION

The government should work with local authorities to ensure that their staff are fully equipped to provide equal support to all racial and ethnic groups in need. We are sympathetic to calls for anti-racism training and guidance. We call on the government to consider the merits of including a module on ensuring fairness of process in the new Competence and Conduct Standard. However, given the effectiveness of that training may not be guaranteed, the government should put measures in place to improve transparency and accountability over decision making.

62. RECOMMENDATION

The government should develop a national performance management framework for homelessness assessments and allocation policies which specifically includes monitoring of outcomes by race and sex and compliance with the Equality Act 2010. It should collate and publish a summary of findings at least annually and report significant patterns of racial and other biases in local decision-making to the Equality and Human Rights Commission for investigation and enforcement.

108 Oral evidence taken on 25 March 2026, [Q13](#)

63. CONCLUSION

Out of area placements can remove vulnerable people from their support networks at a time when they most need them and have a devastating impact on people's healthcare and education. Reports of the disproportionate use of these placements for Black households is concerning. Failures of local authorities to fulfil their section 208 duties in notifying the new host local authority exacerbate these concerns.

64. RECOMMENDATION

We welcome the government's plans to address poor practice in the use of out of area placements. Those plans should include measures to address the disproportionate use of these placements for Black households, including through the recording and publication of data by ethnicity and gender.

Impacts from other public services

- 65.** Wider public services can have a direct influence on homelessness risk. Of those owed a prevention or relief duty in December 2025, 13% had asylum accommodation, a custodial setting or a general or psychiatric hospital as the last address (6.6%, 4.4% and 2.1% respectively).¹⁰⁹ The latest figures show that 381 (5%) of the people identified as sleeping rough in March 2026 had recently left prison, 164 (2%) had left asylum support and 106 people had left a general or psychiatric hospital.¹¹⁰ Black people are overrepresented and more likely to experience worse outcomes in these areas which, together with a lack of trust in public services, increases the likelihood of homelessness at critical transition points.¹¹¹
- 66.** Reducing the impact of these factors on homelessness is not straightforward or cost free. Tackling drivers such as high levels of domestic abuse, the crisis in mental healthcare, chronic underfunding of the criminal justice system and impacts of immigration are clearly big and far wider policy areas, which we cannot do justice to in this inquiry. Contributors to our work focused their recommendations on improved linkages between statutory services and the housing system to help mitigate homelessness risks and on the need for improved mental health support—both for those in the homelessness system and to help prevent people from entering it.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Statutory homelessness in England: October to December 2025](#), 30 April 2026

¹¹⁰ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Rough sleeping data framework, January to March 2026 - release](#), May 2026

¹¹¹ Hleb Buziuk (BLH0002)

¹¹² See for example UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

Referral and collaboration

- 67.** The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 introduced a duty on specified public authorities, including prisons and health services, to refer service users who they think may be homeless or threatened with homelessness to local authority housing teams. However, Jasmine Basran, Head of Policy and Campaigns at Crisis, told us “Even though there is such demand, we see all the time that services are not talking to each other.”¹¹³ She advocated for the laws for public bodies around prevention duties to be developed.¹¹⁴ Professor Bramley, one of the authors of the I-SPHERE study, told us he was also in favour of such duties:

We would particularly mention prisons, the Probation Service and mental health services as being prime examples of where better articulated transition arrangements can avoid the frequent situation of people going straight into homelessness from those institutions. Very often, there is a high proportion of black and minority groups within that. So yes, prevention needs attention; it involves giving more firm duties to other public bodies and clear protocols for how they should operate.¹¹⁵

- 68.** The government’s National Plan to End Homelessness lists “placing new legal duties on public services to identify, act and collaborate to prevent and address homelessness” as a medium term action. The Plan states:

To support this, we intend to introduce a new ‘duty to collaborate’ for key public services, acting on the recommendations of the Expert Group, compelling public services to work together to prevent homelessness and support those who are at crisis point. We will consult on the new duty and legislate as soon as the parliamentary timetable allows.¹¹⁶

Homelessness Minister Alison McGovern emphasised that the duty would encourage active collaboration rather than passivity from services “where we expect people to really work together. That will lead to our prevention goal being achieved if we get it right.”¹¹⁷

113 [Q22](#)

114 [Q22](#)

115 [Q17](#)

116 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

117 [Q55](#)

69. Many third sector homelessness organisations spoke in favour of the planned “duty to collaborate”.¹¹⁸ Homelessness charity St Mungo’s told us:

[we] particularly welcome the new ‘duty to collaborate’; there is a huge opportunity to end the needless homelessness that we see from people leaving hospitals, prisons and asylum accommodation through joining up how government agencies work together.¹¹⁹

Homeless Link noted:

Past failures of government to work collaboratively have undermined efforts to reduce homelessness, so the introduction of new legal duties for branches of government to work together on ending and preventing homelessness is a positive step.¹²⁰

70. The National Plan to End Homeless does not, however, make any connection between the proposed duty to collaborate and addressing the racial disparities in homelessness. Several stakeholders argued that the two should be explicitly linked, given the barriers that Black people face when trying to access appropriate services during times of housing insecurity.¹²¹ Crisis’s peer researchers suggested:

The proposed duty to collaborate could help racially minoritised groups, who face poorer outcomes across health, welfare and criminal justice systems, but the strategy does not link this duty to racial disparities. The proposed duty to collaborate should include Black communities, Black-led organisations and Black lived experience individuals to consult and help collaborate.¹²²

Inclusion of Home Office in duties

71. Crisis noted the importance of including the Home Office within the duty, arguing that it currently faces weaker accountability than other departments despite its role in immigration, asylum and enforcement policies.¹²³ In 2024/25, 5.5% of all households (16,340) were homeless or threatened with homelessness due to being required to leave accommodation provided as asylum support. Once granted asylum

118 Shelter ([BLH0009](#)); Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#)); Single Homeless Project, [Single Homeless Project responds to the Government’s National Plan to End Homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

119 St Mungo’s, [The Government’s Homelessness Strategy: St Mungo’s Response](#), 11 December 2025

120 Homeless Link, [Homeless Link response to National Plan to End Homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

121 Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#))

122 Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#))

123 Crisis ([BLH0023](#))

individuals have 42 days to “move on” from their government-provided accommodation. The asylum support contracts do not require people leaving asylum accommodation to be given information on housing in preparation for leaving it. Nor is there a requirement for the relevant local authority to be notified.¹²⁴

- 72.** The government has pledged to improve move on support for refugees. It told us that it had introduced Asylum Move On Liaison Officers to provide tailored support during the move-on process, including through working with local authorities to ensure referral pathways are in place. It also said:

We are committed to ensuring councils receive information for 100% of newly granted refugees at risk of homelessness within two days of asylum support ending. Our strategy sets out a pathway from crisis to prevention and our plan to address the root causes of homelessness: building more homes, strengthening multi-agency collaboration, and updating allocations guidance to ensure fairness.¹²⁵

73. CONCLUSION

Statutory services should be required to play a stronger role in tackling homelessness. We welcome the focus in the National Plan to End Homelessness on switching from crisis response to prevention of homelessness and the proposed “duty to collaborate” to help achieve that ambition. The lack of an explicit link between the proposed “duty to collaborate” and tackling racial disparities in homelessness risk is, however, a missed opportunity that we urge the government to address.

74. RECOMMENDATION

In bringing forward the “duty to collaborate” the government should set out a clear ambition to tackle the poorer outcomes including increased risks of homelessness that minority ethnic groups experience in leaving the care of public services. The government should ensure that such a proposal is developed with input from Black communities, Black-led organisations, and Black individuals with lived experience of homelessness.

75. RECOMMENDATION

The Home Office and the police should be added to the list of public bodies subject to the statutory ‘duty to refer’ and included in the forthcoming proposals for a ‘duty to collaborate’.

¹²⁴ Dr Nigel de Noronha, University of Manchester) ([BLH0016](#))

¹²⁵ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#))

Access to mental health support

- 76.** Poor mental health support can increase homelessness risk and push people towards crisis. Unmet mental health needs can lead to job loss, relationship breakdown and are a contributing factor to Black overrepresentation in relation to rent arrears and eviction.¹²⁶ Contributors to our inquiry reported that Black people found it more challenging to access adequate mental health support and can find their vulnerabilities not being recognised when they do.¹²⁷ Black adults receive the lowest rates of treatment across ethnic groups.¹²⁸ Access can also be made more challenging for people subject to the out of area placements discussed above. This lack of access to support can make it difficult for people to sustain tenancies and navigate the housing system.¹²⁹
- 77.** According to the government, Black people are “more likely to enter [mental health] services through crisis care or the criminal justice system and less likely to receive evidence-based treatments”.¹³⁰ This was supported by evidence from Crisis, who reported that Black men in psychological distress were more likely to receive police responses than medical responses but that this was not the case for White men in similar positions.¹³¹ Rough-sleeping women, among whom Black women are overrepresented, are more likely to be suffering from mental health problems.¹³² 55% of people seen rough sleeping in London between January and March 2026 had a mental health support need.¹³³ In its evidence, the government noted “a strong correlation” between mental health issues and having been a victim of a crime for people who are sleeping rough, and that this relationship “is particularly significant among Black respondents”.¹³⁴
- 78.** The government told us:
- it would be widening access to specialist support services, including mental health, substance use and physical health.

126 Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#))

127 Crisis ([BLH0023](#)); Katherine Johns, University of Warwick ([BLH0014](#)); UK Women’s Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

128 Katherine Johns, University of Warwick ([BLH0014](#))

129 akt ([Blh0008](#)); Katherine Johns, University of Warwick ([BLH0014](#))

130 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#))

131 Crisis ([BLH0023](#)); Heyes et al., [A co-produced review of the experiences of Black male detention under mental health legislation: Challenging discrimination in psychiatry using The Silences Framework](#), *PLOS Mental Health* 2(4), 9 April 2025

132 UK Women’s Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

133 Combined Homelessness and Information Network (CHAIN), [CHAIN quarterly report: Greater London, January-March 2026](#), April 2026

134 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#))

- NHS Talking Therapies and the Rough Sleeping Mental Health Programme focus on culturally appropriate outreach, aiming to reduce crisis admissions and improve engagement. The Rough Sleeping programme set up 37 multi-agency teams delivering psychological therapies, physical healthcare, employment support and trauma-informed care.
- Neighbourhood Mental Health Centres also offer 24/7 care without GP referral, bringing together mental health, housing, benefits and employment support and linking to specialist homelessness services for those with severe needs.
- The Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework is now a contractual requirement for NHS mental health providers, designed to improve access, experience and outcomes for ethnic minority groups. It mandates better data collection on ethnicity and partnership working to co-design services that meet diverse needs.¹³⁵

79.

RECOMMENDATION

We welcome the government's programmes to increase access to mental health support for people in the homelessness system. We would like to see improved access to referral pathways between health and housing services in areas with high levels of Black homelessness. In these areas, health, mental health and hospital discharge policies should include clear responsibilities for identifying homelessness risk and notifying local housing teams. Particular attention under the proposed new 'duty to collaborate' should be given to patients from over-represented groups such as Black men leaving inpatient mental health care.

3 Variation in homelessness risk across the Black population

80. Homelessness risk is not uniform across the Black population, with significant regional and subgroup variations.¹³⁶ Overlapping protected characteristics compound barriers for people trying to access social housing as racism combines with other forms of discrimination, including against lone mothers, disabled people and LGBT people, making it harder to exit homelessness.¹³⁷ Contributors to our inquiry described how housing discrimination can be multi-layered but, despite people with overlapping protected characteristics facing particularly acute risks, intersectional data is limited.¹³⁸

Ethnicity

81. The government accepts that it lacks data with regard to “ethnic subgroups” and that this “means we are unable to identify specific patterns or disparities within ethnic subgroups, presenting a limitation for fully understanding Black homelessness”.¹³⁹ In their work on the links between Black homelessness and out of area housing placements, Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati from the University of Nottingham identified a lack of disaggregated ethnicity data among local authorities.¹⁴⁰ A quarter of responding authorities did not provide ethnicity data while 42% of those who did noted that they did not know the ethnicity of some of their applicants:

Some stated that their systems were not capable of exporting this data and 14 local authorities stated that they do not record ethnicity data when taking homeless applications. However, these reasons

136 UK Women’s Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

137 Shelter, [My Colour Speaks for Me - Research Report](#), 15 July 2025; Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

138 Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#))

139 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ([BLH0020](#))

140 Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati, University of Nottingham ([BLH0012](#))

contradict the LGA's Equality Framework which outlines four principles for delivering excellence in equality outcomes, including detailed mention of the collection and use of data.¹⁴¹

Women

- 82.** Women are disproportionately affected by hidden and statutory homelessness, with two thirds of homeless families with children including a single mother.¹⁴² Half of all households in temporary accommodation feature a lone mother, due in part to the difficulties associated with sourcing an affordable family home on only one income.¹⁴³ The Women's Budget Group reported that intersectional disadvantage for Black women—who often face poverty, low-paid or insecure employment—renders them more likely to experience longer and earlier exposure to homelessness, compared to men and White women.¹⁴⁴
- 83.** The I-SPHERE study concluded that Black women experience distinct barriers in accessing housing and support, noting that they often encounter discrimination, stereotyping and institutional biases. The study included lived experience evidence of inadequate treatment by housing services.¹⁴⁵
- 84.** Despite the disproportionate impact of homelessness on women, homeless women can be overlooked in statistics, research and policy due to their making particular efforts to be inconspicuous.¹⁴⁶ We heard evidence of female rough sleepers taking steps to avoid being on the streets due to considerations around personal safety. Such steps included sleeping in concealed locations, using 24-hour public services or exhausting informal housing options with friends and family before approaching local authorities.¹⁴⁷ Studies have also found women experiencing homelessness are more likely than men to secure accommodation through unwanted sexual relationships or sex work, making their experience of homelessness both less visible and more dangerous.¹⁴⁸

141 Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati, University of Nottingham ([BLH0012](#))

142 UK Women's Budget Group, [Housing and Gender: Briefing for a New Government](#), July 2024

143 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Statutory homelessness statistics in England, July to September 2023](#), 29 February 2024, updated 30 April 2024; Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

144 UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

145 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025

146 UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

147 UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#)); Single Homeless Project, Centre for Housing Policy, University of York, Fulfilling Lives Islington and Camden, [Women's Homelessness In Camden](#), December 2021; akt ([Blh0008](#))

148 [Q28](#) [Henri Baptiste]; UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

85. The Women’s Rough Sleeping Census identified significantly higher numbers of rough sleeping women than existing data collection methods—12% of the women identified by the survey were Black.¹⁴⁹ Carolin Hess, Research Fellow at King’s College London, cautioned that homeless women’s management of homelessness through strategies such as sofa surfing, living with risks of violence or coercion, and using bed and breakfast accommodation, may be seen by statutory authorities as coping and less urgent to resolve.¹⁵⁰

Domestic abuse

86. Domestic abuse is a significant driver of homelessness, with the most recent figures showing that it affects 16% of households owed the homelessness relief duty.¹⁵¹ In 2024/25, local councils supported 35,990 households facing homelessness because of domestic abuse. 76,850 individuals, including adults and children, accessed safe accommodation, a 20% increase on the previous year. However, 28,190 households could not be supported, an increase of 5% from 2023/24.¹⁵² Nearly 70% of women experiencing rough sleeping in the last year had experienced domestic abuse since age 16.
87. Women of mixed White and Black Caribbean background experience the highest rates of domestic violence.¹⁵³ Polly Stephens, Head of Policy, Impact and Partnerships, New Horizon Youth Centre, told us that “in Camden alone, 46% of the people accessing women’s shelters are from Black communities, which for a community of only 14% cross-city is a wild over-representation.”¹⁵⁴
88. Evidence shows that women who have experienced domestic abuse frequently receive inadequate responses from statutory services, including being turned away or placed in unsuitable accommodation. This can contribute to women resorting to the extreme and unsafe survival strategies set out above.¹⁵⁵ It can also cause women to remain in abusive relationships as they are forced to choose between their personal safety and having a roof over their head. Carolin Hess highlighted a need for the government to increase workforce capacity to reduce caseloads and enable more person-centred care.¹⁵⁶

149 Single Homeless Project, Solace Women’s Aid and Change Grow Live ([BLH0028](#))

150 Carolin Hess, King’s College London and Nottingham Trent University ([BLH0011](#))

151 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [Statutory homelessness statistics in England, Table A2R](#), Q4 2025

152 Home Office, [Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy to build a safer society for women and girls](#), 18 December 2025, updated 26 May 2026

153 Professor Katherine Brickell and Dr Melanie Nowicki ([BLH0015](#))

154 [Q30](#)

155 UK Women’s Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

156 Carolin Hess, King’s College London and Nottingham Trent University ([BLH0011](#))

89. The Women's Budget Group called for the new homelessness strategy to address the intersections between homelessness, violence against women and girls, and safeguarding, including through the expansion of safe housing options for survivors.¹⁵⁷ The government has made halving violence against women and girls one of its key missions. It has committed an additional £19 million over three years to support safe accommodation but the sector faces a funding shortfall of £62 million for refuge services and £212 million for community-based services, meaning that two thirds of referrals to refuges are being rejected.¹⁵⁸ One in eight refuges receive no local authority commissioned funding at all with refuges run by and for Black and other racially minoritised women being less likely to be commissioned by the local authority.¹⁵⁹
90. In visits to Iceland and Spain we have seen firsthand the impacts of strategies which focus on removing the perpetrator of domestic violence from the home and supporting the victim to remain there. Such strategies include increased monitoring of perpetrators and improvements in wraparound support. We expect to examine in more detail what the UK might learn from international comparators later in the year.
91. We note that the government has brought forward measures in the Social Housing Bill to give landlords and courts powers to remove perpetrators of domestic abuse from social housing while allowing survivors and their children to remain in their homes. Measures in the Bill also include safeguards to prevent perpetrators from exploiting tenancy arrangements to make victims homeless and new routes for tenancies to be transferred into a survivor's sole name. These powers are welcome but, as Refuge note, accompanying safeguards will be required to prevent perpetrators who are displaced from retaliating against their victim and there are questions on the stage at which such measures might be applied.
92. **RECOMMENDATION**
Domestic abuse is a key driver of homelessness. The housing workforce must have the training and capacity required to deal with cases effectively and compassionately. The government has increased the funding available to support victims into safe accommodation but it falls far short of what is needed. We are concerned that the significant funding shortfall is putting people's lives at risk. Tackling violence against women and girls is rightly one of the government's key missions. We therefore call on it to urgently review the level of funding it is providing to support victims of domestic abuse.

157 UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

158 Refuge, [VAWG Strategy sets ambition, but lacks critical investment](#), accessed June 2026

159 Women's Aid, [Almost two-thirds of domestic abuse referrals rejected due to a shortage of spaces, Women's Aid report shows](#), March 2026

93. CONCLUSION

We welcome the measures in the Social Housing Bill to support victims of domestic abuse and to help prevent them becoming homeless. We will follow the scrutiny of the Bill closely.

94. RECOMMENDATION

Government strategies to end rough sleeping must take into account that women are more likely to manage their homelessness by making themselves less visible. Using this as a coping strategy can expose them to further risks. More hidden forms of homelessness, including less visible rough sleeping, merit attention and resources equal to that given to more visible forms of homelessness.

Young people

- 95.** Younger Black people may encounter systemic barriers to accessing homelessness support. Government data shows that 54% of homeless people reported experiencing homelessness for the first time when under the age of 25, with 48% experiencing rough sleeping for the first time before this age.¹⁶⁰ The London Borough of Brent reported that Black and other racialised minority groups are “disproportionally at risk of homelessness and that young people experiencing homelessness as a result of parental eviction is second only to the ending of a private sector tenancy as the most common reasons for approaching our services in Brent”.¹⁶¹ Witnesses to our inquiry spoke to these concerns.¹⁶² Henri Baptiste, Founder and Board Member of Pathway Housing Solutions, highlighted factors such as abuse at home, family breakdown and leaving the care system as key drivers of youth homelessness. He noted how:

young black people in particular experience a range of intersectionalities as well, which have a wider impact on what is already a vulnerable group. Just to quickly add to that, there is an issue in terms of young people who subsequently go on to find accommodation and the issue of cuckooing, which is becoming more and more prominent.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Sussex Night Stop, [Here for you: Youth-led blueprint Project](#), June 2025

¹⁶¹ London Borough of Brent, [Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020–2025](#), accessed June 2026

¹⁶² See for example written evidence from Crisis ([BLH0023](#)), akt ([Blh0008](#))

¹⁶³ [Q28](#)

96. Polly Stephens, Head of Policy, Impact and Partnerships at the London-based youth homelessness charity New Horizon Youth Centre, told us about the experiences of young Black people they have supported. They made up over half of the young people the charity had worked with in the last five years:

What we see for a lot of those young people is them being adultified when they are trying to access statutory services, or having discriminatory experiences at the hands of services like the police, which are often some of the main interactions for people who are forced to sleep rough.¹⁶⁴

97. The New Horizon Youth Centre noted high levels of unmet needs, including those associated with “autism, undiagnosed autism, ADHD, and a lot of mental health needs that are either not being met for cultural reasons or not being met because of language barriers”.¹⁶⁵ Witnesses also drew attention to limits in financial support available to young people, including lower rates of local housing allowance and universal credit and risks of young people being placed with older adults in houses of multiple occupation.¹⁶⁶
98. The National Plan noted measures the government is introducing to support young people, notably care leavers, including additional duties on councils, exemptions from social housing local connection and residency tests, and a commitment to develop a cross-government action plan to reduce the proportion of care leavers under 25 experiencing homelessness. The Plan also includes action to improve guidance on youth homelessness and a commitment to develop a Youth Homelessness Prevention Toolkit.
99. Witnesses to our inquiry welcomed these measures, particularly the focus on prevention, but wanted reassurance that they would be supported by adequate funding given the evidence that youth homelessness prevention is “one of the most powerful tools we have”, and the more limited access young people have to state financial support and, in many cases, family networks.¹⁶⁷

100. **CONCLUSION**

We welcome the focus on young people in the National Plan to End Homelessness, not least given the elevated risks young people can face through abuse, family breakdown and care leaving. Ensuring young people can get the right support at an early stage to prevent them experiencing homelessness will be vital to the success of the government’s homelessness strategy.

164 [Q29](#)

165 [Q29](#)

166 [Q38](#)

167 [Q38](#)

Disability

101. Disabled people are over-represented among homeless people.¹⁶⁸ Shelter reported people with disabilities receiving worse treatment due to assumptions made about their intelligence and facing barriers when attempting to obtain accessible housing and support.¹⁶⁹ Disabled Black people reported feeling that they were “invisible”,¹⁷⁰ and treated worse compared to their White peers.¹⁷¹ A need for more accessible housing and collaborative and targeted work between services was highlighted.

Sexuality

102. There is limited data regarding sexuality in national ethnicity-disaggregated homelessness statistics.¹⁷² We received lived experience reports testifying that Black people identifying as LGBT did not feel safe to sleep rough, preferring to sofa surf, remain in unsafe relationships, rest on public transport or in cafes, or use dating apps to find a place to stay for the night, rather than present to support services.¹⁷³ As with female Black rough sleepers, this means Black LGBT+ people are not visible in rough sleeping statistics nor in statutory data on homelessness.¹⁷⁴

103. CONCLUSION

The intersections of race with other characteristics, like age, gender, parenthood, sexuality, and disability, shapes both the likelihood of homelessness and the type of homelessness experienced by Black people and others. Recognition of overlapping issues is essential for understanding how and why homelessness occurs and for designing effective intervention strategies that would benefit Black people and other groups, yet significant gaps in data, both at a local and national level, make this more challenging to achieve.

168 Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#)); [Inside Housing, Disabled people are more at risk of homelessness – how can the sector respond?](#), 30 May 2023; [Centre for Homeless Impact, Homelessness and disability in the UK](#), 10 May 2023

169 [Q10](#) [Jasmine Basran]

170 Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#))

171 Shelter ([BLH0009](#)); Just Life, [What Needs to Change for Disabled People in Temporary Accommodation](#), 18 May 2023; UK Women’s Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

172 Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#))

173 Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#)); akt ([Blh0008](#))

174 Race on the Agenda (ROTA) ([BLH0022](#)); Mariam Ayinla ([BLH0013](#))

104.

RECOMMENDATION

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should create a standardised framework for data collection. This should require local authorities to collect and publish data on social housing applications, outcomes, use and duration of temporary accommodation, and exits from statutory homelessness that can be disaggregated at a minimum by ethnicity, gender, age and disability at a national and local level. Local authorities must be held accountable if they fail to comply with this requirement.

4 The government's National Plan to End Homelessness

105. Homelessness is increasing and at a record-high in England.¹⁷⁵ Yet, unlike in Wales and Scotland, there was no government strategy on how to tackle it in the long-term in England until the government published its National Plan to End Homelessness in December last year.¹⁷⁶ The dedicated strategy is welcome. It contains three overarching national targets to:

- a.** Increase the proportion of households supported to stay in their own home or find other accommodation.
- b.** End the use of B&B accommodation for families except in short-term emergencies.
- c.** Halve the number of people sleeping rough long-term by 2029.¹⁷⁷

The government states that its targeted approaches are key to moving from a crisis-based approach to managing homelessness to proactively preventing it. The 90-page strategy outlines a three-tiered approach: long-term change, medium-term change, and immediate action while also setting out an accountability system for national and local government.

Immediate actions include:

- Curtailing the use of B&Bs as temporary accommodation for families, except in short-term emergencies.
- Improving experience for people living in temporary accommodation, including action on standards, schooling, healthcare and out-of-area placements.

¹⁷⁵ Big Issue, [Homelessness facts and statistics: The numbers you need to know in 2026](#), 2 January 2026; Shelter, [Rough sleeping and child homelessness hit highest levels since records began](#), 26 February 2026

¹⁷⁶ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

¹⁷⁷ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

Medium-term actions include:

- Investing £3.5 billion in homelessness and rough sleeping services over the next three years, enabling councils to invest more in prevention.
- Placing new legal duties on public services to identify, act, and collaborate to prevent and address homelessness.

106. Long-term actions include:

- Building 1.5 million homes, including an increase in new social and affordable homes, backed by £39 billion investment.
- Reforming the private rented sector via the Renters' Rights Act, banning Section 21 evictions and improving security for tenants.
- Tackling poverty and boosting living standards by scrapping the two-child benefit limit.

On accountability, the government stated that it would require every council to publish an action plan to accompany their local homelessness strategy. It also pledged to continue to convene its Lived Experience Forum and Expert Group to help government monitor impact and respond to emerging issues.¹⁷⁸

107. The National Plan was broadly welcomed by stakeholders. Homelessness charity St Mungo's described the plan's publication as a "watershed moment" that it "strongly welcomed". It said that the plan offered "the start of a blueprint for ending homelessness" and that the charity was "relieved to see the government recognising the scale of the crisis".¹⁷⁹ Polly Stephens, Head of Policy, Impact and Partnerships at the New Horizon Youth Centre, praised the government's focus on prevention:

[...] youth homelessness interventions are one of the most powerful prevention tools we have across the board [...] interventions at that point can meaningfully end homelessness for good for those people. With us working primarily with young people from Black communities, it is also one of the most powerful tools that we have to tackle Black homelessness.¹⁸⁰

178 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

179 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [National plan to halve long-term rough sleeping and prevent homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

180 [Q38](#)

Homeless Link, the membership body for homelessness organisations in England, welcomed the “focus on prevention and cross-departmental working, and its recognition of the vital role of frontline homelessness staff”, but highlighted that there was “a lot of detail still to come”. They noted:

there is a lot of reference to future work through toolkits and guidance including for specific populations we know are in specific need such as young people, women, and people experiencing multiple disadvantage.¹⁸¹

Race in the National Plan

- 108.** Ahead of the strategy’s publication, Race on the Agenda, an organisation that works to challenge systemic racial injustice, argued for the government to take “race-conscious action” on homelessness:

The evidence shows that colour-blind policymaking has failed to prevent or reduce these inequalities. The government’s upcoming cross-departmental homelessness and rough sleeping strategy must therefore take explicit, race-conscious action.¹⁸²

The National Plan contains few mentions of race, and none of Black homelessness specifically. It states:

People from ethnic minority backgrounds may face additional barriers, including discrimination, language barriers, and lack of culturally appropriate services. Services should be responsive to the specific needs of these communities, helping to build trust and improve engagement. Recent reports have highlighted a growing evidence base regarding the impact of racism on risk and experience of homelessness in the UK, and we will continue to work with partners to identify the best ways to improve our understanding of the impacts and how to improve outcomes.¹⁸³

- 109.** Peer researcher Danielle Celeste criticised the strategy for the “very limited attention to the specific needs of Black people and other ethnic minority groups”.¹⁸⁴ She told us:

181 Homeless Link, [The Homelessness Strategy: What’s in it and what isn’t?](#), 17 December 2025

182 Race on the Agenda (ROTA) ([BLH0022](#))

183 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), December 2025

184 [Q40](#)

Unlike other at-risk groups, who receive detailed sections and tailored recommendations, the strategy includes only a brief paragraph acknowledging that ethnic minority communities face additional barriers such as discrimination, language challenges and the lack of culturally appropriate services.

Although it notes emerging evidence on the role of racism in homelessness, it offers no concrete actions, funding commitments or plans to address these disparities.¹⁸⁵

110. CONCLUSION

Black people face a greater risk of homelessness compared to other ethnic groups. This disparity is not explained by poverty or geography alone. Instead, it reflects a combination of factors: direct and indirect racism in housing and related services, structural inequalities like lower home-ownership rates and poorer employment outcomes, and the legacy and contemporary effects of housing and welfare policy.

111. CONCLUSION

The government's National Plan to End Homelessness and increased investment in social housing are very welcome. However, it is disappointing that there is little recognition in the Plan of the disproportionate impact of homelessness on Black people or any targeted commitments to address it. Policies and programmes that do not consider racial inequalities will continue to leave Black people disproportionately affected and risk delegating the responsibility for addressing racial inequalities onto third sector organisations and Black communities themselves.

112. RECOMMENDATION

The delivery of the government's National Plan to End Homelessness, including resultant policies and local strategies, should explicitly acknowledge and seek to tackle the excess risks of homelessness faced by Black people, and the disproportionately worse outcomes they experience within the homelessness system. The plan should seek to embed understanding, transparency and accountability in relation to the impact of race in homelessness at national, regional and local levels.

Third sector organisations and Black homelessness

- 113.** Qualitative research, such as the lived experience focus groups in the I-SPHERE study, highlights the crucial role that charity advocates have in enabling people to access their legal entitlements, including from statutory systems that are often complex and/or unresponsive.¹⁸⁶ Many contributors to our inquiry emphasised the importance of the advice, support and guidance provided by the third sector in tackling the excess risk of homelessness to Black people who can be ignored or treated differently to others with the same issues.¹⁸⁷ One young contributor to the I-SPHERE study observed:

I haven't even really dealt with the council since I found [a charitable organisation], because these guys are way more efficient and they actually help, and you can feel they actually want to help. That's the difference, when you actually know when you feel that someone wants to help, it's very different. You feel a lot more comfortable and welcome and not so much of a burden.¹⁸⁸

- 114.** Black-led and community-based organisations frequently have greater trust within Black communities and are able to provide culturally specific support, which may otherwise be lacking from statutory services.¹⁸⁹ When Black people are placed in areas that do not reflect their cultural needs, or are outside of their personal networks, the third sector has been able to support them transition and settle.¹⁹⁰ The UK Women's Budget group described third sector homelessness organisations as "best placed to reach people experiencing hidden homelessness".¹⁹¹ Larger third sector organisations such as Shelter and Crisis have also provided Black people with lived experience of homelessness the opportunity to campaign for change by working as peer researchers.¹⁹² Several stakeholders argued for third-sector organisations to continue to be funded and listened to, as they are often better placed to engage those most at risk.¹⁹³

186 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025

187 See for example Black Equity Organisation ([BLH0026](#)); Shared Health Foundation, Professor Katherine Brickell and Dr Melanie Nowicki ([BLH0015](#)); UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

188 Fitzpatrick et al., [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), Institute for Social Policy, Housing and Equalities Research, 11 July 2025, p30

189 Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#))

190 Black Equity Organisation [[Blh0026](#)]

191 UK Women's Budget Group ([BLH0017](#))

192 Shelter ([BLH0009](#)); [Q10](#) [Jasmine Basran] and oral evidence from peer researchers to the Committee

193 Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#)); akt ([Blh0008](#)); Race on the Agenda (ROTA) ([BLH0022](#)); Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#))

115. Professor Bramley, one of the I-SPHERE co-authors, told us what he believed was the “key recommendation” in this area; namely, for larger homelessness organisations to work together with smaller and more local groups:

[they] should work with local organisations that may be particularly associated with, and hopefully trusted by, particular minoritised groups in particular contexts, to bring in their professional approach and understanding of all the key issues... In the West Midlands, we found that there were local grassroots organisations rooted in communities, but often the advice they were giving their clients was wrong, because they did not know enough about the benefits system. That is why that vertical link with national organisations is something to be very much cultivated.¹⁹⁴

116. Shelter noted that its research found that larger organisations can be perceived as “distant, formal and not tailored for diverse communities, affecting trust and engagement”.¹⁹⁵ It told us that it was building links with community groups by providing housing and debt advice for professionals in third sector organisations who can pass on that advice to clients in an environment they find comfortable. Some contributors argued that there was a need for a more explicitly anti-racist approach in third-sector organisations who could do more to challenge racist behaviour in the homelessness system.¹⁹⁶ Martha Schofield, Senior Research Officer at Shelter, described to us the work that Shelter was doing to embed anti-racist practices into its service model following a review of its own services that found a sense of mistrust among some Black people; steps included anti-racism training and building the confidence of staff to challenge discriminatory behaviour.¹⁹⁷

117. **RECOMMENDATION**

As part of its National Plan the government should engage with smaller, Black-led organisations who have the trust of their communities. This will enable the government to understand the issues Black people face across a range of ethnicities and other characteristics, and then work with these groups to design tailored interventions. It should use its convening powers to facilitate greater join up between smaller grassroots organisations and national bodies who can help them to deliver comprehensive support.

194 [Q25](#) [Professor Bramley]

195 Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

196 Dr Nick Clare and Dr Steve Iafrati, University of Nottingham ([BLH0012](#)); Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#)); Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

197 [Q23](#) [Martha Schofield]

118.

RECOMMENDATION

In allocating funding to third sector organisations the government should not lose sight of those bodies who support the ‘hidden homeless’, including women who might be fleeing domestic abuse and who may be particularly vulnerable and in need of support.

5 Criminalisation of rough sleeping

- 119.** The government’s National Plan includes a number of initiatives to help achieve the ambition of halving rough sleeping, including: improved training for the rough sleeping workforce; a new £15 million Long-Term Rough Sleeping Innovation Programme to enable councils with the greatest pressure to deliver more personalised and comprehensive support for people with complex needs; Long-Term Rough Sleeping Partnership Plans to support different agencies in working together; and £37 million for the Ending Homelessness in Communities Fund to strengthen and support frontline services.¹⁹⁸
- 120.** Rough sleeping is associated with various safety risks. People are exposed to the elements and at risk of abuse and assault from passers-by. Black and other racialised minorities can be even more unsafe, due to the additional risk of racist abuse or violence.¹⁹⁹ Research by the Centre for Hate Studies found that those who were Black and homeless experienced violence which “was amongst the most extreme in nature and repeated in quantity”.²⁰⁰ They also noted that case workers received more risk assessments for Black clients than any other race in referrals from partner organisations, even when no risk was identified, inferring disproportionately high screening.²⁰¹
- 121.** The I-SPHERE study highlighted previous research and their own that found that the mix of circumstances between White and Black homeless respondents differed. While someone White and homeless was more likely to be sleeping rough than someone Black and homeless, the authors noted that their qualitative evidence highlighted that Black people face additional safety concerns when sleeping rough, and will go to greater lengths to avoid having to do so:

We hear a lot of stories [of] young Black people being attacked on the streets or targeted and moved on by police in a different way to, say, an older person sleeping rough or a White person sleeping rough. So that visibility isn’t safe for young Black people, particularly,

198 Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, [A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

199 Shelter ([BLH0009](#)); Dr Georgia Leigh, Dani C and Andrea G ([Blh0024](#))

200 Emily Wertans, Centre for Hate Studies, University of Leicester ([BLH0027](#))

201 Emily Wertans, Centre for Hate Studies, University of Leicester ([BLH0027](#))

and so they're likely to employ other tactics to keep safe during their homelessness [...] like staying on buses or not sleeping throughout the night [...] not going to rough sleeping hot spots.²⁰²

- 122.** Martha Schofield, Senior Research Officer at Shelter, referenced Black people's fears of racist abuse and violence due to anti-Black tropes. She described:

Black men being perceived as more aggressive, or the angry Black woman stereotype [...] Clearly, if you are sleeping rough where you are in danger anyway and people hold these kinds of racist tropes around you, that will impact on your safety in an already very unsafe environment.²⁰³

- 123.** Stereotypes and racist tropes can affect how Black rough sleepers are treated at an interpersonal level—by other rough sleepers and the public—and institutionally, by the police and homelessness services.²⁰⁴ Black homeless people have been found to be systemically overpoliced, with research showing that they are more likely than White rough sleepers to be subject to enforcement and arrest under legislation used against street homelessness and street-related activity.²⁰⁵

- 124.** Research by Generation Rent found that Black people were 68% more likely to be arrested under the Vagrancy Act 1824 which criminalised rough sleeping. While Black people make up 5% of the rough sleeping population, they made up 8% of the 4,200 arrests made under the Vagrancy Act between 2018 and 2022.²⁰⁶ Between April 2022 and July 2024, 51 of the 175 (30%) people arrested by the Metropolitan Police under the Act were Black.²⁰⁷ On 29 June 2026 the government repealed the Vagrancy Act, saying that “no one should be criminalised for sleeping rough”.²⁰⁸

202 Fitzpatrick et al., 2025, [Race, Ethnicity and Homelessness in the UK](#), 11 July 2025, p21

203 [Q6](#) [Martha Schofield]

204 Shelter ([BLH0009](#))

205 Homeless Link, [Race, ethnicity and experiences of homelessness](#), 4 April 2024; Hleb Buziuk ([BLH0002](#)); Generation Rent, [Black people 68% more likely than white people to be arrested under “outdated” Vagrancy Act](#), 19 December 2023

206 Generation Rent, [Black people 68% more likely than white people to be arrested under “outdated” Vagrancy Act](#), 19 December 2023

207 London Assembly, [Question: Vagrancy Act](#), 20 June 2024

208 [Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, A National Plan to End Homelessness](#), 11 December 2025

125.

RECOMMENDATION

We welcome the government's commitment to halve rough sleeping and the additional funding to support that objective. We urge the government to allocate some of that funding to frontline organisations working with Black rough sleepers given the particular challenges those individuals face around personal safety and access to support.

126.

RECOMMENDATION

While no one should be criminalised for sleeping rough, it is clear that the use of powers under the Vagrancy Act have been disproportionately used against the Black homeless population. We welcome the government's repeal of the Act and the resulting positive impact this will have for the Black homeless population.

Conclusions and recommendations

Drivers of higher homelessness risk for Black people

1. Evidence of prejudice against Black tenants in the private rented sector makes it crucial that support and pathways to challenge illegal behaviour are available and accessible. We welcome the increased rights for tenants delivered by the Renters' Rights Act, which will help people to remain in their home, including Black households who are more likely to be threatened with eviction, and make it easier for tenants to challenge poor conduct by landlords. (Conclusion, Paragraph 35)
2. The new Private Rented Sector Ombudsman should support individuals who have been subject to racial discrimination and where appropriate, for example in cases involving multiple complaints about larger housing providers, escalate cases to the Equality and Human Rights Commission. (Recommendation, Paragraph 36)
3. The Equality and Human Rights Commission saw its budget slashed in 2013 and has experienced year on year reductions in funding in real terms since then, preventing it from pursuing sustained programmes of work in key areas including supporting people to secure justice in cases of discrimination. The Government should provide and sustain a 10% uplift to the EHRC's budget. (Recommendation, Paragraph 37)
4. Local Housing Allowance provides vital support for people on lower incomes. The ad hoc approach of freezing and resetting rates creates uncertainty, pushes people into further poverty and increased risks of homelessness. This in turn forces local authorities to increase their use of temporary accommodation, at substantial cost. (Conclusion, Paragraph 44)
5. The government needs to increase and sustain Local Housing Allowance rates at the 30th percentile of local private rents. Doing so will help to prevent people from being pushed into homelessness due to private rent increases, will immediately unlock more homes to help councils move families and individuals on from temporary accommodation, and help stop people from becoming trapped in the cycle of homelessness.

Such an intervention would benefit all groups, but particularly Black households, given they are disproportionately affected by homelessness. We acknowledge that such a measure is not cost free, though some costs will be offset by reductions to the cost of temporary accommodation, but the increasing affordability gap between LHA and private rents and its negative impact on living standards is unsustainable. (Recommendation, Paragraph 45)

6. The chronic shortage of social housing places enormous pressure on council staff to find appropriate housing for people who are often extremely vulnerable. They do crucial work in trying circumstances. However, official data suggests that decisions in the social housing system result in bias against Black people for a range of reasons and contributors to this inquiry highlighted shocking reports of explicitly racist behaviour by some housing officers. (Conclusion, Paragraph 59)
7. We welcome the introduction of the new Competence and Conduct Standard for housing management staff but, given long-standing issues of discrimination against Black people, we believe the government should introduce specific steps aimed at tackling racial bias. (Conclusion, Paragraph 60)
8. The government should work with local authorities to ensure that their staff are fully equipped to provide equal support to all racial and ethnic groups in need. We are sympathetic to calls for anti-racism training and guidance. We call on the government to consider the merits of including a module on ensuring fairness of process in the new Competence and Conduct Standard. However, given the effectiveness of that training may not be guaranteed, the government should put measures in place to improve transparency and accountability over decision making. (Recommendation, Paragraph 61)
9. The government should develop a national performance management framework for homelessness assessments and allocation policies which specifically includes monitoring of outcomes by race and sex and compliance with the Equality Act 2010. It should collate and publish a summary of findings at least annually and report significant patterns of racial and other biases in local decision-making to the Equality and Human Rights Commission for investigation and enforcement. (Recommendation, Paragraph 62)
10. Out of area placements can remove vulnerable people from their support networks at a time when they most need them and have a devastating impact on people's healthcare and education. Reports of the disproportionate use of these placements for Black households is concerning. Failures of local authorities to fulfil their section 208 duties in notifying the new host local authority exacerbate these concerns. (Conclusion, Paragraph 63)

11. We welcome the government's plans to address poor practice in the use of out of area placements. Those plans should include measures to address the disproportionate use of these placements for Black households, including through the recording and publication of data by ethnicity and gender. (Recommendation, Paragraph 64)
12. Statutory services should be required to play a stronger role in tackling homelessness. We welcome the focus in the National Plan to End Homelessness on switching from crisis response to prevention of homelessness and the proposed "duty to collaborate" to help achieve that ambition. The lack of an explicit link between the proposed "duty to collaborate" and tackling racial disparities in homelessness risk is, however, a missed opportunity that we urge the government to address. (Conclusion, Paragraph 73)
13. In bringing forward the "duty to collaborate" the government should set out a clear ambition to tackle the poorer outcomes including increased risks of homelessness that minority ethnic groups experience in leaving the care of public services. The government should ensure that such a proposal is developed with input from Black communities, Black-led organisations, and Black individuals with lived experience of homelessness. (Recommendation, Paragraph 74)
14. The Home Office and the police should be added to the list of public bodies subject to the statutory 'duty to refer' and included in the forthcoming proposals for a 'duty to collaborate'. (Recommendation, Paragraph 75)
15. We welcome the government's programmes to increase access to mental health support for people in the homelessness system. We would like to see improved access to referral pathways between health and housing services in areas with high levels of Black homelessness. In these areas, health, mental health and hospital discharge policies should include clear responsibilities for identifying homelessness risk and notifying local housing teams. Particular attention under the proposed new 'duty to collaborate' should be given to patients from over-represented groups such as Black men leaving inpatient mental health care. (Recommendation, Paragraph 79)

Variation in homelessness risk across the Black population

16. Domestic abuse is a key driver of homelessness. The housing workforce must have the training and capacity required to deal with cases effectively and compassionately. The government has increased the funding available to support victims into safe accommodation but it falls far short of what is needed. We are concerned that the significant funding shortfall is putting

people's lives at risk. Tackling violence against women and girls is rightly one of the government's key missions. We therefore call on it to urgently review the level of funding it is providing to support victims of domestic abuse. (Recommendation, Paragraph 92)

17. We welcome the measures in the Social Housing Bill to support victims of domestic abuse and to help prevent them becoming homeless. We will follow the scrutiny of the Bill closely. (Conclusion, Paragraph 93)
18. Government strategies to end rough sleeping must take into account that women are more likely to manage their homelessness by making themselves less visible. Using this as a coping strategy can expose them to further risks. More hidden forms of homelessness, including less visible rough sleeping, merit attention and resources equal to that given to more visible forms of homelessness. (Recommendation, Paragraph 94)
19. We welcome the focus on young people in the National Plan to End Homelessness, not least given the elevated risks young people can face through abuse, family breakdown and care leaving. Ensuring young people can get the right support at an early stage to prevent them experiencing homelessness will be vital to the success of the government's homelessness strategy. (Conclusion, Paragraph 100)
20. The intersections of race with other characteristics, like age, gender, parenthood, sexuality, and disability, shapes both the likelihood of homelessness and the type of homelessness experienced by Black people and others. Recognition of overlapping issues is essential for understanding how and why homelessness occurs and for designing effective intervention strategies that would benefit Black people and other groups, yet significant gaps in data, both at a local and national level, make this more challenging to achieve. (Conclusion, Paragraph 103)
21. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government should create a standardised framework for data collection. This should require local authorities to collect and publish data on social housing applications, outcomes, use and duration of temporary accommodation, and exits from statutory homelessness that can be disaggregated at a minimum by ethnicity, gender, age and disability at a national and local level. Local authorities must be held accountable if they fail to comply with this requirement. (Recommendation, Paragraph 104)

The government's National Plan to End Homelessness

- 22.** Black people face a greater risk of homelessness compared to other ethnic groups. This disparity is not explained by poverty or geography alone. Instead, it reflects a combination of factors: direct and indirect racism in housing and related services, structural inequalities like lower home-ownership rates and poorer employment outcomes, and the legacy and contemporary effects of housing and welfare policy. (Conclusion, Paragraph 110)
- 23.** The government's National Plan to End Homelessness and increased investment in social housing are very welcome. However, it is disappointing that there is little recognition in the Plan of the disproportionate impact of homelessness on Black people or any targeted commitments to address it. Policies and programmes that do not consider racial inequalities will continue to leave Black people disproportionately affected and risk delegating the responsibility for addressing racial inequalities onto third sector organisations and Black communities themselves. (Conclusion, Paragraph 111)
- 24.** The delivery of the government's National Plan to End Homelessness, including resultant policies and local strategies, should explicitly acknowledge and seek to tackle the excess risks of homelessness faced by Black people, and the disproportionately worse outcomes they experience within the homelessness system. The plan should seek to embed understanding, transparency and accountability in relation to the impact of race in homelessness at national, regional and local levels. (Recommendation, Paragraph 112)
- 25.** As part of its National Plan the government should engage with smaller, Black-led organisations who have the trust of their communities. This will enable the government to understand the issues Black people face across a range of ethnicities and other characteristics, and then work with these groups to design tailored interventions. It should use its convening powers to facilitate greater join up between smaller grassroots organisations and national bodies who can help them to deliver comprehensive support. (Recommendation, Paragraph 117)
- 26.** In allocating funding to third sector organisations the government should not lose sight of those bodies who support the 'hidden homeless', including women who might be fleeing domestic abuse and who may be particularly vulnerable and in need of support. (Recommendation, Paragraph 118)

Criminalisation of rough sleeping

27. We welcome the government's commitment to halve rough sleeping and the additional funding to support that objective. We urge the government to allocate some of that funding to frontline organisations working with Black rough sleepers given the particular challenges those individuals face around personal safety and access to support. (Recommendation, Paragraph 125)
28. While no one should be criminalised for sleeping rough, it is clear that the use of powers under the Vagrancy Act have been disproportionately used against the Black homeless population. We welcome the government's repeal of the Act and the resulting positive impact this will have for the Black homeless population. (Recommendation, Paragraph 126)

Formal minutes

Wednesday 8 July 2026

Members present:

Sarah Owen, in the Chair

Alex Brewer

Rosie Duffield

Dame Nia Griffith

Christine Jardine

Kim Leadbeater

Kevin McKenna

Rebecca Paul

Nadia Whittome

Black people's experiences of homelessness

Draft Report (*Black people's experiences of homelessness*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 126 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the First Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Wednesday 15 July at 2.00pm.

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 25 November 2025

Professor Glen Bramley, Professor of Urban Studies, Heriot-Watt University; **Jasmine Basran**, Head of Policy and Campaigns, Crisis; **Uche Eneke**, Peer Researcher, Shelter; **Martha Schofield**, Senior Research Officer, Shelter

[Q1–27](#)

Wednesday 7 January 2026

Polly Stephens, Head of Policy, Impact and Partnerships, New Horizon Youth Centre; **Danielle Celeste**, Teacher, Researcher & Theatre Practitioner, Off the Wall Players; **Henri Baptiste**, Founder/Board Member, Pathway Housing Solutions

[Q28–46](#)

Alison McGovern MP, Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; **Philippa Davies**, Director of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

[Q47–63](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Blh numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1	akt	Blh0008
2	Anonymised	Blh0006
3	Ayinla, Miss Mariam	Blh0013
4	BME National	Blh0010
5	Black Equity Organisation	Blh0026
6	Bradley, Kate (Housing and Public Law Solicitor, Greater Manchester Law Centre)	Blh0019
7	Buziuk, Hleb (Independent policy researcher and human-rights advocate, FairGo CIC)	Blh0002
8	Campbell, Lucy (Assistant Director of System Change (Women's Homelessness and Multiple Disadvantage) and Domestic Abuse Organisation Lead, Single Homeless Project, Solace Women's Aid, Change Grow Live)	Blh0028
9	Centre for Hate Studies: University of Leicester	Blh0027
10	Clare, Dr Nick (Associate Professor, University of Nottingham); and Dr Steve Iafrati (Assistant Professor, University of Nottingham)	Blh0012
11	Crisis UK	Blh0023
12	Global Policy Network	Blh0025
13	Hess, Carolin (PhD student; Research Fellow, King's College London; Nottingham Trent University)	Blh0011
14	Johns, Katherine (Student, University of Warwick)	Blh0014
15	Leith, Dr Georgia (Senior Research & Evaluation Officer, Crisis UK); Dani C; and Andrea G	Blh0024
16	May, Mr Daniel (Chair and founder of Belong)	Blh0003
17	Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government	Blh0020

18	Noronha, Dr Nigel de (Research Associate, The University of Manchester)	<u>Blh0016</u>
19	Race on the Agenda (ROTA)	<u>Blh0022</u>
20	Shared Health Foundation; and King's College London	<u>Blh0015</u>
21	Shelter	<u>Blh0009</u>
22	The Runnymede Trust	<u>Blh0021</u>
23	Thompson, Miss Diane	<u>Blh0005</u>
24	UK Women's Budget Group	<u>Blh0017</u>

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–26

Number	Title	Reference
12th	Menstrual health of girls and young women	HC 1265
11th	Cosmetic procedures	HC 869
10th	Discrimination, harassment and abuse against Muslim women	HC 571
9th	Tackling HIV transmission	HC 1249
8th	Female entrepreneurship	HC 711
7th	Female genital mutilation	HC 714
6th	Equality at work: Paternity and shared parental leave	HC 502
5th	Misogyny in music: on repeat	HC 573
4th	Tackling non-consensual intimate image abuse	HC 336
3rd	The rights of older people	HC 414
2nd	Equality at work: Miscarriage and bereavement leave	HC 335
1st	Women's reproductive health conditions	HC 337
10th Special	Discrimination, harassment and abuse against Muslim women: Government Response	HC 1863
9th Special	Tackling HIV transmission: Government Response	HC 1663
8th Special	Female entrepreneurship: Government Response	HC 1640
7th Special	Female genital mutilation: Government Response	HC 1506

Number	Title	Reference
6th Special	Equality at work: paternity and shared parental leave: Government Response	HC 1313
5th Special	Misogyny in music: on repeat: Government Response	HC 1302
4th Special	Tackling non-consensual intimate image abuse: Government Response	HC 911
3rd Special	The rights of older people: Responses from Government, Advertising Standards Authority, Ofcom and IPSO	HC 910
2nd Special	The prevalence of sexually transmitted infections in young people and other high risk groups: Government Response	HC 865
1st Special	Equality at work: Miscarriage and bereavement leave: Government Response	HC 803